



FACUTEIT VAN DE LETTEREN EN WIJSBEGEERTE

Vakgroep Afrikaanse Talen en Culturen

Academiejaar 2004-2005

Performing displacements and rephrasing attachments
Ethnographic explorations of mobility in art, ritual, media, and politics

Karel Arnaut

Volume 1

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor (Ph.D.) in African Languages and Cultures

Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van
doctor in de Afrikaanse Talen en Culturen

Promotor: Prof. Dr. Jan Blommaert

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Preface | 1 |
| Introduction | |
| <i>Toward an anthropology of mobilities</i> | 9 |
| I. Glocal openings | |
| <i>Chapter 1</i> | 36 |
| Formulating the ‘Sakrobundi’ and ‘Bedu’ masquerades: artefacts, authorities, and labels | |
| <i>Chapter 2</i> | 115 |
| ‘Sakaraboutou is a Bondoukou custom’: an investigation into ritual spaces and performative positions | |
| II. National closures | |
| <i>Chapter 3</i> | 202 |
| Autochthony and the postnational imagination in Côte d’Ivoire (1901-2003) | |
| <i>Chapter 4</i> | 265 |
| ‘Out of the race’: History and the <i>poiesis</i> of genocide in three newspaper articles | |
| <i>Chapter 5</i> | 315 |
| Re-generating the nation: youth, revolution, and the politics of history | |

Preface

This doctoral thesis is the outcome of a long trajectory that began at the Department of Anthropology (Seminarie voor Antropologie) of Rik Pinxten, and ended at the Department of African Languages and Cultures of Jan Blommaert, located a couple of yards further down the same corridor at Ghent University. In between these two places, I made a number of stops that were mainly located outside Ghent and Belgium. Two of the most important halting places were Oxford and Bondoukou. At the University of Oxford, I worked under the supervision of Howard Morphy at the Pitt Rivers Museum, and later of Wendy James at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology. In the Bondoukou region of Côte d'Ivoire I worked with many people but most intensively with Ali Ouattara from Sorobango and Sadji Ouattara from Sanjo Kupo (Boroponko).

It will not suffice to merely acknowledge them for having escorted me on some stretch of my academic journey so far. They not only accompanied me, but also showed me new routes to travel by, led me into new directions, and helped me reaching destinations I thought I would never attain. One of these is this doctoral dissertation. They therefore deserve more in the sense of recognition and gratitude than just having their names mentioned in a long list. Back in the 1980s, Rik Pinxten initiated me into anthropology and encouraged me to work on the subjects of ritual and dance – forms of artistic and religious mobility that have retained my attention ever since. The same artistic feeling, which I appreciated in Rik Pinxten I found in Howard Morphy in Oxford. Howard Morphy opened the way to come to Oxford for me and made my stay there both intellectually challenging and socially agreeable – and I never found the occasion to properly thank him for this. As much as Howard Morphy made me enthusiastic about the anthropological study of aesthetics, Wendy James motivated me to resume my doctoral project. If I finally have decided to submit this dissertation at Ghent University, she should not interpret this as a failure on her part but as a minor victory: without her inspiring comments this thesis would not have materialised at all. The same goes for the two people I shared much time with during my many visits to the Bondoukou region.

I met Ali Ouattara very early on in my field research, during my first trip to Sorobango where he had been appointed as my – I should say 'our' because Erwin Keustermans was then visiting me – guide and interpreter. Unlike other official spokespersons, he behaved in a rather informal way and was at times jocular and inquisitive. Ali Ouattara attributed his nickname 'technicien' (technician) to his outstanding rhetorical qualities. More than an excellent orator, I found in Ali a

perfect ‘arrangeur’, a broker and a networker. Although at times he was willing to efface himself for the cause of ‘science’ or simply because I asked him, Ali was never slimy or obedient: he valued his independence, he never stopped launching novel ideas or provocative interpretations and continuously interrogated my way of handling research and my emerging points of view. Because of this rare combination of empathy and critical attitude, in more than one sense, I consider him as a brother. More so perhaps than Sadjji Ouattara whom I would rather qualify as a friend and a colleague. Sadjji Ouattara is the complete opposite of Ali: he is generally soft-spoken, cautious and discrete, and respected in the village of Sanjo Kupo because of his level of schooling and his familiarity with ‘government’ – that is the local and regional authorities and administration. Contrary to Ali Ouattara who chose people because of their specific status or special knowledge, Sadjji Ouattara brought me into contact with people of all sorts and conditions – most of them as unassuming and sharp-witted as he is.

After having passed through Oxford and Bondoukou, I regained Ghent University where this doctoral thesis eventually materialised – and if there is one person who can take much of the credit for this, it is Jan Blommaert. Joining Jan Blommaert at the Department of African Languages and Cultures in 1998 was one in a long series of reunions, which began back in the late 1980s. Since then our academic and personal paths have crossed many times. One of the motivations behind the writing of this dissertation is that it allowed me to be part of the kind of intellectual force field that Jan Blommaert constitutes and that has kept empowering me throughout the writing process. I end this series of academic or research-related expressions of gratitude on a personal note, by taking the occasion to bring homage to Pika Blommaert whose genuine concern over what is becoming of me, I have always greatly (but so far never explicitly) appreciated.

While the above-mentioned people, each in their own way have co-conducted me to where I am now (sitting behind my computer, writing the preface of my doctoral thesis), others have helped constructing the many roads I took. In keeping with the general theme of this dissertation, I will split this large group of *compagnons de route* into subgroups defined along geographical lines. Starting ‘at home’, I would like to thank everyone in and around the Department of African Languages and Cultures not only for having put up with me, but for having shown genuine interest in my work or helping me to execute it: Ngo Semzara Kabuta, Michael Meeuwis, Inge Brinkman, Gilles-Maurice de Schryver, Cécile Vigouroux, Meryem Kanmaz, Katrijn Maryns, Annelies Verdoolaege, Stephen Neke, Marga Peters, Jacques Boucneau, Sarah Hillewaert, Gerda Van Daele, Joris Baeyens, and, last but not least, Nicole Vermaete. Beyond the department,

several people deserve a word of gratitude because of their active concern and help: Elze Bruyninx, An van Dienderen, Gwenda Vander Steene, Koen Vlassenroot, Anne Walraet and Danny Bouckaert. I take this occasion to also thank the many hundreds of students with whom I worked over the last six years and whose questions and comments have urged me to develop and explicate my thoughts.

Spread around Belgium and not necessarily connected to the department are a number of people whom I thank for all sorts of different reasons, which I cannot easily explain here: Erwin Keustermans, Filip Erkens, Raymond Dakoua, Hein Vanhee, Boris Wastiau, Paul Kerstens, Sarah Verhees, Jo Verhoeven, 'père' Jolibois, Koen Ross, and Soualiho Ouattara. Special thanks are in order for Bambi Ceuppens, not only because she was willing to copy-edit this thesis under difficult circumstances, but also for sharing ideological stances and social commitment with me.

Moving on to Oxford and the UK, some people have played an important part in my coming of age as an anthropologist and a person. Above all, I want to thank Jeremy and Julia Coote who are among the most loving and committed people I have met so far in my life. I met Jeremy in London when I made my first academic trip outside Ghent in the company of Rik Pinxten; Jeremy introduced me to Howard Morphy, and later discussed my (difficult) case with Wendy James. What Ali Ouattara accomplished in the Bondoukou region, Jeremy Coote did in Oxford and beyond, as a fellow and a comrade. My gratitude towards Marie-Bénédicte Dembour is of the same order as that for the Cootes – to paraphrase the words of an important British playwright: she is a friend, faithful and just to me. Others who accompanied and supported me when I took my first steps in anthropology at Oxford were Mwangi Kasengele, Ed Carter, David Zeitlyn and Marcus Banks. Also in the United Kingdom, and mainly in the zone of ethnographic museums, there were many people who showed interest in my research and encouraged me by including me in their projects of refashioning their collections and rethinking the anthropology of art. Among them, I especially want to thank Malcolm McLeod, John Mack, Nigel Barley and Elisabeth Dell, as well as Anthony Shelton and Nicky Levell.

Among the people in and around Bondoukou who most contributed to the realisation of my research were those who acted as hosts, interpreters, mediators and supportive interlocutors. I cannot list all of them, but mentioning the following names is important both to me and, I think, to them. At Bondoukou: Koffi Amoha (†), Oba Joseph (†), Laurent and Nicolas, Baba Djéna, Laurent and Marianne Barbier, Masace, Billey Kouamé Celestin alias Alpha, Maizan, Kouadjo Kossonou Germain alias 'Bill Koss Bi', and Ferdinand. At Sorobango: Kofi Mouroufie and Kouakou Kra, the sculptor Dabila Ouattara and his son Idrissa, Anzomana Ouattara and Braïma

Ouattara, Mori Ouattara and Sina Ouattara. At Tambi: Kouadjo Donko Bouri and Pegine Sagabile, Bernard and Rivellino, and Yao François. At Sanjo Kupo (Boroponko): apart from the formidable Sie Koffi (†), Kouakou Kouman, Kouassi Lepongo, Brahiman alias Sékou Touré; Adama Ouattara, Kobenan Gado, and Adjima Koffi. At Ouélékei: Adama Ouattara who told me wonderful stories in Zòrògò, but also Sie Yao, and ‘King’. At Sapia: Ouattara Moro. At Yérékaye, Kouadjo Dongo Dari, Yao Babara Dongo, Kouakou Dapa, ‘mi nalio’ Nandi (†) and ‘the great hunter’ Kwame Kra. At Sianwodi: Koffi Dongo and Kouakou Badou. At Songori: Kouassi Adingra François, and Kouadjo Kouasi Michel who assisted me when I was initiated in the Bedu masquerade. At Kamala: Kofi Mouroufié and Kofi Kra. At Motiamo: Kouakou Dongo, Akua Boroni, Aman Frouman, Zito, and Kobenan Kra.

Finally, I wish to thank the members of the different families to which I belong for their emotional and material support. The smallest unit in this scaled series of nested families is ‘my’ own family: my wife Françoise and our daughter Elisa. Only six months after Elisa was born I decided to dedicate most of my time, often including weekends, to writing this thesis. One year later Elisa has become an inquisitive, sociable, and spirited baby girl who deserves much more attention and care than I have been able to give her. During that time, Françoise has taken an inequitable large share of family responsibilities. The completion of this doctoral project is meant to take this heavy burden off her shoulders and give her the breathing space she has been longing for, for so long. If this thesis is about mobility, its submission is above all about finding a new balance between Françoise’s relative mobility and mine. Paradoxically, I think this will bring us closer together.

‘My’ other family is that of my late father Joseph and my mother Monique. Since the first time I thought about conducting research they have stood behind me and offered all the support they were able to give. Although in general I do not deplore the fact that it took me so long to finish my dissertation, I deeply regret that my father has not seen the end of my everlasting studies and research. I know that he would have intensely (albeit not manifestly) enjoyed it. Fortunately, my mother is still there to witness this long-awaited step. Together with my parents, I thank my brothers and sisters, my in-laws, my nephews and nieces, particularly Karel and Febe, as well as some members of the extended family, including aunt Lutgarde, for their unyielding support and encouragement. I wish also to express my sincerest gratitude to my family-in-law, particularly to my mother-in-law from whom over the last months I received a deep-felt sympathy if not complicity, perhaps due to the fact that I reminded her of the time she was writing up her own doctoral dissertation.

Acknowledgements

As the five chapters of this thesis are the result of five more or less separate research projects, I have grouped the project-related acknowledgements by chapter.

Chapter One

I would like to thank the seventy-nine curators, collectors, and scholars who responded to my questions about ‘Sakrobundi’, Bedu and related masks from the Bondoukou region in the collections they administer or study. They provided me with the data and photographs, and above all, with the labels which constitute the basic research material for this chapter. I also owe a large debt of gratitude to Ray Silverman, William Hart, and Boris Wastiau who each in their own way have contributed substantially to the manufacturing of this chapter.

Chapter Two

Earlier versions of this chapter were presented at the ‘Carnival in Context’ workshop of the 1999 EASA Conference in Kraków, and at the West Africa Seminar at University College London (2001). I wish to thank Jonathan Skinner, Nicolas Argenti and Murray Last, participants at both meetings, as well as the reviewers of *Etnofoor* where an earlier version of this chapter was published. Their suggestions were critical in its manufacturing as well as in the invention of the problematic that it seeks to address. For having given me the occasion to explore the many things that go on in Sakaraboutou, I owe a large debt of gratitude to Youssouf Ouattara and his son Siedou Ouattara, mother and daughter Awa Ouattara and Bintou Ouattara, the formidable Ma Kouroubari, the late Alai Ouattara and his partner Bini Ouattara, and finally the young ‘lions’: Mahama Ouattara, Ladji Ouattara, Kader Ouattara and the many others who each year turn Sakaraboutou into a creative spectacle.

Chapter Three

I owe many thanks to the African Studies Centre in Leiden that invited me to give a seminar on autochthony, and to the challenging remarks of Peter Pels, Jan-Bart Gewald, and Ineke van Kessel. Furthermore, I thank my colleagues at Ghent University for their comments and

encouragement, in particular Bambi Ceuppens, and MA student Sofie Claessens for practical help with finding documents. But above all, I wish to thank Bamba Moriféré, Bernard Zadi Zaourou, Désiré Tanoé, and Yacouba Konaté who provided me with basic insights into the political history of Côte d'Ivoire.

Chapter Four

A first draft of this paper was presented at the workshop ‘Grammars of Identity/Alterity’ of the EASA Biennial Conference 2002 at Copenhagen. I wish to thank all the participants at the workshop and above all Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich for their comments and encouragement in the laborious project of turning the initial paper into a chapter of the book they edited. Without their help then, making this paper into a chapter of my thesis would have been impossible. I also wish to thank all the people who helped researching this paper, and in particular Soualiho Ouattara, Ibrahima Ouattara, Sarah Verhees, and Ahmed Kouadio. I should point out, perhaps, that the name Ouattara is one of the most popular Muslim patronyms in the Bondoukou region and that it does not indicate any ties of kinship between my interlocutors and their namesake, the politician Alassane Ouattara, who figures prominently in the events that are analysed here.

Chapter Five

I wish to thank all my interlocutors and the many people who have facilitated my field research in Abidjan, Paris, London, Cologne, and Liège, especially Alyoun Badara Sall, Jean-Marie Ahoussou, Koffi Koffi Didier, Jean Dekpai, Gbalou Angenore, Sisé Fanny Mousa, Kohi Brou Sylvain, Henry Tohou, and Raymond Dakoua. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the Conference *Youth and the Politics of Generational Conflict in Africa* at the ASC in Leiden (2003). I wish to thank Ineke Van Kessel and Jon Abbink not only for having hosted this conference but also for having invited me to include a concise version of this chapter in a forthcoming volume edited by them.

September 2004

Introduction

Toward an anthropology of mobilities

Iocaste: What is an exile's life? Is it great misery?

Polyneices: The greatest; worse in reality than in report.

Iocasta: Worse in what way? What chiefly galls an exile's heart?

Polyneices: The worst is this: right of free speech does not exist.

Iocasta: That's a slave's life—to be forbidden to speak one's mind.

Polyneices: One has to endure the idiocy of those who rule.

(Euripides, *The Phoenician Women*)

Bintou Ouattara: So, does the native quarrel with the stranger?

Awa Ouattara: [No] we joke about with each other.

Bintou Ouattara: By making war with the stranger you show him the way to his village. He heads off and leaves. So your village will be miserable, it is the stranger who renders your village interesting.

(Conversation, Bondoukou, 23/05/2001)

1. Preliminary note

This dissertation is a collection of five semi-autonomous chapters, each of which presents chunks of research I conducted since the early 1990s. Thus it neither has the classic format of a monograph nor does it conform to the new-style dissertation in which authors present a *florilegium* of their best, often published, papers and articles. None of the chapters in this dissertation have been published in the form they are presented here. Apart from chapter four that was only minimally revised (from Arnaut 2004a), other chapters (two and five) of which published and in-press versions ((Arnaut 2000a; Arnaut *in press*) exist, were entirely reworked. Two chapters (one and three) were written especially for this dissertation. The dissertation does not include chapters on the Bedu masquerade on which I have published extensively over the last years (Arnaut 1996, 2000b, 2000c, 2004b) and on which I continue writing (Arnaut *forthcoming*), because I wanted to bring new subject matter and a distinct methodological outlook to this dissertation.

2. Five easy pieces

Given the nature and structure of this dissertation, its point of gravity resides in its various chapters and not in its introduction. Each chapter has a theoretical and methodological outlook of its own and presents research material that differs often very much from that of other chapters. This I try to express in the subtitle ‘Ethnographic explorations of mobility in art, ritual, media, and politics’. The latter terms indicate more or less in order of appearance the different empirical domains within which the research material of each chapter can be situated.

The domain in which chapter one ventures is ‘art’ and more specifically the African art world constituted by academics, curators and museums or exhibitions as well as collectors, dealers, and auction houses. The focus is on labels. I argue that in their large variety, labels are critical and typical products of the African (‘ethnic’, ‘tribal’) art world in that they combine academic authority with other ‘worldly’ interests such as communication with large and diverse publics, or rendering objects attractive to exhibition visitors or potential buyers. Chapter two looks at ‘ritual’, more particularly the public ritual of Sakaraboutou which involves a large group of performers, the more or less active participation of broad publics and, above all, is considered as a traditional form of self-representation of the whole urban community of Bondoukou. This chapter is an attempt at problematising the ‘communal’ and ‘traditional’ character of this public ritual by (a) breaking down the group of performers into different ritual constituencies up to the

level of the individual performer, and (b) by exploring the official, semi-public and decidedly peripheral performances that one category of performers (the male youngsters) brings to the Sakaraboutou parade under the guise of the event's 'traditionalism'.

Each of the three chapters of Part II address to some extent both 'media' and 'politics', but in diverse degrees. Chapter four focuses mainly on 'media', more specifically on processes of selfing and othering in the kind of mass-media that have been earmarked as 'the media of hatred' (*les médias de la haine*) in Côte d'Ivoire. Unlike many other analyses, this chapter does not look at this mass-mediated intolerance in its habitual form of slash-and-burn propaganda but in the guise of matter-of-fact reporting and scientific examination. Chapters three and five venture far more explicitly than does chapter four into the domain of politics. Chapter three makes a programmatic reconstruction of how ideas pertaining to Ivorian autochthons and their 'Others' (allochthons, migrants, colonials, foreign capitalists, etc.) have developed in Côte d'Ivoire over the last century and more particularly within the broad field of politics or political activism during the postcolonial period. Chapter five focuses on one pivotal episode in this long history that mainly revolves around the creation and activities of the student union FESCI during the 1990s. I argue that the student union forms one of the main links – in terms of ideas and personnel – that connects the early autochthony-related ideas of the left-wing opposition of the 1980s with the current autochthony politics of president Gbagbo.

The subtitle of this dissertation further indicates that these five chapters are divergent 'ethnographic explorations' on the same theme of 'mobility'. Later on in this introduction I explain my approach to mobility and point out which aspects of mobility are addressed in the different chapters. In the remainder of this section, I briefly comment on my use of 'ethnographic' in relation to the different case studies.

Since the 1980s at least, ethnography has become a method of enquiry which is widely used in the social sciences and in which it features among other methods of qualitative research. Nevertheless, in my use of it here, ethnography retains its (historical) connection with anthropology in at least two respects.

First, ethnography is not merely a method of registration sustaining some sort of raw empiricism, but is always either theory-driven or aiming at generalisation or comparison. Whether one takes a more realist stance (Englund & Leach 2000, p229; Burawoy 1998) or advocates a more humanistic approach (Hastrup 1995, p141), ethnography is part and parcel of what several authors have described as the central challenge of anthropology: walking the thin line between particularism and universalism (Fabian (1998, p18). In this way, anthropology can overcome its

historical (largely colonial) legacy of focussing on the exotic and the culturally unique, and turn into a novel project that can be variously characterised as the “dialectic of surprise” (Willis & Trondman 2000, p12) or as a reflective interest in “emerging novelty” (Guyer 1999, p49).

Secondly, ethnography involves a sustained interaction with actors in a particular field of social practice and includes a commitment to “tak[ing] into account the perspective of members of a social group, including beliefs and values that underlie and organise their activities and utterances” (Ochs & Shieffelin 2001, p268). The interactional aspect of ethnography as realised in relatively long-term fieldwork has been firmly inscribed into anthropology since the invention of fieldwork by Malinowski (Goody 1995, p153). Following far-going critiques of anthropological practice in the 1970s (Hymes 1972; Asad 1973), the interactivity of ethnography has been deepened by making it conditional on the fact that the researching and researched subjects are ‘sharing time’ (Fabian 1983) and are involved in a joint performance (Drewal 1991, p1). This high degree of “embeddedness” (Wacquant 2002, p1532) makes the ‘truth’ that ethnography produces “implicational” (Hastrup 1990, p57) and enables it to convey “lived experience and carnal presence” (Ethnografeast 2002).

I hope that chapters two and five, which each in their own way are based on some form of classic fieldwork, stand the test of being ‘ethnographic’ in this double sense. Both chapters attempt to convey and transcend local particularity as well as realise to some extent ‘coevalness’ between the researcher and the subject of research. In each case, one can further detect how both aspects of ethnography/anthropology are interrelated because, through their ‘performances’ – whether in the Sakaraboutou parade or in interviews and conversations – the subjects of research transcend locality and particularity. This can be somehow related to their self-conscious positioning vis-à-vis the subject of research. The male youngsters in the Sakaraboutou parade who form the prime target of description in chapter two, take their distance from the event in peripheral and ‘illegal’ performances that bring to bear some kind of meta-perspective on the parade. The FESCI student union in chapter five perceive themselves as vanguards of a changing society; many have also studied this society and easily engaged with my views and hypotheses about them and the society in which they claim to play an important role. Whether or not the two rather straightforwardly ‘ethnographic’ chapters realise the dream of granting the subject of research his or her full agency, is for the reader to decide. What is more important for my present purposes is that ‘coevalness’ is never easily accomplished but always emerging, partly as the outcome of a socialisation process. As I explain in chapter two, this process of socialisation into the performances of the Sakaraboutou youngsters was a long and tedious one. In contrast, my

socialisation among former student leaders was far less intricate. This was probably due to the fact that the (former) students and I shared a ‘pré-terrain’ constituted by ‘the university’, academic life, and sometimes even, research practice.

In all, these observations about how ethnography thinks through particularisms in a shared undertaking with its ‘subjects’, point towards aspects of mobility: the ability of performers to take a relative distance from their performance or context, and of the researchers to socialise with people and insert themselves in contexts that are more or less detached from their habitual living environment. Later in this introduction, I will return to these issues when explicating some aspects of a possible anthropology of mobilities, but prior to that, I need to explain in more detail the ethnographic nature of the three other chapters, which mainly work with texts: labels in chapter one, political and scientific literature in chapter three, and newspaper articles in chapter four. In all three cases, I submit, I bring these texts to life, through foregrounding their intertextuality and, ultimately, their intersubjectivity. In order to explain how I locate agency in ‘social’ texts, I rely on the late Alfred Gell (1998) whose last publication tried to lay the foundation for an anthropological theory of art by locating agency in ‘social’ objects (see also Arnaut 2001).

Asking what would make an anthropological theory of art genuinely anthropological, Gell (1998, p10-11) claims that anthropological theories are typically about social relationships, which, he conjectures, “occupy a certain biographical space”. According to Gell, anthropology focuses on acts in the contexts of the life-course or the stages of life of agents, and this distinguishes it from sociology that is ‘supra-biographical’ and psychology that is ‘infra-biographical’ (idem). Hence, Gell’s anthropology of art is concerned with the production and circulation of art objects in contexts constituted by social relations. Most originally, Gell ties the life projects of agents and objects together by considering objects as “artefactual indexes” of human and social agency (ibid. p15 and *passim*). In more general terms, Gell weaves a web of indexical relationships – he calls it the ‘art nexus’ – in which people and objects are related in differential capacities as agents and as ‘patients’. Although one can criticise Gell for not making full use of the potential of indexicality and for therefore underestimating the mobility of objects (Arnaut 2001, p206-207), his anthropological theory of art is a challenging attempt to turn ‘the social life of things’ (een spatie teveel) Appadurai 1986) into a central concern of aesthetic anthropology or anthropological studies of material culture. The productivity of Gell’s ideas can also be measured from their later application in studies that do not only take material objects as their

subject (Harris 2001) but also investigate the enlargement of social agency through such diverse textual constructs as websites (Miller 2001) and patents (Strathern 2001).

The way in which I foreground social agency in the texts which constitute the material that is presented and analysed in chapters one, three and four, takes its lead from Gell and others who engage with his theory. I try bringing these texts to life by foregrounding their intersubjectivity – that is, by embedding them in the (life) projects of people – and their intertextuality – that is, by situating them in larger genealogies of expressions and by highlighting their reproduction and relations of filiation. This ‘biographical’ approach to texts is in no way meant to naturalise them or to stress organic-like relationships between texts and people. Rather I understand the genealogies of social texts in the sense that Silverstein and Urban (1996) speak of ‘natural histories of discourse’, that is, texts (chunks of discourse) are produced through creative activation, reiteration and transformation by social actors situated and operating in particular production sites of discourse. This stress on the materiality and the relations of production of discourse warrants the fact that in several contributions to the edited volume of Silverstein and Urban (1996), texts appear more strongly as social ‘objects’. In accordance with this, my chapters one, four, and three can be arranged in a decrescendo from texts (labels) that have a high degree of ‘object-ivity’ to texts (literature) that are less ‘objects’ than sites in which subjects operate more directly and express themselves more ‘freely’.

The text-objects (object labels) in chapter one are defined as ‘palimpsests’ that betray (index) ‘the hand’ (agency) of the curator on the one hand, and on the other hand, identify the objects – or rather inscript the objects with a unique identity – and turn them into ‘whole’, independent and mobile art-historical units. In other words, from chapter one, the label as text-object emerges within a nexus of human and ‘material’ agency. Like chapter one, chapter four also illustrates well my combined concern with intertextuality and intersubjectivity. Here, I focus on the Dyula text-token ‘bori bana’ (*the fleeing is finished*) and the way in which – through different but interrelated newspaper articles – it is resignified in order to index different and increasingly large groups of people. ‘Bori bana’ is introduced as a set phrase and first applied to one politician (Henri Konan Bédié) and later to one political party (RDR). Finally, the ‘bori bana’ statement is reassigned to its historical author (Samori Touré) and used to index the language, thoughts and (political) aspirations of an entire contemporary ethno-political constituency (‘the Dyula’/‘RDR’).

In contrast to the ‘text-objects’ of chapter one and the ‘text-tokens’ of chapter four, the text material (mainly published literature) of chapter four may appear less ‘material’ and ‘indexical’,

and thus may seem to possess less ‘agency’ of its own. Moreover, because of its focus on the ‘idea’ of autochthons or allochthons in the history of Côte d'Ivoire, chapter three could be taken as a case study in the “history of ideas” rather than an ethnographic exploration. Nevertheless, I think, if anything, the kind of reconstruction of autochthony which I conduct in chapter three compares rather favourably to what Foucault (1983) characterised as a ‘history of thought’:

“The history of ideas involves the analysis of a notion from its birth, through its development, and in the setting of other ideas which constitute its context.”

“But what I am attempting to do as a *historian of thought* is something different. I am trying to analyze the way institutions, practices, habits, and behavior become a problem for people who behave in specific sorts of ways, who have certain types of habits, who engage in certain kinds of practices, and who put to work specific kinds of institutions.”
(Foucault 1983 – emphasis in the original)

In the above excerpt, Foucault argues in favour of a history of ‘thinking’ as social practice within particular and changing institutional contexts. In chapter three, I take this idea on board as I centre my reconstruction on the ‘places’ in civil and political society, that is the sites that constitute an alternative public sphere, where the ideas concerning autochthony are devised, spread, and rephrased. As discussed in chapter three, autochthony is not so much ‘a child’ of colonial ethnography and governance that comes of age during the post-colonial period and is brought to full maturity in present times than a shifting construct that subsequent ‘generations’ of political entrepreneurs who belong to varying groups and who operate in a diversity of ‘sites’, continuously take apart and rebuild in different shapes throughout this long period. Presently indeed (but only since the year 2000) an important part of these operations take place in and around the presidential palace and in the headquarters of political parties with ministerial responsibilities. However, at the same time other sites of popular-academic expression, at times similar to the alternative public sphere prior to the 1990s, have sprung up in and around Abidjan in the form of people’s parliaments like *La Sorbonne* (see chapter five). In these sites, the presidential messages and political-party messages are rephrased as expressions of popular reflection and enlightenment. This overall focus on emplaced and embodied textual practices, on social relations, and on connections or ideological genealogies of political entrepreneurs, I believe, is what makes chapter four (as well as chapter five) into an ethnographic undertaking. Having explained the ways in which the five pieces of this dissertation are different, I now turn to what connects them and – in the order in which they are presented here – what trajectory they constitute.

3. Dialectical trajectories

Unlike the many phrases that remain unwritten or unspoken ‘because of space limitations’, this dissertation was written *because of* space limitations, and the relative (im)mobility that they bring with them. The long period during which I conducted the research that is presented here is delineated by events that saw the removal of firmly established boundaries and the establishment of new borders, some material and all of them deeply embedded in discourses of inclusion and exclusion, empowerment and disempowerment, and (free) expression and silencing.

In February 1990, only three months after the fall of the 28-year old Berlin Wall, and within one week of Mandela being released after 27 years in prison, students in Côte d'Ivoire took to the streets of Abidjan to begin a series of demonstrations that led to the reintroduction of multipartyism after 30 years of single-party rule. If one sees all three events as remedying a situation created about three decades ago, one begins to assess the kind of ‘geometry of power’ with which the building blocks used for the construction of the golden sixties, were designed. I myself was one of these ‘building blocks’ of the early 1960s, albeit one of the smallest bodily scale. When in February 1990, I planned to travel to Côte d'Ivoire to make my first (field)trip outside Europe, the Belgian Embassy in Abidjan advised me to postpone my journey because of ‘social upheaval’.

That one’s mobility as a researcher is somehow related to that of the people one studies, has remained a concern of mine ever since. During my field research I used the means of transport that were also available to most of the people I worked with, that is my feet, a bike, occasionally a moped, and for longer distances all varieties of public transport ranging from a town taxi or a ‘taxi brousse’ (5 seats) over a ‘badjan’ or ‘mini car’ (20 odd seats), to a regular bus. That meant also that I was subject to the same regular inspections at checkpoints set up by the different security forces, and noticed how the mobility of many people was impaired by the fact that they did not possess the required means of identification. I also experienced how throughout the 1990s the number of checkpoints rose together with the hostility towards undocumented travellers who were suspected of not being ‘true’ Ivorians or not being sympathetic to them (such as the ‘Dyula’). Around the turn of the millennium, the anti-migrant policies and at times the popular violence against migrant communities, ‘Dyula’ or Muslim sites or individuals resulted in many migrants returning ‘home’ (to Mali or Burkina Faso). It also resulted in border control (particularly in the North) becoming more severe, or at least more expensive. When in May 2001 I went to Bondoukou to conduct a final bit of research among the Dyula community (chapter three) I travelled to the city coming from the north (from Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso). Apart

from experiencing how the northern border of Côte d'Ivoire was being policed, I soon realised that my project was favourably looked upon by the Dyula of Bondoukou as some sort of transgression and a sign of solidarity with those who only managed to travel on one-way tickets from the south to the north.

At the moment of writing, more than ten years after democratisation, a civil war divides Côte d'Ivoire into two territories which have come to signify the autochthonous South and the allochthonous North. When observing that at both sides of the divide one finds former student leaders who in the 1990s marched together through the streets of Abidjan, one begins to realise how the new frontier cuts across existing solidarities and ideologies (Serhan 2002; Konaté 2003). At the beginning of the new millennium, similar internal repartitions expressed in terms of nativity and 'alien-nature' are budding in many other places around the globe (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001). Ten years after South Africa liberated itself from Apartheid, new forms of intolerance against Africans, this time migrants from other parts of Africa, are emerging (Mbembe 2004). Likewise, as the Iron Curtain unravelled, new seams are sewn with the threads of ethno-nationalism and cultural fundamentalism, into the fabric of a unified Germany and a unified Europe (Stolcke 1995; Bayart *et al.* 2001). During my latest research stay in Abidjan in September 2003, I interviewed a former student leader who now commands an armed militia that aspires to the suppression of allochthons in a future Côte d'Ivoire. When I asked about his seven-year sojourn in Germany, he asserted that the most important thing which he had learned in Europe was 'nationalism'.

As much as the early 1990s witnessed promising openings of borders, liberations, and democratic revivals, the early years of the new millennium present the image of new closures, radical exclusions, and violent implosions (Appadurai 1996, 1999; Kuper 2003). The more challenging among the anthropological literature on globalisation does not situate processes of democratic and economic liberalisation in one historical corner and nationalist or anti-immigrant retrenchments in another. Instead, both groups of processes are seen as combining into an overall dynamic of flux and closure (Meyer & Geschiere 1999). A case in point is the post-1989 democratisation in Africa that yields processes of minoritisation, regionalisation and indigenisation (Werbner 2002) which, combined with new media opportunities and populist politics, directly feed into autochthony movements (Geschiere & Njamnyoh 2000).

Without denying the extent to which flux and closure are entangled, but rather, in order to map out in more detail the multi-layered design of their conjunction, this dissertation sets apart in time and space 'openings' from 'closures'. This separation is introduced in the title of this

dissertation and is reflected in its overall structure. In the title, flux is phrased as ‘performing displacements’ and closure as ‘rephrasing attachments’, and they correspond respectively to the ‘glocal openings’ of Part I and the ‘national closures’ of Part II.

The performances described in Part I mainly concern ‘displacements’ of some kind. Chapter one describes and analyses labels of Bedu and ‘Sakrabundi’ masks as a series of palimpsests whereby not only the objects as such but also their previous inscriptions (labels) are being displaced and the newly labeled masks are reintegrated in an alternative second-degree tradition of collected and documented objects. Chapter two describes the Sakaraboutou parade as an ambulant form of public ritual and focuses on the spatial organisation and the trajectories of people in the course of it. Moreover, chapter three finds an additional form of dislocation when observing how performers occupy different performative positions in the course of the same event. As I will explain in more detail shortly, the processes described in Part I are grouped under the title ‘glocal openings’ which tries to bring out the historical dynamics of globalisation and localisation in which different spaces such as the Bondoukou region, and particular urban (Bondoukou city) and rural (villages) localities have been engaged for many centuries.

Part II focuses not so much on performance as reformulation and recontextualisation (chapter one) or as ritualised forms of bodily journeying (chapter two) as on texts and discourse and the ways in which they are rephrased within larger projects. The ‘project’, which forms the central concern of Part II is the ‘attachment’ – the loyalty and ties – of Ivorians in relation to the nation, its territory and culture. This attachment is variously expressed in nationalist political discourse (chapter three), in mass-mediated texts about alleged foreigners (chapter four) and in civil society discourse concerning youth and the renewal of the nation from within (chapter five). Together, these processes are grouped under ‘national closures’, a dynamics of contraction and reification of the nation as a bounded territory and the exclusive community of a people.

Together the two parts of this dissertation span a series of research projects that begin in the early 1990s and end in the early years of the new millennium. ‘Glocal Openings’ presents some of my earlier (pre-1998) research on the Bondoukou region of Côte d'Ivoire, while ‘National Closures’ expounds the results of research begun after 1998, mainly in the capital Abidjan, but also among the Ivorian (student) Diaspora in Europe. Although the research trajectory from the Bondoukou region to the national capital and into the international space of Ivorian dispersal looks like one of spatial expansion and broadening horizons, this is challenged by correlating it to the reverse trend described above, from ‘openings’ into existing boundaries towards ‘closures’

within new internal boundaries. This dialectical construction forms the scaffold on which this dissertation works towards building an anthropology of mobilities.

4. Toward an anthropology of mobilities – first steps

“The professionalisation of fieldwork led to its circumscription, its concentration on dwelling rather than travelling. In overlooking the vast web of Empire [...] anthropology bracketed its own global underpinnings.” (Burawoy, 2001, p146)

In the dialectical construction sketched above, the anthropology of mobilities, which I begin to formulate in here, works its way from ‘national closures’ towards ‘glocal openings’. I thereby start from the observation made by many (e.g. Malkki 1992) that for much of its history, anthropology has imagined its subject(s) (‘natives’, ‘tribes’ or ‘cultures’) through the looking glass of the nation-state and the way space was organised in the colony. In a seminal paper Gupta & Ferguson (1997, p40) challenge two parallel ‘naturalisms’: the ethnological one, which associates a culturally unitary group and its territory, and the national one which associates citizens of states and their territories. For Herzfeld (2001), both naturalisms coincide in the work of anthropologists:

“Anthropologists have shown a strong [...] tendency to reproduce the model of the spatially bounded nation-state in their units of analysis, such as ‘societies’ and ‘cultures’”. (Herzfeld 2001, p672)

Already two decades earlier, Chauveau and Dozon (1985, 1987) exposed the collusion of anthropological practice and colonial governance by showing that the ethnic-regional compartmentalisation of the colony was effected by the ‘ethnographer state’ (*l’Etat ethnographe*). Moreover, the two authors perceive a process of internalisation of these territorial-cultural identities/capacities by the population and thus indicate how the repartition of the colony functions in what Foucault (1991, p93) would call ‘governmentality’ (Brubacker & Cooper 2000, p15). The order of governance exemplified by the ‘ethnographer state’ is arguably the one Bauman (1989) associates with modernity and characterises as that of the ‘gardening state’ (1989), and the one Deleuze (1995) labels the ‘disciplinary society’. In all, these “modern forms of state surveillance and control of population as well as of capitalist organisation and work discipline” (Alonso 1994, p382) consisted in a series of far-going operations involving both

people and space and including repartition, migration, expropriation, forced settlement, typecasting for particular kinds of work, etc.

The above observations show how the interest in space and processes of spatialisation – sometimes labelled as ‘the spatial turn’ – in anthropology is part and parcel of a broader project which consists in decolonising, de-westernising, and post-modernising social science. In this overall project, the contribution of political geography over the last decade should not be underestimated.

While many agree that the above operations and processes continue, they add that they are supplemented and partly displaced by other dynamics that are often captured with terms like ‘glocalisation’ and ‘mobility’. The term ‘glocalisation’ was launched from within political geography and is meant to describe more adequately the ambivalent implications of globalisation for the organisation of space (Swyngedouw 1992, p429). More specifically, glocalisation tries to grasp the gradual post-Fordist breakdown of the nation-state and its contested restructuring “both upwards to supra-national or global levels and downwards to the scale of the individual body, the local, urban, or regional configurations” (Nielsen & Simonsen 2003, p914). Put otherwise, glocalisation serves to express the scaled interrelation and mutual embeddedness of the local and the global (and all the intermediate levels) whereby ‘the local’ is not apprehended as an autonomous space with external relations to spaces at higher scales (regional, national, or global) but as entertaining extra-local linkages that are “actually ‘internal’ relations that co-constitute ‘the local’” (Howitt 2000, p6).

In conjunction with this layered repartition of global space, one perceives new forms of governance that are at once more encompassing and more in-depth, more global and more local. In all, the emerging forms of governance are characterised as more mobile and variously labelled ‘game-keeping’ (Bauman 1987), the ‘control society’ (Deleuze 1995), or ‘empire’ (Negri & Hardt 2000). Moreover this global space constitutes a capacity for actors at different levels or scales. For instance, the nation-state can make use of this “reconfiguration and re-territorialisation of superimposed spatial scales” (Brenner 1997, p159) in operations that profit from up-scaling or downscaling. On the other hand, this layered glocal landscape offers “possibilities for social groups to create their own politics of scale” (Marston 2000, p232) in order to resist or connect with local, national, or more global political and economic actors.

These ideas – all too roughly – summarized above, are beginning to make their entry into anthropology (Crehan 1997; Corsín Gimenez 2003). They do not only trigger calls for an anthropology of globalization (Appadurai 1996, Inda & Rosaldo 2002) but also for

ethnographies of emerging forms of spatialisation and governance both ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ (Escobar 2001, Watts 2001, Ferguson & Gupta 2002). This dissertation hopes to contribute to both these projects. In the last and final section of this introduction I return to the subject of ‘glocal ethnography’, or rather ethnographic studies of glocalities. In the following section I explicate how the different chapters of this thesis can find their place in an anthropology of globalization. For doing this, I begin with the ‘national closures’ of Part II (section 5) and move on to the ‘glocal openings’ of Part I (section 6).

5. National closures

In an attempt to reconstruct the colonial legacy in the territorialisation of space and people in Côte d'Ivoire, chapter three draws a long line that connects the early colonial period with the most recent developments in Ivorian political history. The constructs that emerge strongly from the description of the colonial period can be grasped as a processes of regionalisation, ethnicisation, and ‘mobilisation/localisation. In the process of the *mise en valeur* of Côte d'Ivoire through the development of a labour-intensive plantation economy, emerges the regional division between the North and the South. While the South is increasingly seen as a site of the production of wealth that is populated by locals who in different degrees are amenable to plantation management, the North (both inside and outside Côte d'Ivoire) is regarded as a labour reserve. In the process of the ethnicisation of Côte d'Ivoire, the main divisions follow the different stages of the exploitation of the colony. In the early stages of colonial exploitation, the South-Easterners (e.g. Agni and the Lagune peoples) were earmarked as emerging elites of plantation-holders, together with the northern Dyula who were framed as mobile busybodies, given to commerce. In a later stage, following WWI, the Baule take over the role of the South-Easterners, and after WWII, the Bété increasingly present themselves as emerging elites.

These regional and ethnic divisions, together with the distinction between ‘locals’ and ‘migrants’, form the basic material with which post-colonial Côte d'Ivoire has been built as well as contested. The project of the nation-builder by excellence, president Houphouët-Boigny, consists in disapproving of ethnic divisions, far-going attempts to incorporate migrants into the social and political tissue of society, and in announcing future projects to develop economic activity in the North. Since the 1950s, Houphouët-Boigny’s opponents contest his state-building project by denouncing its deceitfulness. Borrowing ideas from dependency theory, the left-wing opposition exposes the new Ivorian nation as a neo-colonial construction in which local elites, including Houphouët-Boigny himself, act as servants of a class of far-away international

capitalists and neo-imperialists (mainly situated in France). Focusing on the long history of the anti-Houphouët opposition movement, chapter three observes how different groups are associated with this class of international foreigners. During the 1980s, the still growing group of migrants is increasingly associated with the group of local and international foreigners. In the course of the 1990s, this process is rephrased in regional terms whereby the North (in the figure of Alassane Ouattara and from 1994 onwards his political party RDR) is presented inhabited by servants of global capitalism. Finally, during the late 1990s and the early years of the new millennium, this (is - laa weg) association is ethnicised and 'Dyula' comes to function as the label which covers a vaguely defined group of 'Northerners' with a religious profile of Muslims and an occupational profile of 'migrants' or itinerant people (active in commerce, transport and other border-crossing activities).

To this grand narrative of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire, chapters four and five add specific, but important 'details'. In chapter four, one can observe the switch from a political-regional identification of political opponents (of the RDR party) to their ethnic characterisation. Although this switch took place over a long period, the three newspaper articles which chapter four analyses, show that the ethnic turn in Ivorian politics can be clearly situated in the move from the second to the third 'bori bana' article. Chapter five, finally, looks at autochthony from youngsters' point of view. In a sense, the narrative that the former student union leaders present relates to the narrative of chapter three as selfing relates to othering. While chapter three accentuates how an increasingly broader group of people are 'othered', the students tell the story of how selfing – the invention of the Ivorian 'people' as autochthons – took place in the long history of the left- opposition.

In all, the story of 'national closures' presented in Part I tries to locate the many production sites as well as the 'local' (national, regional, ethnic) and global (ideological, political) building blocks that are being used to reinvent Côte d'Ivoire as a new nation which insists on the boundedness of its territory and the exclusiveness of its citizenship.

6. Glocal openings

The existing literature on the Bondoukou region (Aubertin 1980; Terray 1995) roughly presents a that begins with its global interconnectedness (trans-Saharan trade), highlights its gradual (political and economic) 'enclavation' during colonial times, and ends with its downright marginalisation during the post-colonial period. To this history, the two chapters in Part I merely

add some footnotes, not only in the sense that they cannot possibly change the course of the grand narrative of the region, but also in the sense that they do not quite fit in it.

In contrast to its alleged marginalisation in recent times, the Bondoukou region features in the first chapter as the birthplace of dozens of Bedu masks, which spread around the globe during the 1960s and 1970s, make their way into many important private and public collections in Europe and the United States, and become critical evidence in an art-historical debate about such long-held paradigms as the ‘one style, one tribe’ model. Overseeing these events, one could argue that the impact of the Bondoukoulese on the global Bedu hype is rather limited, but that, the first chapter argues, is partly an optical effect produced by the art market and the art literature.

One century of formulating and reformulating the Bedu mask tradition in mask labels, sales and exhibition catalogues, and scholarly texts, has resulted in the creation of two parallel Bedu mask ‘traditions’. One of these is demonstrably metropolitan and is constituted by an ensemble (network) of old and new texts that document the Bedu masks that dwell in collections and travel in exhibitions and publications. The other tradition is ‘local’ and consists of undocumented masks attached to their owners and users in villages throughout the Bondoukou region. The two spheres in which these traditions dwell are all the more separated because the historical trajectories (brokerage, etc.) that connect them are back-grounded, and the uni-directional flow of objects and information from the local sphere to the metropolis is stressed.

The first chapter begins to redress the balance by demonstrating how through the information brokerage of anthropologists, metropolitan texts feed back into, limit and orient ‘local’ formulations of the origin and history of the Bedu mask. While this chapter tries to re-establish the bi-directionality of the transactions that featured in the globalisation of the Bedu mask tradition, the second chapter provides some data that indicate the concurrent localisation of Bedu masking. For instance, in villages that saw some of their masks disappear (stolen, sold) during the 1960s and 1970s, Bedu became more secret and is now hidden from non-villagers. In other places, such as Bondoukou city, Bedu retreated into one town quarter and became more a symbol of the town quarter’s ethnic/religious identity than of the city as a whole. Overall, having become a hazardous space for Bedu masks to travel in, the Bondoukou region has stopped witnessing visiting performances of Bedu masks of one village in other neighbouring villages.

Taken together, these observations are nothing more than footnotes that could encourage the drafting of a larger social history of Bedu masks – a story of ‘glocalisation’ that remains largely to be written. The core of this projected history would consist in tracing out the many trajectories

that interconnect the local and the global Bedu masks, not in the least by concentrating on those who acted as go-betweens: informants, migrants, ‘runners’, collectors, and anthropologists. Chapters one and two try to indicate that from this focus on multiple transactions would emerge a more integrated story of the interconnected globalisation and localisation of the Bedu masquerade. In general, I think, such a glocal history would remedy the split (global-local) view of the Bedu mask and resist the double territorialisation of the Bedu masquerade by the African art market. In other words, my rescaling analysis is a critical enterprise meant to disturb, interrogate a dominant spatialisation of the Bedu mask. Such is also the point of departure in the second chapter.

The empirical focus of chapter two is the Sakaraboutou parade, and the re-scaling, which I attempt there takes the form of a critique of the local assertion that the Sakaraboutou is a communal happening, engaging everyone in the town of Bondoukou. This, chapter two intimates, could be an optical effect if the observer would witness the parade during its grand finale when the different actors join in a performance that represents traditional Bondoukou. However, when observed in other places and at other moments the parade provides a far more diverse and even antagonistic spectacle. The second chapter thus pursues another ‘glocal opening’, not by initiating a move up-scale of the regional to the global, but by an initial move down-scale from the local to the sub-local. Moreover, the local in the second chapter is a myriad of spheres of intra-performance diversity defined along ‘ethnic’, political, kinship, religious, generational, and gender lines. Leaving behind any taken-for-granted relationship between public performances and the ‘community’ in which they take place, the second chapter looks at the dialectical relationship between places and people: at the changing relationships between ritual constituencies and the places (in which) the people perform.

Sakaraboutou at Bondoukou form part of the end-of-Ramadan (Id-Al-Fitr) festivities and thus fit into a ritual calendar of transnational scale. Together with its timing in the ‘global’ Muslim calendar, the spatially encompassing nature (‘the town’) of Sakaraboutou, its historical claim (‘age-old custom’), its centrality and hegemonic character (around the Imam, the mayor, and other provincial and national authorities), is what makes this local religious feast into a ‘traditional’ event of national importance. As such, it raises the interest of the national media and enjoys growing attention of tourists to both of whom the event is presented as an age-old Bondoukou-Dyula custom. However, whatever its degree of officialisation and objectification (and emerging commodification), chapter two argues, Sakaraboutou remains a multi-layered

event in which for instance the group of male youngsters play different roles, or – to use the terminology introduced in that chapter – operate in different layers or registers.

In chapter two I discern first of all the official register which presents Sakaraboutou as a traditional military parade in which the young warriors present themselves straightforwardly as bearers of a local tradition. In the semi-official register, the warriors appear as male adolescents who exchange with female participants through movements and in songs. In the third officially unrecognised (repressed) register, the same warriors-adolescents stage side-plays in which they mainly parody the Muslim sermon. In their parodies of this well-known genre of religious teaching, the warriors interweave commentaries and narratives in which they variously position themselves as creatures of the bush (uncivilised, dangerous, and powerful) and as other liminal figures such as world travellers.

Each of the three registers occupies particular places and moments in the Sakaraboutou military parade whose trajectory connects about a dozen stops during which subsequently the dignitaries and important women of the different town quarters are saluted. These stops and salutations form the stage of the first ‘traditional’ register. In-between stops, while walking the streets of Bondoukou, the warriors often switch into the second register of male-female exchanges. While the second register is only half-hidden, the ‘mock sermons’ of the third register are virtually invisible and are conducted during a few minutes by a small group of warriors who detach themselves from their colleagues who are either officially saluting the dignitaries (first register) or flirting with the female participants or public (second register).

Again, I think, chapter two merely adds a footnote to the recent history of Bondoukou by pointing out that the relationships between the Dyula and the non-Dyula population, and thus the relative importance or hegemonic claims of Sakaraboutou, are under revision due to the ethnic politics at the national level. This ethnic politics is one of the main subjects of Part II. There it is explained that the Dyula ethnonym has been subject to active reinvention during the last decade (and mainly since I concluded my research in Bondoukou) and has become associated with the RDR political party, with migrants (from Burkina Faso and Mali), and, through these, with ‘foreigners’ and ‘anti-Ivorians’. Initiated in 1994, these autochthony ideas gained prominence and political relevance in the Ivoirité policies of President Henri Konan Bédié mainly after 1995. During shorter visits to Bondoukou city in 1997 and 1998 and later in 2000 and 2001, I could observe some effects of this on local relationships. Among the Dyula youngsters, I sensed a strong resentment that they were being marginalised on the national level and I felt a greater motivation on their part to participate in Sakaraboutou in order to express the strength of the

Dyula in Bondoukou. I do not so much describe these later developments of ethnicisation and objectification of culture, history and tradition, at the regional level of Bondoukou, in Part I, but on the national level, in Part II.

7. Toward an anthropology of mobilities – second steps

“It seems that a new paradigm is being formed within the social sciences, the ‘new mobilities’ paradigm” (Urry 2004, p1)

Whether mobility is bound to become a new paradigm in anthropology or whether by addressing this issue, anthropology is merely turning a contemporary and widespread concern regarding mobility and immobility into a research focus, is difficult to tell at this moment. Nonetheless, this dissertation takes the issue of mobility at heart and submits that its ethnographic explorations may contribute to methodological reflections both on the mobility of the researcher and on that of the subject of research – stated otherwise on their relative mobility. In order to present the reflections that could feed into a future anthropology of mobilities, I concentrate (!) on two chapters. Chapter three provides the main basis for commenting on the mobility of the researcher, while chapter five forms the starting point for reflecting on the mobility of the subject of anthropological research.

In chapter three I distinguish between three layers or registers of performance which each of them can be productively (albeit loosely) associated with three research ‘perspectives’ that I would like to characterise respectively as ‘mono-sited’, ‘multi-sited’, and ‘mobile’.

The ‘mono-sited’ view of the Sakaraboutou parade at Bondoukou – and likewise of the Bedu masquerade at Yérékaye – is generated from within the place and the moment of the grand finale in front of the Imam’s mosque. Seated besides the Imam and other Bondoukou dignitaries, one perceives the parade in its first official register in which it is presented as a traditional event engaging Bondoukou city as a whole.

A more ‘multi-sited’ view of the parade emerges when one takes up the burden of tracing the trajectory of the procession and mainly locating and identifying the different greeting stops which together constitute the parade. The observation which town quarters are included in or excluded from the parade and where they are located, may help to interrogate the inclusive character of the event and to discern certain hierarchies between the different town quarters. This breaking down of the homogeneity of the parade and the perception of certain hegemonies and exclusions, can be taken further by focussing, for instance, on the kind of gender inequalities

which chapter three situates in the second layer or register of the performance. However, a number of important observations that pertain to gender exchanges and mutual appropriations already require a ‘mobile’ perspective.

The ‘mobile’ perspective demands that one observes what happens in-between the different stops of the procession. This enables the researcher to observe micro-performances going on either at the heart of the parade or in its very periphery, but in both cases largely hidden from the public gaze. This mobility entails that the researcher gets entangled in the unofficial performances, and maximalises the degree of embeddedness of coevalness.

Thus, in the course of the researcher’s trajectory from ‘mono-sited’ to ‘multi-sited’ and from ‘sited’ to ‘mobile’, the amount of ethnographic commitment increases. The step from ‘mono-sited’ to ‘multi-sited’ is an important one because it enables the researcher to map simultaneously the spatial make-up and the underlying or emerging power inequalities.

However, the position of the researcher remains largely authoritarian in the sense that he or she oversees the situation, if not the overall spatial division and unity of the performance. This ‘panoptical’ stance resides in the omnipresent gaze of the researcher. Therefore, the step towards ‘mobility’ is also a step from a ‘sighted’ to a ‘performative’ research position. Indeed, as chapter three further illustrates, within the peripheral or liminal micro-spaces of the performances in the third register of the parade, the researcher – whether he or she wants it or not – becomes an accomplice, a co-performer who loses his or her ‘footing’ as an external observer and is ‘dragged’ and trapped into the performance.

Other recent ideas of ‘mobile ethnography’ stress this connection between ‘losing sight’ and ‘gaining involvement’ (Wacquant 2002). Among a list of research methods ‘on the move’, Urry (2004) lists, for instance (in order of appearance): (a) observation of people’s movements, (b) participation-while-interviewing, (c) ‘co-present immersion’, and (d) researching ‘places of in-between-ness’. Similar remarks are made in the literature concerning the ethnography of globalisation (Watts 2001; Burawoy 2001). In a review of a number of recent ethnographies of development organisations, Watts (2001, p295) observes how these institutional or network ethnographies are “characterised by the mobility of what is under scrutiny, and by differing loci of investigation within the circumference of studying ‘a problem’”. I submit that this is an accurate description of what I set out to do in chapter three, and I agree with Watts that this kind of research

“takes the ethnographer on a very tricky epistemological and evidentiary journey to a number of sites and locations, each with its own demands and challenges”. (ibid., p296)

Of course, as chapter three abundantly illustrates and argues, the mobility of the researcher is predicated on the repositioning of the performers with whom he or she shares time and space and in the course of which he or she becomes deeply embedded in the performances. However, not in the least because this issue is already explicated at length in chapter three, I turn to chapter five to formulate a number of reflections concerning the mobility of the researched performer.

In chapter five I adopt the scheme devised by Baumann in which he distinguishes between three ‘grammars’ of selfing/othering: the segmentary grammar of contextual fission and fusion, the grammar of orientalisation or reverse mirror-imaging, and the grammar of encompassment by hierarchical subsumption. Each of these three grammars I see at work respectively in each of the three newspaper articles that I analyse in chapter five. Moreover, I situate the articles (and the selfing/othering grammars they employ) in a crescendo. The latter begins with the imperious stance of the socialist journalist who makes use of the segmentary grammar in order to position ‘his’ socialist party (FPI) against two other political parties (PDCI & RDR) which he presents as mutually defeating each other. The second step in the crescendo is formed by a journalist who makes use of the orientalisation grammar to antagonise one political party (RDR) and its leader (Alassane Ouattara) against (a virtual coalition of) all other political parties including the one (FPI) he himself adheres to. The third and final step in this crescendo shows a more complex operation in which a journalist makes use of encompassment in a double move whereby he first ‘circumscribes’ the political party RDR as a kind of ethnic/religious group (‘Dyula’) with a particular vision and aspiration, and thereupon claims that by honouring this vision and aspiration, the ‘Dyula’ situate themselves outside the Ivorian nation and by extension outside humankind as a whole.

The use of the three grammars can be apprehended in terms of ‘scale’. In the first article and the segmentary grammar, the journalist situates himself at a higher level but in the same scale of national political parties. In the second, ‘orientalising’ newspaper article the journalist performs up-scales himself and many others and down-scales the ‘other’, in this case to the level of an isolated political formation. In the third article and the encompassing move the journalist simultaneously up-scales himself to the level of the nation and down-scales himself to the level of an ordinary human being. For this de-doubling of his position, I argue in chapter five, the journalist makes strategic use of his position as a professor in Dyula language and linguistics at the University of Abidjan. First of all the professor uses his overtly displayed expertise in ‘Dyula’ (language and culture) as a stepping-stone to delimitating, categorising and characterising the people (RDR, ‘the Dyula’) with whom this language is associated. This

encompassing approach ‘from above’ is supplemented with a similar move ‘from below’. In the latter, the linguist reports from his everyday, ‘man-to-man’ conversations (in and) with Dyula in the streets of Abidjan and downscales his universalist science into the ‘common sense’ of an ordinary human being.

The above crescendo of selfing/othering – which in chapter five I characterise as ‘genocidal’ – is obviously also one of increasing mobility. While in the first article the journalist acts very much on his own and on his political party, in the second he takes sides with other political actors against the reviled one. In the third article the author’s mobility reaches its climax when he simultaneously repositions himself as a ‘national’ – by associating himself with the nation – and as an ordinary human being – as a member/representative of ‘humankind’.

It may seem ironical that in order to illustrate the mobility of the actor or the subject of research, I ultimately come up with someone who is also a researcher, and above all, one with anthropological competences such as being fluent in the vernacular of his subjects, and honouring anthropological ambitions such as describing cultures and characterising ethnic groups. This mobility can be said to reside in the ability to familiarise oneself with one’s subject, and to transform given materials into one’s own scenario. This kind of mobility, according to Asad (1993, p9-13), resembles that of the typical modern Western individual who attributes to ‘himself’ the capacity to deeply penetrate and insinuate himself into the world of others. That is where my dialectical trajectories into mobility and closure come to an end; it is also the moment when researcher and researched collapse, and where the mobility of the one becomes directly implicated or coeval with the mobility of the other and the radical mobility of the one means the radical immobility of the other. Both chapter two and five use research models pertaining to double-voicing. This adds to the scheme of relative and mutually implicated mobility the idea that as much as the mobility of the one takes over the mobility of the other, the voice of the latter is fully appropriated by the voice of the former. I hereby wish the reader a ‘mobile’ (voiced) reading of my dissertation.

References

- Appadurai, Arjun 1996 *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun 1999 'Dead certainly: ethnic violence in the era of globalization'. In: B. Meyer & P. Geschiere (eds.) *Globalization and identity*, pp 305-325. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Arnaut, Karel 1996 (edited with E. Dell) *Bedu is my lover: five stories about Bondoukou and masquerading*. Brighton: The Green Centre for Non-Western Art.
- Arnaut, Karel 2000a 'Islam and its others: Sakaraboutou as masquerade in Bondoukou (Côte d'Ivoire)', *Etnofoor*, 14/2, pp. 23-54.
- Arnaut, Karel 2000b 'Tradition as object of derision and desire: the Bedu masquerade of north-eastern Côte d'Ivoire'. In: K. Arnaut (ed.) *RE-VISIONS: New perspectives on the African collections of the Horniman Museum*, pp. 209-230. London & Coimbra: The Horniman Museum and Gardens & Museu Antropológico da Universidade de Coimbra.
- Arnaut, Karel 2000c 'Bedu mask'. 'Bedu mask'. In: J. Mack (ed.) *Africa: arts and cultures*, pp. 116-7. London: The British Museum.
- Arnaut, Karel 2001 'A pragmatic impulse in the anthropology of art? Alfred Gell and the semiotics of social objects', *Journal des Africanistes*, 71/2, pp. 191-208.
- Arnaut, Karel 2004a "'Out of the Race": the *poiesis* of genocide in mass media discourses in Côte d'Ivoire'. In: G. Baumann & A. Gingrich (eds.) *Grammars of identity/alterity: a structural approach*, pp. 112-141. London: Berghahn.
- Arnaut, Karel 2004b 'The many publics of the Bedu masquerade'. In: F. Lamb (ed.) *See the music, hear the dance: rethinking African art at the Baltimore Museum of Art*, pp. 146-149. Munchen: Prestel Verlag.
- Arnaut, Karel *in press* 'Re-generating the nation: Youth, revolution and the politics of history in Côte d'Ivoire'. In: J. Abbink & I. van Kessel (eds.) *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa (2004)* Leiden: Brill.
- Arnaut, Karel *forthcoming* 'Masks and mobilities: trajectories in Bedu masquerading (Côte d'Ivoire)'. In: A.-M. Bouttiaux (ed.) *Masques d'Afrique occidentale - West African Masks (2005)*. Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale.
- Asad, Talal 1973 *Anthropology and the colonial encounter*. London: Ithaca Press.

- Asad, Talal 1993 *Genealogies of religion: discipline and reasons of power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Aubertin, C. 1980 *Histoire et création d'une région 'sous-développée'. Le Nord ivoirien*. Abidjan: Centre ORSTOM.
- Bauman, Zygmunt 1987 *Legislators and interpreters*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt 1989 *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Bayart, Jean-François, Peter Geschiere & Francis Nyamnjoh 2001 'Autochthonie, démocratie et citoyenneté en Afrique', *Critique Internationale*, 10, pp. 177-194.
- Brubaker, Rogers & Frederick Cooper 2000 'Beyond "identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29, pp. 1-47.
- Burawoy, Michael 1998 'The extended case method', *Sociological Theory*, 16/1, pp. 4-33.
- Burawoy, Michael 2001 'Manufacturing the global', *Ethnography*, 2/2, pp. 147-159.
- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre & Jean-Pierre Dozon 1985 'Colonisation, économie de plantation et société civile en Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers ORSTOM, série Sciences Humaines*, 21/1, pp. 63-80.
- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre & Jean-Pierre Dozon 1987 'Au coeur des ethnies ivoiriennes . . . l'État'. In: E. Terray (ed.) *L'Etat contemporain en Afrique*, pp. 221-296. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Comaroff, John & Jean Comaroff 1992 *Ethnography and the historical imagination*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Comaroff, Jean & John Comaroff 2001 'Naturing the nation: aliens, apocalypse, and the postcolonial state'. *Social Identities*, 7, 2, pp. 233-265.
- Deleuze, Gilles 1995 *Negotiations 1972-1990*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Drewal, Margaret Thompson 1991 'The state of research on performance in Africa', *African Studies Review*, 34/3, pp. 1-64.
- Englund, Harri & James Leach 2000 'Ethnography and the meta-narratives of modernity', *Current Anthropology*, 41/2, pp. 225-248.
- Escobar, Arturo 2001 'Culture sits in places: reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization', *Political Geography*, 20, 2, pp. 139-174.

- Ethnografeast 2002 *Ethnografeast: An international conference on Ethnography for a new century: practice, predicament, promise*. University of California-Berkeley (September 2002) [<http://cue.berkeley.edu/ETHNOFEAST.pdf>, 12/06/2004].
- Fabian, Johannes 1983 *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its subject*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fabian, Johannes 1998 *Moments of freedom: anthropology and popular culture*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Ferguson, James & Akhil Gupta 2002 'Spatializing states: toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality', *American Ethnologist*, 29/4, pp. 981-1002.
- Foucault, Michel 1983 'The "problematization" of parrhesia in Euripides'. In: M. Foucault *Discourse and truth: the problematization of parrhesia* (Six lectures given by Michel Foucault at the University of California at Berkeley, Oct-Nov. 1983) (<http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/Lecture-03/08.problemaparrhesia.html>; 04/07/2003).
- Foucault, Michel 1991 'Governmentality'. In: G. Burchell *et al.* (eds) *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality*, pp. 87-104. Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Geschiere, Peter & Francis Nyamnjoh 2000 'Capitalism and autochthony: the seesaw of mobility and belonging', *Public Culture*, 12/2, pp. 423-452.
- Goody, Jack 1995 *The expansive moment: anthropology in Britain and Africa 1918-1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guyer, Jane 1999 'Anthropology: the study of social and cultural originality', *African Sociological Review*, 3/2, pp. 30-53.
- Hardt, Michael & Antonio Negri 2000 *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Harris, Clare 2001 'The politics and personhood of Tibetan Buddhist icons'. In: C. Pinney & N. Thomas (eds.) *Beyond aesthetics: art and the technologies of enchantment*, pp. 181-200. Oxford: Berg.
- Hastrup, Kirsten 1990 'The ethnographic present: a reinvention', *Cultural anthropology*, 5, pp. 45-61.
- Hastrup, Kirsten 1995 *A passage to anthropology: between experience and theory*. London: Routledge.

- Herzfeld, Michael 2001 'Ethnographic and epistemological refractions of Mediterranean identity'. In: G. Albera, A. Blok, A. (?) & C. Bromberger (eds.) *L' anthropologie de la Mediterranee*, pp. 663-683. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose.
- Howitt, Richard 2000 'Nests, webs and constructs: contested concepts of scale in political geography' [<http://www.es.mq.edu.au/~rhowitt/polgeo.htm> (11/06/2003)].
- Hymes, Dell 1972 'Introduction: the uses of anthropology: critical, political, personal'. In: D. Hymes (ed.) *Reinventing anthropology*, pp. 3-79. New York: Pantheon.
- Konaté, Yacouba 2003 'Les enfants de la balle. De la FESCI aux mouvements de patriotes'. *Politique Africaine*, 89, pp. 49-70.
- Kuper, Adam 2003 'The return of the native', *Current Anthropology* 44/3, pp. 389-402.
- Malkki, Lissa 1992 'National geographic: the rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7/1, pp. 24-44.
- Mbembe, Achille 2004 'The measures of terror: considerations on the neighbour, the stranger, and the enemy'. Keynote speech delivered at the EASA 8th Biannual Conference, Vienna, September 2004.
- Meyer, Birgit & Peter Geschiere (eds.) 1999 *Globalization and identity: dialectics of flow and closure* (Series: Development and Change Special Issues). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Miller, Daniel 2001 'The fame of Trinis: websites as traps'. In: C. Pinney & N. Thomas (eds.) *Beyond aesthetics: art and the technologies of enchantment*, pp. 137-156. Oxford: Berg.
- Nielsen, Asben Holm & Kirsten Simonsen 2003 'Scaling from "below": practices, strategies and urban spaces', *European Planning Studies*, 11/8, pp. 911-927.
- Ochs, Elinor & Bambi Schieffelin 2001 'Language acquisition and socialization: three developmental studies and their implications'. In: A. Duranti (ed.) *Linguistic anthropology*, pp. 263-301. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Serhan, Nasser 2002 'La Côte d'Ivoire et ses étrangers'. In: C. Vidal & M. Le Pape (eds.) *Côte d'Ivoire: L'année terrible 1999-2000*, pp. 173-190. Paris: Karthala.
- Silverstein, Michael & Greg Urban 1996. 'The natural history of discourse'. In: M. Silverstein & G. Urban (eds.) *Natural histories of discourse*, pp. 1-17. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Stolcke, Verena 1995 'Talking culture: new boundaries, new rhetorics of exclusion in Europe', *Current Anthropology*, 36/1, pp. 1-24.
- Strathern, Marilyn 2001 'The patent and the Malanggan'. In: C. Pinney & N. Thomas (eds.) *Beyond aesthetics: art and the technologies of enchantment*, pp. 259-286. Oxford: Berg.
- Swyngedouw, Erik 1992 'Territorial organization and the space/technology nexus', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (n.s.), 17, pp. 417-433.
- Terray, Emmanuel 1995 *Une histoire du royaume abron du Gyaman: des origines à la conquête coloniale*. Paris: Karthala.
- Wacquant, Loïc 2002 'Scrutinizing the street: poverty, morality, and the pitfalls of urban ethnography', *American Journal of Sociology*, 107/6, pp. 1468-1532.
- Werbner, Richard 2002 'Challenging minorities, difference and tribal citizenship in Botswana', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28/4, pp. 671-684.
- Willis, Paul & Mats Trondman 2000 'Manifesto for *Ethnography*', *Ethnography*, 1/1, pp. 5-16.

Part I

Glocal openings

Chapter 1

Formulating the Sakrobundi and Bedu masquerades: labels, artefacts, and authorities

“Thus did a disagreement over labelling – a matter of exhibit installation – escalate to a challenge to Boas’ basic conception of a professional anthropology”

“For Boas, authority was the stumbling block.”

(Jacknis 1985, p105, 106)

1. Introduction¹

In a volume on museum curatorship in US national parks, Lewis (1993, p88) describes the practice of labelling objects in the pre-World War II period, as follows:

“Most exhibits shared a hierarchy of labels with a title at the top, a key label centered below it, often several secondary general or descriptive labels that might be incorporated in illustrations, and brief object labels. The curators had not yet learned the cardinal virtue of brevity in label writing.”

This evaluation of bygone label-writing practice tells us how nowadays one distinguishes between different sorts of labels. Also in anthropology museums or (ethnic) art collections, labels are differentiated. In exhibitions one encounters object (or specimen) labels and general labels in the form of case labels, or entries in catalogues and folders. As the above quote indicates object labels can be mere identification tags but also more extensively descriptive.² Minimally, museum labels are the object’s means of identification and may contain a number that refers to the object, a title (a local term like ‘chi wara’ or a simple description such as ‘seated female figure’), as well as the name of the artist(s) and a date (MacGaffey 1998, p227; Willett 1991, p190). This applies to object labels in general, but Vansina (1984, p21) notes that “very often, for African art, the [artist’s] name is replaced by an ethnic name and the date is omitted simply due to lack of information or to a lack of interest in a date”. Other ‘secondary’ labels may be more elaborate and contain concise statements about the history, function and meaning of the object and are based on published materials to which reference can be made. All this and other information can also be found on, and is to some extent backed-up by, the more ‘private’ labels that are kept in the institutes’ files in the form of (paper) accession cards or (digital) database records.

1. Research for this chapter was mainly conducted when I was a student at Oxford University (1991-1994).

2. Another genre of labelling, more akin to provenance certification (e.g. for organic food or fair-trade products), has recently been introduced in the ethnic art world. In 1999 the Australian National Indigenous Art Advocacy Association introduced the “national authenticity label” that certifies the provenance of Australian indigenous art (Altman *et. al.* 2002). In the concluding remarks I will come back to the issue of labelling and authenticity.

Object and descriptive labels, whether ‘public’ or ‘private’, are key instruments in data management and communication. Moreover, the latter processes, often defined as conservation (identification and documentation) and publication (broadcasting and promotion), arguably constitute any museum’s or collection’s core business. All this makes it more than surprising that the literature on labels is scarce and any theorising of labels almost entirely absent from museum anthropology literature.³ Less surprisingly perhaps is the fact that every now and then the issue of labels erupts from within this theoretical vacuum and is addressed in dramatic appeals that do not stop short of contending with the foundations of museum anthropology. One instance of such a dramatisation can be found in an extensive critique of the exhibition *The Art of a Continent* (London 1995) in which Beidelman (1997, p9) evaluates the labelling. His argument boils down to the idea that the choice between extensive descriptive labels and minimal labels constitutes the difference between an anthropological approach of “ethnic contextualisation” and a “fine arts approach” of decontextualisation and esthetization.⁴

Without fully entering into the art/artefact debate itself, I take the same entry as Beidelman and begin my exploration of labels by looking at aspects of decontextualisation and recontextualisation of objects in order to arrive at the central issue of this chapter, which is the *textualisation* of objects, or as I prefer to call it, the *formulation* of objects. Labels, I argue, are the sites *par excellence* where ‘old’ and ‘new’ context are inscribed into the object, and this process of textualisation involves authorship as much as it requires authority.

3. As far as I am aware, only one article on labels has been published so far in the journal *African Arts*; it was written by Visonà (1987) who interrogates the use of ethnic labels and opts for geographically precise and historically correct labelling. Of course, as my review of parts of the literature indicates, several authors touch upon the issue of labelling in passing. Museum journals like *Curator* often publish articles on labels but most of these deal exclusively with writing and reading ‘public’ labels.

4. The issue of an ‘anthropological’ versus a ‘fine arts’ approach to African art can be said to have loomed large in art anthropology during the 1990s. Not only was this issue often directly addressed (McLeod 1991; Willett 1991; Schelton 1992; Peltier 2000; Morphy 2001), but it also cropped up in related debates on authenticity in African art (Kasfir 1992), the universality of aesthetics (Ingold 1996), and the very possibility of an anthropology of art (Gell 1998).

2. Labels, inscriptions and authority

An undergraduate course on designing exhibitions and composing labels of African art for presentation on the web, formulates the following ground rules.

“...the museum exhibition label should inform the viewer both about the object and its context of use. [...] This helps the viewer to ‘see’ the object within its own cultural setting. [...] If possible, the label should quote a relevant statement (proverb, poetic verse, myth text) taken from the society itself or an informant’s words concerning the object or context. The label must do this with a minimum of words for an audience that possesses little or no knowledge of African art. Since the label represents the curator’s own knowledge and personal point of view, it is necessarily interpretive [...]” (Ray, 2000)

The above presentation of a label model shows how deeply the exhibition label is implicated in the process of recontextualisation of an object that is presented as decontextualised from its “own cultural setting”.⁵ More than anything else, the description points out that this recontextualisation is bi-directional in that the label recovers elements of the original context and recounts these in a text that integrates the object in its new context. This new context is here defined in terms of cultural instruction (informing the unskilled viewer). In the above quote, the recontextualisation process is mainly described in terms of ‘voice’. The proper exhibition label, the course says, should contain quotes belonging to the original context of the object, which together with the other data are subject to interpretation by the curator. This juxtaposition of ‘voices’ casts the problematic of label-writing in terms of transfer (translation and interpretation) between two equally important contexts. In the remainder of this section, I will interrogate this ‘equilibrium of representation’ (between two contexts) by pointing out potential inequalities or imbalances.

An exhibition label on the website of The Cleveland Museum of Art happens to closely follow the instructions of the above model. The entry for a Bedu mask (Nr. 1969.119) consists of two hyperlinked labels (see Fig. 1 & 2). The label found under ‘Overview’ (Fig. 1) holds minimal

5. “The artfulness of the ethnographic object”, says Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991, p388), “is an art of excision, of detachment, an art of the excerpt”. In the concluding section of this chapter, I will come back to this idea of the ‘excerpted object’ and theorise it as the ‘labelled object’.

technical information and gives a brief description of the original context very much in the sense that the model presented above demands. In plain language the 'Overview' label provides information on the function and meaning of the mask, quotes the name of the month during which the masquerade takes place ("Bedu dance moon") and gives a clearly personal appreciation by the curator who states that the nightly masquerade "must have created an impressive sight". The second, 'More information', label gives further technical details on medium, measurements, and acquisition, and offers hyperlinks to the more general categories in which the Bedu mask can be fitted, i.e. 'Africa', 'Ivory Coast', and (objects in) 'Wood and pigment'. This example shows the extent to which the label encroaches upon the object; an intrusion which, after Davis, I characterise as basically 'art historical'.

According to Davis (1993, p331), art history grants objects a certain 'wholeness' as products of what she calls processes of 'replication and summation'. The wholeness of art-historical objects resides in the combination of their historical position (replication), and of their formal and meaningful make-up in relation to other objects (summation) (see also Davis 1989). This is arguably what is realised in the above case of the Bedu label. Minimally, the Bedu mask is historically situated by its approximate date of production or use ('ca 1940'), by its date of entry into the collection (1969), and by its categorisation as African, Ivorian, and wooden object. This, one could say, gives the Cleveland Bedu mask an art-historicity that is external or new. Moreover, the label evokes an art-historicity that predates its collection and that is rather 'internal'. By mentioning the name 'Bedu' as that of a mask genre, and by explaining what this type of object represents and how it functions, the mask is situated in a Bedu 'tradition' of Bedu mask making and using, and given a 'meaning' shared by the maker(s) and the user(s) of the mask. In Davis' terminology, the Bedu mask is presented as a product of a local process of 'replication and summation' and the label suggests that the object possesses an art-historicity that is internal or inherent to it.

Davis' central argument is that such insertion of art-historicity may be problematic, certainly when it is operated on objects that come with little or no historical or contextual data – situations which Davis calls 'beginnings' (Davis 1993, p346).

"At the end of an artwork's becoming whole, art history begins. Before that point, there is only the beginning of the history of art." (ibid., p-347)

In 'beginning' situations such as in many cases of prehistorical art, Davis claims, art historians (as well as archaeologists) engage in attributing 'local' art-historicity rather assertively and sometimes maybe unwarrantedly. Without making any comparison between ethnographic

objects and prehistorical art, I argue below that the Sakrobundi and Bedu mask ‘traditions’ are relatively underdocumented and need to be characterised as ‘beginning’ from the point of view of label-writers or curators.⁶ Therefore, it is worthwhile enquiring to what an extent the projection of art-historicity into the local mask traditions is warranted. Stated otherwise, we need to examine whether the Sakrobundi and Bedu labels bear out the equilibrium of representation which the above-mentioned model label is meant to illustrate.

The present chapter works further with the idea that the label is the locus where the object is art-historically ‘disciplined’ in the sense that historicity and comparability are inscribed in it. Davis likens such academic interventions to palimpsests. I expand on this idea of palimpsest in order to bring out the processes of intertextuality and usurpation involved in the production and publication of labels. As far as intertextuality is concerned, I explore different kinds of textual operations in the vicinity of the object, mainly in labels and related texts. By ‘usurpation’ I refer to various processes of appropriation of objects and texts that occur in the context of labelling. Without necessarily implying misappropriation, ‘usurpation’ indicates the power involved in the hazardous and authoritative intervention in processes of labelling and relabelling. In other words, I consider the textual operations in connection with the object, above all, as acts of control that involve the deployment of power in rewriting, selecting and distributing object-related texts. Such being the case in any situation of art historical description/inscription, it is all the more critical, as Davis argues, in situations of ‘beginnings’. ‘Beginnings’ are moments of instability and uncertainty, and surmounting them involves a great deal of authority and nerve.

The Sakrobundi and Bedu ‘material’: texts and objects

The least one can say about Sakrobundi and Bedu is that they are both masquerades involving plankmasks that were/are found in the Central-Eastern part of Côte d'Ivoire and the adjacent area of present-day Ghana, in the wider region around the city of Bondoukou. The current view on the two masquerade traditions is that Sakrobundi is Bedu’s predecessor of the late 19th and early 20th century but that in the transition from Sakrobundi to Bedu the plank masquerade underwent

6. In the following chapter, I try to show that at least the Bedu masquerade is anything but ‘beginning’. Rather, it is a dynamic institution in which certain communities, groups, and individuals invest a great deal of imagination and labour, and in the process, redefine and reposition the masquerade in rapidly changing rural and urban settings.

a major change in function from a fearsome witch-hunting cult to a beneficial communal mask festival (Bravmann 1974; 1995).

The three specimen of Sakrobundi masks that are currently known, were most probably collected in the Bondoukou region in 1896. They are large plankmasks consisting of a lower 'face' part with 'eyes' and 'mouth', and an upper part with horns. This scheme can be found back in some of the known Bedu masks. The Bedu masks have a similar 'face' part, and when not surmounted with horns, they have a disk-like superstructure. The corpus of known Bedu masks in public collections or in accessible private collections is much larger than that of the (three) Sakrobundi masks but still rather limited. In a survey conducted between 1992 and 1994, I was able to locate some forty-five Bedu masks in museums and accessible private collections. About all of these Bedu masks first entered collections in Côte d'Ivoire, Europe, and the USA during the 1960s and 1970s. Only a couple of masks were possibly collected in the late 1940s and 1950s, while very few were collected after the 1980s. In the course of two decades the almost entire corpus of presently known Bedu masks began a new life outside the Bondoukou region. I will refer to this rather extraordinary phenomenon as the 'Bedu boom'.⁷

Compared to the few collected pieces, the literature on Sakrobundi is fairly generous. Five authors who visited the Bondoukou region between 1888 and 1918, published texts in which they mention Sakrobundi. Following this period, hardly anything was published on the Bondoukou plankmasks until the 'Bedu boom' prompted the sudden production of literature on Bedu masks, not only in the form of scholarly articles and books, but also of labels that were written en rewritten as new masks and information became available. After the early 1980s hardly any new data on the Bedu mask have become available and since then the general view on the history and the content of the Bedu masquerade has remained largely unchanged.

The corpus of texts which the present chapter examines consists of (a) publications (books, articles, and catalogue labels) concerning the two masquerades and (b) 'private labels' of Sakrobundi and Bedu masks in European and American collections, as well as the written and oral comments on them by curators or collectors. Before I turn to the analysis of the texts and object material, in the next two sections, I make some methodological preparation and

7. Among the total of forty-five Bedu masks which I was able to locate in public and private collections in Côte d'Ivoire, the USA, and Europe, twenty-one were dated in the sense that their first entry into a collection was documented. Of these twenty-one, sixteen entered a collection for the first time between 1958 and 1969.

subsequently (a) spell out what I mean by the *formulation of objects* (section 3) and (b) present an analytic scheme based on the concept of palimpsest (section 4).

3. The private life of a Bedu label: circulating and formulating objects

“The corollary to the massive ethnographic collections in museums is the creation of elaborate museum procedures to classify, to draw, and otherwise to produce what are in one way paper counterparts to each object.” (O’Hanlon 2001, p217)

The ‘paper counterpart’ of the Bedu mask (1969.119) in The Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 3) is its ‘private’ label or index card. Quite literally, the index card backs up the museum object in that it, more abundantly than the two public labels, gives identification details (in the form of a morphological description) and data about the mask’s after-life in its new context: the names of the collectors, and the exhibitions in which it featured. That the accession card firmly belongs to the curator’s back office becomes clear from the fact that the card also (a) gives directions on what the public label derived from it, should mention, that is in this case “Gift of Katherine C. White” – which it does – and (b) shows the price (crossed-out) at which the Bedu mask is insured. We learn from the label that a few months before the Bedu mask was donated to the Cleveland museum in 1969, it was acquired somewhere in the Ghana-Côte d’Ivoire border zone by the famous American art collector Katherine White and the (then) Keeper of the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum, William Fagg. One can infer from this that White and Fagg made a joint trip one year after Fagg (1968) had put together a catalogue of the prestigious African art collection of White. More than the managerial image of the ‘curator’s back office’ can express, the accession card indicates that with its collection, the object enters into a new context which can not be sufficiently described in terms of representation, but needs to be approached as a world of exchange, money and fame, travel and power.

Being declared ‘art’, Fagg’s successor at the British Museum, McLeod (1991, p95) once stated, makes an African object enter “extensive financial and trading” networks. But even if we leave the specific problematic of the African antique art market out of consideration, McLeod invites us to consider what identification and classification in a collection or museum imply.

Overlooking the literature on recontextualisation, one can discern at least two major perspectives. A considerable amount of literature examines what happens to objects inside a museum or the within the milieu of collections, and in general take into consideration *the classification of objects* and what this implies. Preziosi and Dias argue that museums are

“evidentiary institutions” as well as “exercises in classification” (in Dias 1997, p33, 45). Collected objects thus get entangled in the “characteristic iconographic programme” of the institution, collection or exhibition in which they end up (Duncan & Wallach 1980, p451) or become part of a newly constituted “ecumene” of objects and imagery (Breckenridge 1989, p214). This integration of an object in a new context may, in the case of non-Western art, be a radical “act of appropriation” which results in “coopt[ing] difference into one’s own dream of order, in which one reigns supreme” (McEvilley in Jones 1993, p205). “While these systems are institutionalised and powerful, they are not immutable” says Clifford (1985, p244) before suggesting several ways to “unravel self-evident, dominant, taxonomies”.

A second group of authors take a broader, inter-contextual view, and focus on the social life of objects: their careers or trajectories. This focus on *the circulation of objects* consists in telling the life-histories of objects and analysing the entangled careers of objects and people. From this we learn a good deal about commoditisation and collecting practices (Steiner 1994, O’Hanlon & Welsch 2000), the power relations involved in collecting and publishing objects (Thomas 1991; Schildkrout & Keim 1998), and the different regimes of value in which they are captured or in between which they circulate (Appadurai 1988; Price 1989; Wastiau 2000; Myers 2001; see also Jones 1993, p213-4).

In this chapter I look at the writing and writings that underlie and cross-cut both spheres. From the literature on classification, I retain that museums and collections are extremely powerful loci where the identity and value of objects are radically transformed. From the literature on circulation, I retain that objects, even if they are stuck in museums, need to be situated within broader institutional and economic spaces. The transformations which objects undergo are written on the basis of texts that come from far and wide, are inscribed in the objects through labels, and have effects on texts and objects far beyond the reach of the institutions that seem to control these transformations.⁸ My focus on *the formulation of objects* takes its lead from the observation that the new contexts of collections in which millions of African artefacts have entered, can equally be considered as “narratives” (Bal 1994) or “narrative sequences” (Dias 1997, p39). However, “objects on display do not provide their own narrative”, Breckenridge

8. There is a long-standing interest in how museums and collections as culture-making institutions interact with academia on the one hand and the art market on the other hand (e.g. Moulin 1986; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001; Stoller 2003). I know of only one short text on the auction house (Muller 1999, p57-58) in which this interaction is spelled out in terms of labels as “stamps of authenticity”.

(1989, p205) explains, “[d]isplayed objects must be textualised [...] if they are to be anything other than a mere accumulation of disoriented curios and wondrous artefacts.” These textualisations render the object into a meaningful material sign, and the collection into a “meaningful sequence” (Bal 1994, p101).

The production of text or meaning that inserts itself between (the visual appearance of) the object and the understanding by the beholder, Belting (1994, p16) explains, has increasingly become the terrain of experts. The textualisation of art objects takes place in a complex interplay of perception and interpretation which “demands the expert or connoisseur, someone who knows the rules of the game”. Such meaning-producing imposition by means of scientific classification and professional display, Clifford (1985, p239, original italics) argues, can easily be “mystified as adequate *representation*”, but they involve a great deal of power to see and to explain. This “professional vision”, says Goodwin (1994, p626) is “perspectival, lodged within specific social entities, and unevenly allocated.” These ‘social entities’ can be networks of art collectors, communities of African art scholars or experts, or indeed, museums and their publics among which ‘insight’ is unequally distributed. Durrans (1992, p14) therefore, argues that “museums are expressive (ideological) institutions rather than interpretive (‘scientific’) ones”.

My analytical exercise consists in examining the *formulation of objects* through labels and within networks of related texts, art objects and historically or geographically remote voices. I consider my approach to be cognate to both the *classification* and *circulation* of objects, in that I try to highlight their textual dimensions. While the classification approach deals with the position of objects in a collection, the ‘circulation’ approach is concerned with the wider ‘travels’ of objects. Instead I look at what underwrites the object’s position and circulation. Unidentified or uncertainly attributed objects, for instance, lack the kind of art-historicity which enables their incorporation in a collection or sustains their circulation in ‘tournaments of value’ as diverse as (travelling) exhibitions, academic and posh publications, and the art market (Wastiau 2000). My focus on labels is based on the idea that among the texts that inform and empower the object, the label is the object’s prime means of identification that is ‘authorised’, in the double sense of being authored (composed and recomposed) and authoritative (scientific and reliable).

In the following two sections, I further explore this dimension of labels as sites where objects are authoritatively formulated and where this authorisation is inscribed (or deeply attached to) the object as in a palimpsest.

4. Managing sources and contesting labels: some lessons from the Boas case

Unlike the three Cleveland labels previously examined, most public and ‘private’ labels contain bibliographic references to sources from which at least the ‘descriptive’ paragraphs are extracted. In the index card of a Bedu mask from the Brooklyn Museum (Nr. 75.83) (Fig. 4), for instance, one finds a typescript reference to the earliest text on Bedu masquerading published by Williams (1968) in the specialist journal *African Arts*. But, as we can see on Fig. 4, the data that provide from Williams are amended. On top of the Brooklyn card there are certain hand-written additions. These most probably date back to October 1975 when the status of the object changed – its previous owner (Lindenbaum family) donated the Bedu mask to the museum – and the label was updated. When updating the card, the same ‘hand’ at the Brooklyn Museum that added a credit line and changed the catalogue number, also took the occasion of specifying, among other things, that the region of origin was “Cercle de Bondoukou” and that the mask was a “female”. While the information about the gender of the mask could also have come from Williams (1968), the expression ‘Cercle de Bondoukou’ only became available when Bravmann (1974) published a chapter on the Bedu masquerade. There, he rather idiosyncratically called the Bondoukou province by its colonial, pre-1959 name ‘Cercle de Bondoukou’.

Using the same technique of text critique, one can establish that the explanation of function and meaning in the ‘Overview’ label of the Cleveland Bedu mask (Fig. 1), is also based on Williams (1968, p19) although no references are given. Williams indeed identified the month during which the Bedu masquerade is held as the “dance moon” or “Bedu moon”. The latter terms are, according to Williams (*idem*), translations of the Nafana word *zòrònyepò*. This claim appears to have been accepted by the author of the Cleveland label – as it is by the author of the Brooklyn label – who considers “Bedu dance moon” as a local expression and puts it between quotation marks.

The above reconstruction of the sources on which labels are based is not meant to highlight the sloppiness of curators in citing external sources, but is meant to bring out the scale of their scientific authority. If indeed the curatorial power resides in composing and amending labels it results in controlling the identity and the categorisation of an artefact as well as the meaning and function it is said to have (had) in its ‘original cultural context’. This connection between authority and label-writing can be more fully grasped from the case of Franz Boas who in 1905 resigned as Assistant Curator from the Ethnology Department of the American Museum of Natural History (New York).

In a meticulous reconstruction, Jacknis (1985) explains that Boas saw labels as critical elements in the transfer of knowledge accumulated in monographs and fieldwork reports to the visiting public. In an article published shortly after his resignation, Boas pointed out that visitors are entitled to accurate labels that do not “slur[...] over unknown and obscure points” but “bring out the sublimity of truth and the earnest efforts that are needed to acquire them” (Boas 1907 in *ibid.*, p107). In the absence of any writings that backed up labels, Jacknis explains, Boas often refused to put objects on display. When in 1905 for that reason he was delaying the display of an expensive collection of Peruvian ethnographica, the Director intervened and ordered a subordinate colleague of Boas’ to devise the exhibition. Boas who found himself overruled and discredited, then decided to leave.

The Boas case is important because it powerfully illustrates the entanglement of scientific and institutional authority in the formulation of objects. Firstly, Boas’ insistence that labels should be exclusively authorised by scientific research is meant, according to himself, not only to pay tribute to scientific excellence, but also to highlight its meticulous production. Bad labels, according to Boas, do not only fool the public by giving them inaccurate information, they also lead them to believe that knowledge production about remote objects is quick and easy, while, in actual fact, it is labourious and testing. Boas thus calls attention to the fact that labels may give a false sense of transparency and suggest a lack of resistance of the object and its context in their accessibility to the expert. Put otherwise, Boas invites us to look at labels as more ‘opaque’, covered with traces left on them by the tough labour of the production of meaning.

Secondly, as Jacknis explains, the fact that the authority conflict between Boas and his colleagues revolved around labels is only partly circumstantial. Jacknis’ reconstruction shows how within the museum different ‘hands’ were competing to author labels. This competition was as much a matter of corporate structure as of personal strife and ideological convictions. One could add to that museums and similar institutions are not only arenas of power contests among their members (departments, networks, individuals) but also part and parcel of larger power fields. These fields are constituted by the museum’s relations with the exterior, with external experts and with the general public or specific interests groups (scholars, private collectors, etc). Taken in that sense, the Boas case invites us to mark out intertextual relations between labels and the relevant publications or ‘sources’ that surround them, and to try to find traces of authority-contests in the way text is selected, acknowledged or otherwise left unused in the composition and recomposition of labels.

Taken together, the Boas case helps us to take into consideration the ‘materiality’ of labels in different ways. First of all, the label is based on concrete research and source texts that can be used or neglected, quoted or plagiarized, or transformed in many ways. Likewise, the drafting of labels is grounded in concrete relationships between people within and outside the institutional hierarchy. These power-laden operations find their material expression in a label that can productively be approached as a ‘text-artefact’ because of its rather extreme concentration of information, and its relative autonomy, durability and mobility.⁹ These characteristics could be said to apply more fully to ‘private’ than they do to more ‘public’ labels. As we can see in the above-mentioned and in other examples (Fig. 5 & 6), accession cards, for instance are the sites of past and recent textual interventions. Labels show different types of writing (long hand, typewritten, computer prints, even stamps – see “XIX-XX Century” in Fig. 6) which are often layered in the sense that new text supplements or replaces existing text by either crossing it out (Fig. 4) or overwriting it (Fig. 5), while in many cases only partly erasing the previous text. These textual operations can quite straightforwardly be characterised as palimpsests that take place in the curatorial back office. However, in the following section, I broaden the concept of palimpsest in order to turn it into a three-part analytical scheme with which I then examine the production of texts on the Sakrobundi and Bedu masquerades.

5. Texts and labels als palimpsests

First, a label can be considered a palimpsest in its relation to the object whose (previous) identity it writes out. As I explained earlier, labels solidly inscribe the object’s (new) identity into the object itself. This most often occurs physically when the identity number that features on the accession card is written, painted, or stamped on the object. When this is not the case, a sufficiently detailed morphological description of the object firmly establishes the unique correspondence between the object and the ‘text-artefact’ without which it remains an anonymous, homeless, or otherwise atypical and ‘strange’ object. Any inscription on the label

9. Lurie (1981, p184-5) states in connection with the conciseness of exhibit labels: “A single label should not exceed 75 words, and not many people will read that much. We all agree in principle that the most effective exhibit technique puts specimens in meaningful contexts with bold, to-the-point statements about the general subject and simple identification labels where the nature of an object is not self-evident. In practice, this is not easy.” Apart from recommending succinctness, Lurie’s statement illustrates my earlier point about transparency.

changes the very identity of the object. This may explain a certain reluctance of the curators to irrecoverably erase obsolete text or replace existing cards altogether. References to published works on similar (types of) objects (either in collections or in the field), of course, relieve the curator of some of her responsibility as authorizer of the object's identity. But such authorisation is not only a matter of labels and texts but also of informal valuations or personal oral exchanges. Two examples suffice to illustrate this point. From an Africa curator at an important museum in Detroit, I received a label (and photograph) of a Bedu mask in which there was no mentioning of published sources. Nonetheless in an accompanying letter he pointed out that "The mask was seen by X who had seen similar masks [...] during field research [...] and had photographed similar masks in...". It also happened that when I went around viewing Bedu masks in European collections, curators asked me after my examination whether I thought 'it was a real one'? These two anecdotes may testify to the fact that curators show a keen awareness of the responsibility they have in rendering an object 'legitimate', 'true' or 'real'. More precisely, what curators are trying to corroborate or question the fact that the object is true to its label – and not necessarily to its maker, previous user or owner. In other words, the identity of an object is firmly located in the match between the object and its label. Palimpsest in this sense, points to the fact that the (new) identification whether physically inscribed or solidly linked to the object, at least partly replaces or overwrites the identification of the object by its previous or original owner or user. Secondly, a label can be seen as a palimpsest in relation to previous labels which it (partly) overwrites. Labels undergo successive textual revisions, some of which I have illustrated above. These transformations consist in the partial re-authoring of existing texts and can therefore be seen as palimpsests or 'paratextual' operations. Paratextuality, according to Genette (1982), is the supplementation, annotation or superposition of one text by another, whereby the hypertext retains parts or traces of the hypotext (1982, p451). What is interesting in this broad definition of palimpsest is the fact that it covers myriad forms of paratextuality ranging from simple intertextuality (e.g. quotation or plagiarism), over metatextual marks or comments, to wholesale hypertextuality like parody (in which the hypertext *almost* entirely replaces the hypotext). As Genette (*ibid.*, p447) points out, the 'first' (hypo)text is in itself already the result of auto-hypertextuality in that it amends and/or overwrites emerging first texts. In the case of labels for objects entering collections, the 'first words' or data are provided by the previous owner, seller or collector. The latter's first texts are liable to scrutiny and additional documentation assembled by the curator. Amendments may thus be realised instantly when the accession card is composed. One curator at the British Museum wrote to me about the habits concerning the registering of museum objects in the 1930s, that:

“At that time various forms of brackets and quotation marks would have allowed the registrar to express doubt on the attribution or clearly mark it as his own opinion as opposed to that of the seller/donor” (personal letter, London, 14/02/2000)

The above statement forcefully shows that paratextuality – in this case metatextual marking – is operated within an authority contest between the old and new owner of the object. This ‘power’ dimension of paratextuality is not so much highlighted by Genette, than it was more recently foregrounded by Bauman and Briggs (1990) and Silverstein and Urban (1996) in their concept of ‘entextualisation’. Generally speaking, entextualisation can be subsumed under paratextuality in Genette’s broad definition, as it considers processes in which stretches of texts are lifted out of (a) source text(s) and recontextualised in a new one (Bauman & Briggs 1990, p73). However, much more than that, ‘entextualisation’ asks attention for two important performative aspects of paratextual operations. First, as in any performance, the author assumes “an authoritative voice [...] which is grounded at least in part in the knowledge, ability, and right to control the recentering [recontextualisation] of valued texts” (ibid., p77). In the above description, the BM curator brings out how the metatextual marking of his predecessors is clearly “an act of control” played out in the accession record. Second, as Silverstein and Urban (1996, p12) make abundantly clear, entextualisation fires back, so to speak, in that it contributes to the establishment of past texts as “valued” by making them the object of (more or less respectful) paratextual operations. But of course, these source texts (e.g. fieldwork reports) are themselves auto-hypertextual products, or more clearly, results of entextualisations whereby informants’ comments or local expressions are staged as evidence (or consciously uneffaced traces) of remote textualisations. Also in these comments, authors may seek ‘authority’ by qualifying the informants as ‘local’, or otherwise as ‘elders’, ‘village chief’ or ritual specialists.

Thus, looking at paratextuality as power-laden entextualisation brings home the general point that labels need to be seen in long strings, in histories of replication and transformation of texts. More specifically, we begin to see that labels share out (distribute) authority to (preceding) texts by naming, summarising, or quoting them. Moreover, labels redistribute or renegotiate authority as new texts become available and are (partly) inscribed in the (persistent) label.

Several of the processes described above can be observed in the Brooklyn Bedu label. In its first (typewritten) version of 1968 (Fig. 4) the label extracts ideas and statements from Williams’ article that is both based on field-research and published in *African Arts*. In the entextualisation of the article the supposedly local expression “the moon of the Bedu” receives pride of place as it simultaneously corroborates the local grounding of Williams’ text and, by entextualisation, of

the label itself. This distribution of authority (going back to the Bedu-using people) may even appear to relieve the curator of some editorial responsibility and allows for such an incongruous statements as “The celebration takes place [...] during the month of the full moon”. In 1975 a new (hand-written) text enters the original label quite literally as ‘paratext’. Certain elements from an unnamed source – but, as we have seen, traceable to Bravmann (1974) – such as “female”, “Cercle de Bondoukou” and “This type of mask used by Nafana, Kulango + Degha”, are inscribed in the upper and lower margins of the label. These elements are introduced into the existing text as specifications for which the curator assumes full responsibility instead of sharing it out to the source.

In conclusion, by taking on board the performance aspects of paratextuality, we can begin to see labels as palimpsests not merely in the sense that the label imposes a certain identity on the object, but that this is effected through a complex, historical process of re-authoring labels and texts whereby the curator distributes authority to herself and/or to her sources. The label is a locus of palimpsest not only because it operates inscriptions and re-inscriptions of identity, but also because it accumulates the traces of these subsequent inscriptions.

The third and final way in which the label can be productively seen as a palimpsest is in the sense given to it by Whitney Davis (1993). The palimpsest of the art historians, according to Davis, consists in inscribing objects in a history of replication and transformation (tradition), and in a group of comparable objects (styles, genres, and complexes). Such historical and comparative palimpsest produces objects that are art-historically full or ‘whole’. As I explained earlier, this art-historicity is not merely external (that is, attributed by the art historian) but ‘internal’ in that it is projected into the intention of the original maker and user of the object. Labelling a mask as a Bedu mask implies that it was created in a ‘local’ history of replication – a tradition of Bedu masks, of mask sculpting or sculpting in general, etc. – and is recognised as such – as Bedu, mask, or sculpture, ... – through shared meanings or culture. In all, labelled objects are ‘whole’ objects firmly identified and located both in their ‘original’ or ‘previous’ and in their new contexts. Conversely, objects that are only accompanied by half-connected texts or whose match with their label is contested, are far more unstable and, ‘merely emerging’.

In the following sections (6 to 11) I make an extensive reconstruction of the formulation of the Sakrobundi and Bedu masquerades in a diversity of texts and with special attention for labels of different sorts. For the sake of diachronic flow and narrative clarity, the amount of analytical digressions is kept to a minimum. Only in the concluding section (12) do I recapitulate the three modes of palimpsest – as inscription into the object, as overwriting of previous/other labels, and

as signing up the object as whole art-historical entity – and illustrate them with instances from the historical reconstruction.

This reconstruction begins in the late 19th century and ends about one century later. As I have already indicated (section 2), my story revolves around two clusters of texts. One cluster concerns Sakrobundi and dates from a period of about four decades around the turn of the century. The second cluster of texts mainly concerns Bedu (also in its relation to Sakrobundi) and was largely produced between the late 1960s and the late 1970s, with some important extensions well into the 1990s. By then, the Sakrobundi and Bedu masks were firmly labelled and had become ‘whole’ objects. One century earlier, none of this confidence reigned. There were merely a handful of largely isolated and hesitant witness reports of masquerades by French and British travellers and a troika of undocumented plankmasks that had travelled from West Africa to Europe, together with their British collectors.

6. The many ‘beginnings’ of Sakrobundi

The European penetration of the Bondoukou area during the last two decades of the 19th and the first two decades of the 20th century produced five literary sources that give descriptions of masquerades or ritual performances variously named *Sakarabounou* (Treich-Laplène in 1888) *Sakrobundi* (Freeman in 1889), *Sakarabrou* (Monnier in 1892), *Sakara-Bounou* (Delafosse in 1902), and *Sakarabouri* (Tauxier in 1921).¹⁰ With the exception of Delafosse who only reports representations connected to the masquerade, all these sources provide rather detailed albeit concise descriptions of masquerade performances. Two of them (Freeman and Delafosse) also supply sketches and/or photographs of masks and other ritual objects associated with the masquerade. Finally, two British military men, Davidson-Houston and Armitage, brought back from a joint mission in the Bondoukou region in 1896 three large plankmasks surmounted by horns, that between 1899 and 1978 ended up in British public collections. The piece collected by Davidson-Houston was registered in 1899 in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin as

10. Apart from these authors, there is, as far as I am aware, one other who mentions *Sakarabro* in an article on the Kulango. The author is Dr. Maclaud who participated in a failed French mission ordered by Binger and conducted by Lieutenant Braulot to sign treaties with, among others, Gurunsi, Mamprusi and Dagomba sovereignties in what is now Northern Ghana. The mission ended in Gyaman where Maclaud spent several weeks (see Terray 1995, p963ff). Maclaud (1896, p34) does little more than indicating that *Sakarabro* is an important ‘fetish’ of the Kulango.

“Dancing mask (Bontuku, Gaman Country)”, while the first of Armitage’s masks entered the British Museum in 1934 as “worn in the sakrobundi secret society”.

The above texts and objects constitute the corpus of sources available to later authors for reconstructing the Sakrobundi masquerade. In this (lengthy) section, I present these texts and objects and situate each of them in their specific historical context. Within the latter I look at how information and objects were transmitted as well as on the writing strategies that ‘frame’ the masquerade in a particular way. I begin by sketching the general geographical and historical context in which these transactions need to be located.

The Gyaman frontier

As the earliest European authors (Bowdich 1819; Dupuis 1824) and visitors (Nielsen & Huydecoper in 1878; Smith in 1879; Lonsdale in 1882) already knew, Bondoukou was the most prominent city, the trading centre of the kingdom of Gyaman (See map). Gyaman was a sovereignty that existed (with varying borders) since the early years of the 18th century. The political and military authority of the realm was in the hands of the paramount king (Gyamanhene) and his group of Twi-speaking Abron who in the course of the 18th century occupied the entire Bondoukou region. The Abron acted as overrulers over different kinds of existing political structures. These polities included: (a) urban centres (like Bondoukou city) that were largely dominated by Muslim Dyula merchants, (b) rural chiefdoms consisting of villages inhabited by Nafana, Kulango, and Degha-speaking people, and (c) isolated settlements of Lobi or other more or less recently arrived migrants (Terray 1995, p299-372). Since its creation, Gyaman struggled to defend its sovereignty against the Asante of Kumasi. For most of its history Gyaman was unsuccessful in its resistance and formed part of the Asante Confederacy (Asanteman), but from 1875, it succeeded in escaping the grip of the Asante that was loosening due to colonial interference by the British (Wilks 1961; Terray 1995, p923-948).

From the 1880s until the late 1890s, Gyaman was a colonial frontier in which not only the British and the French colonisers but also the regional warlord Samori Touré deployed their annexionist projects. The general impetus of European colonial interest in Gyaman may have come from 19th century stories that highlighted the wealth of the region. Bowdich (1819, p169) and Dupuis (1824, plvi), to name but two of the most important sources, reported that Gyaman was richer in gold than any other region in West Africa and that it entertained lucrative commercial links with the North (Niger bend), through the trading town of Kong. Among other things, it was the task of the first French visitors to the region in 1888/1889, Gustave Binger and

Marcel Treich-Laplène, to survey the commercial potential of Gyaman and conclude treaties with its paramount chief. Meanwhile, the British made attempts to expand their colonial possessions in the Gold Coast to include Gyaman. After a couple of individual envoys had been sent to start talks with the Gyamanhene, in late 1888, a major diplomatic mission under the command of Inspector Lethbridge was dispatched to Bondoukou, but arrived two months after Treich-Laplène had signed a treaty with Gyaman which made it into a French protectorate (Terray 1995, p952-954).

In the following decade, the French protection of Gyaman proved rather illusory for the people of Gyaman. Without informing let alone consulting the Gyamanhene, the French struck a deal with the British and ceded to them the eastern section of Gyaman that readily became part of the Gold Coast colony. This arrangement was put down in a protocol of 1891 and later confirmed by the First Anglo-French Boundary Commission of 1892 whose French delegation included Gustave Binger and Marcel Monnier. Also, the French protectors remained inactive when the Dyula warlord Samori occupied large parts of 'French' Gyaman, including the city of Bondoukou in 1895. For the British, this provided the occasion to set up a military expedition to Gyaman in 1896. The mission headed by Davidson-Houston had the task of measuring the strength and impact of Samori. One year later, the British went as far as chasing Samori from the city of Bondoukou but, after intense diplomatic protest from France, they retreated. The partition of Gyaman was definitively fixed by the Second Anglo-French Boundary Commission which was active from 1901 to 1903 and whose the French delegation was headed by Maurice Delafosse.

Having presented the overall colonial agendas in which the different authors on Sakrobundi operated, I now turn to their specific observations and writings as they unfold within their particular projects.

Marcel Treich-Laplène witnesses a Sakarabourou masquerade

One day before reaching the village of Zaranou (now: Amanvi) where he would negotiate a treaty with the Gyamanhene, the French explorer Marcel Treich-Laplène witnessed a Sakarabourou performance in Djenne (now: Gyendé) on 15 October 1888 (See Map). Treich-Laplène wrote down his account of this event in a short text which was only published after his untimely death in 1890 by Bullock (1912). The explorer recounts how, seated next to the village chief, he observed how the whole village, women, men, children alike, danced for many hours around a masked figure that, apart from making movements, saluted many people, and, to

general acclaim, also the chief and his distinguished guest. Treich-Laplène reports that he saw a zoomorphic, horizontally orientated helmet mask. “The mask fits on the head of the actor”, he said, and resembles “the head of a cow [...] shaped like the jaws of a cayman” (ibid., p74). Moreover the mouth (*gueule*) is filled with “sharp teeth” and the nostrils were “painted red which gave it a flaming and at times a fearsome appearance” (ibid., p74-5). Early next day, Treich-Laplène and his convoy left for Amanvi where they met the Gyaman sovereign with whom they concluded a treaty on 13 November 1888.

Impressed by this remarkable spectacle, Treich-Laplène reports that he inquired afterwards about the nature of Sakarabourou. The Gyamanhene called Sakarabourou a gift from God and an elder from Bondoukou assured him that Sakarabourou taught their children not to kill, steal, deceive, or poison. Treich-Laplène concludes that this great Abron “fetish” was “the spirit of the good” (*le génie du bien*) and quotes an elder from Bondoukou as saying that Sakara stood for moral uprightness and thus ensured normal continuity of the natural order, that is, “the eternal coming back of the moon, the abundance of yams and corn, success in hunting, the attachment of the slaves, and the fertility of the women” (ibid., p77).

Treich-Laplène’s witness account was left unused by most later authors on Sakarabourou, including Tauxier (1921) who nonetheless reviewed most of the French colonial literature on all aspects of indigenous life and, as we will see, on Sakarabourou in particular. Only in 1979 was Treich-Laplène’s text picked up by Terray (1979) who largely took over the positive valuation of Sakarabourou by Treich-Laplène and to a large extent based on this account his argument that Sakarabourou was part of a moral revival in Gyaman in the early colonial era.

Dr. Freeman and ‘the great inland fetish’

On obtaining news that the Treich-Laplène mission was on its way to Gyaman, and having received messages that the Gyamanhene wanted to renew his contacts with the British, a major British diplomatic expedition was dispatched to Gyaman in December 1888 “with a view to taking that country under British protection” (Claridge, II, 1915, p332). The expedition was clearly devised to make some impression on the Gyamanhene. Expedition leader Inspector Lethbridge was accompanied by Assistant-Inspector Ewart, Doctor Freeman, one hundred Hausa soldiers, about two hundred carriers, and a small brass band. These and other details about the diplomatic mission can be found in an extensive report published almost ten years later by Doctor Freeman (1898). From this report we learn that on 6 January 1889 the Lethbridge mission stayed at Odumasi (now: Odumase) – the first village on Gyaman territory when coming from

Kumasi – where the British guests were saluted by a Gyaman envoy. There, in the evening a masquerade was performed in their honour. Later on, Freeman asked further questions about what he calls “fetish” practices and objects related to them. On his way back from Gyaman, Freeman also saw masks in Diadasu (now: Duadaso), but time was generally too short to make enquiries. As in Odumase, the mission usually settled down near a village in the afternoon and left early next morning. Only in Soko, just before arriving in Bondoukou, the company spent six days. They waited for clearance to enter the city while gradually finding out that the mission had become obsolete because of the treaty signed between the Gyamanhene and the French.¹¹ In Soko, Freeman spotted animal worship practices, but his inquiries were hampered by the fact that the British were “far from welcome visitors” (1898, p175). Such was very much also the case in Bondoukou city where Freeman stayed for about two months but could hardly leave his house (a Dyula Muslim compound) and was strictly – and in one instance *manu militari* – prohibited from leaving the town.

In his travelogue, Freeman takes the occasion of the Odumase masquerade to present *en bloque* all his observations and findings about shrine houses and acts of worship in the region he visited. Freeman treats all this material, presented in words as well as in drawings and photographs of masks and ritual paraphernalia, as manifestations of one and the same “great inland fetish, Sakrobundi, or Sakrobudi” which is important in “Jáman [Gyaman], Gruinsi [Gurunsi] and several of the countries lying to the north” (ibid., p148). Sakrobundi is the only indigenous term concerning ‘fetishism’ which Freeman brought back from his unfortunate mission. This solitary term stands in stark contrast to the enormous diversity of phenomena that it subsumes. This is first of all the case with the images, the drawings and the photograph of “Sakrobundi” masks (Fig. 7). While the Odumase Sakrobundi dancers can be seen wearing zoomorphic plank masks (Fig. 7a), one Sakrobundi mask from Duadaso is a horizontal zoomorphic helmet mask (Fig. 7b), the other an anthropomorphic plank mask (Fig. 7c), and the one from Jimini (Kong) a small, anthropomorphic face mask (Fig. 7d). In other words, in Freeman’s collage of images, *the* Sakrobundi mask takes the form of about any possible mask type that one can find in West Africa. Freeman, however, keeps ahead of this bewildering formal diversity by highlighting the unifying element of ‘horns’.

11. For more details on the demise of the Lethbridge mission, see Terray (1995, p952-4). Terray convincingly argues that the British were indeed set up by a certain fraction of the Gyaman leadership who wanted to undermine the French-enthusiasm of the Gyamenhene by brokering deals with the British.

In his descriptions of practices of worship which Freeman lists under Sakrobundi, he brings in horns as a leitmotif and on that basis connects the Odumase masquerade, which he says represents an antelope, with “the animal-fetish Sakrobundi” and furthermore with fetish houses, sacred monkeys, and a trumpet. These most diverse phenomena are associated to each other in one lengthy, uncharacteristically convoluted sentence, in which the horn emerges as underlying link:

“It would thus seem that the Sakrobundi fetish is in some way connected with an antelope with incurved horns, which occurs in the district, and one of the horns of which I found in a fetish house, made into a trumpet; and as some of the fetish houses had attached to them troops of sacred monkeys, it is probable that this is a form of the animal worship that is so common in different parts of West Africa.” (ibid., p149-150).

With reference to what I said in the introductory sections concerning art-historical wholeness, we could say that through the association of the most diverse phenomena, Freeman is rendering the Odumase mask into a ‘whole’ cultural/religious object, embedded in a geographically delineated (‘Gyaman, Gurunsi, and the North’) and a thematically unified (‘horn’) tradition of animal worship. However, such a synthetic treatment of Gyaman fetishism, Freeman points out in several caveats, was not a simple undertaking, not in the least because it was based on uncertain descriptions and information. Concerning the intricacies of representing what he had seen during his travels, Freeman is generally very upfront. At the beginning of his description of the Odumase masquerade, he writes:

“The centre of the circle was [...] occupied by [...] the principal fetish man, and as I *despair* of giving an adequate idea of his appearance by mere description I *reinforce* my pen with the pencil and *furnish* a couple of sketches of him.”(ibid., p151; italics mine).

With a switch from the past tense (‘was’) to the present tense (see verbs in italics) Freeman signals how he is struggling at the moment of writing to give a proper representation of the masquerade.¹² But even before starting the description, Freeman introduces his eight-page report on the Sakrobundi cult with an extensive apology on the limitations of his data.

12. The time of writing is vaguely the second half of the 1890s. The book mentions several post-1889 events such as the occupation of Bondoukou by Samori in 1895 (Freeman 1989, introduction) and the occupation of Kumasi by Scott in 1896 (ibid., ch. 9).

“I could obtain very little information about it [Sakrobundi], for the Jáman language was quite unintelligible to our people and we never were on a very cordial footing with the natives of the district; besides which African natives are as a rule extremely reticent on the subject of their religious beliefs, and if pressed for information usually deliberately mislead their questioners, and, moreover, their own ideas on religious subjects are commonly extremely vague and indefinite.” (ibid., p148)

Read together with the twisted sentence in which Freeman sets up a rather ‘wild’ association of ritual practices and objects, the above apologies seek to express that his description of a ‘whole’ Sakrobundi cult is very much a *post factum* construction of his own making. In spite of this, Freeman’s text became undisputably one of the most popular among the sources on Sakrobundi. While his text was already used for composing the earliest public label of a Sakrobundi mask (Underwood 1949), Freeman is presented as a star witness until today (Bravmann 1995). As we will see in more detail later, what is most extraordinary about the later uses of Freeman’s account of Sakrobundi is that both the synthetic character of the description and the hesitation of its author are entirely negated. In the later literature, two options with regard to the link between the name Sakrobundi and the form of the mask, can be found. One option is taken by the historian Terray (1979, p160) who claims that form or mask type (plank, face, helmet) really do not matter and that all Sakrobundi masks are variations on the theme of a “fantastic being”. The option taken by art historians like Fagg (1969) and Bravmann (1974) is that form is precisely what matters and that the Odumase plankmask is the one and only genuine Sakrobundi. That uncertainty and instability of historical sources such as Freeman are not at all reckoned with, and rather glorified, as Terray does, or denied as Fagg and Bravmann do, is particularly unfair in the case of Freeman because, as I explained, he is probably the only author among the ‘beginners’ who openly expresses his scientific scruples so clearly and so abundantly.

Marcel Monnier witnesses an ‘interrogation of the corpse’

By the time the Lethbridge mission of Freeman returned to Kumasi, an informal agreement was already being discussed in London and Paris about the partition of Gyaman, whereby the city of Bondoukou would become French territory and the part east of it British (Claridge 1915, p336). This division was geographically plotted out by the First Anglo-French Boundary Commission of 1892. One of the French members of the commission was Marcel Monnier who stayed for five days in Sapia, a village near Bondoukou, in April 1892. There he witnessed a performance generally known as the ‘interrogation of the corpse’ whereby body parts such as nail clippings

and personal belongings of a deceased person are carried around the village and called upon to designate the person or entity (shrine, god) responsible for his or her death. Monnier relates how in Sapia in 1892 the interrogation was placed under the auspices of Sakarabrou. The carriers of the corpse and the “fetish priest”, he says, paid a visit to the place where Sakarabrou dwelled. There the author spotted a masking outfit of which he claims that it was worn by the Sakarabrou “impersonator” at “evenings of grand feasts” (Monnier 1894, p168). The outfit consisted of a “leaf-costume” and a mask resembling “the head of a dragon with a menacing snout”. The outcome of the interrogation was that “the fetishes” were identified to have killed the deceased who therefore was not properly buried but deposited in the bush (ibid., p170).

Although Monnier’s account became the first published source on Sakarabrou, Terray (1979) is the only one among the later authors to refer of Monnier’s rather sympathetic account. Terray saw his ‘moral revival’ hypothesis confirmed by the fact that the interrogation of the corpse was put under the auspices of Sakarabrou which limited the amount of arbitrariness in witchcraft accusations.

The legacy of Davidson-Houston and Armitage

When in June 1895 Samori occupied parts of Gyaman and Bondoukou city, the British decided to enter into contact with the Dyula warlord. In February 1896, the British dispatched a small military expedition to Gyaman consisting of the commanding officer Captain Wilfred Davidson-Houston, Assistant-Inspector Cecil Armitage, a doctor, and a number of Hausa soldiers. Apart from having a fact-finding mission in what had become British Gyaman, the expedition was meant, on its way, to sign treaties, to enter into contact with Samori, and to “urges on [him] and his people the desirability of entering into trade” (Davidson-Houston 1896, p262). The expedition was exceptionally well-received by about everyone. Samori showed a keen interest in making deals with the British (against the French) (ibid., Letter C). The Gyamanhene felt abandoned by the French, who, he had just found out, “had divided his country in two”, and asked the British to expell Samori from his kingdom (ibid., p276, letter D). Finally, the population of eastern Gyaman and of the Banda region, further north along the Côte d'Ivoire - Gold Coast border, begged for protection against the raids of Samori’s soldiers (ibid., p274).

The mission largely found out about its overall popularity and made most of the contacts while staying in Soko, the village just east of Bondoukou city which Freeman had also visited.¹³ There

13. Having followed the route to Bondoukou first described by Bowdich (1819, p482) and also followed

the company stayed for about one month (March - April) during which time Davidson-Houston and Armitage went on short trips through the region. In June 1896 the mission returned to Accra where Davidson-Houston submitted to the Acting Governor his report from which most of the data presented here are taken. A very positive evaluation of the mission's leaders by the Acting Governor helped Armitage and Davidson-Houston each pursuing different but successful colonial careers.¹⁴

Apart from the report by Davidson-Houston, the two expedition commanders left no other traces of their eventful stay in Gyaman than three masks which eventually ended up in the collections of the National Museum of Ireland (Dublin) and in the British Museum (London).¹⁵ Already shortly after his first stay in Gold Coast (1894-96), Davidson-Houston began making loans and donations to the museum of his natal town of Dublin and continued to depose the objects he brought back from Africa until 1910. Of the objects he lent in 1899, six pieces provide from the Bondoukou region, among which a mask (Loan 359.9a, hereafter the 'Dublin piece'; Fig. 8) that was registered as "Dancing mask (Bontuku, Gaman Country)". The mask shows no signs of wear, is in pretty bad shape, and remained hidden in the Dublin collection until Hart (1995) published it.¹⁶

All this contrasts sharply with the two masks collected by Armitage. After Armitage's death in 1933, one of his masks (1934-2, hereafter the 'BM1 piece', Fig. 9) was acquired by the British Museum, and registered as a mask "worn in the sacrobundi secret society". The other mask went to the Cockin family who in 1978 sold it also to the British Museum (1978 AF 22.834, hereafter 'BM2 piece', Fig. 10). The two British Museum masks show signs of wear, are otherwise in fine

by the Lethbridge expedition of Freeman (Terry, 1995 p714-715), the Davidson-Houston mission first stayed at Odumase, before setting up its base camp at Soko.

14. In his letter to Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, the Acting Governor praised the work of the mission and the two "excellent, reliable Officers". Shortly after Armitage was appointed Travelling Commissioner (CO 96/299). In this function he visited the north-east of the Gold Coast colony in 1897, before being appointed Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories in 1912 (until 1919). In 1899, Davidson-Houston was appointed Resident at Kumasi, stayed for a short while in South-Africa, and returned to Asante where he remained until 1906 (*The Times* 20/09/1960).

15. In his last will Davidson-Houston asked to have his notebooks burned. However, it seems that the personal writings of Armitage are still kept by his heirs (William Hart, personal communication).

16. Due to lack of specialised staff, the Dublin museum called on Hart to make the first survey of its otherwise historically important and rich Africa collection.

condition, and, above all, spent more than three decades in the personal collection of Armitage. The latter, according to Donne (1972, p91), displayed his collection in his house in England after retirement, and kept his whole collection of Africana together until the end of his life. The masks, and particularly the BM1 piece, enjoyed the same preferential treatment after they entered the British Museum.¹⁷ Already in 1948 the BM1 piece was published in an African art-catalogue (and has been many times ever since), and it has remained a ‘celebrity’ object ever since. The culmination of its career came in 2001 when it was put on permanent display in the new Sainsbury African Galleries of the British Museum.

The differential treatment which the masks of Armitage and Davidson-Houston received both by their erstwhile makers and users, their British collectors, and their receiving institutions, almost obscures everything they have in common: their morphological affinities¹⁸, the fact that their original labels are equally fragmentary, and above all the absence of historical interest in their collection.¹⁹ As to the latter point, the proposition that the three masks were collected in the course of the same expedition is made here for the first time. The first move in that direction was made by Hart (1995) who noted that the Dublin and the BM1 piece were almost identical in size, figurative details, and decorative patterns. Because of these similarities Hart named the Dublin piece ‘Sakarabunu mask’ (1995, p44, pl.17) (Fig. 8). This name, he explained to me in a letter, he adapted from the literature on the BM1 mask, not from the original registration of the object which gave merely geographic details – indeed, Bondoukou, the city Davidson-Houston never got to see. This in itself shows how limited the early labels are. The registration entry of the BM1 piece seems to provide at least the name of the secret society ‘sacrobundi’ to go on, but the

17. From the information provided by Donne (1972), we can infer that in 1934 the British Museum made a selection of objects from the Armitage collection, and preferred the BM1 over the BM2 piece. The objects it refused to accept ended up with a merchant who was about to burn all the remaining wooden objects when Mrs Cockin eventually decided to buy the lot for £100. That in 1978 the British Museum decided as yet to acquire the ‘lesser’ BM2, may be due to the fact that in the meantime (see later), the counterpart BM1 piece had become identified as a rare and historically important art object, and was rapidly becoming a celebrity piece.

18. The BM1 piece is unique because it has a wooden semi-circular bar connecting the bases of the two horns on the backside. The function of this bar remains an enigma.

19. Welsch (2000) tells a similar story about three collections from the same area, made at the same time, that were treated by the museum where they ended up as entirely different ‘units’ because they had come in from three different collectors/owners.

question remains where that name came from? From Armitage in 1934? And if he knew that name why did Davidson-Houston not mention it to the registrar at Dublin? Or did Armitage have the occasion to read Freeman's account, and did he extract the name from there? These questions can only be answered when more evidence becomes available.

Until then and up to now, the fragility of the identification of the BM1 as 'Sacrobundi' needs to be taken into account. This fragility is further illustrated by the different 'private' labels of the BM1 piece that can be found in the British Museum collection catalogues. In the paper catalogue of objects from Côte d'Ivoire, the BM1 piece is labelled "Sacrobundi Society mask; 'Nafana'"; 'Nefara'?". In the computer database, one finds "Ceremonial mask (Sakrobundi); Ethnic group: Ashanti; Found: Ghana,..." Finally, in the Ghana catalogue of the BM, the BM1 piece is labelled "Mask from Bedu anti-witchcraft cult". This confusion among the 'private' labels stands in stark contrast with the univocal public label of the BM1 piece that since Underwood (1948) is firmly established as 'Sakrobundi'. This label overwrites the original one as well as all the other ones and unequivocally adopts the orthography (sakro- instead of sacro-) as well as the geographic specifications ("Jaman and Grunshi") of Freeman. While it remains unsure whether Armitage prior to 1934 or the registrar in 1934 introduced 'Sacrobundi', it is clear that Underwood in 1948 effaced the half-baked or emerging identity of the BM1 piece and operated the first in a long series of palimpsests.

Maurice Delafosse visits the village of Ouélékei

After the reasonably successful Davidson-Houston mission, the British ventured one last time into the Gyaman heartland when Bramwell was ordered in 1897 by Governor Maxwell to chase Samori Touré from Bondoukou and occupy the city. Very soon, however, the British retreated and two months later the French built a station (*poste*) in Bondoukou (Benquey 1906). Although from the beginning French Gyaman was firmly occupied, there still remained some quarrels about the precise boundary with the Gold Coast. In order to clear these up a Second Anglo-French Boundary Commission was set up in 1901. Until the commission finished its activities in 1903, the already established linguist and colonial administrator Maurice Delafosse headed its French delegation.

In *Les frontières de la Côte d'Ivoire, de la Côte d'Or et du Soudan*, Maurice Delafosse (1908) published part of the notes he kept during his time at the Boundary Commission. In this travelogue, Delafosse recounts that at some stage he was working near Soko where he spotted a circular pyramid in clay “dedicated to the spirit Sakara-Bounou or Sakara-Brou” (1908, p109) and, like Freeman three years before, passed a river where “sacred monkeys” hung out (*ibid.*, p112). At Oûrigué (now: Ouélékei or Welekei), the first village north of Bondoukou, Delafosse made a walk around the village and noticed a series of shrine houses around a circular pyramid similar to the one seen in Soko. One of the shrine houses, he says, had polychrome bas-reliefs showing:

“a curled-up serpent, a bludgeon (*casse-tête*), and a remarkable effigy of the spirit Sakara-Bounou, supporting on two straight horns a disc with rays, symbol of the sun; the latter image resembles the well-known representation of the Egyptian Osiris, albeit in a rather vulgar way” (*ibid.*, p120).²⁰

This rather inspired mixture of inquisitive scrutiny and orientalist ruminations is followed by some text and a few sketches that are hardly helpful in clearing up the original confusion. The most common attributes of Sakara-Bounou, Delafosse says, were (a) the curled-up serpent and

20. The orientalist tendencies of Delafosse are well documented. One year before his activities in the Boundary Commission, he published the results of his search for traces of Egyptian civilisation in Côte d'Ivoire. Notwithstanding the little evidence of Egyptian influence that he was able to find, Delafosse (1901, p58) conjectured that “it is impossible to see how during thousands of years an advanced civilisation like that of the Egyptians has shone without a few sparkles reaching the primitive peoples that surround it; and since Egypt has civilised Europe, is it not natural that it also civilised Africa?”.

(b) “the rather fanciful head of a cow”, as well as (c) the pyramidal altar (idem, p120-121). In the sketches (Fig. 11), however, only the altar is presented as that of Sakara-Bounou, while the other attributes are presented as simply ‘bas-reliefs at Ouélékei’. The sketch of the ‘effigy’ with horns and a disc is an interestingly imbalanced one as the ‘effigy’ that should be “the rather fanciful head of a cow” is merely rather anthropomorphically outlined – and is as vague as its description as “a remarkable effigy” – while the horns-and-disc part is drawn in minute detail – as precise, one could say, as Delafosse’s musings about its Egyptian provenance. Only the word ‘vulgar’ happens to apply to both the disc and Sakara-Bounou since he characterises the cult as a deadly superstition. This is remarkable in itself because unlike his French predecessors (Treich-Laplène and Monnier), Delafosse paints a disparaging image of the Sakara-Bounou cult which he says was introduced by malicious “priests” who banked on the credulity and defencelessness of the commoners to extort wealth (gold and livestock) from them through sacrifices to an easily ‘irritated’ Sakara-Bounou spirit who killed if not readily appeased (ibid., p120).

Delafosse’s association of Sakara-Bounou with a number of attributes and with the bas-reliefs is a rather indecisive one but compares only with Freeman’s formulation of the Sakrobundi cult in this particular instance. In general, Delafosse’s observations of religious and ritual practices are far more distinctive than Freeman’s. At Soko, for instance, Delafosse does not associate the Sakara-Bounou altar with the sacred monkeys. At yet another village (Sorobango) Delafosse (ibid., p215) witnesses the dance of a face mask that is very similar to the one which Freeman identifies as “Sakrobundi mask from Jimini” (Fig. 7d), but Delafosse stays clear of any association.

In spite of his renown both as an Africanist and as a colonial administrator, Delafosse’s account of Sakara-Bounou is not at all taken into account by later French authors. Tauxier and Terray do not only question but bluntly contradict Delafosse’s negative characterisation of the cult and make his description and sketches of the ‘attributes’ not count for much. Only since William Fagg in 1969 ‘discovered’ the Delafosse travelogue and connected it to Freeman’s account, has the French colonial been treated as a major source of evidence in the Anglophone formulation of ‘Sakrobundi’.

Louis Tauxier reviews the existing sources on Sakarabouri

Louis Tauxier was stationed as a colonial agent at the Bondoukou *poste* for about two years (1918 - 1920). Soon after he published a monograph on the region (Tauxier 1921) in the same genre of encyclopaedic ethnographies which he published throughout his career as an

administrateur-ethnologue (see Tauxier 1912, 1937; see Bonnet 1984, p112). In *Le noir de Bondoukou* Tauxier brings together many of the French sources on the Bondoukou region, and reviews the literature by confronting the different accounts with each other, and with the data he was able to collect himself. In the chapter on the Kulango, Tauxier presents a comprehensive overview of their shrines and gives pride of place to Sakarabouri which, he says, one finds throughout the region including the Abron villages. In connection with the cult, Tauxier reviews the writings of Delafosse and Monnier but not of Treich-Laplène whose views he shares, nonetheless.

In most explicit terms, Tauxier tempers Delafosse's negative view of Sakarabouri and challenges the identification of it as a solar divinity (1921, p188-189). By the same token, Tauxier discredits Delafosse's speculations about the 'superstitious' nature of Sakarabouri and launches a counter-appreciation which situates the spirit within the register of serious religious phenomena. Sakarabouri, according to Tauxier, was introduced by the Abron and adopted by the Kulango into their religion as "an instance of the Earth" (*ibid.*, p189). Sakarabouri is therefore a "great divinity of the Kulango" who hates "everyone who does evil" and ought to be considered a "moral" form of worship (*ibid.*, 175, 189). Tauxier proceeds by quoting extensively from Monnier (1894) and foreshadows Terray's appreciation when he concludes that "like the Komo and the Nama [anti-witchcraft masquerades] of the Bambara and the Malinke, Sakarabouri directly punishes certain culprits of crimes" (*ibid.*, p194). Moreover, Tauxier appears to agree with Treich-Laplène that Sakarabouri has a festive dimension, when he explains that every now and then, the shrine priests – he calls them "public comedians" – put on a crocodile mask and dance in the presence of men, women and children, who are all allowed to see and participate in the masquerade (*idem*).

With Tauxier (1921) the 'beginning' of the formulation of Sakarabouri is coming to an end. Through comparison and synthesis, the cult begins to appear as a 'whole' religious institution with a certain tradition and constituted by shared beliefs and practices. This textualisation of Sakarabouri takes place in a 'context' constituted by an exclusive group of French sources. The least Tauxier's digest makes clear is that the partition of Gyaman counts for much in the emergence of separate Francophone and Anglophone literary traditions on Sakarabouri. When Tauxier (1921, v) states in the preface to his book that he ("the author", he calls himself) has reviewed "everything that has been written on the subject before him and which has some importance", he obviously does not see the need to explain why there is no mentioning of any Anglophone authors. As we will see, the same can be said of the Anglophone authors who for

some time relied solely on Freeman as a source on Sakrobundi. This remains so until the late 1960s when certain texts (and not others) from the two sides of the Anglo-French linguistic divide begin to be exchanged and affect each other.

7. ‘Beginnings’ reconsidered at both sides of the Channel

Apart from Tauxier (1921), the texts and objects which we have examined so far are quite solitary items that are largely unaware of each other’s existence, and traverse unique trajectories of production and publication that lead them away from each other, much further than the proximity of the places where they originated could lead us to suspect. The case of the Dublin and the British Museum masks is a rather sensational instance of intimately related objects drifting apart. Nonetheless, the overall solitude of the emerging Sakrobundi texts needs to be qualified. Treich-Laplène and Monnier provide descriptions of singular events in short reports that are eventually published in *florilegia* (Monnier 1894, Bullock 1912). In contrast, Freeman’s and Delafosse’s accounts of more or less ‘whole’ religious institutions provide more extensive documentation (maps, sketches, photographs) and are embedded in monographs. Whether that has made the latter two authors more interesting or otherwise more convincing, fact is that they are more popular with later authors on Sakrobundi.

From the late 1960s onwards, Freeman and Delafosse find themselves at the centre of the literary space where Francophone and Anglophone authors on Sakrobundi meet. In the Anglophone literature this ‘meeting’ takes place when Fagg (1969) discovers Delafosse, but like his Anglophone successors and colleagues art historians – most notably Bravmann (1974) – he shows no interest in the other French sources. The selection of Delafosse as a key informant features in the construction of a quite complex argument about the demise of Sakrobundi and the emergence of the Bedu masquerade with which I will deal in the next section. At the Francophone side, the historian Terray (1979) takes on board Freeman as well as most of the other French authors, thereby maintaining the positive outlook on Sakrobundi initiated by Treich-Laplène and Monnier, and substantiated by Tauxier.

Terray (1979) brings up the Sakrobundi religious institution in a historical argument about early colonial moral crises and the emergence of new anti-witchcraft cults. In early colonial Gyaman, according to Terray, Sakrobundi features in a regional moral revival in which people respond to the political uncertainty and social disarray provoked by colonial destabilisation (1979, p169-173). Taking the outlook of a social historian rather than an art specialist, Terray does not try to disentangle the different morphological descriptions which the sources on the Sakrobundi

masquerade provide. The divergent descriptions illustrate Sakrobundi's polymorphous character, according to Terray (ibid, p159-161, 163), and are the result of the cult being practiced by different ethnic groups of Gyaman. In other words, for Terray, the morphological diversity is not to be situated at the level of the European descriptions of the masks (by more or less resourceful authors) but at that of the local, but multi-sited production of the masks (by different ethnic groups). Quite dramatically, this perspective leads Terray to *overlook* the fact that all French authors associate Sakrobundi with the same mask type, that is, a zoomorphic mask that is horizontally orientated and that can variably be described as 'the head of a wild cow with jaws like a cayman and sharp teeth' (Treich-Laplène), 'the head of a dragon with a menacing snout' (Monnier), 'the rather fanciful head of a cow' (Delafosse) or a 'crocodile' (Tauxier). The odd ones out are obviously the Odumase sketch by Freeman and the BM1 piece that present us with a plankmask with long horns and an anthropomorphic 'face' (fig 7a, 7b). Instead of singling out the latter images for further inspection, the otherwise congruent French sources are disregarded with them.

Terray's switch from the level of literary representation to the level of artefact production, signals nothing less than the displacement of the Francophone authors by an 'Anglophone' sketch. This displacement is clearly expressed in the orthography. By adopting 'Sakrobundi' as the name of the early colonial cult, Terray elects Freeman's ideosyncratic orthography above all Francophone renderings of the term. Like in their approximate morphological descriptions, the latter agree on 'sakara' as the first part of the cult's name and only differ in their rendering of the second part of the word (-bouri, -bouti, -bounou, etc). In sum, both in the grasp of the mask's formal characteristics and of its name, the Francophone 'unity-in-diversity' is discarded in the face of an Anglophone piece of evidence that obviously counts for a great deal. The question remains how? In order to answer this question we need to look at 'the Sakrobundi object' (sketch/mask/text) as it was already constituted by the time Terray took it on as a firm piece of evidence. In the late 1970s, as we will see, this 'object' was no longer in its 'beginning' like it was at the time of the French early descriptions, but already a 'whole' item, firmly inscribed with an imposing identity during three decades of palimpsests.

8. First palimpsests: Leon Underwood and William Fagg

When the BM1 piece entered the collections of the British Museum in 1934, it was registered as a mask "worn in the sacrobundi secret society". As I said, it can no longer be established whether at that time the Freeman 'Sakrobundi' label was inscribed into the accession record of the BM1

mask, or not. Likewise, we can no longer ascertain whether ‘sacrobundi’ was the result of a suggestion by Armitage or his heirs, or rather of an intervention by the registrar or the curator. Overlooking the different labels presently circulating in the internal catalogues of the British Museum, both ‘sacrobundi’ (in association with the ethnonym Nafana) and ‘sakrobundi’ (situated in present-day Ghana) are used, as well as the more eccentric label “Bedu anti-witchcraft cult”. In the public labels of the BM1 piece that were produced in the postwar period, something of this uncertainty can be found back, although most authors discard both sacrobundi and Bedu and opt for Freeman’s orthography and the data he provided on Sakrobundi.

As far as I am aware, the British artist, art teacher, and publicist Leon Underwood (1948) was the first to publish the BM1 piece. Under the catalogue entry “Grunshi or Jaman (?), Gold Coast, Northern Territories” Underwood (1948, p45) readily introduces the name “Sakrobundi” and refers to Freeman’s sketch and his description of the masquerade at Odumase. Moreover, in the same catalogue, two horizontal zoomorphic helmet masks from another collection are given exactly the same geographical specifications (even identically type-set and punctuated) and are equally interpreted with reference to Freeman.²¹ One of them is said to be a “horse antelope” mask, and to resemble “Freeman’s sketch of *still another form* of Sakrobundi” (idem; my italics) – most probably the zoomorphic mask from Diadasu (fig 7b). In the end, Underwood considers all three masks as “abstracts of the same antelope” (idem). Thus, together with taking over the name, location, and ‘meaning’ (antelope) of the Sakrobundi masks by Freeman, Underwood imports also the latter’s writing strategy which consists in subsuming radically diverse types of objects under one and the same label. There is, however, a certain hierarchy to be discerned in the way Underwood treats the three masks as instances of Sakrobundi objects. The plankmask (BM1) is said to *represent* Sakrobundi (“a mask of the divinity Sakrobundi”) while the two others are explained to *resemble* (“similar to”, “resembles”) Sakrobundi masks. Only on one point Underwood diverges from Freeman. The Sakrobundi mask is used, he says, “in the ritual of war in Ashanti”. However, he hastens to add that he is incapable of discovering “by what transactions a sylvan [antelope] spirit became an Ashanti war fetish” (idem). Thus, with Underwood, the confusing, polymorphous ‘image’ of Sakrobundi produced by Freeman is transcribed into the first label of the BM1 piece, while the latter is elected *primus inter pares* of the Sakrobundi masks. This process whereby the morphological confusion created by Freeman is

21. The collection in question is that of former colonial agent Maurice Cockin (see also footnote 11) who in 1933 acquired part of the collection of Cecil Armitage (the other part went to the British Museum), including the BM2 piece (Donne 1972, p91).

somewhat reduced, is continued by the next important author of a label for the BM1 label, William Fagg.

In an American exhibition catalogue Fagg (1969, p112) labels the BM1 piece “Nafana; Horned Mask” and explains that “*this form* of mask which was *generally* called sakrobundi was described by Austin Freeman” (italics mine). In this generalising statement, Fagg reduces the confusion in Freeman’s attribution of different mask types to Sakrobundi. More radically than Underwood, Fagg effaces all traces of other types of masks equally called Sakrobundi by Freeman, and elects the BM1 as the sole genuine claimant of the name. Moreover, Fagg presents the BM1 as the oldest known survivor of a masquerade tradition that continues until now. In support of this argument, Fagg relies on new evidence from the field, providing from “Sieber and his followers” who are said to have found similar masks in the Nafana area between Wenchi (Central Western Ghana) and Bondoukou. These more recent instances of Sakrobundi, Fagg suggests, are very tall and mass-produced for the tourist market, while the smaller ones are the more older masks. An example of the latter more genuine masks, Fagg points out, can be seen in a “photograph published by Delafosse” (idem). This is an extraordinary reference for several reasons. As we have seen, Delafosse did not publish a photograph, but a half-baked sketch, did not say that a Sakrobundi *mask* was represented in the sketch but that it resembled “the rather fanciful head of a cow”, and, finally, did not provide any precise indication as to the length of the ‘mask’, at least not precise enough to measure it against the supposedly ‘gigantic’ more recent ‘Sakrobundi’ masks produced by the Nafana.

In general, the confident somewhat haughty way in which Fagg introduces novel sources and treats the known ones, gives a hint of the authority with which the widely acclaimed African art scholar and connoisseur who that same year (1969) was appointed keeper of Ethnography at the British Museum (Picton 1994) could pronounce his art historical judgements. Without much explanation or critical analysis, Fagg transforms Freeman’s and Delafosse’s texts (and sketches), and introduces hearsay. Moreover, Fagg fortuitously gives shape to a previously unknown tradition of Sakrobundi masks that connects the late 19th century with the 1960s, that has a classic and a degenerate phase, and that can be attributed to one specific ethnic group (Nafana).

Critical in Fagg’s formulation of a Sakrobundi tradition, is the fact that he takes on board the contemporary production of Sakrobundi-like masks in the Bondoukou area, as well as the new (American) research that is being conducted into these previously unknown masks. By ‘Sieber and his followers’, Fagg refers to René Bravmann who was doing fieldwork (1966-1968) in the Bondoukou region and, maybe also to Drid Williams who visited Bravmann in the field and

readily published her findings in an article in *African Arts* (1968). What Fagg does not mention in his vague reference to the new researchers, and what to some extent challenges his idea of an ongoing Sakrobundi tradition, is that both researchers had already established ‘Bedu’ (and not Sakrobundi) as the name of the masquerade. Before we examine how the above-mentioned fieldworkers themselves deal with the relationship between Sakrobundi and Bedu, we need first to briefly consider how and where ‘Bedu masks’ and the term ‘Bedu’ had been circulating prior to Fagg’s text.

The question of Bedu or how to control the ‘Bedu boom’

Without making references to either Freeman or Underwood, the famed collector of African art, Ladislav Segy (1958/1975, p185, pl. 207) published the BM1 piece with a label that gives the ethnic attribution “Grunshi (Gourounsi)” and introduces two terms: ‘Nafana’ and ‘Bedo’. The mask is said to be “large, flat, plank-like structures known as *nafana*” (idem, original italics) and to resemble similar masks in museums in Abidjan and Accra, attributed to either the Abron or the “Bedo” people from the Bondoukou region.²² In the revised edition of this catalogue, Segy clears up the confusion over mask names and ethnonyms by stating – without references, but clearly traceable to Williams (1968) and Bravmann (1974) – that “The Nafana used these planks in the Bedu moon ceremony” (Segy 1958 (1975), p328). In other words, in two steps (1958 and 1975), Segy operates a radical re-labelling of the BM1 piece as a Bedu mask.

The same assimilation of ‘Bedu’ and ‘Sakrobundi’ takes place in the public label of a Bedu mask from a Milan private collection, for which Monti (1969, p72, pl. 33) uses the tag ‘Sakrobundi mask’. That this name is extracted from Underwood (without for that matter mentioning his source) rather than directly from Freeman, becomes clear when Monti explains that Sakrobundi is “the spirit of the forest, adorned with antelope horns [...] used by the Ashanti people in a war ritual”.

22. The ‘Abron’ nafana mask Segy saw at the National Museum of Abidjan, could be the one that was later published by Holas (1969), the (then) director of the museum (but see Bravmann 1974, p109 n17). The mask, I was told by a curator of the museum, is no longer there, because it was destroyed by insects. The name ‘Bedo’ people could either be a misapprehension of ‘Bedu’ mask or a transformation of ‘Badu’ people. As Pitt (1926) already noted, Badu is a dispersed group of Kulango who migrated (possibly in the course of the 19th century) to the east, and settled in a dozen villages in the western-central part of present-day Ghana, where they still live.

Taken together, the labels of Fagg, Segy, and Monti indicate that in the course of the 1960s Sakrobundi and Bedu were becoming formulated as part of the same mask tradition. That this led to some confusion can be attested in the ‘private’ labels of the Bondoukou plankmasks that were beginning to enter in ever increasing numbers into European and American collections from the late 1950s onwards. Overlooking the ‘private’ labels of the ‘Bedu boom’ masks, one is struck by their instability. Some labels mention a specific name, like ‘Sakrobundi’ (DeLawter Collection) or ‘Nafana’ (Metropolitan Museum of Art), sometimes in combination with ‘religious mask’ (Musée d’Ethnographie, Genève) or ‘initiation mask’ ‘Gourounsi’ (MNAN, Paris; fig 5a & b). As far as the geographical attribution is concerned, most labels seem to agree that the masks provide from Ghana, while some give further (ethnic) details, such as ‘Grunshi, Northern Ghana’ (Antwerp; Fig. 14a) or just ‘Gourounsi’ (MNAN, Paris; fig 5a & b). Finally, very few labels give any indication of the time of production. The Metropolitan Museum of Art is most vague when it says that the Bedu mask that joined their collection in 1962 is an object of the “XIX-XX Century” (Fig. 6), while the Bedu mask that entered the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1964 is dated “late 19th century” (Fig. 15) and the one of the Brooklyn Museum “early 20th century”(Fig. 4).

Considering the shakiness with which the ‘private labels’ were being composed, the ‘Bedu boom’ may have provoked a certain curatorial panic. The overall image one gets from measuring the ‘boom’ and reading these labels is that many important ethnographic museums in Europe and the USA decided to buy masks of a particular type without possessing any clear information whatsoever about their name, provenance, or history. In order to fill this distressing vacuum, curators recuperated bits and pieces of information mostly extracted from Underwood and Segy. However, the confusion over the emerging ‘Bedu-Sakrobundi’ masking tradition also provided certain opportunities. One of them was that the century-old history of the masking tradition offered considerable scope for ‘ageing’ the newly arrived objects in one’s collection. Monti (1969, p72) is one of the most resourceful in seizing this opportunity when he wraps up his ‘Sakrobundi’ label of a 216 cm tall ‘Bedu’ mask by stating that “the really old copies, like the one shown here, are extremely rare”.

That is the context in which the above-mentioned label of Fagg (1969) needs to be situated. By connecting ‘Sakrobundi’ and ‘Bedu’ (albeit without naming it Bedu) Fagg created considerable historical breathing space for an emerging Bondoukou plankmask tradition. At the same time, his rather prescriptive label supplied collectors with a firm morphological guideline (length) to rank and date the Bondoukou plankmasks. In retrospect, Fagg’s label only heralded the end of the unruliness with which collectors were composing ‘Bedu’ and ‘Sakrobundi’ labels in the 1960s.

The ‘Bedu boom’ was only properly brought under control when Williams (1968) and, above all, ‘Sieber’s follower’ Bravmann (1974) published the fieldwork data they brought back from the Bondoukou region.

Although Williams and Bravmann challenged Fagg’s gigantist theory, they provided the plankmask collectors with vital information about the name, meaning, and function of the masks.²³ As soon as these data became available, they were almost instantly included in the new and old labels and thus initiated a new series of palimpsests. Given the quantity and quality of new data that were included, one could suggest that the labels were largely renewed rather than merely amended. However, I will argue that the ‘new’ fieldwork data, particularly those on the critical issues of name and history of the plankmask traditions, only partly effaced the existing Sakrobundi labels officialised by art experts like Underwood and Fagg. Basically, the fieldwork texts overwrote the existing labels with local words that largely repeated the texts of the earlier palimpsests. This important moment in the re-officialising of the international expert labels by local voices is the subject of the following section.

9. Second palimpsests: Williams and Bravmann

The publications of Williams (1968) and Bravmann (1974, 1979) gave the formulation of the plank masquerades a new impetus.²⁴ The newly available ethnographic details on local names

23. It appears that Fagg’s ideas about the degeneration of the Bedu masks were challenged even before they were published in 1969. In a footnote, Bravmann (1974, p108, f13) mentions conversations with Fagg in 1968, during which Bravmann expressed his misgivings about Fagg’s conjecture that the tall Bedu masks were ‘tourist pieces’. Also Williams (1968, p18) mentions ‘traditional’ Bedu masks of up to 3.3 meters in length.

24. Before 1974, Bravmann published tiny bits of his fieldwork findings on Bedu in 1970 (p44, pl. 87), 1972 (p10-11), and 1973 (p18, pl. 20) – apart from his Ph.D. dissertation of 1971. These publications are important in Bravmann’s oeuvre in that they spell out his personal research programme that is arguably based on three pillars: (a) the transethnic mobility of African art and material culture (1970, 1973), (b) the participation of Muslims in, and the contribution of Islam to, what is generally called African ‘pagan’ art and ritual (1972), and (c) the study of these two phenomena through combined anthropological and historical research (1970, introduction; 1973, p9-10). In spite of their relevance, the pre-1974 publications of Bravmann are hardly mentioned in labels or in the museum literature on Bedu. In contrast, Bravmann’s book (1974) and his *African Arts* article (1979) traveled more widely and were (and are) very often referred to by African art professionals.

and expressions and fresh historical evidence provoked a wave of paratextual inscriptions on the existing labels and led to radically different ‘descriptive’ public labels. However, in spite of the general renewal which these texts signaled, they did not start from scratch but inscribed themselves in existing textualisations, partly effacing and partly reiterating and transforming them. Generally speaking, Williams and Bravmann firmly established ‘Bedu’ as the new name of the plank masquerade, and ‘the Nafana’ as its original authors. As we have seen, both terms already circulated in connection with the masquerade but without the fixity they received from the two fieldworkers. Yet the two authors were far less successful in revising other items of the the existing texts, not in the least, the persistent ‘Sakrobundi’ who is seen as forefather of Bedu.

Bedu, a genuine tradition, but how ‘old’?

The *African Arts* article by Williams (1968) portrays the Bedu masquerade as a traditional practice of the Nafana people. Regarding the morphology of Bedu masks, Williams distinguishes between the village styles of Tambi and Sorobango. In each of these styles, Williams further distinguishes between a male Bedu mask with horns and an energetic dance style, and a female Bedu mask that has a disk-like superstructure and dances more stately. Williams spends most of the article explaining the ritual context of the Bedu masquerade but does not go very far in detailing the ethnic, geographical, and historical context of the Bedu masquerade. As far as the ethnic attribution is concerned, Williams considers the Hwela (Mande) people of Sorobango as Nafana and seems entirely unaware of the fact that any other ethnic groups than the Nafana inhabit the Bondoukou region.²⁵ The mono-ethnic region in which Williams situates the Bedu tradition is geographically defined in the most vague terms as a “traditional area” located somewhere in “far west-central Ghana, extending into Côte d’Ivoire” (ibid., p18-19), and is positioned on a map that transforms the modern states of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, their roads, cities and villages into vast *terrae nullae* (see Fig. 13). The Bedu tradition is not only

25 Apart from the Nafana, Williams names three other groups that are said to belong to the same language group: the Pantera, Fantera, and Mfantera. In fact, all these are alternative renderings of ‘Panara’ and Pantarani, respectively the Dyula and Twi word for Nafana. “Some of them [Nafana]” she adds “refer to themselves as ‘Kalongos’ and call their dialect by the same name” (ibid., p19).

Undoubtedly, Williams is talking about the Kulango who form the majority of the population in the Bondoukou region and who distinguish themselves from the Nafana. Neither ‘Nafana’ nor “Kulango” were, however, unknown ethnonyms. ‘Nafana’ was, as far as I know, first used in the European literature by Delafosse (1908), while ‘Kulango’ first appeared in Clozel (1906).

geographically but also historically decontextualised by situating it solely in cyclical time, that is, in the local twelve-month calendar. Williams explains that each year Bedu is performed during the “dance moon” and finally stresses the agelessness of the Bedu tradition by opposing it to ‘modernity’. In the last paragraph of her article, Williams points out that the village of Tambi is “still [...] relatively untouched by ‘progress’” but not for long any more, she adds, because “someone recently acquired a transistor radio” (ibid., p72).

Immediately after its publication, Williams’ article showed up in several ‘private’ Bedu labels. A “wood Bedu mask” joining the collections of The Brooklyn Museum (New York) in 1968 was labelled: ‘Africa, Ivory Coast, Nafana’ with reference to Williams’ article. That the mask was dated “early 20th century” (Fig. 4b), brings out well how Williams did not impose any limitations on the masquerade’s seniority. On the contrary, by presenting Bedu as an age-old tradition which had already disappeared in Ghana and might be threatened by ‘modernity’ in Côte d’Ivoire, Williams suggested that Bedu masks were old rather than recent. In contrast, the texts by Fagg and Bravmann addressed more explicitly the historical questions surrounding the Sakrobundi and Bedu masks. As we have seen, Fagg solved the issue from his curator’s office and used all his authority as a connoisseur and an African art scholar to classify Bedu masks as recently degenerated Sakrobundi masks. The PhD student Bravmann readily disputed this categorisation (see footnote 20) with evidence he received from the elders of the village of Ouélékei.

Disentangling Sakrobundi and Bedu with the help of the elders

With regard to the ethnic, geographical, and historical context of the masquerade, the chapter of René Bravmann (1974, p101-18) on the “Bedu masking tradition” is much more precise than Williams’s article. Bravmann specifies that (part of) his research was conducted in the Bondoukou region – which he anachronistically designates by its colonial name *Cercle de Bondoukou* – and gives a rather detailed overview of its complex ethnic composition.²⁶ In contrast to Williams, Bravmann also points out that besides the Nafana, also the Kulango,

26. Already in 1959 the twenty ‘Cercles’ of Côte d’Ivoire (that since December 1958 was an independent Republic in the *Communauté française*) were abolished and replaced by four vast provinces (*départements*). In 1961 a separate East province (*Département Est*) was created within which Bondoukou was a separate administrative unit (*sous-préfecture*). This situation lasted until 1976 when Bondoukou became a province in its own right (N’Guessan-Zoukou 1990, p21-23).

Hwela, and Degha villages use Bedu masks. Finally, Bravmann addresses the historical questions surrounding Sakrobundi and Bedu and gives pride of place to “oral traditions”, more specifically to statements made by “the village elders” of the rural community of Oulike (now: Ouélékei).²⁷

The Ouélékei elders ‘intervene’ at two critical moments in Bravmann’s historical reconstruction: when documenting the ‘old’ Sakrobundi masquerade and when explaining the transition from Sakrobundi to Bedu. According to Bravmann, the elders claimed that “the Sakara-Bounou cult [...] originally included two large plank-like masks” (1974, p102) and they provided a description of a mask that is “seemingly very similar” to the “mud relief of a mask” sketched by Delafosse. On the basis of these statements Bravmann argues that Sakara-Bounou, like Bedu these days, came in pairs, that is, consisted of a male and a female mask. This strong resemblance between Sakara-Bounou and Bedu figures in a larger argument which confirms the morphological continuity between both traditions, but marks a neat break between the old Sakara-Bounou and the more recent Bedu masquerade. In this respect, the elders of Ouélékei, says Bravmann, claimed that Sakara-Bounou was suppressed by French and British religious and colonial officials in the 1910s and 1920s, because it was considered to be utterly destructive. Following this repression, Sakara-Bounou went into hiding in the course of the 1920s, and re-appeared in the 1930s in two distinct forms.²⁸ On the one hand, the elders argued, Sakarabounou continued to exist as a shrine but without masks associated with it, while, on the other hand, the Bedu mask emerged in a form identical to Sakarabounou but without its destructive potential (ibid. p102-103).

After having presented the opinions of the elders concerning the colonial rupture and the re-emergence of Bedu, Bravmann proceeds by substantiating their claims with historical evidence from Delafosse and Freeman. For the statement of the elders that the Sakara-Bounou cult included “two large plank-like masks”, Bravmann finds two types of masks in the early sources. For the female mask with the disc-like superstructure, Bravmann, as we have seen, finds evidence in the “mud relief of a mask” which Delafosse saw “on the exterior of a ‘Sakara-

27. Together with a handful of other satellite villages and settlements (*campements*), Ouélékei now forms part of the commune of Bondoukou.

28. Bravmann takes the 1930s as the *terminus post quem* for the existence of Bedu masks because of a picture, featuring two Bedu masks, published by a French traveler Clothilde Chivas Baron in 1939 and taken in Bondoukou in the course of the 1930s.

bounou' hut" (ibid., p102). Of the male mask with horns, Bravmann finds instances in the "Sakrobundi masks" collected by Armitage, and in the Sakrobundi mask seen and sketched by Freeman at Odumase in 1889. Thus, in a quite straightforward way, the elders of Ouélékei appear to confirm both early colonial sources. The question is, however, whether the elders corroborate the early sources or rather echo and validate the later reworkings of these sources, inscribed in the early objects through a series of palimpsests.

In order to deconstruct the historical dialogue which Bravmann brokered between the colonial sources and the postcolonial voices, we need to briefly recapitulate the main instances of palimpsest prior to the interrogation of the Ouélékei elders in the late 1960s. To begin with the only pieces of material historical evidence, it cannot be said that Armitage collected 'Sakrobundi' masks, but only that Underwood (1948) put the Armitage mask together with the text of Freeman and elected the BM1 piece as *the* Sakrobundi mask *par excellence*. This reduction, firmly inscribed in the first BM1 label, is entirely taken over by Bravmann (1974, p104) when he states – with a footnote reference to Underwood (1948) – that "One [Sakara-Bounou mask] is in the British Museum and is labeled 'Sakrobundi mask from Jaman'". In this way, Bravmann overwrites the original 'sacrobundi' label with words that are not only imported, but also accurately copied from (Freeman and) Underwood. Furthermore, it cannot be claimed that Delafosse spotted the "mud relief of a mask", only that Fagg (1969) stated that he did in a concise label that lacks any argumentation. This palimpsest on the 'mud relief' is confirmed by Bravmann when he reproduces Delafosse's "Bas-relief d'Oûrigué" and renames it into "Mud relief *of a mask*" (my italics; compare Fig. 11 & 12).²⁹ Finally, like Fagg, Bravmann juxtaposes the 'Sakrobundi masks' of Freeman and Delafosse and presents them as a pair. However, neither Freeman nor Delafosse mention a 'pair' of Sakrobundi masks. The 'historical pair' Bravmann and the elders speak about, only exists in the contemporary (1960s) juxtaposition of the two early texts and their respective illustrations. Moreover, this combination of a mask with horns ('male') and one with a disc-like superstructure ('female') has no material counterpart in the historical Armitage masks that are both horned plankmasks (Fig. 9 & 10), but only in the contemporary Bedu masquerades witnessed by Williams (1968) and Bravmann (1974, p116, pl.

29. It is impossible (and not terribly relevant) to know who was the first to reinvent Delafosse's mud relief as that of a mask. According to Bravmann (1974, p108, fn13), he and Fagg were discussing the matter of Sakrobundi and Bedu masks before, during and after Bravmann conducted his field research in 1966-1968. Although Bravmann may have been the first to have indicated Delafosse as a source on Sakrobundi, Fagg (1969) is the first to use Delafosse in a published text.

36; e.g. Fig. 16) in the field.

In sum, the elders of Ouélékéi do not so much corroborate what the early colonial authors said in connection with Sakrobundi, or what the early masks collected by Armitage show, but confirm profound transformations of these sources inscribed into the historical ‘Sakrobundi’ masks in a series of palimpsests authored and authorised by Underwood and Fagg. To be more precise, the elders of Ouélékéi not only confirm later *transformations* of early evidence, but also the (later) *selections* and *elections* operated on the early sources. This comes to light when we consider the historical claim of the elders about the destructive nature of Sakara-Bounou. When the Ouélékéi elders contend that Sakara-Bounou was seen by the French “religious and colonial officials” as a “ruthless organization that exploited naive villagers” (1974, p102), they not only echo Delafosse’s idiosyncratic point of view, but gainsay the positive appreciation of Sakarabounou expressed by Treich-Laplène, Monnier, and Tauxier alike. In other words, by confirming one single French source (Delafosse) and silencing *all* the other French sources, the elders of Ouélékéi neatly verify the selections and elections that constitute the partial historiographies of both Fagg and Bravmann.³⁰

In the above deconstruction, I have tried to show that if the ephemeral voices of the Ouélékéi elders succeed in covering up the early sources, they are less successful in supplanting the later texts that purified and transformed these sources. Therefore, the texts of the elders appear as mere ‘voice-overs’ that echo the palimpsests, the authoritative formulations inscribed in the ‘Sakrobundi’ mask tradition by the European connoisseurs. Apart from that, Bravmann’s text demonstrates how through labels the authority of curators is not only at work in revising historical evidence but also in setting out the discursive limits of future evidence. Labels can be said to travel far and wide. With Underwood and Fagg, the authority of the curators travels back in time. Underwood rewrites Freeman and reformulates the BM1 piece, after which Fagg and Bravmann read Delafosse’s text in combination with Underwood’s version of Freeman. In the process, the early sources are *scrambled* in the sense that the opaque texts of the later authors

30. The elders do not only contradict Tauxier’s critique of Delafosse, but also imply that he was a most cynical colonial ethnographer. If it is true that Sakarabounou was suppressed by, among others, the French colonial officials during the 1910s and 1920s, Tauxier who was stationed at Bondoukou between 1918 and 1920, should have been one of its suppressors. In other words, the elders of Ouélékéi are in fact arguing that Tauxier stamped out the Sakarabounou masquerade while in his writings he defended the cult against the derogatory misconceptions of such an eminent Africanist and top-ranking colonial agent as Delafosse.

almost entirely obscure the unstable sources which they overwrite. In a paradoxical way, from this process whereby their texts are massacred, the early authors emerge with greater authority and scientific credibility – a rise in status in which the later authors fully partake.

The curator's agency not only manifests itself in a retroactive but also in a proactive way. With Bravmann and with the scrambled texts which he takes for granted, the authority of the European label authors travels to the field and powerfully delimits the discursive space within which the vernacular voice is able to operate. Largely confirmed or slightly amended by fieldworker and interviewees alike, the curator's palimpsests travel back from the field 'voiced-over' by such local authorities as "the elders of Ouélékei". As we will see presently, these renewed texts, regenerated by empathic dialogue, local lore, and eye-witness accounts, are redistributed, and eagerly reinscribed in existing and new labels.

10. Final palimpsests on Bedu and Sakrobundi

The above reconstruction of Bravmann's fieldwork is not at all meant to discredit in any way his valuable research which resulted in a seminal book about the participation of Muslims in different masking traditions in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. In that book, it is essential to point out, the above passages about the elders of Ouélékei and the history of Sakrobundi and Bedu, in all, take up four pages of text and three pages of illustrations (1974, p102-108). This indicates well, I think, how relatively unimportant and even peripheral Bravmann's research and arguments concerning the history of Bedu were in his entire research project. However, even if they were unimportant to Bravmann at the time, the new ethnic, geographical, and historical data he provided were eagerly awaited by curators and collectors in Europe and the USA, and readily put to use in reformulating the 'Bedu boom' masks, to the extent that one can speak of a 'Bravmann turn' in Bedu labelling. Moreover, with the distribution of his new, albeit undisturbing, data on Sakrobundi and Bedu, Bravmann became the prime authority on Bedu masks and, from then onwards until now, was invited to write labels and entries for many important exhibitions that featured Bedu masks.

In this section, I will further examine how others and Bravmann himself inscribed and (consequently) reinscribed the old and new data in 'private' and public labels of Sakrobundi and Bedu masks. While reconstructing the history of labels after the 'Bravmann turn' of 1974, I will focus on the aspects of ethnic attribution and look at how, over the years, Bravmann changed his line and how other label authors went along with him. More precisely, we will observe how Bravmann gradually shifted away from a multi-ethnic to a mono-ethnic (Nafana) attribution of

the Bedu mask. This shift was followed by other authors of labels who increasingly identified their masks as Nafana. Finally, in a 1995 entry for an important exhibition catalogue, Bravmann transferred this Nafana attribution of the Bedu mask to the ‘Sakrobundi’ mask of the British Museum (BM1) and ascribed this attribution to ‘the elders of Ouélékei’. This label – the ultimate palimpsest and also the terminus of my study – shows the final collapse of all previous texts in a single ethnic voice, of all travels and places in a single village, and of all (previous and Western) authors in a group of elderly authorities.

The ‘Bravmann turn’ in Bedu labelling announces itself already in 1968. While Monti (1969) and Fagg (1969) are still using the Sakrobundi tag to identify Bedu masks, Roy Sieber and Arnold Rubin (1968, p50, pl. 42) rely on Bravmann’s research data to label a plankmask from the Paul and Ruth Tishman collection “Bedu mask”. In accordance with their own and Bravmann’s sensitivity for cross-cultural mobility of art types and styles, the authors state that the mask could have been made by “Hwela, Mo, Koulango and other groups” and put down “undetermined group” as ethnic label. By attributing an art object to an “undetermined group”, Sieber & Rubin make a theoretical statement about ‘tribal styles’. Kasfir (1984, p174) argues that in their joint publication, Sieber and Rubin (1968) react against the ‘one tribe, one style’ paradigm promoted by, among others, William Fagg.³¹ In line with the “undetermined group” label of his mentors, Bravmann (1970, p44), in his first ever published label of a Bedu mask, puts “para-tribal” as its ethnic origin.

While some curators follow the multi-ethnic line indicated by Bravmann, others pick one among the several ethnic groups he mentioned. When a mask accepted in 1968 comes into the possession of The Brooklyn Museum in 1975, the curator renumbers the object and writes in long hand “Cercle de Bondoukou” on top of the machine-typed entry of 1968 “Africa, Ivory Coast, Nafana”, and adds that “this type of mask [is] used by Nafana, Kulango + Degha” at the bottom of the card (Fig. 4a &b). Other curators also use Bravmann as a source but choose either Nafana or Mande as ethnic origin of the Bedu mask in their collection. In the records of the two Bedu masks (63.2.8 and 67.1.4) in the Musée des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie (Paris)

31. In more than one sense, both Williams’ and Bravmann’s work on masquerade traditions in the Bondoukou region articulates Sieber’s ideas about style and the need to refine style areas. Williams tries to define – what Sieber (1977, p223) would later call – “village styles” by distinguishing the Bedu masks of Tambi and Sorobango. Also and like Bravmann, Williams identifies the Bedu sculptor Siriki Ouattara of Sorobango, and thus opens the way to determine what Sieber called “the styles of individual carvers” (idem).

“Gourounsi, Ghana” is crossed out and replaced by “Nafana; Cercle de Bondoukou, Côte d'Ivoire” (Fig. 5a & b). At the Ethnographic Museum of Antwerp the index card for a Bedu mask (62.53.2) composed before 1974 locates the object in “Region: Ghana (North); Tribe: Grunshi” (Fig. 14a). A post-1974 index card for another Bedu mask in the same collection reads “Region: Ivory Coast, Cercle de Bondoukou; Tribe: Mandé” (Fig. 14b).

For reasons that are beyond our present interest, this multi-ethnic approach of Bedu is gradually discarded, not in the least by Bravmann himself who, in other texts than his Bedu chapter (1974), increasingly insists on designating the Nafana as the creators of the Bedu masquerading tradition. In the Bedu chapter, Bravmann (1974, p103) is still very cautious in locating the place of origin of the Bedu masks and ventures no further than a regional – and thus ‘para-ethnic’ – origin, when he notes that:

“It was about the same time [1930s], according to the Oulike elders, that the first Bedu masks appeared in the area.”

Already in 1979 this is reformulated in terms of a precise ethnic origin.

“*Bedu* masquerades, developed by the Nafana after the demise of the Sakrobundi tradition, ...” (Bravmann 1979, p51; original italics)

Much later, this ethnic attribution of Bedu is supplemented with a precise geographical one:

“...the origins of the *bedu* go back no further than the 1930s to the Nafana village of Oulike” (1993, p56; original italics)

The gradual election of the Nafana as the Bedu makers/users *par excellence*, becomes even more clear when comparing two labels of the same Bedu mask, that of the Tishman collection. As we have seen, Bravmann supplies the data which prompt Sieber and Rubin (1968, p50, pl. 42) to assign the Tishman mask to an “undetermined [ethnic] group”. More than a decade later when Bravmann (1981, p29) himself writes a label for the same mask, he puts down “Nafana” as ethnic attribution, while explaining that the Bedu masquerade “served to reassert time-honoured Nafana values” (ibid., p30). With the latter statement, Bravmann entirely discards the ‘para-ethnic’ nature of the Bedu mask and embeds it into ethnic-specific cultural values.

Like in many other labels, this mono-ethnic attribution also pops up in a Bedu label written by the notorious ‘one tribe one style’ author William Fagg (1988) when he is a consultant for the

London auction house Christie's.³² The 'Fine Nafana mask' of 1.3 meters in length from a Swiss private collection is advertised by Fagg as an old piece "fall[ing] within the limits of the tradition" (1988, p39). When four years later the mask has joined a German private collection, it is published again with a label written by African art connoisseur Schaedler (1992, p62). The latter makes an interesting mix of Bravmann's suggestions about the origin of Bedu and Fagg's conjectures about the rise of Bedu gigantism, to conclude that this "Nafana mask [...] is probably one of the few existing masks of the earlier period."

Although the above example may illustrate how a mono-ethnic attribution assists in the search of collectors and their scribes for origins, authenticity and seniority, I remain interested in the textual dimension of these market-driven reinventions. More particularly, we cannot fail to notice how Bravmann entextualises his own texts and extracts solid claims and firm attributions from the margins of his own research, from side-stories and unstable local statements. This can also be witnessed in a series of public labels which Bravmann produces of the BM1 piece, that, as I pointed out earlier, has become a celebrity object treasured by many a temporary exhibition curator as well as at the British Museum itself.

Bravmann's first texts on Sakrobundi, notably the 1974 chapter, feature a range, albeit a limited one, of earlier authors such as Freeman, Delafosse, and Underwood. Already in 1979 Freeman is put forward as key-informant and celebrated as one of the few colonial authors who provides a description of a Sakrobundi performance (Bravmann 1979, p44). Together with the rising importance of Freeman and to a lesser extent Delafosse, Underwood almost entirely disappears from the public labels of the BM1 piece. For the prestigious exhibition 'Africa: the art of a continent', Bravmann (1995, p452-3) repeats the story of Freeman and Delafosse, but further scrambles both their texts when stating that Delafosse documented the "*sakrobundi* mask" in the "Nafana community of Oulike". This observation underwrites the ethnic attribution of the BM1 piece as 'Nafana' and firmly connects it to Ouélékei, whose elders Bravmann quotes again saying that, after colonial repression "it [Sakrobundi] was put to rest".

I consider Bravmann's 'Art of a Continent' label of the BM1 piece as the ultimate palimpsest, expressly because all traces of earlier palimpsests have been (almost) totally erased. This rather extensive public label features three key-informants, Freeman, Delafosse and the elders of

32. Many 'private' labels prefer the ethnic attribution 'Nafana' over a multi-ethnic one (see e.g. fig 3, 4, 5, and 6). Conversely, mono-ethnic attributions to the Kulango or the Mo ethnic groups whom Bravmann designates as 'copiers' are entirely absent from my corpus of labels.

Ouélékei. Through pithy quotes and effective recontextualisation, the pristine voices of all ‘three’ authors speak to the label reader with a conspicuous directness about what they witnessed or simply know. I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter that these voices lack the authenticity attributed to them and largely talk along the lines and within the limits put down by other authors. Although they are absent from the body text, those authors who transform or regiment the undecided observations and hesitant statements into witness-accounts and historical erudition can, however, be found in the bibliography. In the latter, we find no direct references to the texts of Freeman or Delafosse, and, more understandably perhaps, to the elders of Ouélékei, whose voices are made so immediately accessible in the label’s body text, but only to the brokers and manufacturers of historical and authoritative voice: Underwood (1953), Fagg (1969), and Bravmann (1974, 1979).

Thus, in spite of the radicalness of the implosion of voices, the (self-)effacement of the palimpsest is not complete. In the label there is a suture formed by the blank space that connects the text of the label with the bibliography and my often painstaking scrutiny had no other ambition than to expose this suture, to amplify the only trace that stains the flagrant transparency to which the label aspires, and thus to problematise, almost one century after Boas, the transparency of knowledge production and the accessibility of historical and ethnographic sources.

11. Concluding remarks: parallel lives, unequal opportunities

In this chapter I have made an attempt to unravel the formulation of the Sakrobundi and Bedu masks and masking traditions in European and American texts over the last century. In this formulation process, I have foregrounded ‘labels’ (in many forms) as a special category of texts. In one sense, labels can be said to constitute intertextual ‘knots’ in which earlier and remote (more elaborate or otherwise more hesitant and ‘beginning’) texts are quoted, summarised, and generally contracted, and which serve as a starting points for later and distant other texts and labels. But these ‘knots’, I argue, do more than tying together different texts, they also tie together texts and objects. By serving as the object’s prime document (proof?) of identification, labels firmly inscribe texts into objects. Looking at *what* labels minimally inscribe into the objects, one can observe that apart from making the object unique (through identification), they also make it historical – situated in a relevant group of successive objects – and comparable – situated in a relevant group of similar or related objects. After having established, with the help of Davis, that creating historicity and comparability is what the discipline of art history is all about, I have characterised labels as the primary production sites of the art-historicity of objects.

The key metaphor that guides the above analytical undertaking is that of palimpsest, situated, according with the three ‘interventions’ of labels, within three different relationships: between object and text, between text and text, and between a texts and objects as ‘traditions’.

The first and perhaps most evident way in which a label functions as a palimpsest is in relation to the object. A label inscribes a name/identity into the object and thereby either partly erases and partly supplants previous, non-existent or otherwise emerging identities. The case of the late-nineteenth century Sakrobundi is an elucidating one because it shows how first palimpsests on objects (such as the one by Underwood) however unstable and confused they may be, have a lasting impact on the object and are not easily effaced, let alone, recommenced. The case of the ‘elders of Ouélékei’ strongly indicates that, instead, these first palimpsests are often confirmed and even thrown into sharp relief in secondary palimpsests in which the previous ones are restated and re-inscribed by new and ‘other’ voices.

In the latter case, we are already considering palimpsests of the second kind, that is, in their relation to previous or other texts/palimpsests. The lengthy reconstruction of the formulation of Sakrobundi and Bedu provides instances of manifold transformative processes of (in Genette’s terminology) ‘paratextuality’. Among these, I have been particularly interested in processes of ‘entextualisation’ because they bring out more clearly the power play involved in the reformulation of other texts and labels. The example of Bravmann’s ‘ultimate’ label of the BM1

piece offers the occasion to demonstrate that when Bravmann cites ‘Freeman’, he is in fact citing Fagg’s reformulation of Underwood’s reformulation of Freeman. The power play, I argue, resides in the fact that Bravmann relies on the authoritative interventions of art world power figures such as Underwood and Fagg in order to transform the unassuming voice of Freeman into a firm art historical source. Labels as palimpsests thus leads us to detect how the brokerage of historically distant – and in the case of the ‘elders of Ouélékei’, geographically distant – voices is almost entirely effaced from the label while what these remote voices say is all the more strongly usurped. This leads us to wonder to what extent existing and established formulations prescribe what other voices will be able to say.

The third and final sense in which labels are palimpsests, brings together the findings concerning the two other dimensions. Through their intimate connection with objects, labels bring to bear upon them an extensive text complex, that formulates their art-historicity. Connected to the bi-directionality of recontextualisation, I pointed out that this art-historicity is not only seen as external but also projected as inherent to the objects. As we have seen, Davis problematised this projection by characterising it as a palimpsest. This crucial point was given only cursory attention in the preceding analysis. In the remainder of this section, I want to elaborate this issue further while making some final reflections on ethnographic (art) objects, anthropology, and museums.

More than a decade ago, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) radically foregrounded the critical issue of decontextualisation.

“Ethnographic objects are [...] artifacts created by ethnographers. Objects become ethnographic by virtue of being defined, segmented, detached, and carried away by ethnographers.” (1991, p387)

“The artfulness of the ethnographic object is an art of excision, of detachment, an art of the excerpt” (ibid., p388)

The recontextualisation of ‘excerpted’ objects implies:

“exert[ing] strong cognitive control over the objects, asserting the power of classification and arrangement to other large numbers of artifacts from diverse cultural and historical settings and to position them in relation to one another.” (ibid., p390)

Since this article and the volume in which it featured (Karp & Lavine 1991) were published, the issue of museums as power-laden institutions was further developed (see e.g. Rice & Yenawine 2002) and its implications for museum anthropology, about one century after Boas’ museum adventure, was formulated as follows:

“Before the museum can serve as a voice for anthropology, interwoven issues of power must be resolved” (Haas 1996, pS1)

The kind of ‘resolutions’ that we have seen over the past years go basically in two directions that either seek to expose the power-ladenness of museums, collections, and exhibitions or remedy it by introducing democratic participation. When Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2000, p15) asks “What if museums were prohibited from ‘exhibiting the Other’, but required to exhibit their collections?”, she was aware that recently curators had been reflecting on the museum as an “autopoetic or self-reproducing system” with its own structures and tactics that had for too long remained hidden from public inspection (Fehr 1997 in Fehr s.d.).

A remedy of a different order summons museums to relinquish “power and authority in representing cultural diversity” and becoming “common meeting grounds for all cultures and forums for bringing cross-cultural understanding to a wide public audience” (Haas 1996, pS1). This idea of the museum as contact or conflict zone (Clifford 1997, p188-219) consists in the museum sharing out authority or having its curatorial power contested by relevant groups and individuals who are either the subject of representation or feel otherwise concerned about it (Appelbaum s.d.; Wastiau 2000).

In order to more clearly situate both domains of enquiry and the respective remedies they propose, we return to the quote of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in which ethnographic objects are presented as excerpts. These ‘excerpted objects’ correspond with my category of ‘labelled’ objects, that is they form more or less part of an art historical ensemble of selected texts and collected objects. Referring to what Davis said about art-historical palimpsests, one realises that this ensemble has its ‘local’ counterpart in a parallel category of ‘unexcerpted’ or ‘unlabelled’ objects upon which the art-historicity created with/on the excerpted objects is brought to bear. In other words, disentangling the palimpsest in the sense given to it by Davis, enables us to

perceive two parallel ‘traditions’: one made up of excerpted (labelled, collected, photographed, or otherwise represented) scetched objects and their texts, and one made up of ‘unexcerpted’ (uncollected or otherwise ethnographically uncaptured) objects, as yet unheard explications of cultural meaning and historical development. Using this distinction, we can begin to see that the above problematisation of (power-laden) recontextualisation as well as its remedies are situated in the register consisting of the labelled objects and the institutions in which they linger. The question needs therefore to be asked whether this one-sided problematising and remedying does not obscure as much as it exposes, and democratises at home what it represses in the remote or past sites in which it is grounded?

The invention of the Bedu ‘tradition’ may help us to locate the problem at hand. What do we know, or more precisely what data are available on the local Bedu tradition? When answering that question one is bound to realise that the ‘Bedu tradition’ is a very ephemeral phenomenon altogether, made up of very fragmentary descriptions of masks and masquerades, a dozen of terms and quotes, and hardly anything at all on what it represents, its institutionalisation, functions, etc. Nothing of this evanescence can, however, be observed in the parallel ‘tradition’ of labelled Bedu masks. That ‘tradition’ knows its predecessor (Sakrobundi), its precise date and place of foundation, its history of trans-ethnic dispersal, and essentials on meaning and function. Moreover, this tradition is ‘fully’ represented in Western collections in which there are fine exemplars of Bedu’s predecessors, many masks from the original (Nafana) creators, and a few from the later Bedu diaspora in other ethnic communities around the region.

The difference in assumed factualness between the ‘traditions’ at both sides of the divide, forces us to consider the hegemonic grip of the international tradition on the local one. Remedying this inequality would not profit, I believe, from re-introducing the idea of the museums as ‘evidentiary institutions’. This solution would anyway fire back in the form of the question: ‘What counts as evidence in formulating objects and object traditions?’ The history of the formulation of the Sakrobundi and Bedu masquerades brings out the fact that however foregrounded as new evidence, local bits of oral history are unlikely to destabilise the traditions that have been built into art-historical literature and inscribed into the objects through labels.

Anyway, making one tradition serve – a metaphor that effectively expresses subjection – as evidence for another, again effaces the gap and the inequality between them. Instead, we may want to look into the opposite direction and choose to foreground that imbalance. The alternative solution may in fact have been offered by Boas about one century ago when he proposed in letting the ‘scientific’ labour of documentation and interpretation – that, as we have seen, is often

very visible in 'private' labels – resurfacing in public labels. With it the label may become longer, more complicated and even somewhat disturbing to read, in other words it may have to alter its established 'regime of language' (Kroskrity 2000). In return, the 'Boas label' may allow us to visualise instead of obscuring the gap that it constantly attempts to cross without ever succeeding.

References

- Altman, J. C., B. H. Hunter & S. Ward 2002 *Some competition and consumer issues in the indigenous visual arts industry* [Technical Report Discussion Paper no.235, CAEPR, Australian National University], <http://eprints.anu.edu.au/archive/00001127/> (12/04/2004).
- Appadurai, Arjun (ed.) 1988 *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Appelbaum, Ralph s.d. 'Anthropology, history and the changing role of the museum', www.raany.com/anthropologylecture.html (3/03/2004).
- Bal, Mieke 1994 'Telling objects: a narrative perspective on collecting'. In: J. Elsner & R. Cardinal (ed.) *The cultures of collecting*, pp. 97-115. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bauman, Richard & Charles Briggs 1990 'Poetics and performance as critical perspectives on language and social life', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, pp. 59-88.
- Beidelman, T. O. 1997 'Promoting African art: the catalogue to the exhibit of African art at the Royal Academy of Arts, London', *Anthropos*, 92, pp. 3-20.
- Belting, Hans 1994 *Likeness and presence: a history of the image before the era of art*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bennett, Tony 1995 *The birth of the museum: history, theory, politics*. London: Routledge.
- Benquey, Capitaine 1906 'Notice sur la ville de Bondoukou'. In: F. J. Clozel (ed.) *Dix ans à la Côte d'Ivoire*, pp. 185-202. Paris: Augustin Challamel.
- Bonnet, Doris 1984 'Biographie et travaux de Louis Tauxier', *Journal des Africanistes*, 54/2, pp. 107-114.
- Bowdich, 1819 *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*. London: Murray.
- Bravmann, René 1970 *West African sculpture* [Catalogue for an exhibition held at the Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, February-March 1970]. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Bravmann, René 1972 'Masquerades among the urban Dyula of the Voltaic Basin', *Proceedings of the Conference on Manding Studies*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies. 16p.
- Bravmann, René 1973 *Open frontiers: the mobility of Art in Black Africa*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

- Bravmann, René 1974 *Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa* [African Studies Series 11]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bravmann, René 1979 'Gur and Manding masquerades in Ghana', *African Arts*, 13/1, pp. 44-51, 98.
- Bravmann, René 1981a 'Mask (Bedu)'. In: Susan M. Vogel (ed.) *For spirits and kings: African art in the Paul and Ruth Tishman collection*, pp. 29-30. New York: H. N. Abrams.
- Bravmann, René 1981b 'Seeking the sense of history: art historians in Africa'. In: D. I. Ray, P. Shinnie & D. Williams (eds.) *Into the '80s : proceedings of the 11th annual congress of the Canadian Association for African Studies*, pp. 122-129. Vancouver: Tantalus Research.
- Bravmann, René 1993 'Bondoukou: the artistry of a city and countryside'. In: J. P. Barbier (ed.) *Art of Côte d'Ivoire: from the collections of the Barbier-Mueller Museum*, Vol II, pp. 54-57, 116-126. Geneva: The Barbier Mueller Museum.
- Bravmann, René 1995 'Mask (Sakrobundi)'. In: Tom Phillips (ed.) *Africa: the art of a continent*, pp. 452-453. London: British Museum.
- Breckenridge, Carol 1989 'The aesthetics and politics of colonial collecting: India at world fairs', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31/2, pp. 195-216.
- Bouquet, Mary 1988 *Melanesian artefacts: postmodernist reflections*. Lisbon: Museu de Ethnologia.
- Bullock, Fred 1912 *La fondation de la colonie française de la Côte d'Ivoire*. London: Le Courrier de Londres.
- Chivas Baron, Clothilde 1939 *Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Éditions Larose.
- Claridge, William Walton 1915 *A history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (2 vols.). London: Murray.
- Clifford, James 1985 'Objects and selves – an afterword'. In: G. W. Stocking, Jr. (ed.) *Objects and others: essays on museums and material culture* [History of anthropology, 3], pp. 236- 246. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Clifford, James 1997 'Museums as contact zones'. In: J. Clifford *Routes: travel and translation in the late twentieth century*, pp. 188-219. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Clozel, F. J. 1906 *Dix ans à la Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Augustin Challamel.
- Clozel, F. J. & B. Villamur 1902 *Les coùtumes indigènes de la Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Challamel.

- Corps sculptés, corps parés, corps masqués. Chefs d'oeuvre de Côte d'Ivoire* [Catalogue of an exhibition at the Grand Palais, Paris] 1989. Paris: Galeries nationales du Grand Palais.
- Cruikshank, Julie 1996 Oral tradition and material culture: multiplying meanings of 'words' and 'things', *Anthropology Today*, 8/3, 5-9.
- Davidson-Houston, Wilfred 1896 'Captain Davidson Houston to the Acting Governor' [mission report, 17/8/1896]. CO 96 No 295 Confidential. London: Public Record Office.
- Davis, Whitney 1989 'Finding symbols in history'. In: H. Morphy (ed) *Animals into art*, pp. 170-189. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Davis, Whitney 1993 'Beginning the history of art', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51/3, pp. 327-350.
- Delafosse, Maurice 1901 *Sur les traces probables de la civilisation égyptienne et d'hommes de race blanche à la Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Masson.
- Delafosse, Maurice 1908 *Les Frontières de la Côte d'Ivoire, de la Côte d'Or et du Sudan*. Paris: Masson.
- Dias, Nélia 1997 'Cultural objects/natural objects: on the margins of categories and the ways of display', *Visual Resources*, 13, pp. 33-47.
- Donne, J. B. 1972 'The Celia Barclay Collection of African Art', *The Connoisseur*, pp. 88-95.
- Duncan, Carol & Alan Wallach 1980 'The universal survey museum', *Art History*, 3/4, pp. 448-469.
- Dupuis, Joseph 1824 *Journal of a residence in Ashantee*. London: Printed for Henry Colburn.
- Durrans, Brian 'Behind the scenes: museums and selective criticism', *Anthropology Today*, 8/4, pp. 11-15.
- Fabian, Johannes 1983 *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fagg, William 1968 *African tribal images: the Katherine White Reswick collection*. Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art.
- Fagg, William 1969 *African Sculpture*. Washington: H.K. Press.
- Fagg, William 1988 'A fine Nafana mask'. In: *Sale: March 24th 1988*, pp. 38-39. London: Christie's.

- Fehr, Michael s.d. 'Text and context: developing a museum by reflecting its history'.
www.keom.de/kuenstler/texte/text_context_e.html.
- Freeman, Richard Austin 1898 *Travels and Life in Ashanti and Jaman*. London: Archibald Constable.
- Gonseth, Marc-Olivier, Jacques Hainard & Roland Kaehr 2002 *Le musée cannibale*. Neuchâtel: Musée d'ethnographie.
- Goodwin, Charles 1994 'Professional vision', *American Anthropologist* 96/3, pp. 606-633.
- Gell, Alfred 1998 *Art and agency: an anthropological theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Genette, Gérard 1982 *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré*. Paris : Seuil.
- Haas, Jonathan 1996 'Power, objects, and a voice for anthropology', *Current Anthropology*, 37, Supplement, pp. 1-22.
- Hart, William 1995 'African art in the National Museum of Ireland', *African Arts*, 28/2, pp.43-47.
- Holas, Bohumil 1969 *Masques ivoiriens*. Paris: Geuthner.
- Ingold, Tim (ed.) 1996 'Aesthetics is a cross-cultural category'. In: *Key Debates in Anthropology*, 1993, pp. 251-293. London: Routledge.
- Jacknis, Ira 1985 'Franz Boas and exhibits: on the limitations of the museum method of anthropology'. In: G. W. Stocking, Jr. (ed.) *Objects and others: essays on museums and material culture* [History of Anthropology, 3], pp. 75- 111. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Jones, Anna Laura 1993 'Exploding canons: the anthropology of museums', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 22, pp. 201-220.
- Karp, Ivan & Steven Lavine (eds.) 1991 *Exhibiting cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kasfir, Sidney 1984 'One tribe, one style? Paradigms in the historiography of African art', *History in Africa*, 11, pp. 163-93.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara 1991 'Objects of Ethnography'. In: I. Karp & S. Lavine (eds.) *Exhibiting cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display*, pp. 386-443. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara 2001 'Reflections'. Paper presented at the conference *Exhibiting the other: museums of mankind and the politics of cultural representation* (Paris, November 2000).
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara 2001 'Reflections'. In: F. Myers (ed.) *The empire of things: regimes of value and material culture*, pp. 257-268. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- Kroskrity, Paul 2000 'Regimenting languages: language ideological perspectives'. In: P. Kroskrity (ed.) *Regimes of language: ideologies, politics, and identities*, pp. 1-34. Santa Fe: School of American Research Advanced Seminar.
- Lewis, Ralph 1993 *Museum curatorship in the National Park Service 1904-1982*. Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior.
- Lurie, Nancy Oestereich 1981 'Museumland Revisited', *Human Organization*, 40/2, pp. 180-187.
- Maclaud, Dr. 1896 'Notes sur les Pakhalla', *Anthropologie*, 7, pp. 18-34.
- MacGaffey, Wyatt 1998 "'Magic, or as we usually say, Art": a framework for comparing European and African art'. In: E. Schildkrout & C. Keim (eds.) *The scramble for art in Central Africa*, pp. 217-235. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McLeod, Malcolm 1991 'Art museums or ethnographic museums', *Arte in Africa*, 2, pp. 92-96.
- Monnier, Marcel 1893 'La mission Binger à la Côte d'Ivoire et au Soudan méridional', *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie Commerciale de Bordeaux*, (1) XVI, 7, pp. 161-177 and (2) XVI, 8, pp. 193-211.
- Monnier, Marcel 1894 *France Noire*. Paris: Plon.
- Monti, Franco 1969 *African Masks*. Transl. A. Hale. London: Paul Hamlyn.
- Morphy, Howard 2001 'Seeing Aboriginal art in the gallery', *Humanities Research*, 8/1. [http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/publications/hr/issue1_2001/article05.htm; 5/11/2003]
- Moulin, Raymonde 1986 'Le marché et le musée: la constitution des valeurs artistiques contemporaines', *Revue française de sociologie*, 27, pp. 369-393.
- Muller, Jean-Claude 1999 'Sous le masque africain, quelques faux-semblants'. In: M.-O. Gonseth, J. Hainard et R. Kaehr (eds.) *L'art c'est l'art*, pp. 45-60. Neuchâtel, Musée d'Ethnographie.

- Myers, Fred 2001 (ed.) *The empire of things: regimes of value and material culture*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- N'Guessan-Zoukou, L. 1990 *Régions at régionalisation en Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris : L'Harmattan.
- O'Hanlon, Michael 2001 'The field of collecting: back to the future', *Folk: Journal of the Danish Ethnographic Society*, 43, pp. 211-220.
- O'Hanlon, Michael & Robert Welsch (eds.) 2000 *Hunting the gatherers: ethnographic collectors, agents, and agency in Melanesia 1870s-1930s*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Pels, Peter 1997. 'The anthropology of colonialism: culture, history, and the emergence of Western governmentality', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 163-183.
- Peltier, Philippe 2000 Les musées: art ou ethnographique?. In: D. Taffin (ed.) *Du musée colonial au musée des cultures du monde*, pp. 205-218. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose.
- Picton, John, *et al.* 1994 'A tribute to William Fagg', *African Arts*, 27, 26-33.
- Pitt, Walter J. 1926 'The Bedu people, their history, customs and language', *The Gold Coast Review*, II, 2, pp. 277-284.
- Price, Sally 1989 *Primitive art in civilized places*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ray, Benjamin 2000 *African art & the web museum* (Course Syllabus, University of Virginia) [www.aarweb.org/syllabus/syllabi/r/rela345_00.html; 10/01/2002]
- Rice, Danielle & Philip Yenawine 2002 'A conversation on object-centered learning in art museums', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 45, 4, pp. 289-301.
- Schaedler, Karl-Ferdinand 1992 *Götter, Geister, Ahnen: Afrikanische Skulpturen in deutschen Privatsammlungen*. München: Klinkhardt & Biermann.
- Schildkrout, Enid & Curtis Keim (eds.) 1998 *The scramble for art in Central Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, James 1990 *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Segy, Ladislav 1958 (1975) *African sculpture*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Segy, Ladislav 1976 *Masks of Black Africa*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Shelton, Anthony 1992 'The recontextualization of culture in UK museums', *Anthropology Today*, 8/5, pp. 11-16.

- Sieber, Roy 1977 'Traditional arts of Black Africa'. In: P. Martin & P. O'Meara (eds.) *Africa*, pp. 221-242. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Sieber, Roy and Arnold Rubin 1968 *Sculpture of Black Africa: The Paul Tishman collection*. Los Angeles: County Museum of Art.
- Sieber, Roy and Roslyn Adala Walker 1987 *African Art and the Cycle of Life*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Silverstein, Michael & Greg Urban 1996. 'The natural history of discourse'. In: M. Silverstein & G. Urban (eds.) *Natural histories of discourse*, pp. 1-17. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Steiner, Chris 1994 *African Art in Transit*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stoller, Paul 2003 'Circuits of African art/paths of wood: exploring an anthropological trail', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75, 2, pp. 207-234.
- Tauxier, Louis 1912 *Le Noir du Soudan: pays Mossi et Gourounsi*. Paris: Larose.
- Tauxier, Louis 1921 *Le Noir de Bondoukou: Koulangos, Dyoulas, Abrons, etc.* Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- Tauxier, Louis 1937 *Moeurs et histoire des Peuls*. Paris: Payot.
- Terray, Emmanuel 1979 'Un mouvement de réforme religieuse dans le royaume abron précolonial: Le culte de Sakrobundi', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, XIX, 1-4, pp. 125-142.
- Terray, Emmanuel 1995 *Une histoire du royaume abron du Gyaman: Des origines à la conquête coloniale* [Collection 'Hommes et Sociétés']. Paris: Karthala.
- Thomas, Nicolas 1991 *Entangled objects: exchange, material culture, and colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Underwood, Leon 1948 *Masks of West Africa*. London: Alec Tiranti.
- Vansina, Jan 1984. *Art history in Africa*. London: Longman.
- Visonà, Monica Blackmun 1987 'The limitations of labels', *African Arts*, 20/4, pp. 38.
- Wastiau, Boris 2000 *ExitCongoMuseum: an essay on the 'social life' of the masterpieces of the Tervuren Museum*. Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa.
- Welsch, Robert 2000 'One time, one place, three collections: colonial processes and the shaping of some museum collections from German New Guinea'. In: M. O'Hanlon & R. Welsch (eds.)

Hunting the gatherers: ethnographic collectors, agents, and agency in Melanesia 1870s-1930s, pp. 155-179. Oxford: Berghahn.

Wilks, Ivor 1989 (1975) *Asante in the nineteenth century: the structure and evolution of a political order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Willett, Frank 1991 'Art galleries: the last bastion of colonialism'. *Arte in Africa*, 2, pp. 184-190.

Williams, Drid 1968 'The dance of the Bedu Moon', *African Arts*, II, 1, pp. 18-21, 72.

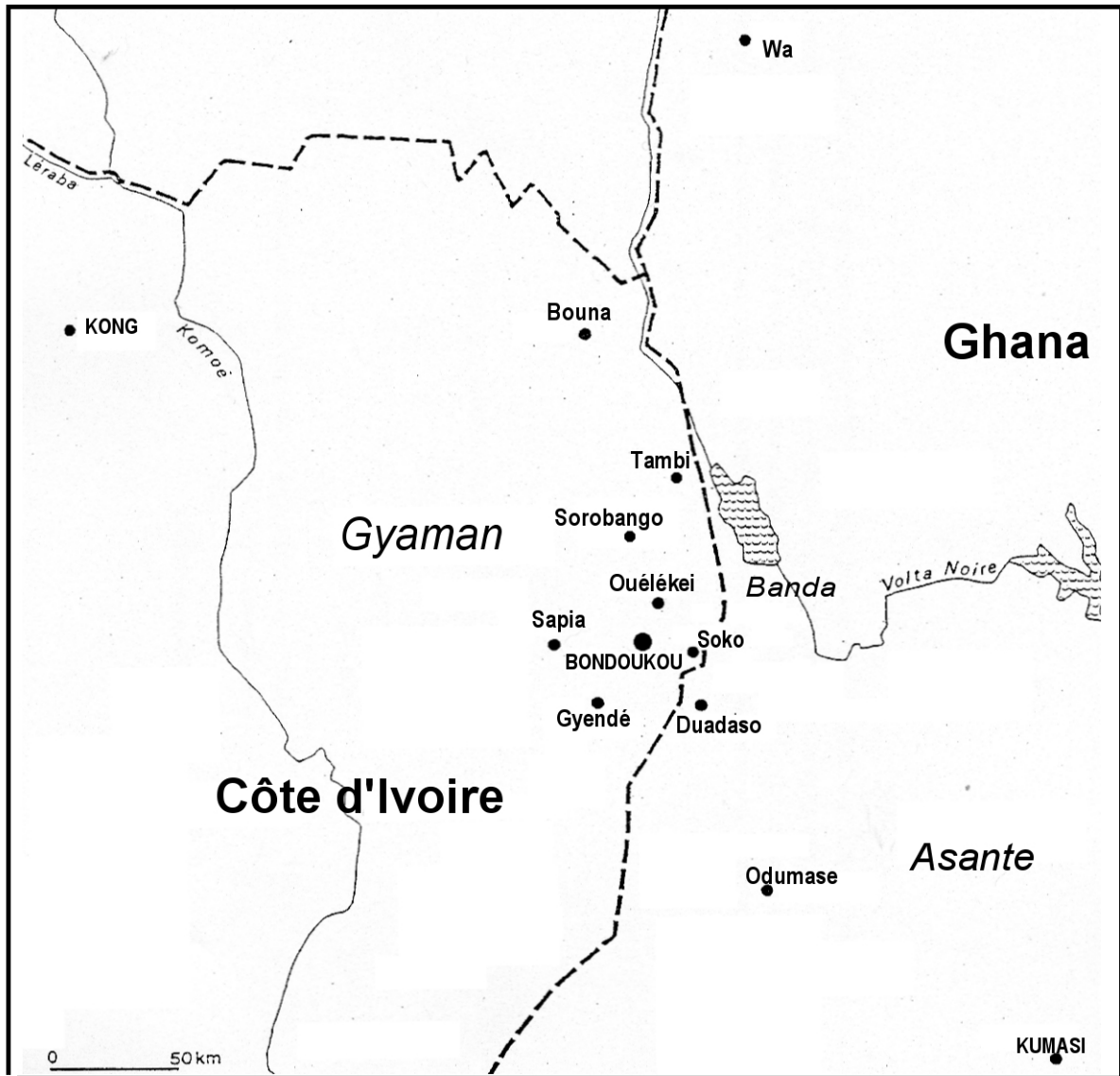
ANNEX: Maps and Figures

- Map Map of Bondoukou region [after Terray (1979, p145)].
- Figure 1 ‘Overview’ web label of Bedu mask (1969.119), The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.
- Figure 2 ‘More information’ web label of Bedu mask (1969.119), The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.
- Figure 3 Accession card of Bedu mask (1969.119), The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.
- Figure 4 Accession card of Bedu mask (75.83), The Brooklyn Museum, New York.
a. card 2
b. card 1
- Figure 5 a. Accession card of Bedu mask (MNAN 63-2-8), Musée des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie, Paris.
b. Accession card of Bedu mask (MNAN 67-1-4), Musée des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie, Paris.
- Figure 6 Accession card of Bedu mask (LP 62.19 R), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Figure 7 Illustrations of Sakrobundi masks in Freeman (1898)
a. Sketches of ‘Sakrobundi fetish man’.
b. Sketches of ‘Sakrobundi mask of painted wood representing an antelope’s head, from Diadasu’.
c. Sketch of ‘Sakrobundi mask of painted wood, from Diadasu’.
d. Photograph of ‘Sakrobundi mask of polished black wood, from Jimini’.
- Figure 8 ‘Dancing mask (Bontuku, Gaman Country)’, collected and donated by Wilfred Davidson-Houston in 1899 to the National Museum of Ireland (Loan 359.9a), Dublin.
- Figure 9 Mask ‘worn in the sacrobundi secret society’, collected by Cecil Armitage and since 1934 in the British Museum (AF 1934-2), London.

- Figure 10 'Sakrobundi Mask', collected by Cecil Armitage and since 1978 in the British Museum (AF 1978 AF 22.834), London.
- Figure 11 Page 121 of Delafosse (1908) showing sketches made by Delafosse at the village of Ouélékei.
- Figure 12 Reproduction of sketches by Delafosse in Bravmann (1974, p103).
- Figure 13 Map showing the area where the Bedu masking tradition is found, in Williams (1968, p21)
- Figure 14 a. In:dex card of Bedu mask (A.E. 62.53.2) in Ethnografisch Museum, Antwerp.
b. In:dex card of Bedu mask (A.E. 62.49.3) in Ethnografisch Museum, Antwerp.
- Figure 15 Label of Bedu mask (64.108) in The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.
- Figure 16 Photograph of male and female Bedu mask performing at the village of Sorobango (1967), published in Bravmann (1974, p116).

Annex Maps & Figures

Map of Bondoukou Region



Map of Bondoukou region [after Terray (1979, p145)].

The Cleveland Museum of Art

Explore

Africa << Previous object Next object >>

Mask (Bedu)

Overview

More Information



Level 2

- Africa
- Ancient & Islamic
- Contemporary Art
- Decorative Arts & Sculpture
- Medieval & Armor Court
- Painting

Search Online Collections

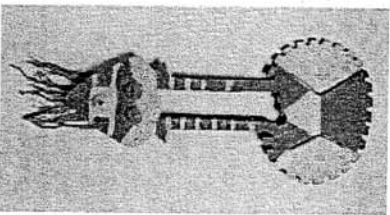
- Advanced Search
- Search Help
- A-Z of Artists

Museum Level 1

Museum Lower Level

Rotating Collections

Online Tours



Mask (Bedu)
 Africa, Ivory Coast, Natana, Bonduku area, 20th century
 c. 1940
 1969.119
 Not on display

- Order a study photograph of this object
- License this image

During the lunar month known as the "Bedu dance moon," paired male and female maskers danced nightly to purify, bless and heal the community in preparation for the new year. This mask represents a female, surmounted by a serrated disk suggestive of the moon. The maskers dance and lead the assembled audience in a series of playful songs of abuse that diffuse tensions and conflicts in the society. Seen looming over the crowd in the moonlight, the mask's dramatic silhouette and bold geometric patterns and dotted patterns must have created an impressive sight.

Search | Explore | What's On | Contact Us
 Copyright © The Cleveland Museum of Art 2002

Figure 1. 'Overview' web label of Bedu mask (1969.119), The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.

The Cleveland Museum of Art



Explore



Search Online Collections

- [Advanced Search](#)
- [Search Help](#)
- [A-Z of Artists](#)

[Africa](#) << [Previous object](#) [Next object](#) >>

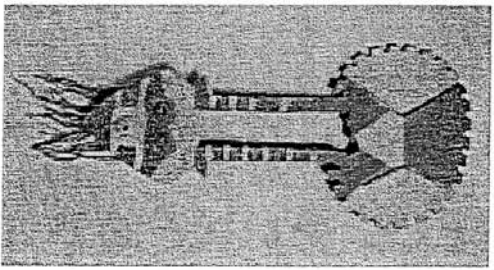
Mask (Bedu)

[Overview](#)

- [Museum Level 2](#)
 - [Africa](#)
 - [Ancient & Islamic](#)
 - [Contemporary Art](#)
 - [Decorative Arts & Sculpture](#)
 - [Medieval & Armor Court](#)
 - [Painting](#)
- [Museum Level 1](#)
 - [Art of the Americas](#)
 - [Asian Art](#)
 - [Photography](#)
 - [Special Exhibitions](#)
- [Museum Lower Level](#)
 - [Asian Art](#)

[Rotating Collections](#)

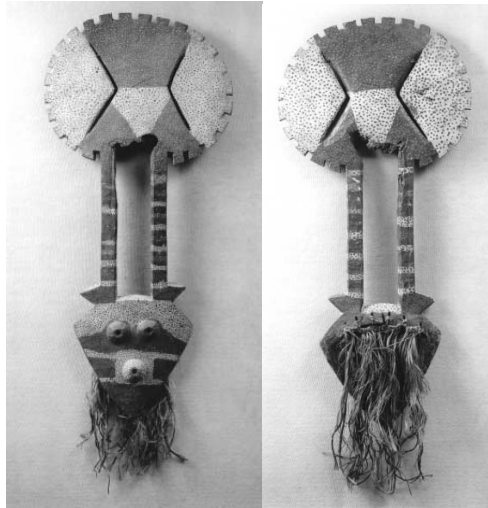
[Online Tours](#)



[More Information](#)

Title: Mask (Bedu)
Maker: Africa, Ivory Coast, Natana, Bonduku area, 20th century
Medium: wood and pigment
Measurements: Overall: 138.4cm x 63.5cm
Dates: c. 1940
Acquisition: Gift of Katherine C. White
Location: Not on display
Accession Number: 1969.119
Department: Africa
See Also:
[Africa](#), 282 works.
[Africa, Ivory Coast](#), 31 works.
[Wood and pigment](#), 27 works.

Figure 2 'More information' web label of Bedu mask (1969.119), The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.



69.119
TR 15276

Sculpture

10 Africa

Guinea Coast Style Region, Ivory Coast or Ghana
Nafana People, probably ca. 1940

Female Bedu Mask: painted wood

69C-39938,A

Top: notched flat oval panel with 2 vertical chevron slits. Middle: 2 vertical struts with outward flares at lower ends. Below: triangular flat panel with 3 raised circles with holes. It was carved from 1 piece of wood and has muted earth colors evident below more recent polka-dotted paint layers. Collected by W. Fagg and donor in Africa in 1969.

69D-39938

Exhib.: CMA 1970: "Year in Review, 1969," cat., Bull., LVII (Jan.1970), p. 47, #133.

(WDW July, 1974)

Label: Gift of Katherine C. White

54 1/2" x 25"

Gift of Mrs. Katherine White Reswick, 7/12/69,

EV ~~69.119~~

Figure 3 Accession card of Bedu mask (1969.119), The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.

| ACCESSION NUMBER | COUNTRY AND DATES | OBJECT AND MATERIAL |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 75.83 168.28.5 | Africa, Ivory Coast, Nafana | wood Bedu mask card 2 |
| <p>The Bedu masked dance of the Nafana people takes place once each year in the Ivory Coast Region. The celebration takes place on the Nafana calendar during the month of the full moon - called by the Nafana, "the moon of the Bedu". The dances are executed around two immense masks - one male, the other female. The function that the Bedu perform is one of absorption; all evil, misfortune, difficulties, and negativity are taken by them and thereby removed from the community, so that the next year is started fresh and clean.</p> <p>The masks are carved whole from sections of the silk cotton tree. The dyes are: black-charcoal, mixed with shea butter (a substance made from the nkudua tree); red and white clay, also mixed with shea butter. <i>This type of mask used by Nafana, Kulango + Degha</i></p> | | |

Figure 4a Accession card 1 of Bedu mask (75.83), The Brooklyn Museum, New York.

| ACCESSION NUMBER | COUNTRY AND DATES | OBJECT AND MATERIAL |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| P 75.83 168.28.5 | (Cercle de Bondoukou) Africa, Ivory Coast, Nafana | (female) wood Bedu mask |
| <p>Size: Height: 228 cm. (89 3/4") (early 20th century) Credit line: [REDACTED] Description: Monumental female Bedu dance mask. Consists of a large triangular face with two boards rising from the top and supporting a large scalloped edge rosette. The eyes and mouth are very simply rendered by raised and open circles. The rosette is pierced with circular and semicircular openings. Entire surface is covered with stripes and circles of red, white and black paint. A length of rope is tied around the base of the boards. Condition: Good, insect damage on face, many long cracks in rosette. Ref: Williams, Drid. "The Dance of the Bedu Moon". <u>African Arts</u>, vol. II, no. 1, Autumn 1968, pp. 18-21 (continued -card 2)</p> <p><i>Ref (see back of card # 2 - * Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Lindenbaum. 10/22/75</i></p> | | |

Figure 4b Accession card 2 of Bedu mask (75.83), The Brooklyn Museum, New York.

MNAN 63-2-8 NAFANA ~~BOURBONSI~~
 Cercle de Bondoukou ~~CHANA~~
 Côte d'Ivoire
Masque d'imitation de type Bedu femelle
 Bois polychrome
 Haut. 175 cm. diam. disque : 66 cm. , larg. tête :
 53 cm.
 Achat Diao, Paris. 4/7/63
 nég. 64 B 361
~~CHANA~~ ~~BOURBONSI~~. Nafana, Cercle de Bondoukou, C.I.

Figure 5a Accession card of Bedu mask (MNAN 63-2-8), Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, Paris.

MNAN 67-1-4 NAFANA XGOURBONSIX
 Cercle de Bondoukou ~~CHANA~~
 Côte d'Ivoire
Grand masque plat de type Bedu
 surmonté d'un haut cimier circulaire denté, avec
 visage en bas-relief ; trous de fixation à l'ar-
 rière du masque. Bois foncé, traces de polychromie
 rouge et blanc.
 Haut. 145,5 cm. , larg. roue : 57,5 cm.
 masque : 39,5 cm. , prof. 8 cm.
 Achat Guerrero, Agen. 67/1/4
 nég. 67 Dn 285
~~CHANA~~, ~~BOURBONSI~~.

Figure 5b Accession card of Bedu mask (MNAN 67-1-4), Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, Paris.

LP.62.19 R AFRICA, Ghana: Nafana MASK

DETAILS: Wood "stems" between triangular face area and loop above is thicker on back side than in other areas. Thick arch carved in relief on back of triangle, with a thick bar of wood nailed onto the top horizontal section or arch, with square iron nails. Rusted nail projects from right side of arch. Top back of loop is painted black with red stripe. Back of "stem" pieces painted black with red border where meets loop. Color: black, red, white

WOOD, paint

H. 110" W. 36 1/2" D. 8"
 cms: 279.2 92.7 20.2 Base:

Credit Line:
 Permanent Loan of Nelson A. Rockefeller, February 1962

Neg: U 35mm: S305-39

REMARKS: ----- MPA # 1979. 286. 237
 XIX-XX CENTURY INFO. APPR: DATE: CAT: JM?/ ehg DATE: '62 & 6/71
SHAW-WALKER 22-37881 4-64

LP.62.19 R AFRICA, Ghana: Nafana MASK

HISTORY:
 MAR purch Kamer 2/13/62, V 12409, DGE.
 Exh: Hartford, Conn., Wadsworth Atheneum, "West African Sculpture", Sept.25-Nov.3, 1963.
 Exh: MPA 43.
 Exh: Yonkers, N.Y., The Hudson River Museum, "African Art in Westchester from Private Collections", April 24 - June 6, 1971 cat. #125
 Exh: N.Y., Visual Arts Gallery, "Timbuktu - Window into The Past", April: 10-- May 6, 1974.

Figure 6 Accession card of Bedu mask (LP 62.19 R), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

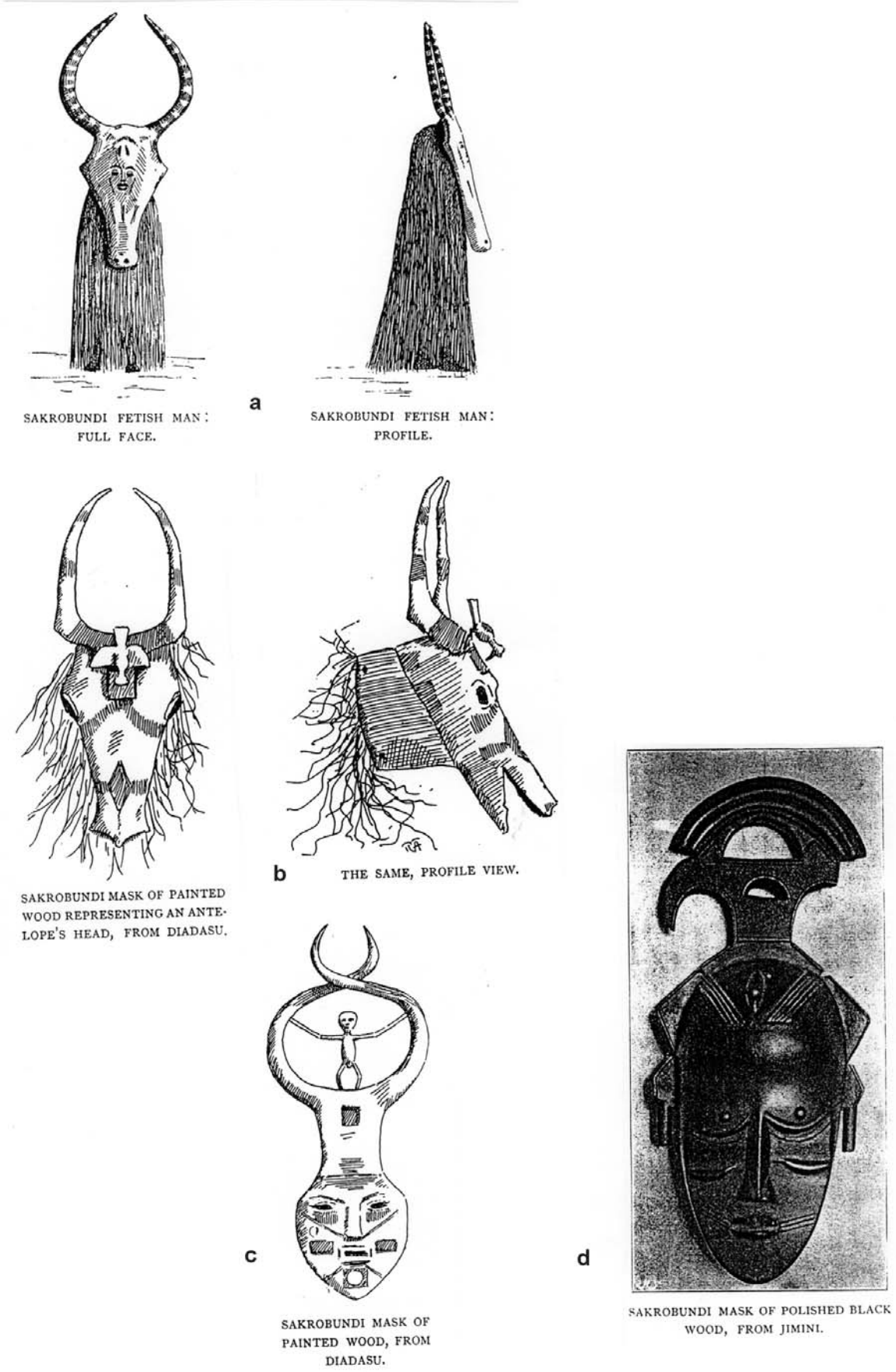


Figure 7 Illustrations of Sakrobundi masks in Freeman (1898).



Figure 8 'Dancing mask (Bontuku, Gaman Country)', collected and donated by Wilfred Davidson-Houston in 1899 to the National Museum of Ireland (Loan 359.9a), Dublin.



Figure 9 Mask ‘worn in the sacrobundi secret society’, collected by Cecil Armitage and since 1934 in the Birtish Museum (AF 1934-2), London.



Figure 10 'Sakrobundi Mask', collected by Cecil Armitage and since 1978 in the British Museum (AF 1978 AF 22.834), London.

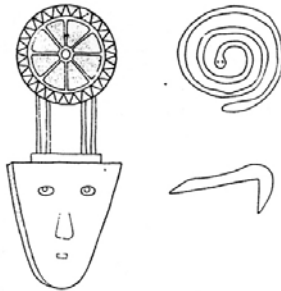
roulé sur lui-même et une tête de bœuf plus ou moins fantastique. L'autel a la forme d'un cône ou d'une pyramide à base circulaire, soit construit en escalier, soit bas et aplati, soit mince et étroit à son sommet; ce cône supporte une assiette de terre ou un bassin de cuivre généralement arrosé de sang.

6 juin. — *Assafoumo*. — Il est peu de régions où les races soient aussi mélangées que dans la région de Bondoukou : côte à côte, dans le même village ou dans des villages voisins, habitent des familles de races et de langues très différentes, et dans la même journée, il peut arriver d'avoir affaire à des *Abron*, à des *Koulango*, à des *Nafâna*, à des *Gbin*, à des *Dioula*, à des *Noumou*, à des *Huêla*, à des *Ligbi*, à des *Dégha*, autant de peuplades dont chacune a sa langue ou son dialecte à part. Heureusement le *koulango* est compris de tout le monde et sert de langue franque; le *dioula* et l'*abron* sont également très répandus, mais moins que le *koulango*. Quant aux autres idiomes, ils ne sont guère parlés en dehors des tribus auxquelles ils appartiennent en propre.

Assafoumo, connu aussi sous les noms de *Sâfou-Bourou* et de *Bouroumba*, et dont le nom indigène est *Guioboué*, est,

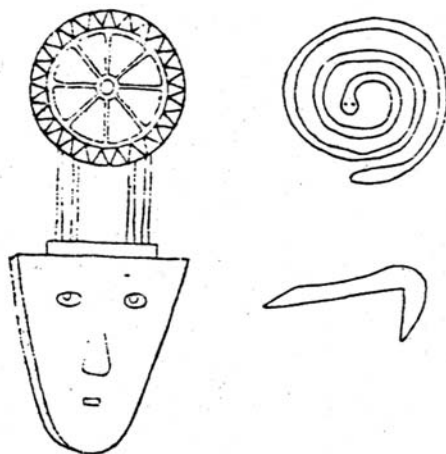


Autel de Sakara-Bounou à Oûrigué.



Bas-reliefs d'Oûrigué.

Figure 11 Page 121 of Delafosse (1908) showing sketches made by Delafosse at the village of Ouélékei.



Bas-reliefs d'Oûrigué.

22. Mud relief of a mask on the wall of the "Sakara-bounou" hut.

Figure 12 Reproduction of sketches by Delafosse in Bravmann (1974, p103).

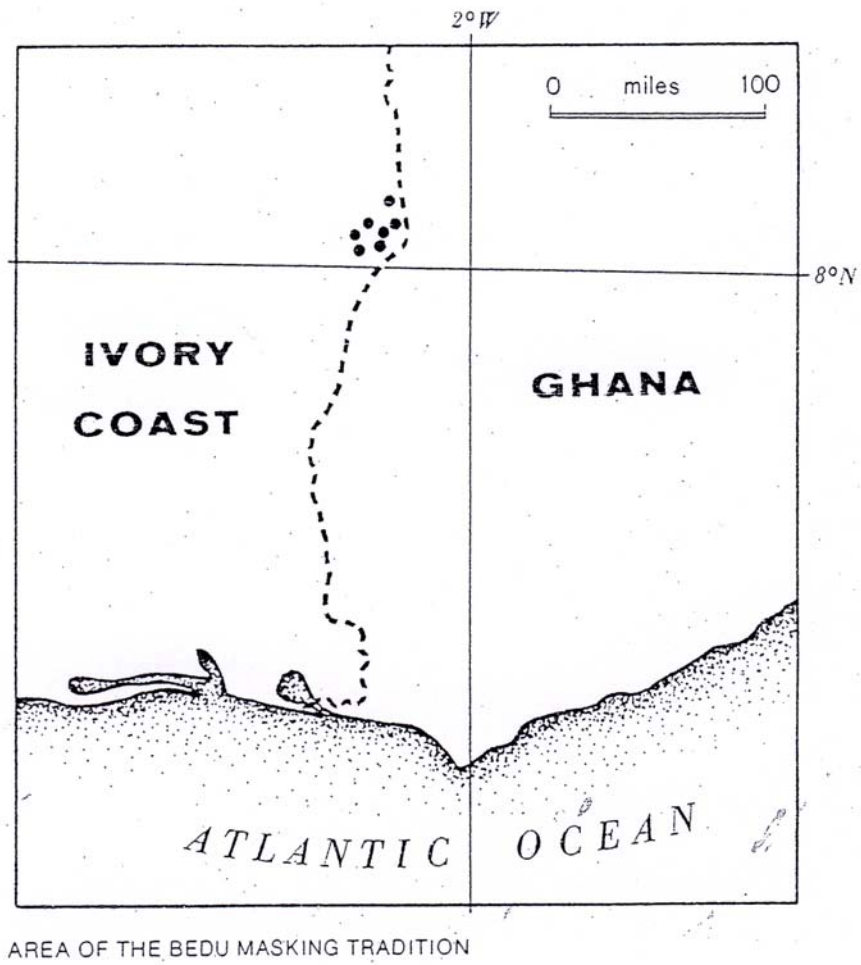


Figure 13 Map showing the area where the Bedu masking tradition is found, in Williams (1968, p21).



62.53.2
 Nr : A.E. 62.53.2.

Voorwerp : Houtplastiek:
 masker

STEKKKAART VERVANGEN
 L : 12/10/1974
 H : 112,7 cm D : cm

STAD ANTWERPEN
 OUDHEIDKUNDIGE MUSEA
 Ethnografisch Museum

Beschrijving : Houten driehoekvormig sangezichts masker (met drie
 ronde openingen voor ogen en mond) met aangesneden
 opzet van twee horens; diepbruin geschilderd met witte lijnen-
 versiering. Achterop een witte rands met openingen voor
 vastmaken van waskerkleed.

Herkomst : Afrika

Gebied : West

Streek : Thana
 (Noord)

Stam : GRUNSHI

Localiteit :
 Datering :
 Auteur :
 Refer. :

Zie : Sculpture of Black Africa, P.T. Collection, AF/D.50, nr.42
 Zie : African Arts (TJ/C.98/2,1) blz. 18-21, 72
 Zie : Bravman, A.: Islam and tribal art in W.-Africa, pl. 32,
 blz. 110 (AF/B.415.)
 Verwijzingen : zie herkomst en stijl verwant aan A.E. 62.53.3.

Dos. naam Foto Neg. Literatuur :
 Dos. nr Diap.
 Tentoong. Drukpl.

Verwerving : Verkoop Toestand :
 P. VERIË (Paris)

Datum : 2 November 1962 Behandeling :
 Graaf :

Figure 14a Index card of Bedu mask (A.E. 62.53.2) in Ethnografisch Museum, Antwerp.



| | | |
|--|---|--|
| : A.E. 62.49.3 | Voorwerp : <u>Houtplastiek:</u> <u>masker</u> | L. : cm B. : 72,5 cm H. : 181,7 cm D. : cm |
| STAD ANTWERPEN OUDHEIDKUNDIGE MUSEA Ethnografisch Museum oorsprong : Afrika gebied : West oorsprong : Ivoorkust Cercle de Bondoukou naam : MANDE kwaliteit : datering : maker : refer. : | Beschrijving : Houten afgerond-driehoekig aangezichtsmasker (drie uitstulpende cirkelvormige openingen voor ogen en mond) met aangesneden opzet van twee opstaande balkjes waarop in fragmenten ingesneden schijfvormige bekroning met gekanteelde rand. Beschildering: wit, rood, zwart. Achterop uitstaande rand met openingen voor vasthechting van maskerkleed. "Bedu"-masker (waarschijnlijk van het vrouwelijk type). Ireden op in paar tijdens het jaarlijks "Zaurau"-feest; ook bij ziekte van een voorname ingezetene. - (Bij deductie uit BRAVMANN, Islam and tribal art...): mogelijk vervaardigd door Sirikye, een Moslim die tot de Hwela-stam behoort, en dan tussen 1959 en 1962. Verwijzingen : Verwant aan AE.62.53.2. (Zie Nr. dossier 62.53.2.). | |
| ops. naam <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foto <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neg. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ops. Nr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diap. <input type="checkbox"/> afbeelding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drukpl. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Literatuur : - R.A.Bravmann: Islam and tribal art in West Africa (AF/B/415), p.101 e.v. ; R.A. Bravman : Gur and Manding masquerades in Ghana (TJ/C.98/13,1, blz. 44) ***/*** | |
| verwerving : Aankoop GALERIE BURGUI datum : 5 november 1962 draaif : | Toestand : Aangetast door houtworm. Behandeling : Behandeld met Pentachlorphenol (december 1962). | |

Figure 14 b Index card of Bedu mask (A.E. 62.49.3) in Ethnografisch Museum, Antwerp.

negative: 15633, 1969
category: Sculpture
64.108: Bedu Mask
object date: late 19th Century
medium/technique: Carved and polychromed wood
measurements: height 2.76225m (9ft 3/4in) [E]
width of disk 99.7cm (39 1/4in) [E]
credit line: Founders Society Purchase, Director's Discretionary Fund
department: African, Oceanic & New World Cultures

Reproduction of this photograph in any form is allowed only with
written permission from: Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts,
Photographic Services, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48202.

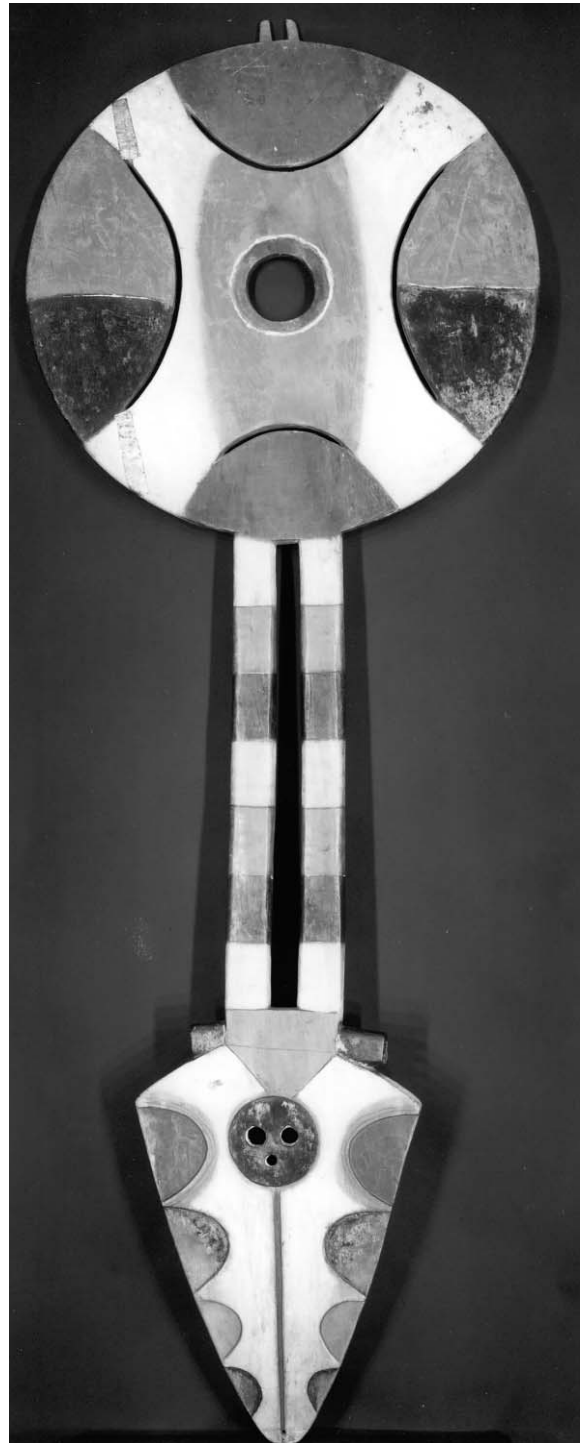


Figure 15 Label of Bedu mask (64.108) in The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.



36. Bedu masks, male and female; wood; ochre, white, blue paint; male (left) h. 66", female h. 81". Carved by Sirikye. Village of Sorhobango, 1967.

Figure 16 Photograph of male and female Bedu mask performing at the village of Sorobango (1967), published in Bravmann (1974, p116).

Chapter 2

‘Sakaraboutou is a Bondoukou custom’:

An investigation into ritual spaces and performative (re-)positioning

“The invention of tradition is here about the invention of the coherence of a place, about defining and naming it as a ‘place’ at all.”

(Massey 1995, p188)

“What I wish to stress here [...] is the multiplicity of constituencies [...], the multiplicity of values [...], and the multiplicity of modes of participation.”

(Baumann 1993, p112)

1. Introduction¹

This chapter takes the exploration of space and mobility in ritual which I explore in other publications (Arnaut 2000a, 2004, and *forthcoming*) in connection with the Bedu mask, one step further by bringing in the issue of the repositioning of performers within composite ritual spaces. Here I take my lead from Parkin (1993), and more particularly his suggestion that the ‘formulaic spatiality’ of ritual conjures up its opposite:

“Ritually ‘proper’ spaces, positions, and directions may be prescribed by those in authority, but individuals can slip, if only slightly and gradually, beyond boundaries and can widen, narrow, or shift these spatial orientations.” (1993, p19)

Parkin then broadens his argument by stating that such operations are not only effected by individuals but also by particular ritual constituencies.² In order to illustrate this, Parkin takes the example of burial practices among the Giriama of Kenya, and observes how ‘traditional’, Christian and Muslim Giriama realize their divergent opinions and beliefs by adding or changing particular sequences of the ritual. So, for instance:

“If Christians can cluster in sufficient strength around the grave, they can delay the covering-up of the body and say Christian prayers, but this depends on their assuming prominent positions in the cortège by slipping in front of customarily more eligible pallbearers and processionists.” (1993, p21)

With these remarks Parkin opens an interesting field of research in which the relative *openness* and *limitation* of ritual can be explored. The relative openness of ritual lies in the (spatial) leeway it offers for different ritual constituencies to realise alternative figurations of the ritual through additions or other transformations. The limitation is that participants may not be in a

1. Research for this article was conducted over a long, discontinuous period, between 1994 and 2001. Although I had participated in the Sakaraboutou parade in 1994 and 1995, I collected the corpus of songs and other oral performances during the parades of 9 February 1997 and 27 December 2000. In May 2001 I worked with several Sakaraboutou performers specifically on the subject of the *wanzu* (mock sermon). An earlier version of this chapter was published under the title “Islam and its others: Sakaraboutou as masquerade in Bondoukou (Côte d’Ivoire)” in *Etnofoor* (2000) 14/2, pp. 23-54.

2. In accordance with what has been said about them in the previous chapter, ritual constituencies are groups of participants that are either defined as (permanently or temporarily) distinct in the course of a ritual or outside the ritual. In the latter case the groups’ specific social location must have some bearings on their participation in the ritual. (see Baumann 1993)

position (in society) to discuss or contest the general course of the ritual and “can only demonstrate the saliency, success, and effectiveness of what they have to say through performative practice” (ibid, p22).

Within this overall analytical frame, at least three dimensions of diversity and change in performance require further elaboration: (a) the construction of space in ritual through the attribution/appropriation of space to or by different ritual constituencies, (b) the interrelation between different (standard and non-standard) components of a ritual performance, and (c) their relationship with the ritual as a whole. I will briefly look into each of these dimensions before turning to the case of the Sakaraboutou parade at Bondoukou which forms the empirical focus of this chapter.

As part of the spatial turn in social sciences in general and in anthropology in particular, the idea that the spatial is socially constituted was extended to the “even more powerful recognition that the social is necessarily spatially constituted” (Massey 1992, p80). Arguably, this perspective is as much inspired by theories of space and power relations (Foucault 1980, p70), and of spatial practices (De Certeau 1984, p117-8) as by the practice paradigm of the 1980s (Ortner 1984). In anthropology, the spatial turn can be said to have also received a considerable impetus from (gender) diversity-sensitive research. With a number of ground-breaking publications the Ardeners (Edwin Ardener 1972; Shirley Ardener 1975, 1981) initiated a problematic which linked the (spatial) position of women to their relative (in)visibility and vocality (or silence) in the public and private sphere. These issues can be found back in the recent anthropological literature on gender and space in general (Rodman 1992; Moore 1996; Crehan 1997) as well as in a number of case-studies on gender differentiation in space and ritual (Smith 1993, 1995; Heatherington 1999; Fortier 1999). The latter studies are of particular interest to us because they all address the issue of power relations, diversity and history in contexts of public rituals.

On the issue of diversity and identity, Smith (1995, p141) endorses the view formulated by Anthony Cohen that public rituals are boundary-marking exercises – mechanisms through which people might ‘think themselves into difference’ (Smith 1995, p141). This difference resides not only in their external relations but also in their internal diversity. Or as Cohen (1986, p13) put it in his model of symbolic boundaries:

“Rather than being drawn at the point where differentiation occurs, the community boundary incorporates and encloses difference and, as Durkheim asserted for his organic model, is thereby strengthened.”

Looking at processes of reterritorialisation through performances such as processions of Italian migrants living in London in and around 'The Hill' ('Little Italy'), Fortier (1999, p50), observes that:

“As it unfolds the procession simultaneously traces the confines of a territory and reiterates the identity of The Hill as an Italian place”

Within the boundaries marked out by the public ritual both Smith (1995, p160) in the case of an annual festival in the borderlands of Scotland, and Fortier (1999) focus on the differentiation of males and females. While Smith (1995, p160) observes how in the Scottish Beltane festival male adults play a central role “which involves both defending and representing the burgh”, Fortier concludes that on The Hill “women embody the threshold of identity/difference as they are both moving and fixed figures of identity and change” (1999, p57). In the case of Catholic processions in Sardinia, Heatherington (1999) presents a still more diverse picture in which the categories of practicing and non-practicing Catholics, and females and male youngsters intersect. Overall, Heatherington observes how through festivals and processions in which religious and local historical elements are combined, practicing Catholics seek a central and encompassing position in the public sphere of the community. This hegemonic position is contested or at least partly destabilised by young men who at the occasion of each festival organise horse-riding performances. These spectacular events contribute to the local, historical (pastoral) character of the festival but at the same time disturb their solemn disposition, add a particularly male component to the otherwise female-dominated processions, and on the whole marginalise the public ritual in its capacity as a Catholic event (ibid., p319-323).

The general points which we can extract from the above observations is that public ritual is a particularly productive activity of what Smith (1993) calls “claiming space and making place”. The efficacy of ritual in spatialising history and memory and in staging solidarity and belonging largely depends on the contributions of the ritual constituencies through whose differential practice the ritual unfolds in space and time. This internal differentiation can in some cases rely on a stable (gender) division of (ritual) labour, but sometimes be subject to rivalry and tension. In the case of a small town in Sardinia presented by Heatherington, tensions seem to arise when roles overlap, when one ritual constituency, i.e. the group of horse riding young men, has, so to speak, a double agenda which indirectly exposes the double agenda of the organisers, i.e. the practicing Catholics. In the case at hand, the latter incorporate “key markers of historically rooted belonging, such as the traditional costumes [...] and songs in local dialect, into their performances of faith” (ibid., p320), in an attempt to “control the representation of the town’s

collective identity” (ibid., p322). However, this neatly integrated double project of religious and cultural encompassment is destabilised by the young horsemen who draw out its suture by taking up the cultural dimension and thrusting aside the religious one. As Heatherington puts it: The young men “invoke the legitimacy of a male-centered local historical subjectivity that stands somewhat independent of the Roman Catholic Church” while they “affirm their inherent belonging within the history of [the town] and create a space for their own social agency” (ibid., p323).

Combining the insights provided by the above case-studies of public ritual with the initial challenge formulated by Parkin, in this chapter I will argue that *performers may use the spatial lay-out of public ritual to insert actions which extend the significance, meaning, and propriety of the ritual beyond what is officially declared, accepted or even acceptable. Moreover, these insertions are additive rather than subversive, resulting in a multi-layered, unstable performance that is more reflexive than either hegemonic or counter-hegemonic.*

This argument partly summarises and partly transcends the observations and interpretations presented above. What remains to be properly explained and theorised are the conjectures that insertions are ‘additive’ rather than ‘subversive’ and that the performance as a whole is ‘multi-layered’ and ‘reflexive’ rather than uni-dimensionally conservative or revolutionary. These points will be explained and expanded upon along with the description of the Sakaraboutou festival to which I turn now.

2. Detecting layers in the Sakaraboutou performance

In Bondoukou, the end of the Muslim month of fasting (d. *sungari*, a. *Ramadan*) is marked by a series of festivities and solemn celebrations.³ On the 27th of Sungari, many elder Muslim men spend the night – also called the Night of Destiny or Majesty (d. *leiletul kadiri*; a. *Lailat al-Qadr*) – praying either at home or in the local mosque. The following night and morning hundreds of girls and women gather in their respective town quarters for the Night of Kouroubi

3. The abbreviations for languages spoken in Bondoukou and featuring in this paper are: d. = Dyula, a. = Arabic, and f. = French. With the exception of ‘Dyula’, all official names such as Kouroubi, Sakaraboutou, etc. are given in French orthography.

(d. *kurubi su*).⁴ The non-married girls are seated on wooden platforms that are put up in different town quarters (Fig. 1). Together with their mothers, and other adult female members of their families who are standing beneath the platforms, and cheered by (mostly) boys and male adolescents, the girls sing songs on brass-band music while waving fly-whisks (Fig. 2). Two or three days later, on the first day of the new month (d. *mingari*; a. *Shawwal*), the Id-al-Fitr ('day of the breaking of the fast') is held. In the late morning of this canonical festival, thousands of Muslims – delegations from different town quarters, individuals, and entire families – meet for the grand, public prayer (d. *seriba*) on the market place in front of the imam's mosque (Fig. 3). The prayer ends with a sermon (d. *kalan*) which consists of a series of benedictions and may include a speech addressed to the town's office-holders: the governor (f. *prefet*), the mayor and the customary chief of Bambaraso, that is the 'pagan' (i.e. non-Muslim, largely Christian) town quarter (Fig. 4). In the afternoon, at around 2 p.m., a group of about 200 youngsters start parading the streets of the town during a traditional performance known as Sakaraboutou. The Sakaraboutou troupe consists of young men dressed in, among other things, traditional warrior-hunter outfits. Headed by an elder and together with a delegation of girls in Kouroubi outfit and a band of musicians, the warriors visit most of the town's quarters and stop off to greet their representatives who have gathered in front of the house of each town quarter's chief. The parade ends at about 6 p.m. with a final performance in front of the imam's mosque.

Both the timing (end of Ramadan) and the directionality (centered on the imam) give Sakaraboutou a strong focus on the Islam.⁵ Although the diversity of Muslims in Bondoukou is considerable in terms of ethnic or national provenance, religious orientation and practice, most

4. Since 1997 the Night of Destiny and Kouroubi are held separately while before that date they coincided (see section six of this chapter).

5. Trimingham (1959, p75) points out the importance of the adoption of the Islamic calendar in the local consolidation of Islam in West Africa.

often they are referred to by the ethnonym Dyula.⁶ Indeed, the Dyula town quarter of Donzoso acts as the organiser of the event and appoints one of its authority figures to command the Sakaraboutou warriors. In their general appearance the latter signal their ‘Dyulanness’ in at least two different ways. The costumes bear strong resemblance to those of the *donso* traditional Manding hunters (Cissé 1964, 1994; Mensah 2001) who are vaguely associated with Islam and with other Dyula strongholds such as the town of Kong. Moreover, most warrior tunics sport amulets (d. *sewɛ*), a by-product of Muslim religious expertise in which the Dyula of Bondoukou as well as Kong are widely considered to excel (Handloff 1982, 1983; Mommersteeg 1990).

However, the Dyula-centeredness of Sakaraboutou is glossed over by labeling the event a typical custom of the city as a whole. When El Hadj Siriki Ouattara (23/05/2001) explained to me that Sakaraboutou “is our traditional dance” (d. *ani lasiri donw lo mu*; ‘it is the dance of our custom’) and that it belonged to the whole of Bondoukou (d. *gutugo biɛ*) he expressed an idea that are widely circulating in a terms that many Bondoukouans would use to characterise the annual parade. The relative fixedness of the itinerary of the parade and the antiquity of the outfit of its main performers are said to illustrate the pageant’s traditional character. Moreover, the name Sakaraboutou as well as speculations about its supposed meaning, ground the public ritual in a space that encompasses the historic town and differentiates it from other towns and spaces outside of it. While the annual festival enjoys popular acclaim, in everyday conversations the term Sakaraboutou is most often used to refer to Bondoukou’s premier league football team, Sacraboutou Sport, which attracts thousands of (mainly young male) spectators about every fortnight during the football season. What also prevents ‘Sakaraboutou’ from being associated solely with the Dyula population of Bondoukou and makes it a more inclusive label, is the general speculation that it is not a Dyula but a Kulango word. While many Bondoukouese refrain from speculating beyond this general observation, some associate it with the Sakraboutou shrine still known in many Kulango villages to the north of Bondoukou, while others claim it is derived from the Kulango word *saakɔ* (earth).

6. As will become abundantly clear in the next part of this dissertation, the term ‘Dyula’ has an extraordinary colonial and postcolonial career whereby the pre-colonial ethnonym applicable to a few thousands Muslims in Bondoukou, Kong, Kadioha, e.a. was gradually expanded. Within the present-day, highly politicised ‘ethnic’ landscape of Côte d’Ivoire, ‘Dyula’ has come to include a large section of the Ivoirian population identified as allochthons, Muslims, and travelling merchants or labourers (migrants) (LeBlanc 2000, p447). Partly related to these developments, in Bondoukou, ‘Dyula’ has become a common denominator for all Muslims including the Hausa of the Malagaso town quarter and the Muslim population of the Jiminiso quarter.

Among the few Dyula officials who are entitled to make more far-going suggestions about the meaning of the term, several state that Sakaraboutou is a kind of ‘power substance’ (d. *fila*) named ‘*sekere mi tu*’ (‘the day I stayed’). This shrine is said to consecrate an oral treaty concluded by the two main groups inhabiting the city of Bondoukou: the Bambara (‘pagan’ Nafana, Kulango, etc.) firstcomers and the Dyula (Muslim) latecomers. In this treaty, they say the Dyula recognised the Bambara as owners of the earth, and the latter accepted the numerical superiority as well as the political and economic supremacy of the Dyula. Both sides agreed to ‘go to war together’. All this, it is explained, is spectacularly embodied in the itinerary of the parade in which the Sakaraboutou warriors, after having greeted the parades organisers (see Annex 1, stops 1 & 2) visit the Bambara (pagan) chiefs (stops 3 to 5) before traversing the different (mostly Dyula) town quarters.

The above description of the name and fame of ‘Sakaraboutou’ sufficiently illustrates how the term simultaneously indicates local unity and Dyula supremacy, particularly in the annual parade in which the Dyula function as mediators between local history and culture on the one hand, and world religion (Islam and the knowledge that comes with it) on the other. More than taking this as the general meaning and function of the Sakaraboutou event, I situate what I have described above, in a group of performances and discourses that constitute but one layer or register of the parade. In this register, the Muslim clerics, Dyula authorities and Sakaraboutou officials, appear as owners, organisers, or focal points of the event. They possess the ‘secret’ of its meaning and orchestrate or constitute the hubs of its unifying endeavour. In terms of spatial positioning they are the alpha and omega of the itinerary: the whole town is mobilised in the course of a trajectory that connects the Donzoso organiser with the town’s highest moral and religious authority, the imam. As I will explain shortly, the ritual space of the first register is that of the different stops where short solemn public performances are held in front of the different sublocal authorities, and the time which the ritual re-enacts is the epoch which spans the entire history of Bondoukou from the arrival of the Dyula (which turned Bondoukou into a proper town of merchants, clerics, and warriors) to the present day.

The first register of Sakaraboutou is also based on a rather neat division of ritual labour along age and gender lines. Apart from the elder Donzoso representative who leads the cortege (d. *Sakaraboutou kuntigi*), adults and elders make up the static viewing public while male and female youngsters constitute the mobile performers. The latter group is further differentiated along gender lines. The twenty or so rather mature adolescent girls who participate in the Sakaraboutou parade form a small compact group who wear the same outfits as the many

hundreds of Kouroubi girls (between the age of four and about twenty) three days before. They wear dresses or combine a glittery blouse with a 'skirt' of strip-woven cotton cloth, covered by a wealth of jewellery (a shiny belt, necklaces and earrings, etc.) (Fig. 5). Much attention is also paid to the make-up, but it is the head-dress that forms the focal point of the Kouroubi outfit. It consists of a four-piece wig with a prominent front 'chignon' (d. *jomo*), covered by a headscarf (d. *fatara*) that is kept in place by a string of multi-coloured pompons (d. *gogoro*) (Fig. 6). Sunglasses and watches fall within the category of jewellery, while flashy tinsels add to the colourful effect of the *gogoro*. The *jomo-gogoro* ensemble is seen as *the* traditional element of the Kouroubi outfit and Kouroubi and Sakaraboutou are the only occasions on which Bondoukou girls collectively dress in a way that presents them as unmarried and attractive, and their mothers and families as reputable and resourceful (Bini Ouatarra 06/02/1997).⁷ The main activity of the Kouroubi delegation in the (first register of the) Sakaraboutou parade is singing and clapping hands. In this and in many other ways, this contrasts heavily with the performative position of the male warriors.

The 'traditional' outfit of the Sakaraboutou male youngsters is a warrior's tunic (d. *tunara*) which consists of a shirt (d. *delege*), a pair of trousers (d. *kurusi*), and a cap (d. *gbanvula*). With this outfit go offensive attributes such as old guns, spears, sticks, and knives, as well as instruments of defense such as helmets and amulets (Fig. 7). The amulets in the form of leather pouches in different shapes and sizes can be attached to the tunic, worn on the warrior's body (arms, legs), carried in his hands, and most chillingly, for a short while, held between his teeth (Fig. 8). The face-paint of the youngsters in either black (charcoal), white (kaolin), or brown (mud), or indeed any combination of these, is a further sign of their fearless nature which is abundantly expressed in their boisterous behaviour and above all in their extraordinary mobility (Fig. 9). Unlike the girls who throughout the parade stay together in a compact group and are surrounded by musicians, warriors take turns in running away while others encircle the female delegation (Fig. 10). This is in fact the space and time where the second register 'takes place',

7. A number of published photographs (see Annex 3) from the Dyula towns of Kong and Bondoukou, dating from the first decades of the twentieth century, show girls in what one now recognises as the costume only worn during Kouroubi. However, the captions that go with these old photographs often suggest that such is, more generally, the girls' 'best dress'. Prouteaux (1925) presents one group of 'Kouroubi' girls as "Jeunes filles en grande toilette" (1925, p616) and another group as "Elégantes de Kong" (1925, p608) while Tauxier (1921, p10) speaks of "Jeunes filles de Bondoukou en grand costume".

but before I continue this description, I need to recapitulate as well as press forward with the theoretising of the registers I seek to discern.

On the whole, the above ‘classic’ description of the Sakaraboutou parade sufficiently illustrates how a public ritual of the itinerant kind operates (to paraphrase Smith 1993) in claiming space, making place and asserting identity. The time-space that is being claimed is that of the whole of Bondoukou since its foundation. This ‘claim’ on space-time constitutes the Dyula elite and majority group that realises its supremacy in a performance which it controls and organises. Within this overall frame, the ruling group can be said to ‘co-opt difference into it’s own dream of order, in which it reigns supreme’.⁸ Along religious lines, the ‘pagan’ town quarters are treated with all due respect but not given absolute priority (as their status of firstcomers could require), only visited by the Sakaraboutou cortege after it has paid its respects to the Donzo Dyula masters. This can be understood in the way Last (1993) grasped the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslim Hausa in Nigeria in terms of relative age. The non-Muslim Maguzawa are seen by the Muslim Hausa, Last (1993, p292) writes “not so much as aboriginals (in a historical sense) [than] as ancient: and as ancients, to be tolerated, if not necessarily respected – like a very old aunt?”. This culture of the elderly is exemplary given shape in the first register of the Sakaraboutou parade: the elders’ supremacy as viewers and receivers of respect is strongly articulated in contrast to the youngsters who perform and publicly display their obedience. As we will see, in the first register, the youngsters are associated with other categories of social juniors, but for now we focus on the gender division partly based on the distinction between protectors and protected. Here the assertive and extrovert young males defend against external enemies the spatially encompassed unmarried and nubile females who ensure the reproduction of the local community. Thus, the Sakaraboutou grounds a local identity in a community that is stratified in age and gender categories that cross-cut the historical and religious (Dyula-biased) hierarchies.

However, in practice and as already abundantly insinuated, Sakaraboutou offers much more than an elderly-driven, locally grounded traditional military parade. When traversing the streets of Bondoukou, in between greeting stops in the different town quarters, the male and female youngsters often lose sight of the elders and interact with each other mainly through risqué dialogues and songs. When asked about these mostly sexually explicit exchanges, Dyula officials often dismiss them as modern-day additions by unruly adolescents. While *these* additions are tolerated others are not. In the course of the parade, every now and then, a small group of two to

8. Here I paraphrase McEvelley (in Jones 1993, p205).

four male warriors breaks away from the main group, sit down, and stage a mock sermon (d. *wanzu*). In these micro-performances which last only a couple of minutes, the participants tell each other rather fanciful stories, present themselves as half-pagans, parody Muslim prayers, and criticise the conduct of imams. The issue of *wanzu* is so problematic that it can hardly be mentioned in conversations with Muslim clerics or Sakaraboutou officials, and if so, it is readily brushed aside as nonsensical child's play unworthy of proper Sakaraboutou warriors.

Now, the challenge of my ethnographic description is to present the Sakaraboutou parade as a whole event. This implies that I cannot unquestionably adopt the 'gerontocratic' classification of the different performances. However, my analytic refusal to reduce Sakaraboutou to the 'Bondoukou custom' that it is declared to be, does not mean that I am entitled to negate the obvious marginalisation of performances that do not quite fit in it. The challenge is thus to find a place for these differentially subsidiary performances. Therefore, the working hypothesis about insertions into ritual formulated above, needs to be strengthened. This can be done, I argue, by emplacing and embodying the insertions beyond what Parkin suggested when observing the elbowing for space of the Catholics around a burial place and when attributing the reshuffling of ritual trajectories in another context to "ritual enthusiasm and emotion" (Parkin 1993, p20). Emplacing certain insertions means allocating to them a certain space and moment within the overall performance; and embodying these insertions means attributing them to a certain ritual constituency. The emplacement and embodiment of insertions, I propose, allows me to speak of layers or registers.⁹ In other words, *a register or layer is a cluster of embodied and emplaced micro-performances that do not in any substantial or far-going way subvert or destroy the overall performance but add to it supplementary terrains and moments of ritual action that extend its saliency and significance.*

An important methodological aspect of researching embodied and emplaced layers in a performance is that one has to have access to the places and moments of the micro-performances and that the researcher's co-presence in these must be at least endured. Accessibility and co-presence by the researcher are predicated on the relative hidden, repressed, intimate or unofficial character of the micro-performance. Moreover, given the simple fact that one cannot be

9. In this chapter I use 'layer' and 'register' interchangeably. As I explain in more detail below, I take my lead from Blommaert (in press, Ch 6) who argues that the context operating in every semiotic act is simultaneously multiple. In my usage of this suggestion, the term 'layer' conveys the spatial dimension of performance, while 'register' accentuates its discursive construction. However, as space in this chapter is conceived as social, material *and* discursive, I see no point in distinguishing between the two terms.

everywhere at the same moment, participating in one register of the performance may exclude participating in another. Finally, registers may be incompatible. Participating in the micro-performances of one ritual constituency may be taken by others as *drifting away* from the main event or *taking sides* with certain performers. All this clearly brings out that register-oriented research and analysis is situational and that the identification and selection of registers is, to some extent oriented towards or located in the activities of one or more ritual constituencies to whom the researcher has preferential access and (depending on the degree of intimacy or precariousness of the performance) whose confidence the researcher has.

In the Sakaraboutou parade, I distinguish between three registers which coincide with the official one and two additional performative positions of the male youngsters in two clusters of side-plays. In other words, my analysis is ‘young men’ oriented in the sense that I seek above all to give a place to their different performances in the overall event. Underlying the detection of different layers, is a long and gradual process of socialisation and participation in the Sakaraboutou parade and beyond. This process started in 1994 (13 March) and 1995 (3 March) when I first witnessed the parade, observed it standing along one of the streets (in Malagaso) where it passed, and, afterwards followed many other bystanders who went to see the final presentation near the imam’s mosque. In retrospect, on these occasions, I was very much exposed to Sakaraboutou in its first, official register. In February 1997 I followed the parade from start to finish and participated as a kind of reporter who recorded songs and interviews with the participants. Then I noticed and discussed with the participants the many sexually explicit songs that are not easy to catch when standing along the road and that are entirely absent from the performances during the grand finale. Also at that time, I recorded by accident some snippets of a *wanzu* performance which I found impossible to make sense of. When I wrote a friend and collaborator about these recordings and asked him to make suggestions for possible transcription, he wrote back saying:

“Dear Karel, here are the [transcripts of the] fragments in the tape of Sakaraboutou where the people say stupid things (*des bétises*). These are parts of the Koran turned upside-down (*renversé*). So, I can say they are without meaning, without sense (*c’est sans signification, sans sens*).” (Sadji Ouattara, personal communication)

When going back to Bondoukou in December 2000, I got in touch with some of the youngsters I had met three years before and, in the week preceding the parade, I discussed these ‘nonsensical’ fragments. The explanations I received then were few and far between. However, in the course of the parade some of these young interlocutors, in a discrete but clear way showed me where the

wanzu performances were taking place and performed some themselves. This, my ‘breakthrough’ into what I know call the third register of the Sakaraboutou performance, reached its summit when in May 2001, I returned again to Bondoukou and apart from telling me more about their experiences as *wanzu* performers, two Sakaraboutou ‘warriors’ staged a private performance of it in an isolated place, not fortuitously perhaps, located between the fringes of Donzoso and the thinly wooded marshlands along the Wamo River.

In the three following sections (3 to 5), I present each of the three registers. Following this presentation, I return to the central issue so far left largely undiscussed, that is whether these two inserted registers add and extend the whole performance rather than subvert or destabilise it.

3. The first register: demonstrating traditional hegemonies in a historical city

When asked about the nature of the Sakaraboutou parade, elder men and women mostly give an almost canonised account in which the event is presented as a traditional warrior’s dance (d. *dɔn*). In more detailed explanations, my interlocutors offered fragments of local historical lore. Some narratives recounted the late nineteenth-century war of Samori against Bondoukou in which the city is said to have prevented the warlord from entering the town. Others rather focussed on the people from Donzoso (the Donzo-Ouattara *kabila* or clan ward).¹⁰ In the latter narratives, the Donzo are presented as exemplary warriors who have special links with the imam and his clan ward (Limamso), and who differ from the rest of the Dyula merchants who inhabit the other town quarters.

To start with the latter narratives, many authors have pointed out that among the dispersed Dyula communities of West Africa, distinctions between merchants, scholars and warriors are widely found and have developed differently in different localities (Green 1984; Quimby 1972; Launay 1988). According to Handloff (1982, I, p35), already in the 19th century the Dyula of Bondoukou stopped distinguishing between clerical and warrior groups. As we will see, in the (first register of the) Sakaraboutou parade, this categorical merger is spectacularly staged without

10. *Kabila* designates the (discontinuous) residential units of patriclans or *jamu* who, however, mostly refer to their town quarter as ‘so’ (house) – e.g. Donzoso as the home of the Donzo people. I only follow Launay’s useful translation of *kabila* as ‘clan ward’ when speaking exclusively of Dyula town quarters of Bondoukou (Launay 1982, p28-29). When including also the non-Muslim and/or the new parts of town, I use ‘town quarters’ as a more neutral, geographical term without the patrilineal relationships it presupposes.

for that matter its two components are being confused. In conversations about Sakaraboutou the Donzo-Ouattara are identified as hunter-warriors. That is how the late Alai Kourouba, the head of a Donzo subquarter historically situated the Sakaraboutou phenomenon:

- (1) “It so happens that the Donzo have created that dance. You see, the people of Donzo; they are at the origin. When you hear ‘Donzo’, it is warriors (d. *kerebaru*, lit. ‘the big ones in war’) whom one calls like that. You see, they were into hunting (d. *dandagaya*) and they became Donzo (d. *donzoru*). That is how their origin/tradition (d. *lasiri*) was born. It is the dance of the hunters, if you see it you close your door.”
(Alai Kourouba 12/02/1997)

The above passage constructs a Donzo group with roots (d. *lasiri*) in hunting (d. *dandagaya*) and in war (d. *kere*). Both activities associate the Donzo-Ouattara with dangerous activities very often on the borders or outside of the town (bush). Hunting and warfare also involve special knowledge of power substances and shrines which give the Donzo a paganish profile.¹¹ Such a profile also underlies the special relationship between the Donzo-Ouattara of Donzoso and the Timité of Limamso, the patriclan among whom Bondoukou’s imams are chosen. As quasi pagans, the Donzo differentiate themselves from, and as protectors they collaborate with, the exemplary scholars (d. *mory*) of the Timité quarter. The special intimate, albeit sometimes ambiguous relationship between warriors and clerics is manifest throughout the end-of-Ramadan festivities. For Kouroubi, the girls from Donzoso and Limamso share the same platforms in the very centre of town, in front of the imam’s mosque (Fig. 11). In the Sakaraboutou parade, Donzoso and Limamso, respectively, form the starting point and the final destination of the parade (Fig. 12). As the following historical narratives bring out, this can be understood as a move from the periphery of the town to the centre whereby the periphery indicates the border of the old Bondoukou.

- (2) “We do Sakaraboutou in order to walk around and greet people. The moment relates to the war of Samori. That war did not enter Bondoukou here. It was at Wamo, you have understood correctly, where they met each other. [...]
They have taken the Sakaraboutou dance in order to meet them there; the warriors

11. Green (1984) provides strong evidence in favour of her suggestion that the Ouattara of Kong were more pagan than Muslim. This is endorsed by Person’s (1964, p327) suggestion that the Donzo-Ouattara are a typical contact phenomenon: they originated in the military confrontation between pagan Senufo and Muslim Mande peoples during the seventeenth and eighteenth century in the north-central region of what is now Côte d’Ivoire.

have then changed their direction. The town has remained [intact]. That is why each year, when the Ramadan arrives, we celebrate Sakaraboutou.”

(Ma Kouroubari 15/05/2001)

The Samori narratives told in connection with Sakaraboutou, strongly insist on the fact that Samori – after having conquered large parts of the northern hinterland of Bondoukou – arrived on the border of the town but never entered it. Instead he stayed on the left bank of the Wamo River, the pre-colonial south-western boundary of the city. This is an interesting interpretation when compared to what historians have established concerning the exploits of Samori at Bondoukou. Among historians, there appears to be a consensus about the fact that Samori conquered and held Bondoukou city between September 1895 and July 1897 (Terray 1995, p971-983). Nevertheless, his occupation of the city was atypical in two respects. After having concluded a peace agreement whereby Bondoukou paid a heavy price (in slaves, ammunition and gold), Samori did not destroy the city or slaughter its population like he had done, for instance at Kong (Marty 1922, p187; but see Aubertin 1983, p24-27) and Bouna (Holden 1970). Also, already after three months of occupation, Samori left the old city and moved his camp near the Baya River to the West of Bondoukou (Muhammad 1977, p248-249). Thus Samori kept Bondoukou not only “intact” (Terray 1995, p977) but also left it more or less to his fellow Muslim Dyula to rule the city. In the process, Muhammad (1977, p249) claims, the Dyula gained power in Bondoukou at the expense of the Abron overlords who saw their control over the city decreasing. In other words, both the local historical lore in connection with Sakaraboutou, and the historians’ writings bear out the fact that the Samori episode at Bondoukou was somehow empowering for the Muslim Dyula.¹²

Since the time of Samori, Bondoukou has grown in two directions: during colonial times mainly in the northeastern direction and after 1960 further to the southwest and the northwest, across the Wamo River. After decolonisation, residential town quarters such as *Quartier Lycée*, *Quartier Résidentiel* and *Mont Zanzan* were built in order to accommodate the growing numbers of teachers, security forces and public servants flooding into Bondoukou after it became a provincial and regional capital. Unlike the two other town quarters, *Mont Zanzan* has an ethnic profile as its name refers to the mountain outside Bondoukou where the Abron chiefs are buried.

12. While both local and ‘scientific’ histories locate Samori’s army beyond a river, the river is not the same. However, knowing that the Wamo is a tributary of the Baya, the two versions merely differ in the reorientation from the northwest (Baya) to the southwest (Wamo).

For a long time *Mont Zanzan* was a peripheral urban space in which the growing (political and electoral) power of the Abron and Kulango in the city was being articulated. These ‘indépendance’ quarters and their mostly non-Muslim inhabitants are largely excluded from the ‘traditional’ town centre that forms the ritual space of the Kouroubi and Sakaraboutou performances. Although Mont Zanzan has begun participating in the Kouroubi in the latter half of the 1990s, the large majority of town quarters that set up wooden platforms for their girls are located to the east of the Wamo river. Three days later, the Sakaraboutou warriors do not cross the river, not to call on *Mont Zanzan* and not even to visit the people living in the vicinity of the *Lycée* (Secondary school) where many schoolgoing ‘warriors’ have spent or are still spending some of their time.

As much as the Sakaraboutou dance in the story of Ma Kouroubari (2) is said to have helped to prevent Samori from entering the town, later and present-day parades re-validate the Wamo River as a natural and historical frontier. Part of this frontier are the Bambaraso and Donzoso town quarters which border on the Wamo River (Map, A5 & A6). Together, these two liminal town quarters form the part of town that accommodates a bewildering diversity of places, ranging from the heritage site of Bondoukou’s first house at Gbinso, the city’s main night-club Baya, the stadion of Bondoukou’s football team Sacraboutou Sport as well as the residence of the imam and his family’s mosque. It is from this peripheral, eccentric urban area that the Sakaraboutou parade takes off.

The starting point of the parade is the house of the leader (d. *kuntigi*) of Sakaraboutou. Almost instantly after setting-off, the following, often-repeated song is chanted by male and female participants alike:

- (3) donzo masa denw be anoro yee
 mɔgɔ kpɛrɛ ni tɛ ana
 we are the children of the Donzo chief
 no other person is among us

The first stop is in front of the *donzomasa*, the head of the organising Donzo-Ouattara clan ward. On arrival, the leader gets his troops to dance. Different teams of four to five youngsters dance in front of the chief and his entourage. The warrior teams come first, followed by a couple of ‘Kouroubi’ girls’ teams. The dance of the male warriors and of the female singers resembles very much the Kouroubi dance performed two days before. The main attribute of the dancers is a pair of horse tails (d. *so kwo*). This attribute distinguishes the elder leader from the youngsters (Fig. 13). In the former’s dance that concludes each greeting session, instead of horse tails, the

performer holds a whip on both ends and makes only minimal movements with his hands and hips. After he has received a small donation in money, he and his troops move on to the next destination.

The following three stops are all situated in Bambaraso (stops 3 to 5). The warriors subsequently greet the officials of the Gbin, the Noumou and the Nafana families, all of whom are considered as the first occupants of the town, prior to Dyula immigration in the seventeenth century. With songs such as the following, the male and female youngsters address the chief of one of the ‘pagan’ town quarters’.

- (4) i y’an kiri le aa yee
 bambaramasa
 i y’an kiri le aa yee
 you call us
 chief of Bambara
 you call us

Having left behind the ‘pagan’ town quarters, the troops traverse the town, visiting the different ‘Dyula’ clan wards. Subsequently they greet the chief of Karidyulaso, Malagaso, Kamagaya, Jiminiso, Koko, Hwelaso, Neneya, and Koumalaso. The parade finishes in the open space of Bondoukou’s evening market in front of the mosque of Limamso, where all performers bring an extensive salute to the town’s imam. In between the stops where the processionists address town quarter authorities, the parade visits a number of dignitaries who receive the same honours. Four of them (stops 8, 10, 12, 14) are elderly and affluent women from Donzo-Ouattara descent who have married and reside outside their father’s clan ward. Apart from them, two other Donzo ‘big men’ (d. *cemɔgɔba*) are visited (stops 11 and 15).

That is how the Sakaraboutou parade greets *the* people of the town by, firstly, selecting a historic Bondoukou, northeast of the Wamo and sensitive to the firstcomers’ status of the ‘pagans’, and, secondly, by electing its different chiefs as main addressees *but* paying them the same tribute as a considerable number of Donzoso-filiated elderly personalities. This trajectory, combined with songs (excerpt 3), and certain historical narratives (excerpts 1 & 2) reinvent a town where the power of the subchiefs is mediated and enhanced through the power of Donzoso, embodied by its warriors, and ultimately presented to the imam.

The power of the warriors resides in their outfit as well as in their acts. The tunic and the amulets add to the power of the warrior by protecting him against all sorts of physical and spiritual attacks. Amulets are produced by Muslim specialists (f. *marabout*; d. *karamɔgɔ*) while also the

tunics are treated by ‘marabouts’ in order to make them bullet-proof.¹³ This exposure to and direct contact with Koranic texts (d. *seri*) and other power substances (d. *fila*) requires that the wearer takes ablutions before putting on the tunic. The condition of the warrior during the Sakaraboutou parade thus equals that of the Muslim faithful who has entered the mosque in order to pray. This parallel is accentuated by the fact that warriors need to avoid what could spoil their state of purity: drink alcohol, get angry, pee, and above all, touch women.

One warrior whom I met during the Sakaraboutou parade of December 1997 explained it as follows:

- (5) my father has told me, if I wear [the tunic], I must not take a leak.
[...] when you wear [it], you must not beat someone. Well, you must not get angry.
Things like that; you should not make contact with a woman.

This issue of interdictions crops up regularly in the omnipresent debate about whether modern-day tunics still have the same power as before. In this respect a regular female participant in the parade, *Njambi Ouattara* (22/05/2001) explains:¹⁴

- (6) In the past, the tunic which the boys wore, we did not touch it. If you touched it, you would not bear children no more. It [the tunic] was for strong men. [...]
However, those [tunics] of the men of today, we could not care less.

In itself, I believe, the debate about the power of modern tunics, brings out that these military garments are as much religiously charged as they are invested with history and tradition. One inherits a tunic from one’s (categorical) father or grandfather and before setting out to join their colleagues in the Sakaraboutou parade, most warriors pay a visit to their father who inspects his sons outfit and sends him off with the habitual benedictions (Mahama Ouattara 23/05/2001). In conversations I had with elders and ‘warriors’ about their tunics, ‘tradition’ (d. *lasiri*) comes up in its double meaning of past (origin) and tradition (transmission across generations). When

13. Brenner (2000, p150-151) differentiates between the term ‘karamoko’ that denotes “more the function of teacher” and the ‘marabout’ that carries more pejorative connotations due to a view shared by some Muslims and non-Muslims that marabouts mix their Islamic knowledge with non-Islamic practices and thus help to perpetuate superstition. ‘Maraboutage’ or ‘Maraboutisme’ (d. *siru karamogoya*) is best understood as an ‘applied’ Muslim scholarship that cures, consults, and otherwise helps people in all sorts of situations of physical, psychological and/or social distress. ‘Marabouts’ are most notorious for the production of amulets.

14. Names of interlocutors put in italics are pseudonyms.

elders complain that the real, old ‘power-tunics’ are rare these days, they stress certain lost origins (Baba Djena 12/02/1997). When youngsters claim that they wear their ancestor’s tunic *or* that in spite of their tunic being ‘modern’, they carefully respect the interdictions that go with it, they point to a living tradition (Mahama Ouattara 23/05/2001). In any case, the warrior’s tunic is understood to carry a lot of religious and traditional weight, which in more than one sense, makes the male youngsters *re-present* their fathers and forefathers.

The power-laden behaviour of the warriors consists in break-outs into the compounds along their way, boisterous behaviour, and loud songs. The gender-aspect of this power-display is equally important, as the dispersed and unruly movements of the warriors stand in stark contrast to the even-paced march of the girls. There is one short and very popular song that squeezes the association of gendered power and Donzo supremacy into two lines:

(7) cow be ara, cow be ara, cow be ara
 donzori cow ye

 power is yours, power is yours, power is yours
 Donzos, here’s the power

When explaining the meaning of this song, one youngster said that *cow* could be interchangeably translated as ‘male’ and as ‘intelligence’ and ‘power’ (Sadji Ouattara 30/05/2001).

In its first register, the Sakaraboutou traditional parade mobilises a historical Bondoukou in which the Donzo elders and their warriors hold a special position due to the power that resides both in their military supremacy (Donzo) and in their access to Muslim religious and spiritual power (amulets, imam). However, the Donzo male supremacy is principally marked as ‘elderly’. This is realised in the Sakaraboutou parade by juxtaposing the male youngsters not only with the Kouroubi girls, but also with another group of ‘protected’ subordinates: the *woroso* second and subsequent generation slaves.

Woroso literally means ‘the house-born (slave)’ and designates a category of people distinct from the *horon* or free-born and from the *jòn* or slaves proper (Derive 1984).¹⁵ In past times, the

15. This phenomenon has been documented more widely in West Africa among the Mande (Quimby 1972; Klein 1983; Bird *et. al.* 1995) and among the Songhay (e.g. Olivier de Sardan 1973). Among the Mande, the *woroso* (and even the *jon* are sometimes included in the larger category of *nyamakala* (groups of specialised professionals or craftsmen). However, Bird *et. al.* (1995, p31) strongly indicate that the profile of the *woroso* and of the *nyamakala* almost coincide, when they state that: “From the Mande

worosos were men and women born from *jòn* in the house of a *horon* family and this gave the ‘domestic slaves’ certain liberties vis-à-vis their masters to whom they remained attached. This attachment should not be understood in the sense of being stuck or tied to (as is the case with *jòn*) but more in the sense of clinging to and throwing in one’s lot with the free-born family. This kind of (relative) reciprocity of the *worosos* and the free-born is given shape in the joking relationship (d. *sinanguya*) they entertain and which allows the *worosos* to insult his or her master or any free-born (often in public places) until the latter comes up with something of a reward in money or kind (Abiba Ouattara 26/12/2000) – this phenomenon Launay (1977) refers to as “joking slavery”. In Bondoukou, the *worosos* form a kind of network with a double command structure: apart from their own *worosos* male and female chief, they receive orders from a male and female ‘free-born’ from Donzoso (Abiba Ouattara 26/12/2000). The activities of the *worosos* nowadays are restricted to *worosos*-only gatherings and occasional public and (as we will also see later) often rather official events (Ma Kouroubari 15/05/2001) (Fig. 14). As Derive (1984, p128) observed in other towns, *worosos* do not only seek a public audience, they often strike “at the heart of the most important Dyula customs”.

One of these customs at Bondoukou is the Sakaraboutou parade in which the *worosos* form a small group of processionists which can be easily distinguished by their traditional outfit which merely consists of a tunic made out of a rice sac (Fig. 15). In two respects, the presence of the *worosos* adds to the traditional character of the parade: on the one hand, the *worosos* recall the ‘traditional’ division between free-born and slaves, while on the other hand, with *sinanguya*, they bring in the customary technique of division and bonding which not only exists among masters and transitional slaves, but also exists in the form of joking relationship between different ethnic groups, villages, patrilineages, age-grades, social classes, and alternate generations (Launay 1977; Labouret 1929; Paulme 1939; Pageard 1958).

In the Sakaraboutou parade, the joking relationships between different town quarters (in fact between different *jamu* or patrilineages) are given center stage. Nowadays, intra-village *sinanguya*

horon point of view, the nyamakala represent everything that a noble must not be or do. They dabble in the occult. They lie. They act shamelessly. They comport themselves without constraint or control. They plead weakness. They beg. They manifest sexually in public places. They dance with wild gestures. They raise their voices. They shout and yell in public. The nyamakala are utterly alien: they are “The Other”. Among the Songhay-Zerma, *worosos* are called *horso*, a term which Olivier de Sardan (1973, p158) translates as “integrated slave” (f. *captif intégré*) and explains as follows: “The *horso* is integrated in the family but at a discount. Fundamentally he or she is an eternal junior.”

in Bondoukou is practised between for instance Malagaso and Koumalaso, and Donzoso and Hwelaso, while intra-family joking relationships between cross-cousins or between grandparents and grandchildren, are occasionally staged in the course of funerals. Sakaraboutou and funerals are thus the principal occasions during which people indulge in collective and reciprocal sessions of insulting language and behaviour (*Njambi Ouattara* 22/05/2001). Because of its reciprocal (equality-based) nature, *sinanguya* practice builds special relationships or alliances between groups and individuals (Griaule 1948; Drucker-Brown 1982) – very much of the kind one can observe to exist among free-born and *woroso*. In Bondoukou the inter-clan joking relationships express historical alliances that were forged between paired groups who, as hosts and guests, were directly involved with each others’ settlement in the town (see Agier 1981). In other words, the web of *sinanguya* was woven in a long-term project of building a locality where different groups forged transversal relationships based on relative equality and reciprocity.

Inter-*jamu* joking practice in Sakaraboutou takes the form of insulting songs sung at the instigation of the warriors of one clan ward when approaching the clan ward of their joking partners.¹⁶ The song below is directed by the warriors of the Donzo-Ouattara clan at their joking partners: the Hwela and their chief.

| | | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| (8) | (chorus) | a yan welamasa | <i>ah here chief of the Hwela</i> |
| | (lead singer) | lɔgɔlɔgɔni | <i>skeletal</i> |
| | (chorus) | a yan welamasa | <i>ah here chief of the Hwela</i> |
| | (lead singer) | pɔgɔpɔgɔni | <i>spongy</i> |
| | ... | | |
| | (lead singer) | denyugumasa | <i>chief of the little rogues</i> |
| | ... | | |
| | (lead singer) | pɔmpɔmni | <i>flimsy</i> |

The above example is not fortuitously chosen, as Hwela-targeting songs in Sakaraboutou are both abundant and creatively elaborated. In the parade of December 2000, another ‘Hwela’ song was: “The Hwela have shit in their pants, the Hwela have peed in their pants, the Hwela have

16. Tauxier, the only historical source on Sakaraboutou (although he does not mention the name), seems to confirm the inter-*jamu* exchange when pointing out that on the first day of the new month of ‘Mingari’ one could witness war-like behaviour combined with delegations of clan wards visiting each other (Tauxier 1921, p292).

shat in the night”, and still another “The face of the Hwela, the face of the chief of the Hwela is like that of a monkey who is fasting”. Both the volume and creative intensity with which the above song are performed, indexes the prominence of the Donzo-Ouattara among the members of the cortege. Thus, even in its joking mode, when the parade stages relationships of reciprocity and equality, the Donzo supremacy within Sakaraboutou is evident.

In conclusion, in its first register, Sakaraboutou illustrates how the invention or construction of the parade as a tradition is, in the words of Massey (1995, p188) quoted in the epigraph of this chapter, “about the invention of the coherence of a place, about defining and naming it as a ‘place’ at all”. In Cohen’s terms, Sakaraboutou can be said to emplace Bondoukou by indicating its external borders and its internal make-up. Moreover, in this process of visualising and dramatising the historical geography of the town, its internal stratification is grounded. I have tried to show in what ways the parade is selective and elective in tracing out its boundaries and staging its inner differences; and thus how, from the spectacular ‘unity in diversity’, distinct hierarchies emerge that refract throughout the performance. These refractions are many and diverse. The distinction between protectors and protected – an issue which resides at the heart of the Sakaraboutou military parade – is refracted in the difference (a) between Muslim Dyula (who control the ‘army’) and ‘pagans’, (b) between the Donzo-Ouattara (who effectively organise the ‘army’) and other Dyula clan wards, (c) between elders (who provide e.g. power-tunics) and youngsters, (d) between (circumambulating) male and (encompassed) female youngsters, as well as (e) between the free-born and the *worosso*. The latter refraction of social distinction can be said to evoke hierarchy as much as reciprocity and (playful) equality and this we found also in the staging of inter-clan-ward joking relationships. While the observations about the prominence of Donzo-Ouattara joking as against other stagings of inter-clan *sinanguya* may reveal the limits of the staged ‘egalitarianism’, we cannot properly understand its relative importance without taking into account the specific place of inter-clan joking within the overall make-up of the parade.

The ‘map’ that emerges from the Sakaraboutou parade in its first register consists of the twenty or so stops about half of which are associated in one way or another to Donzoso: either by contiguity, because they are located on Donzo territory (stops 1 and 2), or by filiation because they visit people in de intra-urban Donzo ‘diaspora’ (stops 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15), or indexically as in the case of the last stop in front of the imam’s mosque which (for instance during Kouroubi) functions as the official ceremonial working space of Donzoso and Limamso alike. These twenty or so stops can be argued to represent the town quarters which, together, represent ‘traditional’ Bondoukou. That may be largely the case, but by describing the space of the public

ritual in such a way, one may easily operate the kind of spatial closure which, I think, Sakaraboutou positively lacks. What seems to largely fall outside the ritual space of the ‘traditional’ Sakaraboutou parade are (a) the transitions, the spaces between the stops, and (b) parallel zones, spaces situated literally alongside the stops and transitions. In both these spaces, the warriors and other participants engage in other performances that are not directed to the elders and officials who form the point of departure and the target of the first register, but in eccentric exchanges with occasional bystanders (in the streets) or simply among themselves. I situate these performative repositionings realised with actors and publics and in ritual spaces and moments that are different from the one presented above in the two additional layers or registers of the parade.

4. The second register: exchange and appropriation among male and female youngsters

As Tauxier (1921, p287-291) observed in his overview of the Dyula ritual calendar of Bondoukou at the beginning of last century, the month of Ramadan including Kouroubi and Sakaraboutou follows a period when marriage feasts are preferably organised. Nowadays, many marriages are still organised in the month preceding Ramadan, while the cycle of courting and preparing next year’s marriages seems to recommence at the end of the month of fasting. This can be noticed in the rapprochement and gift exchange between unmarried girls and boys that lies at the heart of the long night of Kouroubi. In between the wooden stands are make-shift candy-shops which provide the gifts that boys throw at their chosen ones who are, beyond reach, singing on top of the platforms. Candies and chewing-gum and occasionally small flasks of perfume bought from itinerant vendors are what the girls get as attention and admiration from the boys. Other historical and comparative data suggest that Kouroubi is a moment of public contact and exchange between youngsters of both sexes, whether this may or may not prefigure actual marriage. Yves Person (1968, I, p140) writes about the Kouroubi at Kong that it “would appear to have been put in place by Seku Watara [Sekou Ouattara of eighteenth-century Kong] in order to present brides to his warriors”. Trimingham (1959, p78-9) reports that during the “Mande feast of the virgins” on the night of the 27th of Ramadan, “in western Guinea children sing for presents, young men and maidens parade the streets, singing and dancing all night.”¹⁷

17. Trimingham (1959, p78-9) adds that youngsters “carry around ‘floats’ with representations of animals, boats, and the like”. Both his and Person’s description of Kouroubi enlarge the scope of the feast by pointing out Sakaraboutou-like features: ‘warriors’ in the case of Kong (Person) and a ‘carnavalesque

In several respects contemporary Kouroubi and Sakaraboutou can be situated within a festive period during which the separation between youngsters of both sexes is formalised at the same time that exchanges between them intensify. In the static configuration of Kouroubi, girls are seated on high platforms while boys roam the hectic spaces underneath them. In the mobile context of Sakaraboutou, girls together with the band of musicians occupy a more steady and condensed space than of the warriors. This divide is mainly marked aesthetically: the disciplined march and the colourful appearance of the girls contrasts heavily with the dirty faces and garments of the warriors who rush forward, interrupt their march for one or the other micro-performance (see later), and hurry up again in order to join the main group.

However, the aesthetic boundary between male and female participants in the Sakaraboutou parade is blurred by the fact that many warriors add female attributes to their outfit. One of the most popular ways of departing from the standard outfit is for the ‘traditional’ warrior to decorate it with items of the Kouroubi head-dress and make-up such as (most popularly) the *gogoro* pompons, the *jomo* headpiece, and female make-up. Although in some cases these items appear as proper imitations, in most other cases the transformations are so obvious that one can speak of visual parody.¹⁸ The men’s *jomo* sometimes have a grotesquely gigantic front chignon and some participants substitute it altogether with a gross mop of hair (Fig. 16). Also, some warriors may add colourful pompons to their headdress and sometimes enhance its effect by adding tinsels or plastic straps carelessly tied around their necks (Fig. 17). Even the most girly-looking warriors who wear a proper Kouroubi head-dress, may mark a critical distance from the ‘real’ girls by, for instance, using lipstick in colours (such as white or black) that mark the outfit as bizarre (Fig. 18). None of such appropriations of male items can be observed among girls, which makes the visual parodying appear as instances of misappropriation. Although, when looking at what happens in other exchanges between male and female youngsters, the image one gets is a far more balanced or reciprocal one, the contrast between Kouroubi and Sakaraboutou is nonetheless obvious.

In Kouroubi, the boys can be said to engage in gift-giving while in Sakaraboutou it appears to be the reverse. If Kouroubi is the time to make one’s choice among the many girls presented on the platforms, the day the Ramadan ends seems to be the right time to take hold of them. In a few

parade’ in the case of the Guinea Dyula (Trimingham). I take this as a further suggestion that Kouroubi and Sakaraboutou form part of the same ceremonial ensemble.

18. The use of this term is explained below.

female youngsters, it becomes clear that this song has strong sexual overtones while some claim it is simply about sexual intercourse of the rougher kind. The sexual connotations of the *kalemara* do not so much reside in the fact that many girls have it and use it intensively, since also men, even elderly man often use eye-liner. Rather, it is the form as well as the material of the object in relation to the ‘wara wara’ that produces an association of *kalemara* with the female private parts (vagina, anus).

In rare variations of this song, the word *kalemara* is replaced with $s\text{og}\text{as}\text{og}$ (a perforated calabash used to filter liquid) and with *sison* (the spungy flesh inside a fresh calabash). By stressing that the material of the *kalemara* is calabash, the singer plays on the form as well as on the fragility of the ‘object’. The form of the *kalemara* resembles that of a standard calabash consisting of a ‘bowl’ and an elongated ‘neck’. On this ‘neck’ fits a shaft that is glided over it in order to seal the *kalemara*. In order to apply the eye-liner, one uses a thin twig to reach the coal in the bowl. While the form and the techniques involved in the use of the *kalemara* may be likened to penetration, the phonological resemblance of calabash (d. *fie*) and vagina (d. *biç*) is sometimes capitalised on in songs that explicitly mention either of these. This is made more explicit in the ‘Penis song’. One often heard version of this song is intoned by male youngsters and evokes the image of a wandering penis.

| | | | |
|------|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (10) | (lead) | kpangiri ni a $s\text{og}\text{ori}$ | <i>penis with its shoes</i> |
| | (chorus) | ho ya ho | <i>ho ya ho</i> |

This image of the footloose penis is developed in the same metaphoric of mobility in the version below:

| | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| (10') | (lead) | kpangiri o sira ba | <i>penis like a big road</i> |
|-------|--------|--------------------|------------------------------|

In a further variation the ‘road’ is replaced by a ‘calabash’:

| | | | |
|--------|--------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| (10'') | (lead) | kpangiri ni a fie ba | <i>penis with its big calabash</i> |
|--------|--------|----------------------|------------------------------------|

Interestingly enough, when discussing this song with youngsters from Bondoukou, some suggested that I had misunderstood the words and that the correct transcript was “kpangiri n’a biç ba”, that is, “penis and its big vagina”.

In its classic (‘shoe’) version at least the walking action of the penis in the ‘Penis song’ resembles that of the trampling in the ‘Wara wara song’ and also in the former this is associated with the act of penetration. In one variation I recorded ‘ $s\text{og}\text{ori}$ ’ is replaced by ‘ $s\text{og}\text{ona}$ ’ and the only translation I and my interlocutors are able to come up with is that ‘ $s\text{og}\text{ona}$ ’ means “something to perforate”. Also the ‘Wara wara song’ plays on the fragility of calabash and

stresses the act of crushing or destroying (*wara*) due to trampling (*don*) or violent action. All this seems to suggest that two of the most popular sexually explicit songs are as much about violent or even illicit sexual action as they are about deflowering.¹⁹ More importantly perhaps is that in these songs, the warriors seem to turn their own aggressive mobility realised in the parade into a trope of sexual empowerment and the harsh seizure of girls.

As can be seen from the above examples (10, 10', and 10'') the popularity of a song resides not only in the fact that it is often sung during the Sakaraboutou parade, but also in that it is invested with a lot of creative energy resulting in endless variations. The few problems I mentioned with translations, can merely indicate the myriad struggles involved in documenting and researching the Sakaraboutou parade in the other less official register than the first. Many of the songs and performances in the two other registers are short-lived, introduced by one creative spirit and followed by others. At times a version spreads rapidly and produces a rare moment of unison singing but most of the time different songs and different versions of the same song are being sung simultaneously. The only element of order which one can frequently observe in the performance of sexually explicit songs is that relating to the opposition between gender groups.

When time and circumstances permit, male and female singers may engage in a vocal dialogue whereby the girls transform the version of a song intoned by the boys; upon which the latter retaliate with still another variation. This happened quite frequently in the 'Wara wara song' (9). One common variation is the following whereby the girls simply replace the *sunguru* (young girl) in the lead part by *kamele* (young man):²⁰

(11) jamana kamele, ju-o kalemara, i ka don

the young men of the world, arse (like) kalemara, you trample on it

In the same song recorded very early on – in between stop 1 and 2 – in the Sakaraboutou parade of December 2000, the young men rejoined the girls by substituting *kamele* with *muso* (woman).

19. I have not been able to elicit interpretations from my interlocutors which unequivocally bear this out. Rather, conversations about the songs mostly do not rise above the level of chuckling and innuendo. One example of this innuendo is that one interlocutor suggested that given the general inspiration of the song, it would probably be better to translate *sunguru* by 'prostitutes' rather than just 'young girls'.

20. The addition of the suffix *-ba* (great, big) magnifies connotations of *kamele* that are otherwise latent: they range from being beautiful and well-dressed to being proud and over-confident. A poignant critique of the *kameleba* can be found in Alpha Blondy's song *Fangandan Kameleba* ('The poor *kameleba*') (1984).

Somewhat later – in between stops 5 (Nafanamasa) and 6 (Karidyulaso) – the girls first recovered the *kamele* version and in a subsequent variation, replaced *kamele* by *masa* (chief)

- (11') - jamana kamele, ju-o kalemara
- jamana masa, ju-o kalemara

Although one could discern a certain escalation in the gradual move from ‘young girl’ over ‘young man’ and ‘woman’ to (male) ‘chief’, the import of these vocal exchanges between male and female youngsters resides, I think, in the mutual appropriation of each other’s texts whereby a certain reciprocity is achieved by progressively substituting the words that index one’s own gender group by words that index the other. This activity of mutual verbal abuse falls within the same category of playing (d. *tolo*) or insulting (d. *nieni*) that takes place between joking partners. As is also the case among joking partners, insulting induces a certain equality, informality, and reciprocity among, in this case, the gendered partners. This contrasts considerably with the gendered separation and hierarchy which constitutes the first register of Sakaraboutou..

Although the term appropriation – in its different guises as male-driven ‘uni-directional’ or cross-gender ‘mutual’ seizure – is reasonably adequate for articulating the (‘gift’, ‘girls’ and also ‘boys’) ‘taking’ behaviour that goes on in the (second register of the) parade, one needs however finer concepts in order to grasp the micro-physics of the exchanges between gender groups. In order to interpret the abduction of Kouroubi items in the outfits of the male youngsters, one could rely on other explanations of cross-dressing in ritual (Adams 1981) or by ‘traditional’ warriors (Moran 1997). Perhaps Adams summarises these best when she re-interprets Ottenberg’s description of boys parades among the Afikpo (Nigeria), by stating that, by appropriating female gear, the male youngsters are “showing that they have mastered also all that women can do” (1981, p50). However, what remains unexplained in these accounts is why the Sakaraboutou warriors do not only wear a simple *jomo* but often a grotesquely giant one (Fig. 16), and sometimes not a standard *gogoro* but a patently counterfeited or misplaced one (Fig. 17). In the songs also, one can detect a certain amount of exaggeration or amplification in the way the sexual organs are named as well as in the sense that the sexual intercourse that is evoked is particularly brutal and destructive.

In order to grasp this, the analytical concept of (visual or material) parody as defined by Hutcheon (1985) is a productive one. For Hutcheon, parody is a form of trans-contextualisation and “a method of inscribing continuity while permitting critical distance” (ibid., p20) which makes it “overtly hybrid and double-voiced” (ibid, p28). What further insights this may bring to our analysis of Sakaraboutou in terms of registers, will become clear in Section 6 of this chapter.

For the time being, I concentrate on the aspect of hyperperformance and the reception of cross-gender exchanges by both elder and younger males.

When I asked an experienced Sakaraboutou performer (Mahama Ouattara 25/05/2001) whether he did not feminise himself by adding 'Kouroubi' attributes to his outfit, he explained that the idea of using elements of Kouroubi head-dress and cosmetics was all about laying one's hands on women and the things they wear by adding it to one's outfit. He had done it many times, he said, and if it made him look just like a girl he could not get enough of it: he would even speak in a high-pitched voice and at times walk in a girlie fashion. This was all about showing the girls and their parents that he could be a girl if he really wanted to be.

In the above statements, Mahama Ouattara not only clearly articulates the general idea of appropriation that Adams (1981) and Moran (1997) subscribed to, but the specific idea of overdoing it. This, according to Hill (1999, p552) is rather typical of instances of double-voicing or 'styling the other', because these transgressions trigger a certain blurring of identities which can be surmounted by overdoing it, or as she calls it, by 'hyperperforming'. This explanation rephrases the combination of 'continuity' and 'critical distance' which Hutcheon observes in parody. Both Hill (1995, p209) and Hutcheon (1985, p106) also consider the power dimension of this and observe that double-voicing implies as much complicity with dominant hierarchies as aloofness from them. In all, Hutcheon (1985, p75) states "even in mocking, parody reinforces; in formal terms, it inscribes the mocked conventions onto itself, thereby guaranteeing their continued existence". (ibid., p75).

In his confident declarations, Mahama Ouattara characterises his actions in the way Lloyd (1999, p204) relying on Butler, did for 'drag', namely as "a parodic performance based upon disavowed identification". For realising this in the Sakaraboutou performance, warriors can rely on their 'hegemonic' location in the first register. There, the young men possess all the authority that is linked to their outfit (tunic) and attributes (amulets). Unlike the girls who do not engage in cross-dressing, the young men do. With this, they confirm the male superiority underlying the first register, but at the same time, they destabilise the separation between the sexes which is so dramatically stated in the rule that the male's tunic cannot be touched by women. Also this can partly be accommodated by the 'traditional' model. After all, the rule of gender separation seems to apply more severely to women than to men. While a transgender 'touch' of a tunic-wearing man has only temporary consequences for the young man who thereby wastes the effects of his ablutions, it has lasting effects for the woman who is no longer able to bear children for the rest of her life. Nonetheless, the authority of the warriors seems somehow affected by this

transgression. While this is a major concern for the elders, we will see that what concerns the youngsters is the fact that the girls retaliate. Interestingly enough, both elder and younger males understand the transgressions that worry them as modern-day phenomena, that is, incompatible with the ‘traditional’ scheme.

When I (M) asked what he thought of the warriors’ fancy dresses, the Donzoso dignitary Alai Kourouba (AK) stated:

(12) (AK) You know, in past times, if you want to do that, the elders will not accept. That is why all the elders are dead now and the naughty children have found something fancy to put on their faces. [...] Before that was not done. One only wore the tunic, the cap, and the trousers.

(M) But now they do it.

(AK) That is because the children like to practice banditry (*bandija*). [That is why] we don’t give them guns. There is no question of guns any more.

In many ways, Kourouba signifies that the cross-dressing is a modern-day deviation. By using the creolised term *bandiya* (derived from French ‘bandit’) instead of the regular Dyula term for banditry, *gbananyɔrɔja* and by associating it instantly with firearms, the Donzoso dignitary evokes the question of youth delinquency and hold-ups (also by adults) along Côte d’Ivoire main roads that rose in the latter half of the 1990s. Nevertheless, ‘banditry’ retains a certain positive connotation, certainly when used in combination with children of youngsters, as Alai Kourouba did a bit later in the same interview when he identified the wrongdoers as ‘naughty children’ (d. *demisiru bandiru*). The latter term or its French equivalent ‘petits bandits’ is often used to describe children who are inquisitive and outgoing and in the process make mistakes. This, I think, approaches the stance of the youngsters concerning their cross-gender endeavours, namely that they are functions of their mobility and juvenile entrepreneurship. In other words, while he associates the tradition with the (deceased) elders, and modern-day illicit behaviour (in and outside Sakaraboutou) with the children and youngsters of today, Alai Kourouba as much protects and glorifies tradition as he deplures and excuses its demise.

Another way in which the cross-gender transgression is addressed as a modern-day phenomenon is by raising the issue of the modern tunics. Both among elders and youngsters the idea seems to reign that the tunics the warriors are wearing these days are mostly ‘fake’ in the sense that they are neither old nor have been produced according to ‘traditional’ procedures (involving, for instance, a special treatment by a ‘marabout’). The lack of this implies, what *Njambi Ouattara*

said in excerpt 6, that the rule of being untouchable by females no longer applies. So, the loss of tradition implies the demise of the gender separation and hierarchy – one of the building blocks of the first register. This is clearly stated by the Sakaraboutou *kuntigi* Baba Djéna (12/02/1997). When I showed him pictures in which one saw girls and boys parading next to each other, he said:

- (13) You see in past times, there would be at least forty meters distance between the boys and the girls. [...] But as today the tunics are not well treated like they were before, these tunics can touch women, nothing happens.

That what happens in the second register of Sakaraboutou are modern-day phenomena is not only intimated by remarks of elder males and females, but also by male youngsters. The same Mahama Ouattara (28/05/2001) who before showed such confidence about his appropriation of femininity, showed less sympathy for how the females these days counteract the sexually explicit songs of himself and his fellow warriors.

- (14) Before, the girls just repeated what the boys sung but now the girls add words of their own; they even intone songs on their own [initiative] instead of waiting for the boys. [...] You see, girls are less afraid now; many have been to Abidjan or Bouaké, they have worked their, they know men.

These remarks by Mahama Ouattara and Alai Kourouba, show how the cross-gender exchanges of the second register possess the kind of intensity and visibility which makes them hard to reconcile with the ‘tradition’ of the first register. What is striking in the comments on these phenomena is not only that they deal with contemporary society but also that this society by far exceeds the boundaries of Bondoukou and include Côte d'Ivoire and the modern world as a whole. As the ‘Wara wara song’ so aptly indicates, the girls (*sunguru*) and boys (*kamele*) who confront each other in the second register are ‘of the world’ (*jamana*) rather than ‘of the traditional town’. As such, in its second register, Sakaraboutou loses much of the traditionality and fixedness it appears to possess in its first register, and is rather situated in the time-space of contemporary society in which the position of youngsters in their relation to the elders and to each other is in constant flux and open to contestation. The reciprocity and relative equality among the two gender groups, at least in some of the performances, appears to interrogate the position of the male ‘warriors’, a situation which their elder patrons seem to deplore as much as the warriors themselves.

However, for counteracting the seemingly rising ‘ritual power’ of the girls – a subject to which I will return – the warriors can draw on another resource for which they do not depend on their elders, but which they seem to master and reproduce themselves. This resource is situated in the third register of the Sakaraboutou parade and includes the micro-performances in which warriors engage in staging still other personages than the ‘warrior’ of the first and the ‘young outgoing youngster’ of the second register. This repositioning takes place in yet another space-time zone opposite the site of exchange in the second register. While the girls and boys exchange sexually explicit songs in the semi-public space of the inner centre of the parade, and between greeting stops when public attention is somehow dispersed, the micro-performances and impersonations that constitute the third register take place in the parade’s diaspora, in the liminal and private spaces and moments far removed from public attention.

5. The third register: warriors as bush creatures

(15) are ma kamele nyuma ye?
 an bɔra kongo
 n ka nya n’i denmusori
 Don’t you see a handsome young man?
 We come from the bush
 I am more handsome than your daughter

Here, a ‘warrior’ (Kader Ouattara 27/05/2001) describes how in the course of Sakaraboutou he addresses a mother who is standing along the street next to her daughter. When illustrating how he treats elder male persons during the parade, the same youngster says: “I go and show my beard to the elders and tell them that mine is more beautiful than theirs”.

These instances bring out well that the same rebellious spirit that connects male and female youngsters in the second register reigns also in the way the warriors address adult bystanders both in their status of (bearded or respectable) elders and parents (of girls). Such and other scenes can be witnessed when, in between stops, the warriors abscond from the parade and confront its unwary spectators. In these marginal zones of half-private interactions with girls and their parents, warriors engage in a game of confrontation whereby they do not only challenge the girls’ integrity but also their parents’ authority. Statement 15 does this by focusing on ‘good looks’ and thereby strikes at the heart of the end-of-Ramadan pageantry. The issue of ‘beauty’ is as central to the girl’s presentation during Kouroubi as it is when girls are posted in front of their compound during the Sakaraboutou parade. In the latter case it equally involves their parents

who invest a lot of time and resources in their daughters' attractive appearance (Ali Ouattara 13/02/1997).

In excerpt 14 Kader Ouattara locates the source of his 'beauty' neither in 'tradition' (outfit, frightening looks), or in his masculinity, but in 'the bush'. The same phrasing can be found in many statements made during the *wanzu* mock sermons, to which I will turn shortly. In the following conversation an 'elder brother' who is the main narrator (M) tells a story to his 'younger brother' (V).

(16)

M: [...] min an tagara be kpenege kan o, cɛmɔgɔba dɔ ti sigi le be a kɔrɔ; dɔgɔ, ba busá; i te a lɔn?

[...] When we went to the market place, a certain elder was sitting next to us; younger brother, father beard, don't you know him?

V: n ya a lɔn

I know him

M: a busá a sya

His beard is plenty

V: ee, tian

M: dɔgɔ fɛrɛ, ni ka to a ka lɔn busa mi ti[gi] be ni ve *quoi*, ni bɔra ni a ye kongo le; *mais* ale ta busa, ee dɔgɔ, ale be tagara, a tagara sigi ni a ye limami kɔrɔ, a tɛ sie ka kwo nyanama dɔ fɔ a ye

Younger brother see, I made him understand that the beard which I had quoi, I came with it from the bush; Mais his beard, ee younger brother, he went, he went to sit next to the imam, he could not tell one good story.

V: a ti tian fɔ limami ye

He does not tell the truth to the imam

V: a busa ya bo a fɛ jaga; a tɛ tian fɔ

His beard is big for him, for nothing; he does not speak the truth

(Wanzu performance 23/05/2001)

In this conversation, one gets a sense of the extent to which Sakaraboutou warriors in their guise as bush creatures interrogate the prestige and moral authority of the (bearded) elders. Moreover, if in this excerpt the imam remains out of target, we will soon see that this is not always the case. These critical performances obviously do not fit the register of traditional-historical warriorhood, but neither do they find their place in the second register of festive loutish exchanges.

The third register is a diverse cluster of individual and group performances that take place almost hidden from the public eye, in the privacy of street-side conversations or when a small group of ‘warriors’ separate themselves from the main group and sit down in a lost corner of a compound. In terms of garments and make-up, the third register is the one in which the warriors transform their faces almost beyond recognition. Certain warriors make their faces entirely unrecognisable by wearing a plastic ‘carnival’ face mask or a minimally decorated piece of cardboard with holes for the eyes, nose, and mouth.²¹ More importantly perhaps, body hair and multi-colour face paint contribute to the ‘wild’ appearance of the warriors. As much as black face-paint is the attribute of the ‘traditional’ warrior of the first register (Fig. 19), and lipstick (Fig. 18) that of the outgoing male youngster of the second register, brown and white greasepaint as well as beards and wigs of tousled hair belong to the third register (Fig. 20).

The individual acts which constitute the third register of the Sakaraboutou parade can best be described as acts of permanent (for the duration of the parade) impersonation or temporary and instantaneous acts of imposture. Among the permanent individual acts in the parade of 1997 there was, for instance, a youngster carrying a carcass of a radio while impersonating a famous television speaker or actor. Others who have no particular attributes and cannot be visually distinguished from the mainstream warriors, all of a sudden may start impersonating for instance a football commentator or a couple of persons who are deaf and dumb.

What is striking in most explanations afterwards is that participants are often able to put a name to the persons impersonated. So, a Sakaraboutou youngster walking around while repeating “a bo bo bo” is not just recognised as someone who stutters, but as “Diomandé”, the actor who often impersonates a stammerer in the popular Friday-evening, comical tv-show on national television, *Sacrée soirée*. Another Sakaraboutou personage speaking heavily through his nose is identified as the late Cameroonian comedian Jean-Miché Kankan in one of his well-known impersonations of a university professor. Although not all impersonations are impersonations-of-impersonations – as the instances of the television speaker and the football commentator bear out – they do indicate the kind of double character of the impersonations that is omnipresent in the third register.

21. From a Dyula community in present-day Burkina Faso, Quimby reports performances of boys during and after Ramadan whereby the male youngsters perform “acrobatic dances”, and jump and leap with a pole, often wearing face masks “often representing wild animals”.

In order to explain this, I turn to my own experiences of February 1997 when I joined the parade for the first time, equipped with a rather noticeable professional tape recorder and a microphone. Apart from recording songs at different times and places, I also approached the Sakaraboutou participants, also those with obvious disguises and attributes. In the often hilarious conversations I had with these impressionists, I increasingly realised that I myself, in one or the other aspect of my (presumed) identity, was willingly or not incorporated ('dragged' is possibly a better word) into the game. So at one moment, I bumped into a personage walking around with a half-open and empty suitcase. He (V1 in excerpt 17) readily explains to me (M) that his task is to distribute five billion dollars that were given to him by the French president Jacques Chirac to the ones who have just finished their fast.²² Near the end of the conversation a third processionist (V2) joins in who addresses me as a Westerner by suggesting he accompanies me back home. After this, the original interlocutor joins us, resumes the subject of 'foreign money', and suggests I leave also with him in order to share the profit (f. *bouffer ensemble*).²³

(17)

(V1) le président Chirac m'a envoyé ce matin \ je viens donner de l'argent au ivoiriens \ voilà c'est *ça \ . la mallette.

President Chirac has sent me this morning. I come to give money to the Ivoirians. That's it, the attaché-case.

(M) ils vont prendre tout l'argent là? *Are they going to take all that money ?*

(V1) oui, ils vont prendre *Yes, they will take*

(M) et puis .. et puis xxxx *and then, and then*

(V1) c'est pour ceux qui ont fait le jeune \ c'est : pour ceux qui ont jeuné là \ c'est à eux que je vais donner

It is for those who have done the fast. It is for those who have fasted. It is to them that I am going to give.

(M) oui, oui *yes, yes*

22. When I came across him a second time, he completed his list of beneficiaries with the mayor, the governor and the imam of Bondoukou.

23. In this and other transcriptions, I have made use of the following symbols: [= speech overlap with previous line(s); X = an unintelligible and untranscribed syllable; (.) = represents a pause of more or less 1 second; : = the immediately preceding sound it prolonged; \ = a slight fall indicating temporary closure; words in capitals are loudly spoken; ==the word that follows is latched to the preceding word; ↑ = high pitched voice.

(V1) xx c'est tout=tout le monde va avoir aussi \ même Bédié même va avoir aussi parce qu'il a fait aussi \ donc aujourd'hui là c'est ça= c'est ça qui est là \. voici l'argent \ c'est cinq milliard dollars \ . cinq milliard

Everybody is going to receive, even Bédié himself will also receive because he has also done [the fast]. So, today that is that ; the money that is there is worth five billion dollars.

(V2) attend attend *Wait, wait*

(V1) oui *Yes*

(V2) si tu vas aller en France \ on va aller ensemble \

If you go to France, we will go together

(V1) [oui *Yes*

(V2) en=en tout l'Allemagne en Amérique \ je vais partir en Amérique avec toi \ je ne veux pas rester à Bondoukou encore \ je vais partir. avec toi

Wherever in Germany or America ; I will leave to America with you. I don't want to stay in Bondoukou anymore. I'm going to leave with you

(V1) [xxx on va bouffer ensemble. [...] *We will benefit together*

(V2) on doit manger ensemble \ on doit bouffer ensemble \ de l'argent

We have to benefit together. We have to benefit together from the money.

(V1) [xx ça pèse quinze kilo *It weighs fifteen kilos*

(Sakaraboutou parade 9/2/1997)

The derisive act clearly plays on a number of contradictions, such as the incongruity between 'Chirac' and 'dollars', between the Catholic Bédié and the fasting Muslims, as well as between the performer's stated intention to distribute huge sums of money ('it weighs fifteen kilos', 'five billion dollar') and the noticeable emptiness of his suitcase. My own implication in this performance is rather straightforward in the sense that I am basically constructed as a Westerner (subsequently a Frenchman, a German and an American), perhaps as a foreign money lender, but also as an accomplice in embezzling the foreign money.

This kind of implication was both more indirect and more stinging in another act in which an impersonator walks up to me while I, tape recorder in hand, am wandering around trying to have conversations with the parade participants:

(18)

1. (V1) Monsieur, laisse-moi parler dedans *Mister, let me speak in it*

These sophisticated forms of double-voicing are different from the more pedestrian ones found in the second register, and constitute the core practice of Sakaraboutou in its third register. One of the main characteristics of double-voicing, Rampton (1999, p422) explains below, is the multiple positioning of the performer.

“In the moment of interactive performance, it is often very hard for analysts, for interlocutors and for speakers themselves, to tell exactly how separate self and other are, and where and how the self is being positioned.”

In the Sakaraboutou parade, this mobility of the performer in a metaphorical sense, is paralleled by his mobility in a literal sense. In the performances belonging to the third register, this literal mobility is expressed by the performer who in his narratives situates himself subsequently (and sometimes simultaneously) in different geographical places, ranging from the urban or national space to places well beyond (in France, Germany or the US). In the Sakaraboutou parade the performer's mobility is indexed by the space where his performances take place: that is in spaces that are external or marginal and situated beyond the 'traditional' confines of the parade. These general characteristics of third-register performances are exemplarily realised in the *wanzu*, a specific genre of small-group conversation-play derived from the format of the Muslim sermon (d. *kalan*). In the *wanzu*, the performer engages in a bewildering game of multiple selfing through multiple othering in a large range of personages. This multi-locality/vocality of the performer is given some firm ground by his auto-identification as a creature from the bush. 'The bush' in *wanzu* performance and narratives, I will argue, both functions as a non-place – a space of transit and trafficking – and as an anti-place, signaling exteriority and liminality.

Although in Bondoukou there is no other form of *wanzu* than the mock sermon performed during Sakaraboutou, I have come across one author (Haïdara 1988) who mentions the term '*wazon*' among the (unspecified) Manding of north-western Côte d'Ivoire, a Mande group historically, linguistically and culturally related to the Dyula of Bondoukou. In the description of Haïdara (1988, I, pp217-9), *wazon* is a generic term for a number of games played by recently initiated boys during their stay in the bush camp. The principal game consists, according to Haidara, in fooling people from the village, by leaving an attractive object seemingly unattended along the side of a road leading into the village. The passer-by who picks up the object is first surprised by the initiates who appear from their hide-out and then insult him or her until the victim pays off the silence of the boisterous youngsters. Most interestingly, Haïdara reports several instances of double-play by non-initiates or by villagers who are tipped-off about the initiates' game. These people may, for instance, feign to be interested in the object but withdraw their hand just before

it touches the object. If the initiates appear from their hiding place before the object has actually been grabbed, they themselves become the object of laughter. Another counter-fooling practice consist in children smearing the sole of one foot with a gluey substance so that the object sticks to them when they tread on it. Both cases of counter-play are meta-pragmatic in the sense that they play on the rules of the game (who grabs what?) or on the specific competences involved (immediate reaction, anticipation). In Haïdara's account, *wanzon* thus appears as a cluster of fooling and counter-fooling performances, of games and meta-games.

Whatever the historical links between the Manding initiates' *wazon* and the Dyula Sakaraboutou *wanzu*, the latter seems to be equally a reflexive game whereby the imam's or *karamogo*'s sermon forms the primary target or source of transformation and transgression. Sermons are generally held at funerals, at important holidays such as Tabaski, and at the end of Ramadan, but they are also quite common during the whole period of the fast. Any Qur'anic teacher (d. *karamogò*) or imam can be called upon or present himself to give sermons during which he counsels the community on how to behave, what rules to follow, etc. Sermons are dialogic in the sense that the audience is entitled to intervene, with anything from a short statement, over a confirming '*amin*', to a short chanted recitation from the Qur'an. In all, the relationship between *wanzu* and the sermon is not only one of representation in which the latter is mimed or parodied by the former, but also one of indexicality. The 'imams' and *karamogow* are conspicuously present in the sermons, benedictions and prayers that form part of the ceremonies – Night of Destiny, Kouroubi, grand prayer, Sakaraboutou – that are held during and just after the Ramadan. Given this ceremonial context, the Sakaraboutou *wanzu* indexes the performances of religious counselling by prestigious and authoritative Muslim experts that abound during the preceding period. In the sense that 'I' was indexed in the double-voicing performances of the 'treasurer' and the 'journalist', the imams, *karamogow*, and elders are indexed in the *wanzu*.

The Sakaraboutou *wanzu* lends at least three elements from its official model.²⁴ First, the relationship between the main narrator and his direct audience is modelled after that between the '*karamògò*' (teacher) and his '*karamògòdenw*' (pupils) or an adult public of listeners. Secondly, apart from salutations and benedictions, the *wanzu* provides some counselling on duties and prohibitions, and, like sermons, *wanzu* also includes short narratives that stage characters who are sometimes exemplary personages or anti-models for certain thoughts or behaviour. Thirdly,

24. This is based on a detailed description of sermons among the Dyula of Northern Côte d'Ivoire, provided by Launay (1992, Ch. 7).

the counselling session is interrupted by Qur'anic recitations in the typical style of unison chants with a high degree of melodic ornamentation.

In the following excerpt of a *wanzu* performance, both the benedictions and chants that feature in standard sermons, appear in heavily reworked form:

(19) [spoken]

| | | | |
|----------|---|--|-------|
| (lead) | ala si di ala | <i>god give (long) life to god</i> | |
| (chorus) | [<i>still involved in the preceding chant, no answer</i>] | | |
| (lead) | ka di ala na ma | <i>and give [life] to god's mother</i> | |
| (chorus) | amin, amin | <i>amen, amen</i> | |
| (lead) | ka si di ala ba ma | <i>and give life to god's father</i> | |
| (chorus) | amin, amin | <i>amen, amen</i> | |
| (lead) | ala denworu ma | <i>to god's children</i> | |
| (chorus) | amin | <i>amen</i> | |
| (lead) | ala bema na | <i>to god's grandfather</i> | |
| (chorus) | amin | <i>amen</i> | [...] |
| (lead) | AL FAAATIA | <i>"the opening"</i> | |
| (chorus) | AL FAAATIA | <i>"the opening"</i> | |

[chanted 2 x]

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|---------------|
| (lead) | kenzi, duzi | <i>15, 12</i> |
| (chorus) | tirezi, katorzi | <i>13, 14</i> |
| (lead) | onzi, duzi | <i>11, 12</i> |
| (chorus) | tirezi, katorzi | <i>13, 14</i> |

(Sakaraboutou parade 27/12/2000)

The spoken part of the above mock benediction consists of a series of progressively more derisive variations on the standard benediction "*Alla si di i ma*" ('May God give you a (long) life'). First the benediction is turned unto God himself and further expanded to the different members of God's family, his (?) mother, father, children, and grandfather. The series is concluded by shouting 'Al Fatiha', the title of the first chapter (a. *surah*) of the Qur'an, but also an often-used exclamation of approval or blessing aimed at a successful speaker. In the mock

benedictions the lexical and phonological ties between the source – “*alla si di i ma*”– and the parodic renderings are obvious as well as the parodic techniques such as line-initial and line-internal repetition and substitution, alliteration and rhyme.²⁵

In the chanted part, even the phonological ties are breached and what rests are melodic correspondences between recited verses from the Qur’an and the ‘arabised’ French numbers eleven to fifteen. The only rule that seems to apply is that the chorus never repeats the numbers that the lead singer introduces. This lexical difference indexes a lead and a chorus part which one also finds back in average, serious recitations where the chorus completes the verse introduced by the lead singer(s).

Wanzu lives up to its characterisation as a meta-game when the narrator provides a (mock) explanation of this number-play.

- (20) “Younger brother, I will explain to you the meaning of ‘*tirezi*’. The big imam went somewhere to pray for a deceased. He said to me: ‘If you give benedictions, you must say ‘onzi’, ‘douzi’. So you have left ‘*tirezi*’ for the corps, ‘onzi’ is for us and ‘kinzi’ is for everyone.’”

This meta-communicative statement is both bewilderingly nonsensical and extremely funny for the same reason: it fully exploits the tension between cohesion (formal consistency) and coherence (semantic consistency), or rather the absence of coherence.²⁶ In this and many other respects, excerpt 19 is a typical example of the kind of narratives that, together with benedictions and chanting, constitute the *wanzu* as a powerful reflexive performance in which Islamic practice is indexed and recontextualised with a critical difference.

Wanzu reworks the official sermon-model in several related ways. The conversation structure is overly dialogic: there is constant turn-taking between ‘teacher’ and ‘pupil’ a relationship that is most often styled as that between ‘my younger brother’ (d. *n dɔgɔ*) and ‘my elder brother’ (d. *n kɔrɔ*). The advice formulated during the sessions explicitly inverts or corrupts the official advice. Like the sermons, the narratives invoke third-party characters but most often the central

25 . The terminology of parodic techniques utilised here is taken from Bauman ’s analysis of the performance of the masked figure of the *Hermintaño* in a Mexican *colloquio* (Bauman 1996; see also Bauman & Ritch 1994).

26. Bauman (1996, p316) concludes his analysis of the *Hermintaño* (see previous footnote) by stating that the latter’s comic efficacy resides “in the tension between cohesion (formal structure) and coherence (semantic structure)”.

character is the *karamogo* himself who is mostly addressed as imam or occasionally referred to as ‘El Hajj’ (a Muslim believer who made the pilgrimage to Mecca). The reversal resides in the fact that the latter are precisely the people who, in standard sermons, are the narrators who portray other characters. Thus, in *wanzu*, the critical gaze which Muslim teachers direct at their fellow believers is turned onto themselves.

These three characteristics give the *wanzu* almost unlimited potential for exploiting and refining the kind of double-voicing that we saw in the individual acts. The Muslim clerics in the *wanzu* stories talk to the narrator and to other people, but they can be even more distanced in stories where other people report to the narrator about what others have said to them. The following is a typical example of this aspect of the performance.

- (21) M1 min nazarace ka fɔ n ma-o *when the white person said to me*
 ko ar ka fɔ ko sakarabutu *that they said that Sakaraboutou*
 fila be a fe *owns power substance*
 [...] ka fɔ ni’ma-o *[he] has said to me*
 ko, *depuis* min a wirira-o *that, since then, he has grown up*
 ko, an yi sayaduga nyini *that, we search the place of death*
 ka a faga *and kill it*
 wole, n ka a fɔ a ye-o *thus, I say it to him*

[...]

(*Wanzu* by Mahama and Kader Ouattara, Sakaraboutou performance, 27/12/2000)

In *wanzu* the kind of play of identities through personal pronouns is centered on a composite narrator who throughout the narrative disposes of different voices. I will limit my description to three of these personages: the ‘pupil/child’, the ‘world traveller’, and the ‘bush creature’ in a *wanzu* performed by Mahama and Ladji Ouattara outside the context of the Sakaraboutou parade in May 2001. All the remaining excerpts (22 – 24) are taken from that session.

In *wanzu* the narrator sometimes describes but mostly indexes himself and his listeners as children or pupils. In the following passage, the narrator tells about what happened to him and his group, one day during the month of Ramadan. It stages the character of an elder woman who before and after this episode pops up either in the village, or, like in this case, in the bush.

- (22) an tagara yara yara domu dugara, ni an be suna
 muso kòròni ya fò an ye o ko nyɔto te suni tige

*When we went to eat yarayara, we were in [the month of] fasting
the elder woman said to us that it did not ruin our fast*

[...] ñ ka domu allah ni a cyera

I have eaten (by) god and his prophet

[...] e hali n'i be ilmamiba, a dò di, i ya domu

Eh, even if you are the grand imam, she gives some (food), you will eat

The food (*yarayara*) which the elder woman prepares is a variant of a typical dish made from millet or corn flower. The *yarayara* is said to be normally destined for sacrifice and is meant to be eaten quickly by children or adolescents who are called upon to finish the food by someone shouting *yarayara* ('walk-walk'). Thus, the 'we' in this story can be expected to be a group of children. This is confirmed by the statement of the elder woman in which she refers to the general rule that youngsters and certainly children are social categories for whom breaking the fast is not terribly serious.

In other aspects of *wanzu*, the performers index themselves also as children, not in the least in the abundance of number-play (see excerpt 18) and in the (chaotic) style of chanting in recitations, both of which can be situated in the context of school learning. Juggling with series of numbers and learning *surahs* by heart is something many of the male youngsters learn respectively at primary schools and at the Qur'anic school. The standard style of unison chanting of the Qur'anic recitations and the almost entrancing ornamentation, grant the normal chanting sessions a certain intimacy and a contemplative character. In contrast, the mock recitations in *wanzu* are shouted and the fact that pupils scream one over another, makes them rather resemble the 'chaos' of dozens of individual recitations during Qur'anic school sessions, than the disciplined harmony of reciting Muslim adults.²⁷

However, in excerpt 21, the situation of the 'children' becomes more complex when they claim full responsibility before God and his prophet. On the rebound, this makes it sound as if the 'we' were not children but were led astray by the false advice of the elder woman who minimalises

27. I consider this unsynchronised shouting and shrieking as a form of auditive protective wrapping which makes it extremely difficult for bystanders to make out individual words and sentences (that could be used as evidence against the individual blasphemer).

the consequences of their food consumption.²⁸ Finally, the offence of eating during daylight in the course of Ramadan is (possibly) extended to the ‘grand imam’. This possibility becomes reality when later in the same story, the ‘grand imam’ is accused of, for instance, hiding food under his prayer mat – an act for which he is duly reprimanded by the narrator. Overall, the ‘grand imam’ is consistently associated not only with breaking Islamic rules but also more generally with moral decay. At some stage the narrator sees a child hitting his father in the face. When he reports this to the ‘grand imam’, there is no reaction from him other than: “the child did not exaggerate in its action”.

The above examples bring out well how *wanzu* storytellers exercise a kind of moral superiority which enables them to reprimand others for breaching rules which the ‘bush creatures’ violate self-consciously and outspokenly. This superiority seems also to reside in the self-attributed superior Qur’anic expertise of the narrator which makes him often appear as a ‘super marabout’. In several narratives, the storyteller operates internationally as a ‘super marabout’ and is called upon by Europeans and Arabs alike to help them solving various problems. Solutions for these problems are almost invariably provided by the ‘power substance’ (d. *fila*) which is said to dwell ‘in Sakaraboutou’ (see excerpt 20). With this power substance in hand, the *wanzu* orator reports that he can face any dangerous forces in this world and beyond. In one short story, a white man and the narrator have both taken possession of the Sakaraboutou power substance (d. *sakarabutu fila*) and progress by challenging the forces of death. First they want to seek out the ‘angel of death’ (d. *saya mελεγε*) in order to kill him; after which they intend to find the ‘real, real Satan’ (d. *sutana jati, jati*) in order to finish him off as well.

Taken together, the defiance displayed in the *wanzu* towards Islamic rules and institutions (imam, *karamogo*, Ramadan), as well as in confronting ‘universal’ superior forces such as death, Satan and Allah/God, is more often than not explained as being based on the fact that Sakaraboutou participants are ‘bush creatures’. The superior power which resides in Sakaraboutou as ‘power substance’ located in the bush, is often expressed in two other forms of superiority and confrontation: one pertaining to knowledge or ‘wisdom’ (excerpt 23) and one pertaining to ‘beauty’ (excerpt 24).

28. This is further developed elsewhere in the performance, when the ‘narrator’ states his express intention to eat at any moment during the Ramadan wherever he is. “When I’ll be in Europe”, he instructs his ‘little brother’ “send me food by telephone, you will see that it works – Europeans are witches, you know”.

(23) ni ka fɔ a ye ko \ n karamɔgɔ ma i dasɔsɔ \ ko an be kongo'ra \ kurana \ ni ka yeɛma nyanama ka a *liser* nyanama.

I have told him: " my teacher I haven't contradicted you; we are from the bush, the Koran, I transform it very well to read is very well"

In the above statement the bush emerges as a heterotopia, a place outside the regular world where knowledge is processed in a different way. Most significantly, the code-switching in 'liser' – most probably a creolised form of the French verb 'to read' (f. *lire*) – collapses into 'the bush' the two other spaces – 'the school' and 'the international' – connected to the two other prominent identities – 'children' and 'world travellers' – of the *wanzu* performers. Stated otherwise, the bush is a global (national as well as international) space of transformation indexed by local institutions and practices such as state schools and second-language learning. In contrast to this far-reaching space in which the young performers operate, the 'grand imam' or the *karamogo* are located in the town. There they constitute the kind of authorities which the Sakaraboutou parade in its first register brings homage to. More importantly perhaps is that the 'traditional' time and space of the town, which the Sakaraboutou parade so neatly circumscribes and hierarchises, is violently broken open by the *wanzu* performers. The latter almost miniaturise the town as a small, static place in a global space of mobility and transformation. In their *wanzu* performances, the Dyula youngsters measure the locality of certain practices and values against those providing from beyond. This is expressed in aesthetic terms in the following excerpt.

(24) an nɔgɔra o, an bɔra kongo o, wole ka to a ma sye ka a den di

Our dirtiness o, we came from the bush o, that made that she [mother] did not agree to give her child [to marry me]

[...] na nyɔgɔri ma lɔ, ari ma lɔ kamele nyuman tora kongo

None of the mothers know, they do not know that a beautiful young man stayed behind in the bush

Again, the 'dirtiness' and 'beauty' in the above statements need to be situated in the immediate ceremonial context of the Sakaraboutou parade, more particularly in the Kouroubi festival. In the latter, the beauty of the girls represents the reproductive vitality of the town as a whole as well as the resourcefulness of the different clan wards and families. By contrasting this 'communal' beauty to their own bush-driven dirtiness, the *wanzu* performers appear to address the second register of the Sakaraboutou parade and interrogate its function (as part of) a pre-marital festival. In a sense the incompatibility of town and bush (aesthetic) values and the unwillingness of the

parents to engage in girl-giving, could be said to inform the girl-taking of the Sakaraboutou performers.

In conclusion, in the above description of the performances in the third register of the Sakaraboutou parade, I have tried to bring out their meta-pragmatic nature. This I have tried to link with the way in which the performers construct (meta-local) space in the *wanzu* narratives and carve out for themselves spaces that lie beyond the confines of the Sakaraboutou parade. From within these spaces they reflect and transform what is happening in the other registers of the event. The question that remains to be answered is the one formulated in the introduction of this chapter, namely whether these reflections and transformations subvert the official event and its hegemonic significance or simply contribute to its saliency and significance for particular ritual constituencies and publics. In the remainder of this chapter, I argue in favour of the latter position. This argument consists of two steps. First (section 6) I review analysis which takes the view that performances either confirm the existing societal order or are (at least partly) subversive. Secondly (section 7), I will argue in favour of a model of layeredness of performance by relying on recent studies of masquerading and double-voicing.

6. Additions or subversions: lessons from studies of related or similar Dyula performances

The issue of the reactionary or revolutionary character of performances has been abundantly discussed in the literature on public rituals (see e.g. Brightman 1999). Here, I limit myself to a brief review of the literature that raises the issue of ‘hegemony’ in descriptions of public rituals which relate to or fall within the same category as the end-of-Ramadan performances described above. First I consider the description of a Sakaraboutou-like performance observed and described by Launay (1992) among the Dyula of Kadioha, and then I look into the analyses by Derive of Kouroubi and *worosó* songs in the Dyula town of Kong, which, like Kadioha, accommodates an important Dyula community and is located in northern Côte d'Ivoire.

In 1985 Launay (1992) witnessed a remarkable ceremony among the Dyula of Kadioha, during the communal celebrations for Donba, the anniversary of the Muslim Prophet. Although it does not seem to have a name, Launay labels the performance a “mock warfare” in which youngsters “sporting bows and arrows” and dancing “before an assembly of elders” in order to commemorate “the military exploits of his ancestors” (1992, p112-113). Launay understands the dances, processions and chanting that constitute the ritual as an affirmation of Kadioha’s locality and history. He finely observes how the ritual marks not only the distinction between the Dyula community and its ‘pagan’ neighbours, but also endorses a series of internal distinctions. Among

other things he observes the distinction between the village as a whole and its different clan wards, between ‘warrior’ youngsters and singing adolescent girls, between junior producers and senior receivers of the performance, and even between the more and the less affluent in the unequal supply of catering for the occasion. Analysing the event, Launay’ concludes that it “*recapitulate[s]* many of the major divisions of the social universe” (ibid., p113; my emphasis).

It is difficult to find a more clear-cut case of the ‘sociologisation’ of a cultural performance, than in Launay’s text. In the literature on ritual and performance, this sociologisation has been denounced by, among others Erlmann (1996) who follows Fabian (1990) in his critique of the work of Victor Turner. Erlmann (1996, p20-21) deplores that performances have been too unproblematically seen “as a microcosmic mirror images of society” which encourages the analyst to establish “monosemic links between society and performance”. In the case of Launay, such monosemic links connect ritual constituencies with social groups, and turn the performance into a stage of social differentiation and unity.

In the work of Derive part of this equation between society and ritual is interrupted as he grants the performers a certain leeway in contesting or transcending their otherwise subaltern position in society at large. In a series of articles on Dyula public ceremonies and discursive power in Kong, Derive (1978, 1984, 1987) makes a ‘hegemonic’ reading of the cultural manifestations of two subaltern groups in Dyula society: the songs produced by women in the course of Kouroubi, and the songs in which *woroso* joke with their masters and the free-born *horon*. In a detailed analysis of Kouroubi songs, Derive (1978) acknowledges the ‘resistance’ involved. Through satire and irony, women seem to take the occasion of the annual festival to publicly contest gender inequalities and the conditions of marriage. This is, however, combined with songs that contain rather positive valuations of married life. Even if they pay tribute to the dominant ideology, the author concludes, the spirit of contestation dominates Kouroubi and may spill over into the dominant discourse (ibid., p113-4).

In his analysis of *woroso* songs, Derive (1984) finds that similar processes of feeble contestation are at work. The *woroso* performers target particular ‘hegemonic’ genres: they make official or serious genres such as marriage and excision songs, traditional dance songs, praise poetry, etc. into a subject of parody. With these parodies the *woroso* directly confront their ‘masters’, the *horon* or free-born, and strike at the heart of “the most important Dyula customs” (ibid., p128). When examining these and other instances of power dynamics through cultural performances in Kong, Derive (1987) finds that the dominant group of male adults remains largely silent in public performances, whereas a substantial part of the oral literature is in fact produced by “the

dominated groups in society (women, children, and *woroso*)". Thus in 'folklore', Derive (ibid., p28-29) concludes, these subaltern voices are given "a simulacrum of power" which, however, permits them to exercise what he calls certain "counter-forces".

The descriptions of the above two authors can be used to illustrate that the trouble with characterising public performances as 'hegemonic' or (however faintly) 'counter-hegemonic' is twofold. First, it appears that the 'power' of performance is reduced to either confirming or not the differentiation, the hierarchies and tensions produced by society at large. Underlying this is the idea that performances do not possess much creative or productive potential of their own. Secondly, the valuation of the hegemonic or counterhegemonic character of a performances is uni-dimensional and occurs along a continuum that connects the most powerful with the most subaltern. Transgressions in this scheme occur when more subaltern groups disturb the established order which is variously named custom, tradition or the social universe. Underlying this is a rather monolythical view of tradition and society.

Over the last ten years these views have been counteracted by anthropologists' attempts to (a) recognise the relative autonomy of performance as location of embodied, reflexive practice, in other words, as a production site of social experience and imagination, and (b) to deconstruct monolythical conceptions of society as much as of tradition. Both lines of research come together in numerous studies of performance that seek to make out how 'tradition' is constructed through performance, and what goes on in the way of emerging restructurings under the guise of a traditional performance (Gable 2000; Brightman 1999; Briggs 1996; Silverstein & Urban 1996). Paraphrasing Ranger (1993, p102) one could summarise these studies as attempts to consider performances as *dynamic under the guise of traditionalism and semi-autonomous from hegemonic society*.

In line with the above ideas Kapferer (1995) makes a restudy of Mitchell's Kalela dance and argues that the *kalela* formed the festive space in which new urban identities were being formulated. In the dance, the Copperbelt urbanites not only staged authority figures ('nurse', 'doctor', 'customary chief') of quotidian colonial practice, but they also pictured themselves as seen through the eyes of the colonial order, that is as tradition-bound and stereotyped (1995, p64-65). Therefore, Kapferer finds it paradoxical that "the African mirroring of colonial practice was conceived by the colonizers as the persistence of tribal practice and sentiments" (ibid., p67). Finally, Kapferer widens his point and observes that similar processes are taking place now, for instance, among Aborigines in Australia where tourism and leisure, like colonial rule in Zambia, form the context in which a lot of identity-building and stereotyping of Aborigines takes place.

In a way similar to that of the *kalela*, “it is in the play space of tourist practices that Aborigines are able to engage with dominating ideologies and to work (out) new definitions of their situation” (ibid., p78).

These observations help us to explore the limitations of a ‘hegemonic’ perspective on cultural performance. First of all Kapferer exposes the ‘recapitulation’ of society as much as the transgression of tradition as perspectival constructions: literally, they can be seen or not seen depending on the intentions and significance one brings to bear upon the performances. To put it simply, according to Kapferer, *kalela* was a site of reflexive performance for the African urbanites, while for colonials it was a mindless representation of Africanness. This brings us to the second point: Kapferer can be seen challenging the unidimensionality of hegemonic-subaltern relations by discerning forms of complicity and double-play. Performers may not be in a position or not feel the need to frame their performative undertakings as anti-traditional or revolutionary but rather to do the opposite in order to keep their scarce empowering spaces of social and emotional restructuring or political expression free from interference.

By the choice of its title which contains a condensed quote from El Hadj Siriki Ouattara (23/05/2001) according to whom ‘Sakaraboutou is our traditional dance’, this chapter sets out to interrogate whose tradition is being staged and what else is going on in the ritual arena marked by the label ‘Bondoukou custom’. In the above analysis of Sakaraboutou, I have solely concentrated on the performance and the positions of different ritual constituencies therein, without identifying them as either dominant or subaltern in society at large. This would require another dissertation or another chapter at least. After all, when taking the semi-autonomy of performance seriously the researcher cannot take interrelations between performances and society for granted but must establish them meticulously. However, focusing solely on performances does not condemn a researcher to micro-analyses of (re-)positionings without also allowing to perceive more large-scale historical transformations. In order to illustrate this point and partly in response to Derive’s analysis of Kouroubi and *woroso* songs, I briefly turn to a programmatic description of what looks like a gradual repositioning and perhaps empowering of women in Bondoukou ‘traditional’ performances centered around the Kouroubi head-dress.

One aspect of this emerging repositioning of women in the sphere of public ritual, is pointed out above by one Sakaraboutou ‘warrior’ when drawing our attention to the increasing vocal retaliation of girls to the boys’ sexually explicit songs. Without for that matter saying anything precise about the changing position of women in ‘Bondoukou society’, I conjecture that this

phenomenon needs to be situated at the confluence of at least two other changes that are taking place within the ceremonial complex of the end-of-Ramadan festivities.

The first important development in that respect is that Kouroubi appears to be emerging more strongly than before as a site of female manifestation. One element in this development is that since 1997 the ‘female’ dancing of the Night of Kouroubi is formally separated from the ‘male’ praying during the Night of Destiny. After many years of debate, it was decided to hold *Leiletul Kadiri* on the 27th of *sungari* and Kouroubi the day after. This change of rule, the imam Brahim Timité of Bondoukou (12/2/1997) explained to me, was meant “for men not to be distracted from praying while the women dance”. From Quimby (1972), we learn that also in other places there are long-term tensions between the two end-of Ramadan events. Among the Dyula of Kongbougou (Burkina Faso) Quimby (1972, p211) signals that in the 1960s many people showed increasing resistance to the evening dances. In order to make their protest clear, “the men began going to the Quran readings instead.” However, this attempt to discourage mothers and daughters to invest time and resources in the Kouroubi remained without much effect while “bitterness and high feelings over the affair increased as a result of the satirical content of the songs the women sang while they danced” (idem). Although the Kouroubi songs I heard in Bondoukou generally match the description given by Derive (1978, p113-4), I have never heard men protesting against those songs that depict different aspects of female adolescents’ life and of male and female behaviour in situations of courting and marriage. However, other elements of the organisation and the performance turn Kouroubi into an encompassing and imposing site of female-driven manifestation on a par with the male-dominated Sakaraboutou. The ongoing popularity of Kouroubi is partly based on the fact that many songs use popular melodies of contemporary Zouglou or other Ivorian and African genres. On these and more ‘traditional’ melodies, existing and newly created lyrics are sung. The languages of these songs cover the entire range of local languages that are in use in multilingual Bondoukou. While Dyula and Kulango are the most popular languages, there are also songs in Twi (Asante, Abbron), Lobi, and Hausa. Here we begin to see the contrast with Sakaraboutou, which stages only ‘traditional’ songs and is a unilingual Dyula event. Another emerging difference in ‘reach’ between the two festivals is that while Sakaraboutou sticks to its traditional trajectory, since the late 1990s the ‘modern’ trans-Wamo town quarter *Mont Zanzan* has joined Kouroubi and rather successfully so (at least in 2000 there were at least two hundred girls participating).

Taking these observations together, we begin to see how Kouroubi is increasingly competing with Sakaraboutou in becoming an all-Bondoukou event in its own right, mediated and

dominated by women and girls and incorporating a larger amount of contemporary linguistic and populational diversity. The ritual empowerment that accompanies this development may contribute to the more defiant attitude taken by the 'Kouroubi girls' in the Sakaraboutou parade. This is all the more so perhaps when the girls see their Kouroubi attributes being rather shamelessly arrogated by the kind of male youngsters whose whimsical and irresponsible behaviour they depict in their songs one or two days before the parade. On this issue of appropriation, a second development deserves our attention.

Over the last decade the *woroso* and particularly the female *woroso* have taken a renewed interest in intervening in 'Dyula custom' like Sakaraboutou as much as they have extended their interventions. The latter now include also official occasions and state-related events. Although female leaders like Ma Kouroubari and dynamic *woroso* women like Abiba Ouattara and *Njambi Ouattara* remain rather discrete on the matter, they intimate that their decision to operate more visibly in the official public sphere is a direct consequence of recent political developments, in particular, the increasing marginalisation of the Dyula in Côte d'Ivoire since the mid-1990s (see part II). One such a new-style *woroso* performance I witnessed on 11th July 1998 during the inauguration of the local Women's Cooperative Association (*Groupement Cooperatives des Femmes de Bondoukou*). This organisation was put under the auspices of an Ivorian female diplomat with family roots in Boundoukou, Fatoumata Touré alias *L'Ambassadrice*. When *l'Ambassadrice* arrived at the local party headquarters of the PDCI, where the inauguration meeting was to be held, she was not only received by party officials and local MPs but also by a small delegation of *woroso* women and their children. The leader of this 'party' wore the traditional rice-sac costume supplemented by a range of attributes. Among them a huge dried goat's scrotum on her breast, two wooden penises (one small white, one large black) on her belt, and a fake mobile phone 'that kept ringing up' (see Fig. 14 insert) were the most eye-catching, but no less so than her head-dress which consisted of a policemen's kepi adorned with 'Kouroubi' *gogoro* pompons (Fig. 14). The intervention of the *woroso* women was a mute performance in which she kept 'filming' *l'Ambassadrice*, using an enormous ghetto-blaster from which the interior mechanism was removed as recording device. After about half an hour of mock media attention the *woroso* woman donated her 'film camera' to the guest of honour and

disappeared. When I asked some of the bystanders what this act was about, I was informed that it was a ‘Bondoukou custom’ of ‘combattant slaves’.²⁹

A more comprehensive interpretation of this ‘happening’ would need to take into account the content (women’s association, *L’Ambassadrice*), the moment (late Bédié reign) as well as the place (PDCI headquarters, presence of local and national authorities) of the event, but that is beyond my present purposes.³⁰ Here I want to briefly comment on the *woroso*’s attributes most of which, the woman (Abiba Ouattara 26/12/2000) later explained, were recent and personal additions to the *woroso*’s traditional outfit (rice-sac tunic). Among the personal additions were the ‘male gear’ ranging from the wooden penis to the policemen’s kepi. The *gogoro* – her fellow performers also wore the *jomo* hairpiece and scarf (Fig. 14 inset) – she explained and her ‘boss’ Ma Kouroubari (15/05/2001) confirmed, was added to the *woroso*’s outfit in the mid-1990s, together with their decision to also operate at other official occasions than local ‘custom’. This double change (of appearance and target) effected in the 1990s, I surmise, shows a simultaneous operation to ‘politicise’ and nationalise *woroso* activity while traditionalising and localising its appearance. In the process, the central Kouroubi attributes gather new saliency and significance.

Together with the development of Kouroubi into a female-mediated all-Bondoukou event on par with Sakaraboutou, and the *woroso* women’s reinvention of their jocular interventions, the emblems of Kouroubi expand their symbolic reach and increasingly come to signify female

29. Some slaves, it was further explained, were used as soldiers and the women of these slave soldiers were the ones performing such jocular acts. Although I understand this explanation and the use of the term ‘escalves combattantes’ in a metaphorical sense of ‘women who dare acting naughtily or defiantly in public’, some of the literature mentions the importance of *woroso* in war situations. Quimby (1972, p153) discusses the military responsibility of *woroso* in the past and explains that “nobody had the right to leave the battle-ground so long as the drums and banners were still there, and the *wurusu den* had the right to shoot anyone they saw doing so.”

30. In a conversation I had with the *woroso* woman afterwards, she (Abiba Ouattara 26/12/2000) explained the political motivation context of the decision of the *woroso* in general and herself in particular to strike at state-related or official occasions, as follows “*Bedie le k’ari do gouvernementra*” “(it is Bédié who made them [*woroso*] enter into government [affairs])”. In general terms, this extension of the target of *woroso* joking practice transcodes the opposition between *woroso* and free-born *horon* to the opposition (during the Bédié regime) between politically marginalised ‘Dyula’ and their slave masters in the PDCI government.

empowerment rather than submission. As much as the *woroso* woman in July 1998 combined her wearing the *gogoro* with laying her hands on attributes of male power (penises, scrotum, and *kepi*), the girls in the Sakaraboutou parade of 1997 and 2000 were wearing Kouroubi outfits while in their songs re-seizing the words with which their male counterparts expressed their command over females. Interpreting these developments in terms of subversions, transgressions and (re-)appropriations, I think, would collapse developments in public ritual with those in society at large, and boils down to answering the question: who wins? Understanding these developments in terms of ‘additions’ and double-voicing, I argue, values more the performances as sites of embodied and enacted reflexivity for the reinvention of tradition in a constantly changing world. The central questions here concern aspects of creativity and imagination and ask how different groups and subgroups of performers ‘work (out) new definitions of their situation’.

7. Additions or subversions: lessons from studies of masquerading and linguistic crossing

In an earlier version of this chapter (Arnaut 2000a), I began to argue that the concept of layered performance can rely on insights recently generated (a) in the domain of masquerade studies concerning the identity of maskers and masked entities and (b) in anthropological linguistics concerning forms of double-voicing and code-crossing. Both chunks of ethnographic description and anthropological theory are concerned with phenomena of layeredness and simultaneity in semiotic processes (see Blommaert *in press*). In this section I summarise some of these insights in support of my general argument that *performances may be seen as unstable combinations of registers or layers that do not in any substantial or far-going way subvert or destroy the overall performance but add to it supplementary terrains and moments of ritual action that extend the performance’s saliency and significance.*

The empirical impetus for approaching Sakaraboutou, or at least the warriors’ contribution to it as a masquerade, was based on the observation that the male youngsters clearly *are not themselves*. In using the latter expression, I am not simply punning on the title of Cole’s *locus classicus* of masquerade studies ‘I am not myself’ (Cole, 1985a), but also questioning his conception of masquerades as:

“spirit-associated transformations which cancel or obliterate the wearer’s personality, even his humanity, by superimposing a wholly new form” (Cole 1985b, p16).

The way in which the Sakaraboutou warriors are not (only) themselves is that they do more than playing the role of warriors which they are supposed or expected to play, but appear also as

androgynous beings and bush creatures.³¹ This accumulation of roles can hardly be accommodated by conceptions of masquerading in which the masker's identity and agency are entirely obliterated and substituted for that of the masked entity. Fortunately, over the last two decades, masquerading has been approached as a more complex performance in which a multiplicity of entities can be represented through differential degrees of disguise or impersonation. In his ethnography of the Chamba, Fardon (1990, p151,157) was among the first to point out that masks are not necessarily representing one entity, spirit, or being, but can be "composite creations". Concerning the issue of disguise, Leach (1989/1990) notices a continuum between dressing-up for special occasions and masquerade, while Picton (1990) was among the first to document the fact that masks can conceal the person of the carrier to a lesser or larger extent. Therefore, he argues, identifying the person of masker and recognising his or her agency does not necessarily 'spoil' the masquerade. These findings can be situated within the renewal of masquerade studies that dates back to the 1970s and need to be seen as radical departures from what one could call the previously conventional 'secret-society model' of masquerading. The latter model is neatly summarised in the below statement of Revelard (2001, p19) who claims that:

"In Africa, the mask is generally connected to the secret, to initiation societies, and almost always to men."

This view on masquerading in Africa focuses on what is *behind* the mask both literally ('the men', 'the secret society') and metaphorically ('the secret'). Taking this as the core problematic of investigating masquerades, one enters into a logic of discovery and demystification. The ethnographic effort related to this, lies in tracking down, through maximal initiation, the 'inside views' of those who know most – in many cases an elite group of elder men – in order to identify the hidden meanings and to reveal the mechanisms of deception (organisers) and credulity (public) at work in the masquerade. The overall effect of such an approach is the 'implosion' of masquerading through it being explained in terms of an in-group dynamics which either confirms, adjusts or temporarily inverts the local social order. The claimed demystification pretends to explain masquerade in a way similar to 'false consciousness'. While the application of the latter concept in 'complex societies' is heavily contested because it begs the question of

31. That the disguise in the 'third register' may be considered as a form of masquerading is indicated by Quimby (see footnote 21).

who has the right consciousness, it appears that in the masking communities in Africa this question is foreclosed by equating the ideological degree zero of the local community with the elites' values which take the form of cultural preconceptions and internalised versions of what is 'tradition'.

An alternative conception of masquerading is aptly (although perhaps unwarrantably) contained in the quote below in which Barlet summarises a critical sequence in Souleymane Cissé's film *Waati* which portrays the experience of masquerading by a woman called Nandi.

“Through these masks, Nandi learns to transcend her individuality, in order to broaden her struggle to include the other African peoples: she will go to help the dispossessed Tuaregs in the sands of the Sahara...” (Barlet 2000, p92)

This radically breaks with the masquerade as an in-group phenomenon, as male, secretive, and monolithically hegemonic and portrays masquerading as an enlightening and empowering experience through which one transcends the limitations of one's own personality and locality. Such a view on masquerading, albeit rather less idealistic than in Barlet's version, has been emerging over the last decades. In retrospect, the work of Tonkin (1979, 1983) raised important points towards a critique not only of the secret-society model but also of the gendered power-play involved in masquerading.³² As we saw in the case of Picton, an important element in the renewal of masquerade studies was the ethnographic unsettling of the 'concealing/revealing' research programme by, for instance, Nooter (1993) and Poppi (1990). Parodi da Passano summarises this deconstruction of the secret as follows:

“...the content of the secret seems less significant than its use as strategy, as potential instrument for transmitting the relationship with power, for exercising pressure, for achieving transformations.” (1998, p12)³³

By unfixing the relationship between the mask and the entities (person, spirits) *behind* it, and by acknowledging the compositional nature of masks, masquerading can now be seen as opening up a field of differential and shifting imagination about who or what is being 'masked'. While exploring the openness and the dynamics of masquerading, masks become vehicles “for the

32. Tonkin proposes to look at masquerades as specific sites for the production of (structured, social, historically situated) power. While raising the question of gender inequality, she argues that masquerades and the secrets that surround them, both shape ideologies *and* the conditions to resist them (1979, p12-15; 1983, p170-1).

33. On secrets and strategies of knowledge distribution, see also Bellman (1984) and Fabian (1991).

process of transformation” (Kasfir 1988). In this way also, masquerades remain endlessly ‘uncaptured’, in the sense that people incorporate into the performance reflections on the masks’ status and history (Doquet, 1999; De Jong, 1999). The displacements and novel reconnections provoked by otherworldly masks may involve far-going operations on the identity of the masked entities. In two articles Argenti (1998, 2001) shows how in their own masquerades youngsters and children in the Cameroonian Grasslands substitute the figures of the “alteric world” of spirits and ancestors that are represented in adult masquerades, with other ‘fictional’ characters of “European modernity and its national refractions”:

“child masquerades (...) evoke a mythical world in which beasts are replaced by gendarmes, spirits by the White Man, and gods by opposition politicians” (2001, p81).

‘Masquerades’ in this approach can be situated in processes of religious/artistic renewal in which external (religious, political, social) entities are captured and inserted into existing practices and models (Werbner 1989, ch. 6; Argenti 1997, p376-7; see also Drewal 1991, p42-3). The outcome of this is the juxtaposition and “linking of categories of experience and knowledge which in the everyday world are understood to be located in different domains” (Kapferer 1986, p200).

Finally, several of the above studies of masquerading (Fardon, Argenti) point out that ‘the bush’ from where the mask is often said to provide, functions as a metaphor for places and phenomena that fall beyond the grasp of the local community (‘the village’).

Two general ideas can be substracted from the more recent literature on masquerading that sustain the idea of registers and layers in performance. They are summarised in Fardon’s characterisation of Chamba masks as “composite creations in which the wild predominates” (1990, p151). First, the Sakaraboutou warriors are to be considered as ‘composite creations’ not only in their multiple, often accumulated disguises, but also in their acts. A single warrior can perform devotedly as an exemplary traditional warrior during a greeting-stop performance, soon after use the most crude terms when addressing the ‘Kouroubi’ girls, and five minutes later transform himself into a candid ‘elder brother’ during a *wanzu* performance. These repositionings, I submit, are enabled by the auto-identification as ‘bush creature’ whereby ‘the bush’ indexes a space of transformation and a source of novelty and mobility. Thus, in the third register where the youngsters appear most radically as ‘bush creatures’, they appear as superbly mobile and capable of transforming themselves. This is less the case in the second register and almost entirely absent from the first. What remains to be explained is how this differential capacity of transformation is articulated in performance. For this purpose, I turn to the literature on double-voicing and code-crossing.

The three registers in the Sakaraboutou parade can be productively restated in terms of voice and place.³⁴ In the first register the warriors can be said to straightforwardly ‘quote’ tradition, not only in their costumes and songs but also in their spatial operations. The tunics are said to ideally belong to tradition in the sense of being transmitted from the past to the present time through patrilineal filiation. This filiation underlies the only division that is allowed among the warriors: the one based on clan wards. In the course of the parade this division in patriclans is played out in space as it defines the fixed greeting stops of the parade in the different town quarters. This grid of Dyula clan wards is extended to the non-Dyula groups whose chiefs receive the same vocal treatment as – and are thereby degraded to the status of – the different Dyula ‘subchiefs’. Also, the Donzoso male and female dignitaries are integrated into this same grid whereby their status is upgraded to the level of patriclan chiefs. Finally, this division and all the Donzoso-biased levelling it implies, is also expressed in those songs that fall within the joking practices among allied clan wards.

Although it differs in important nuances from that of the boys, ‘quoting’ can also be said to characterise the acts of the girls in the parade. In their dresses, the girls replicate the model of the ‘traditional’ non-married girls’ costume. Unlike in the case of boys, this vestimentary replication is not kinship-related, but merely indexes the wealth of their respective families. Rather than signifying particular clan wards, in Sakaraboutou the girls’ relative ‘uniformity’ signifies the pool of reproductive vitality available in Bondoukou as a whole. In the songs of the first register, the girls also quote the traditional songs, but also here the difference with the warriors is significant. As girls are not supposed to intone songs on their own initiative, the form of quoting the girls practice can better be characterised as ‘echoing’. Finally, the ‘echoing’ of the girls has a spatial dimension. Given the physical distance (either symbolic or real) between the boys and the girls, the latter so to speak always come second.

In the second register the mode of articulation resembles closely the form of double-voicing which Rampton (1998, p304) following Bakhtin, characterises as ‘uni-directional’. In uni-directional double voicing, speakers use someone else’s discourse for their own purposes but largely follow the latter’s semantic intention. The double-voicing of femininity by the male

34. Perhaps the most relevant aspect of the literature from anthropological linguistics of which I am trying to make use here, is that it explores the intimate relationship between speaking and space in terms of indexicality. The latter and related concepts have since long been subject of attention (see Crapanzano 1981; Silverstein 1995; Ochs 1990) and insights concerning space, language and deixis have been used productively in cultural and social anthropology (see e.g. Parkin 1982; Zeitlyn 1993).

youngsters (as well as the reverse) takes place in the vicinity of the Kouroubi delegation in the form of songs but is played out more broadly and visibly in the form of visual parody of tokens of femininity in the outfits of several warriors. The vocal and material forms of double-voicing are of the same nature. According to Hutcheon (1985) parody is a form of trans-contextualisation.³⁵ Because the target of parody is always another form of coded discourse, Hutcheon (1985, p16) argues, parody is “doubly coded” (ibid., p11). The same goes for double-voicing which Rampton (1999, p421) sees at work in ‘crossing’. The latter refers to the kind of performance whereby actors appropriate, explore, reproduce or challenge influential images and stereotypes of groups and individuals other than their own.

In ‘material’ forms of crossing, the boys engage in double-voicing by appropriating elements of clothing and decoration (*jomo*, *gogoro*, etc.) that are coded as tokens of femininity, not in the least during the Kouroubi performance that precedes the parade. In the re-coding of these tokens the ‘semantic intention’ (i.e. ‘I am a female’ or ‘this is female’) is kept intact but is used to illustrate the male superior power and mobility to cross gender lines (and come back). In the songs, very much the same happens. The boys ‘lay their hands’ (or rather ‘stamp their feet’) on items that are – through the word-play and allusions, but above all through spatial proximity and even intimacy with the girls – overdetermined as feminine. However, as in the sung form of ‘crossing’ the spatial distance (both symbolically and materially) collapses into immediate proximity and the way is open for reciprocity. The girls retaliate and cross into the domain of masculinity as radically as the boys invade the most intimate spaces of femininity. Taken together, and transforming (no parody intended!) Bakhtin’s terminology, one could characterise the reciprocal crossings that constitute the second register as ‘bi-directional double-voicing’.

Finally, the mode of articulation that dominates the third register can be characterised – again using a Bakhtinian term recycled by Rampton (1998, p305) – as ‘vari-directional double-voicing’. In this case, the speaker radically redirects the semantic intention of someone else’s discourse. This technique can be used for what Rampton (1999) and Hill (1999) call ‘styling the other’ whereby a person engages in a complex identity play of selfing through othering (styling) the other. Here I distinguish two sorts of performances: the individual acts of impersonation and the *wanzu*. In the individual acts I myself was variously styled as a ‘news reporter’, a ‘Westerner’, an ‘American’, etc. whereby the impersonator somehow emerged as superior to, or

35. Hutcheon compares her concept of parody with that of ‘hypertextuality’ as defined by Genette (see Chapter I).

at least in control of, who I ‘am’ while I appeared unable to get a grip on his ‘personage’ that undertakes the styling. This discursive mobility through impersonation and styling, I argue, is also what underlies the *wanzu* micro-performances. In a maelstrom of personages who are as much quoting still other people as they speak for themselves, the narrator refracts himself not only in multiple voices but also in multiple places. As said, ‘the bush’ (as in “I come from the bush”) is a metaphor of this multilocality both in the sense of being a non-place (a space of transformation, transit, and travel) as well as being ‘everywhere’ or ‘all over the (local, national, and global) place’. All this makes the *wanzu* performers ungraspable and what they say non-sensical or confusingly multi-sensical.

Conceiving of what happens in the third register as performances of ‘vari-directional double-voicing’ helps us to get away from the idea that the male youngsters of the Sakaraboutou parade in any straightforward way criticise or attack Islam, its practices, institutions and dogmas. Rather, the starting point of my appreciation of *wanzu* is that Islam in the form of Islamic schools (their teachers and pupils), (grand) imams, unison recitations, recurring benedictions as well as Ramadan-related sermons, form an important part of the immediate living environment of the youngsters. This forms the discursive material and generic forms with which *wanzu* performers create ‘alteric worlds’ of global reach in which they claim for themselves uncertain and shifting places by controlling or manipulating (styling) the ‘others’ that inhabit them.

The above often intricate digressions into theories of masquerading and double-voicing may appear at times far-fetched and as instances of over-theoretisation, but above all they help to understand unassuming but insightful explanations I received from people concerned with Sakaraboutou, such as El Hadj Siriki Ouattara from one of whose statements the title of this chapter is derived. Being one of the few who was prepared to discuss the use of Islam in the parade, I asked him what he thought of the karamogo-like performances of the warriors. His answer was:

“The things youngsters have now and in the past are not the same, the knowledge (lɔni) they have now and in the past is not the same. [...] Maraboutage (karamɔgɔ kuo) was not as omnipresent in the past; now there are many pupils at Qur’anic schools (karamɔgɔ denw) and the children of Sakaraboutou are educated. That is why they do it.”

Rather surprisingly in a way, in the above quote the ‘illegal’ parodies of the youngsters are appreciated in terms of what they possess (both materially and intellectually). In other words, for Siriki Ouattara *wanzu* derives from a certain competence and illustrates present-day capacities, with which, paraphrasing Kapferer, they ‘work (out) new definitions of their situation’.

Some final remarks in lieu of a conclusion

This chapter is an attempt to explore the many things that can take place in ‘one’ performance; it is about mental and physical creativity and mobility and not an attempt to classify or otherwise ‘discipline’ it into rigid registers and layers. The latter are mere analytical tools used in order to elicit the creativity and mobility of at least certain sections of the Sakaraboutou performers. In a few final remarks I conclude this chapter by arguing that this creativity is ‘local’ while the mobility is ‘relative’.

In many ways I have tried to illustrate the local character of the creativity by pointing out that the Sakaraboutou performers work with discursive material, personages, concepts and institutions that surround them. Such, however, is only the starting point, the territorial basis from which creativity takes off into much wider spaces, discursive terrains and present-day global dynamics. I have tried to bring out the ‘glocal’ thinking that goes on in an event that is expressly marked as ‘old’ and ‘local’ and I think anthropology should make more conceptual space for that. Such ‘space’ I found in the beginning of this chapter in the observations of Parkin and I tried to extract more from other niches of anthropology in which such localised practices as masquerading and ‘crossing’ were opened up as sites of selfing and othering on levels that by far exceed that of the local alone. The kind of creative mobility of performers that I found in these studies and that I hope one can find in this chapter, is not idealistic in any way, because it remains grounded in local spheres, pedestrian practices and everyday experiences. This brings me to the relativity of mobility.

An important goal of this chapter is to de-homogenise the Sakaraboutou performers.³⁶ In doing so I try to differentiate between groups and individual performers but neither by reducing them to the roles they are supposed to play in the parade or in holy-days like *Id-al-Fitr*, nor to the positions they occupy in society at large or in so-called normal times. Rather, I try to make out which (different) positions the performers occupy not only in relation to the performances is a

36. Such a stance has been widely advocated in historical anthropology and in performance studies, and consists in analytically refining and ethnographically elaborating the external and internal politics of (self) representation of communities in broader political and economic contexts. This we find in appeals and descriptive attempts to start deconstructing *the colonised* (Stoler & Cooper 1997), *the subaltern* (Ortner 1995), *the commoners* (Holmberg 2000), and *the audience* (Brightman 1999).

whole but also in relation to the ‘others’ that are produced in the course of the performance. In my view the ingenuity of masquerading and a vast number of related types of performances that involve sophisticated, often indirect ways of imagining the self through inventing the other, lies in this ‘game’ of constructing oneself through representing (styling, voicing) ‘others’, in other words, of selfing through othering. In these games the creativity and mobility of the self are directly related to the lack of those in others who are styled, whose voice or appearance is usurped. In this practice the male youngsters ‘from the bush’ appear as victors, but that is only very partly so as pressures to conform to their ‘traditional’ roles are arguably rising. Over the last decade Bondoukou has been increasingly torn apart by developments on the national level that provoke the dichotomisation between northerners and southerners, Muslims and non-Muslims, and Dyula and non-Dyula. In this context Sakaraboutou is being reinvented as a tradition in order to, as Massey points out in the epigraph of this chapter, refind the coherence of Bondoukou as a place. Increasingly the Sakaraboutou youngsters may find themselves facing the difficult choice between making local place and claiming glocal space.

References

- Adams, Monni 1981 'Interpretations of masking in Black African ritual', *Africa-Tervuren*, 27/2, pp. 46-51.
- Agier, Michel 1981 'Etrangers, logeurs et patrons: l'improvisation sociale chez les commerçants soudanais de Lomé', *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 81-83, 1-3, pp. 251-265.
- Ardener, Edwin 1972 'Belief and the problem of women'. In: J. S. La Fontaine (ed.) *The interpretation of ritual: Essays in honour of A. I. Richards*, pp. 135-158. London: Tavistock.
- Ardener, Shirley (ed.) 1975 *Perceiving women*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons.
- Ardener, Shirley (ed.) 1981 *Women and space. Ground rules and social maps*. London: Croon Helm
- Argenti, Nicholas 1997 'Masks and masquerades', *Journal of Material Culture*, 2/3, pp. 361-381.
- Argenti, Nicholas 1998 'Air Youth: performance, violence and the state in Cameroon', *JRAI* (N.S.) 4/4, pp. 753-781.
- Argenti, Nicholas 2001 'Kesum-body and the places of the gods: the politics of children's masking and second-world realities in Oku (Cameroon)', *JRAI*, 7/1, pp. 67-94.
- Arnaut, Karel 2000a 'Tradition as object of derision and desire: the Bedu masquerade of north-eastern Côte d'Ivoire'. In: K. Arnaut (ed.) *RE-VISIONS: New perspectives on the African collections of the Horniman Museum*, pp. 209-230. London & Coimbra: The Horniman Museum and Gardens & Museu Antropológico da Universidade de Coimbra.
- Arnaut, Karel 2000b 'Islam and its others: Sakaraboutou as masquerade in Bondoukou (Côte d'Ivoire)', *Etnofoor* 14/2, pp. 23-54.
- Arnaut, Karel 2004 'The many publics of the Bedu masquerade'. In: F. Lamb (ed.) *See the music, hear the dance: rethinking African art at the Baltimore Museum of Art*, pp. 146-149. Munchen: Prestel Verlag.
- Arnaut, Karel *forthcoming* 'Masks and mobilities: trajectories in Bedu masquerading (Côte d'Ivoire)'. In: A.-M. Bouttiaux *Masques d'Afrique occidentale - West African Masks* (2005). Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale.
- Aubertin, C. 1980 *Histoire et création d'une région 'sous-développée'. Le Nord ivoirien*. Abidjan: Centre ORSTOM.

- Barlet, Olivier 2000 *African cinemas: decolonizing the gaze*. London: Zed Books.
- Baumann, Gerd 1993 'Ritual implicates 'Others': rereading Durkheim in a plural society'. In: D. de Coppet (ed.) *Understanding rituals*, pp. 97-116. London: Routledge.
- Bauman, Richard 1996 'Transformation of the word in the production of Mexican festival drama. In: M. Silverstein & G. Urban (eds.)' *Natural histories of discourse*, pp. 301-327. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bauman, Richard & C. L. Briggs 1990 'Poetics and performance as critical perspectives on language and social life', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, pp. 59-88.
- Bauman, Richard & Pamela Ritch 1994 'Informing performance: producing the Colloquio in Tierra Blanca', *Oral tradition*, 9/2, pp. 255-280.
- Bellman, Beryl L. 1984 *The language of secrecy : symbols and metaphors in Poro ritual*. New Brunswick (N.J.): Rutgers University Press.
- Bird, Charles S., Martha B. Kendal & Kalilou Tera 1995 'Etymologies of Nyamakala'. In: D. C. Conrad & B. E. Frank (eds.) *Status and identity in West Africa: Nyamakalaw of Mande*, pp. 27-35. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Blommaert, Jan (in press) *Discourse: a critical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brenner, Louis 2000 *Controlling knowledge: religion, power and schooling in a West African Muslim society*. London: Hurst & Co.
- Briggs, Charles 1996 'The politics of discursive authority in research on the "invention of tradition"', *Cultural Anthropology*, 11/4, pp. 435-469.
- Brightman, Robert 1999 'Traditions of subversion and the subversion of tradition: cultural criticism in Maidu clown performances', *American Anthropologist*, 101/2, pp. 272-287.
- Cissé, Youssouf Tata 1964 'Notes sur les sociétés de chasseurs Malinké', *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, 34/2, pp. 175-226.
- Cissé, Youssouf Tata 1994 *La confrérie des chasseurs Malinké et Bambara: mythes, rites et récits initiatiques*. Ivry & Paris: Editions Nouvelles du Sud & ARSAN.
- Cohen, Anthony 1986 'Of symbols and boundaries, or, does Ertie's greatcoat hold the key?'. In: A. Cohen (ed.) *Symbolising boundaries : identity and diversity in British cultures*. Manchester : Manchester University Press.

- Cole, Herbert 1985a (ed.) *I am not myself: the art of African masquerade*. Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History.
- Cole, Herbert 1985b Introduction: the mask, masking and masquerade arts in Africa. In: H. Cole (ed.) *I am not myself: the art of African masquerade*, pp. 15-27. Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History.
- Crapanzano, Vincent 1981 'Text, transference and indexicality', *Ethos*, 9/2, pp. 122-148.
- Crehan, Kate 1997 *The fractured community: landscapes of power and gender on rural Zambia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- de Certeau, Michel 1984 *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley : The University of California Press.
- Derive, Jean 1978 'Le chant de Kurubi à Kong', *Annales de l'Université d'Abidjan, Série J (traditions orales)* 2, pp. 85-114.
- Derive, Jean 1984 'Une paillardise rituelle: les chants des captifs dioula', *Cahiers de littérature orale*, 15, pp. 105-133.
- Derive, Jean 1987 'Parole et pouvoir chez les Dioula de Kong', *Journal des africanistes*, 57/1-2, pp. 19-30.
- Doquet, Anne 1999 *Les masques dogon: ethnologie savante et ethnologie autochtone*. Paris: Karthala.
- Dozon, Jean-Pierre 2000 'La Côte d'Ivoire entre démocratie, nationalisme et ethnonationalisme', *Politique africaine*, 78, pp. 45-62.
- Drewal, Margaret Thompson 1991 'The state of research on performance in Africa', *African Studies Review*, 34/3, pp. 1-64.
- Drewal, Margaret Thompson 1992 *Yoruba ritual: performers, play, agency*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Drucker-Brown 1982 'Joking at death: the Mamprusi grandparent-grandchild joking relationship', *MAN (n.s.)*, 17, pp. 714-727.
- Fabian, Johannes 1990 *History from below: The 'Vocabulary of Elisabethville' by André Yav. Texts, translation and interpretive essay*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishers.

- Fabian, Johannes 1991 'Dilemmas of critical anthropology'. In: J. Fabian, *Time and the work of anthropology: Critical essays 1971-1991*, pp. 245-264. Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers
- Fortier, Anne-Marie 1999 'Re-membering places and the performance of belonging(s)', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16/2, pp. 41-64.
- Foucault, Michel, 1980 *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-77*, (C. Gordon, ed.). Brighton: Harvester.
- Green, Kathyn Lee 1984 *The foundation of Kong: a study in Dyula and Sonongui ethnic identity* [unpublished Ph.D. thesis]. Indiana University.
- Griaule, Marcel 1948 'L'alliance cathartique', *Africa*, 18/4, pp. 242-258.
- Handloff, Robert Earl 1982 *The Dyula of Gyaman: a study of politics and trade in the nineteenth century* [unpublished Ph.D. thesis]. 2 vols. Evanston University.
- Heatherington, Tracey 1999 'Street tactics: Catholic ritual and the senses of the past in Central Sardinia', *Ethnology*, 38/4, pp. 315-334.
- Hill, Jane 1999 'Styling locally, styling globally: what does it mean?', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3/4, pp. 542-556.
- Holden, Jeff 1970 'The Samorian impact on Buna: an essay in methodology'. In: C. Allen & R.W. Johnson (eds.) *African perspectives: papers in the history, politics and economics of Africa, presented to Thomas Hodgkin*, pp. 83-108. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holmberg, David 2000 'Derision, exorcism, and the ritual production of power', *American Anthropologist*, 27/4, pp. 927-949.
- Hutcheon, Linda 1985 *A theory of parody: the teachings of 20th century art forms*. New York: Methuen.
- Kapferer, Bruce 1995 'The performance of categories: plays of identity in Africa and Australia'. In: Rogers, Alistair & Steven Vertovec (eds.) *The urban context: ethnicity, social networks and situational analysis*, pp. 55-80. Oxford: Berg.
- Kasfir, Sidney L. 1988 *West African masks and cultural systems* [Sciences Humaines]. Tervuren: RMCA.
- Klein, Martin 1983 'Women and slavery in the Western Sudan'. In: M. Klein & C. Robertson (eds.) *Women and slavery in Africa*, pp. 67-92, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Labouret, Henri 1929 'La parenté à plaisanteries en Afrique occidentale', *Africa*, 2, pp. 244-254.

- Last, Murray 1993 'History as religion: de-constructing the Magians "Maguzawa" of Nigerian Hausaland'. In: J.-P. Chrétien (ed.) *L'invention religieuse en Afrique: histoire et religion en Afrique noire*, pp. 267-296. Paris: Karthala.
- Launay, Robert 1977 'Joking slavery', *Africa*, 47/4, pp. 413-422.
- Launay, Robert 1982 *Traders without trade: responses to change in two Dyula communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Launay, Robert 1988 'Warriors and Traders: the political organization of a West African chiefdom', *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 28, 3-4, pp. 355-373.
- Launay, Robert 1992 *Beyond the stream: Islam and society in a West African town*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Leach, Edmund 1989/1990 'Masquerade: the presentation of the self in holi-day life', *Cambridge Anthropology*, 13/3, pp. 47-69.
- LeBlanc, Marie Nathalie 2000 'Versioning womanhood and Muslimhood: 'fashion' and the life course in contemporary Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire', *Africa*, 70/3, pp. 442-481.
- Lloyd, Moya 1999 'Performativity, parody, politics', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16/2, pp. 195-213.
- Marty, Paul 1922 *Etudes sur l'Islam en Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- Massey, Doreen 1992 'Politics and Space/Time', *New Left Review*, 196, pp. 65-84.
- Massey, Doreen 1995 'Places and their pasts', *History Workshop Journal*, 39, pp. 182-192.
- Mensah, Alexandre 2001 'Bamako, carrefour des chasseurs', *Africultures*, 36, pp. 104-108.
- Mommersteeg, Geert 1990 'Allah's words as amulet'. *Etnofoor*, 3/1, pp. 63-76.
- Moore, Henrietta 1996 *Space, text, and gender: an anthropological study of the Marakwet of Kenya*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Moran, Mary H. 1997 'Warriors or soldiers? Masculinity and ritual transvestism in the Liberian Civil War'. In: L. Lamphere et. al. (eds.) *Situated selves: gender and culture in everyday life*, pp. 440-450. New York: Routledge.
- Muhammad, Akbar 1977 'The Samorian occupation of Bondoukou: an indigenous view', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 10/2, pp. 242-258.

- Nooter, Mary 1993 *Secrecy: african art that conceals and reveals*. New York: The Museum of African Art.
- Ochs, Elinor 1990 'Indexicality and socialization'. In: J.W. Stigler *et al.* (eds.) *Cultural psychology: essays on comparative human development*, pp. 287-308. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Olivier de Sardan, Jean-Pierre 1973 'Esclavage d'échange et captivité familiale chez les Songhay-Zerma', *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, 43/1, pp. 151-167.
- Ortner, Sherry 1984 'Theory in anthropology since the sixties', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26/1, pp. 126-166.
- Ortner, Sherry 1995 'Resistance and the problem of ethnographic refusal', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37, pp. 173-193.
- Pageard, R. 1958 'Notes sur les rapports de "Senankouya" au Soudan français particulièrement dans les cercles de Segou et de Macina', *Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N.*, 20 (sér. B.), 1-2, pp. 123-141.
- Parkin, David 1982 'Introduction'. In: D. Parkin (ed.) *Semantic Anthropology*, pp. xi-li. London: Academic Press.
- Parkin, David 1993 'Rituals as spatial direction and bodily division'. In: D. de Coppet (ed.) *Understanding rituals*, pp. 11-25. London: Routledge.
- Parodi da Passano 1998 'Dibi-Kèlè-Dibi: le ténèbres combattent le ténèbres: savoir, pouvoir et secret chez les Bamana'. In: Jean-Paul Colleyn (ed.) *Bamanya: un art de vivre au Mal*. Milan: Museo Civico di Storia Naturale.
- Paulme, Denise 1939 'Parenté à plaisanteries et alliance par le sang en Afrique occidentale', *Africa*, 12, pp. 433-444.
- Person, Yves 1968-70 *Samori: une révolution Dyula* (2 vols.) Nîmes: Barnier.
- Picton, John 1990 'What's in a mask', *African Languages and Cultures*, 3/2, pp. 181-202.
- Poppi, Cesare 1990 '*Behind the mask, nothing*': *secrecy, commentary and exegesis in an African initiation society*. Paper presented at the Satterthaite Colloquium on African Religion and Ritual.
- Prouteaux, M. 1925 'Divertissements de Kong', *Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française*, 8/4, pp. 606-650.
- Quimby, Lucy Gardner 1972 *Transformations of belief: Islam among the Dyula of Kongbougou from 1880 to 1970* [unpublished Ph.D. thesis]. The University of Wisconsin.

- Rampton, Ben 1998 'Language crossing and the redefinition of reality'. In: P. Auer (ed.) *Code-switching in conversation: language, interaction and identity*, pp. 290-286. London: Routledge.
- Rampton, Ben 1999 'Styling the other: introduction', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3/4, pp. 421-427.
- Revelard, Michel 2001 'Le masque en Afrique noire'. In: *Makambo ya ndoki, 'Affaires de sorciers': L'art africain au travers des pratiques de sorciers et devins*, pp. 19-25. Namur : Musée africain de Namur.
- Rodman, Margaret 1992 'Empowering place: multilocality and multivocality', *American Anthropologist*, 93/3, pp. 640-656.
- Silverstein, Michael 1995 (1987) 'Shifters, linguistic categories, and cultural description'. In: B. Blount (ed.) *Language, Culture, and Society*, pp. 187-221. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press.
- Silverstein, Michael & Greg Urban 1996 'The natural history of discourse'. In: M. Silverstein & G. Urban (eds.) *Natural histories of discourse*, pp. 1-17. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Susan 1993 'Bounding the borders: claiming space and making place in rural Scotland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (n.s.), 18/3, pp. 291-308.
- Smith, Susan 1995 'Where to draw the line: a geography of popular festivity'. In: A. Rogers & S. Vertovec (eds.) *The urban context: ethnicity, social networks and situational analysis*, pp. 141-164. Oxford: Berg.
- Stoler, Ann Laura & Frederick Cooper 1997 'Between metropole and colony: rethinking a research agenda'. In: F. Cooper & A. L. Stoler (eds.) *Tensions of empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*, pp. 1-58. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tauxier, Louis 1921. *Le noir de Bondoukou: Koulangos, Dyoulas, Abrons, etc.* Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- Terray, Emmanuel 1995 *Une histoire du royaume abron du Gyaman: des origines à la conquête coloniale*. Paris, Karthalla.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth 1979. *Masking and masquerading, with examples from West Africa* (Discussion Papers Series C Sociology and politics 36). University of Birmingham, Faculty of Commerce and Social Science.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth 1983. Women excluded? Masking and masquerading in West-Africa. In: P. Holden (ed.) *Women's religious experience*, pp. 163-174. London: Croom Helm.

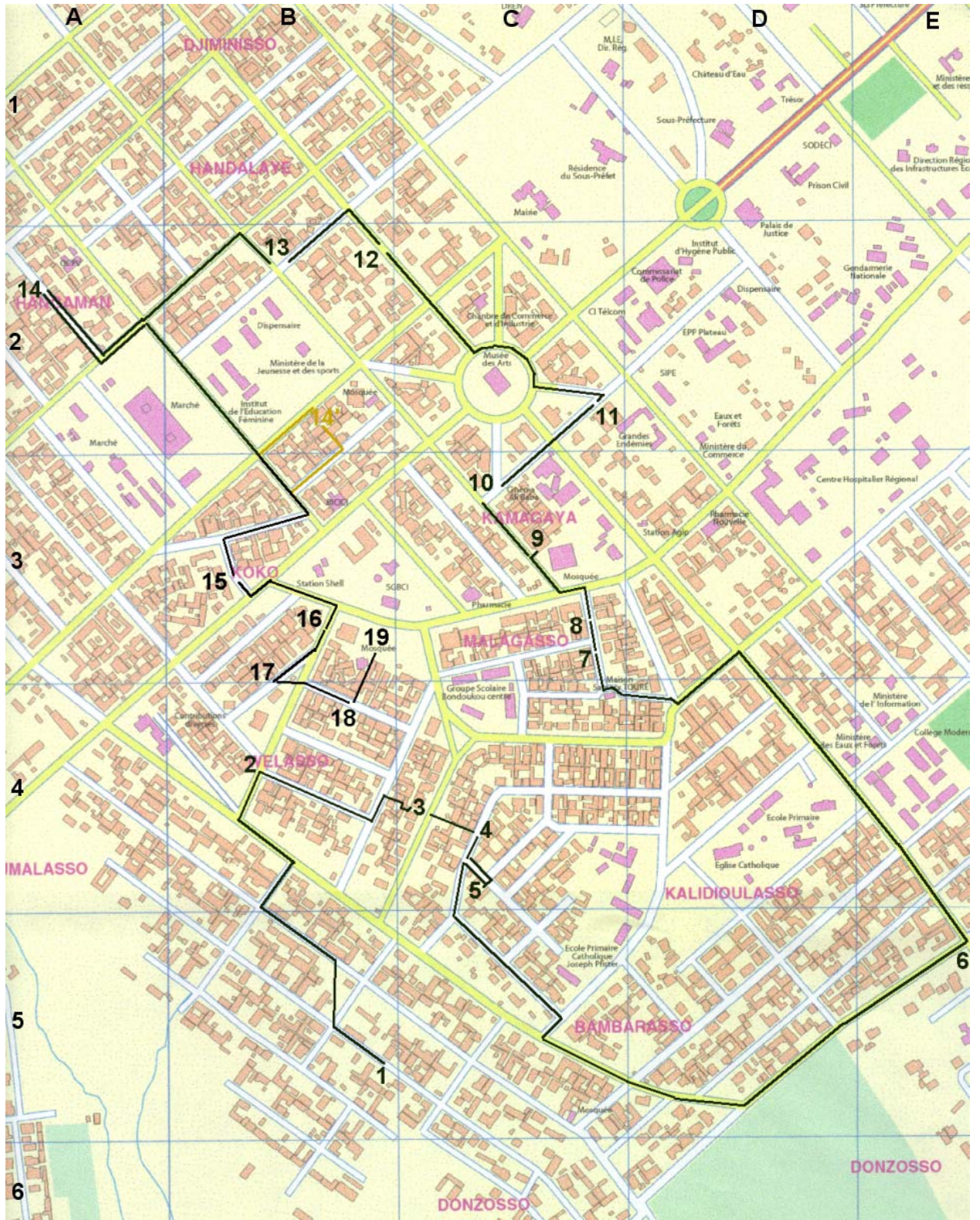
Trimingham, J. Spencer 1959. *Islam in West Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Werbner, Richard 1989. *Ritual passage, sacred journey: the process and organisation of religious movements*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Zeitlyn, David 1993 'Reconstructing kinship or the pragmatics of kin talk', *MAN* (n.s.), 28/2, pp. 199-224.

Annex 1: List of greeting stops, Sakaraboutou (27-12-2000)

Map of greeting stops



List of greeting stops

1. Baba Djéna, Sakaraboutou leader (Donzoso)
2. El Hadj Dabila, Donzomasa (Donzoso)
3. Djénan Ouattara, Gbinmasa (Gbinso)
4. Béma Amoro, Noumoumasa (Noumouso)
5. Kobenan San Kouadio, Bambaramas (Bambaraso, Nafabin)
6. Adamou Ouattara, Karijulamas (Karijulaso)
7. Representative of Touré Souleymane, Kamaramasa (Malagaso)
8. Mandjalia Ouattara (Malagaso)
9. Fétigué alias Loni, Kamagayamassa (Kamagaya)
10. Hadja Mariam Ouattara (Kamagaya)
11. Alai Kourouba (Donzoso)
12. Ma Sarati (Jiminiso)
13. Koné Moussa, Jiminimasa (Jiminiso)
14. Ma Kouroubari (Handalaye)
- [14'. Kokomasa (Koko) *Not visited in 2000!*]
15. Youssouf Ouattara (Gbayagodara)
16. Daouda Ouattara, Hwelamas (Hwelaso)
17. Representative of Neneyamas (Neneya)
18. El Hadj Mahama Gbané, Koumalamas (Koumalaso)
19. El Hadj Brahim Timité, Imam of Bondoukou (Limaso)

Annex 2: List of Figures

- Figure 1. Kouroubi stand of the Limamso and Donzoso town quarters. Bondoukou, 10-11/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 2. Girls waving fly whisks during Kouroubi night. Bondoukou, 6-7/02/1997 (Photo: Filip Erkens).
- Figure 3. Family attending the grand prayer on Id-al-Fitr. Bondoukou, 9/02/1997 (Photo: Filip Erkens).
- Figure 4. Public meeting of the Imam and the *Prefet* of Bondoukou after the grand prayer of *Id-al-Fitr*. Bondoukou, 09/02/1997 (Photo: Filip Erkens).
- Figure 5. Girls variously dressed-up for Kouroubi. Bondoukou, 10-11/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 6. Girl selling *gogoro* pompons on the eve of Kouroubi. Bondoukou, 10/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 7. Sakaraboutou warriors sporting guns. Bondoukou, 9/02/1997 (Photo: Filip Erkens).
- Figure 8. Sakaraboutou warrior wearing a cap with amulets sewn onto it. Bondoukou, 13/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 9. Sakaraboutou warriors frightening bystanders. Bondoukou, 3/03/1995 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 10. Behind the musicians walks a delegation of Kouroubi girls preceded by an elder woman (left) and a *worosso* woman (right). Bondoukou, 3/03/1995 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 11. Kouroubi platforms of Limamso and Dozonso in front of the Imam's mosque. Bondoukou, 10-11/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 12. A dance performance by the *kuntigi* in front of the Imam (with white cap) during the grand finale of the Sakaraboutou parade. Bondoukou, 9/02/1997 (Photo: Filip Erkens).
- Figure 13. Sakaraboutou *kuntigi* dancing in his particular style. Bondoukou, 13/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).

- Figure 14. *Woroso* woman returning from a performance during an official event at the party headquarters of the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) at Bondoukou, 11/07/1998. Insets: the same woman using her 'mobile phone' and a child in Kouroubi outfit accompanying her. (Photo: Karel Arnaut)
- Figure 15. *Woroso* women dance during Sakaraboutou parade. Bondoukou, 3/03/1995 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 16. Sakaraboutou warrior with a massive wig. Bondoukou, 9/02/1997 (Photo: Filip Erkens).
- Figure 17. Sakaraboutou warrior wearing *gogoro* pompons and tinsels. Bondoukou, 3/03/1995 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 18. Sakaraboutou warrior with Kouroubi attributes. Bondoukou, 13/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 19. Sakaraboutou *kuntigi* accompanied by two other warriors wearing 'traditional' black face-paint. Bondoukou, 13/03/1994 (Photo: Karel Arnaut).
- Figure 20. Sakaraboutou warriors with multi-colour face-paint and abundant body hair. Bondoukou, 9/02/1997 (Photo: Filip Erkens).



Figure 1. Kouroubi stand of the Limamso and Donzoso town quarters.



Figure 2. Girls waving fly whisks during Kouroubi night.



Figure 3. Family attending the grand prayer on Id-al-Fitr.



Figure 4. Public meeting of the Imam and the *Prefet* of Bondoukou after the grand prayer of Id-al-Fitr.



Figure 5. Girls variously dressed-up for Kouroubi.



Figure 6. Girl selling *gogoro* pompons on the eve of Kouroubi.



Figure 7. Sakaraboutou warriors sporting guns.

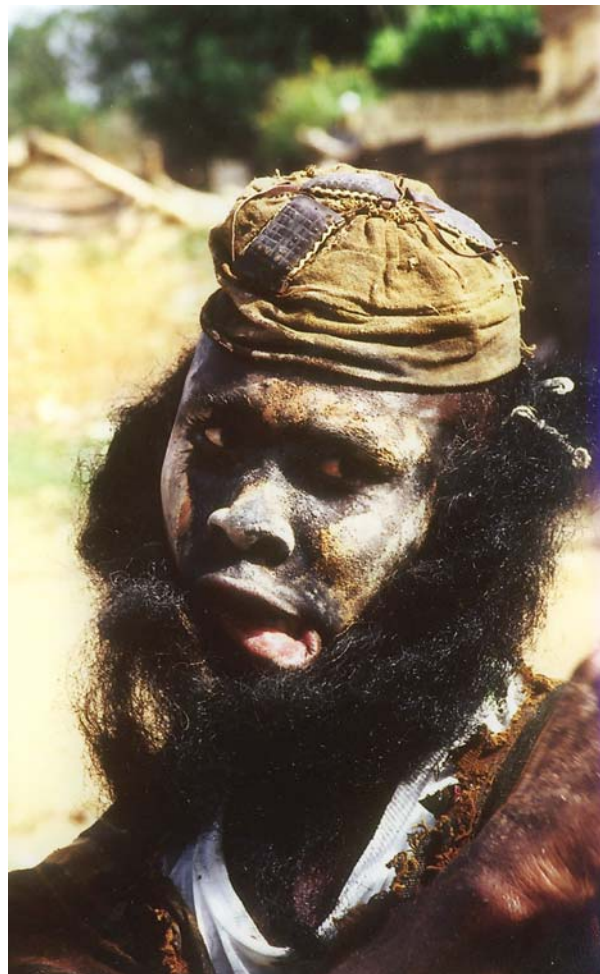


Figure 8. Sakaraboutou warrior wearing a cap with amulets sown onto it



Figure 9. Sakaraboutou warriors frightening bystanders.

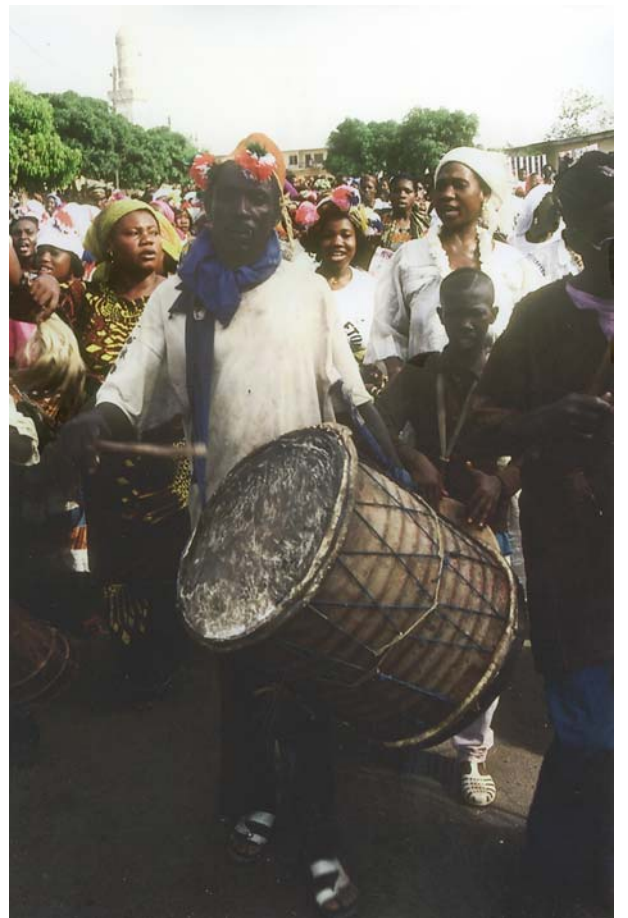


Figure 10. Behind the musicians walks a delegation of Kouroubi girls preceded by an elder woman (left) and a *woroso* woman (right).



Figure 11. Kouroubi platforms of Limamso and Dozonso in front of the Imam's mosque.



Figure 12. A dance performance by the *kuntigi* in front of the Imam (with white cap) during the grand finale of the Sakaraboutou parade.



Figure 13. Sakaraboutou *kuntigi* dancing in his particular style.



Figure 14. *Woroso* woman returning from a performance during an official event at the party headquarters of the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) at Bondoukou (1998).



Figure 15. *Woros* women dance during Sakaraboutou parade.



Figure 16. Sakaraboutou warrior with a massive wig.



Figure 17. Sakaraboutou warrior wearing *gogoro* pompons and tinsels.



Figure 18. Sakaraboutou warrior with Kouroubi attributes.

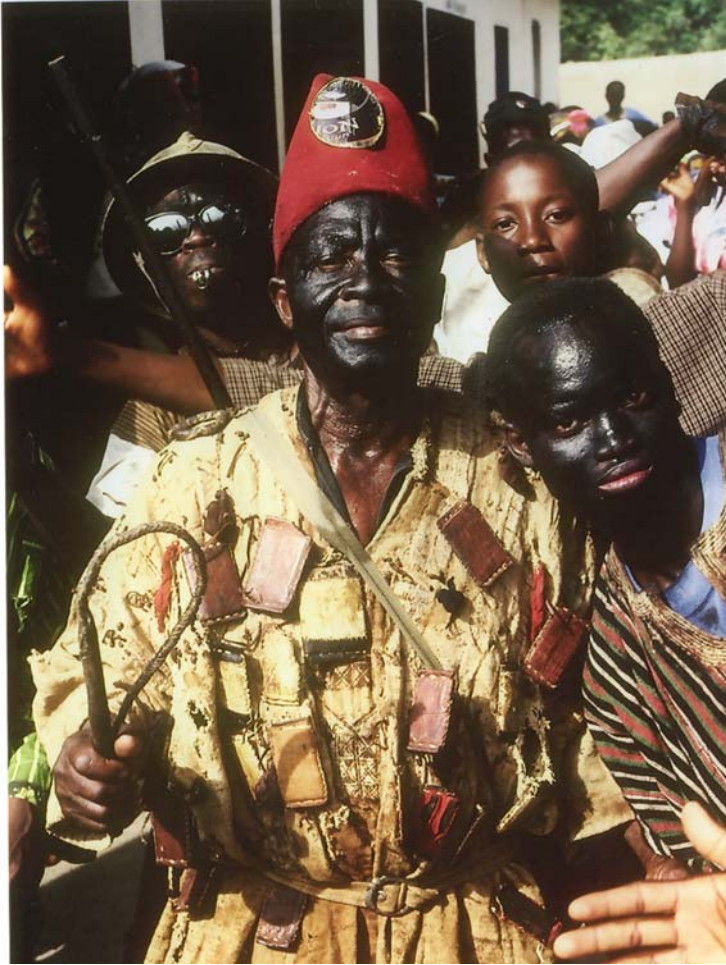
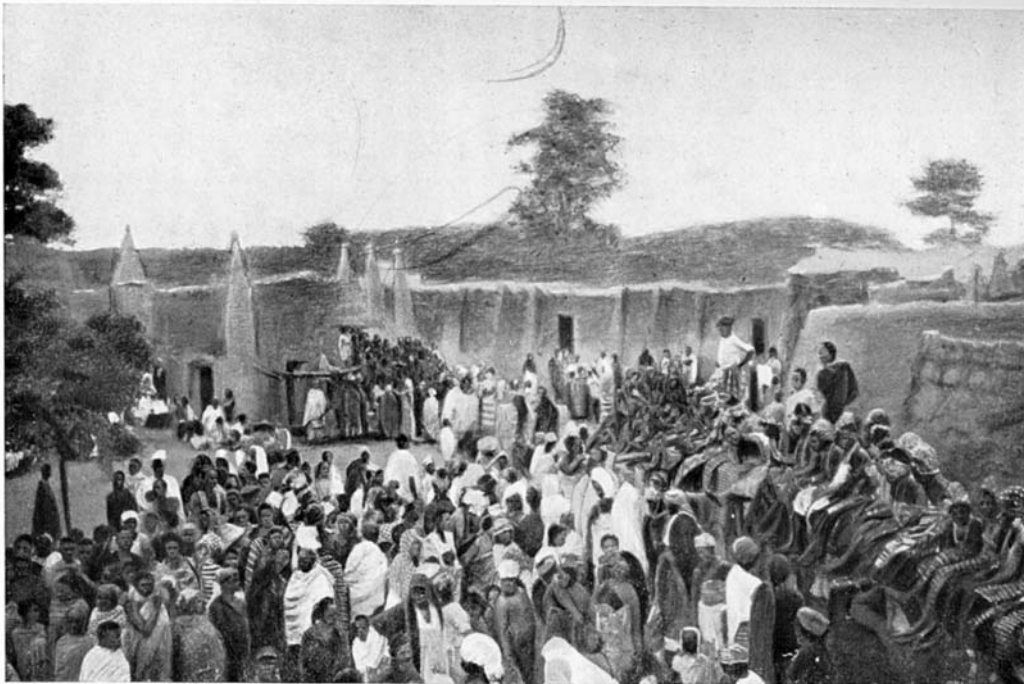


Figure 19. Sakaraboutou *kuntigi* accompanied by two other warriors wearing ‘traditional’ black face-



Figure 20. Sakaraboutou warriors with multi-colour face-paint and abundant body hair.

Annex 3: Additional Figures



LE NOIR DE BONDOUKOU

Pl. XIII

La fête des jeunes filles : sur les estrades.

One of the few graphic representations of the Kouroubi festival at Bondoukou published by Tauxier (1921).

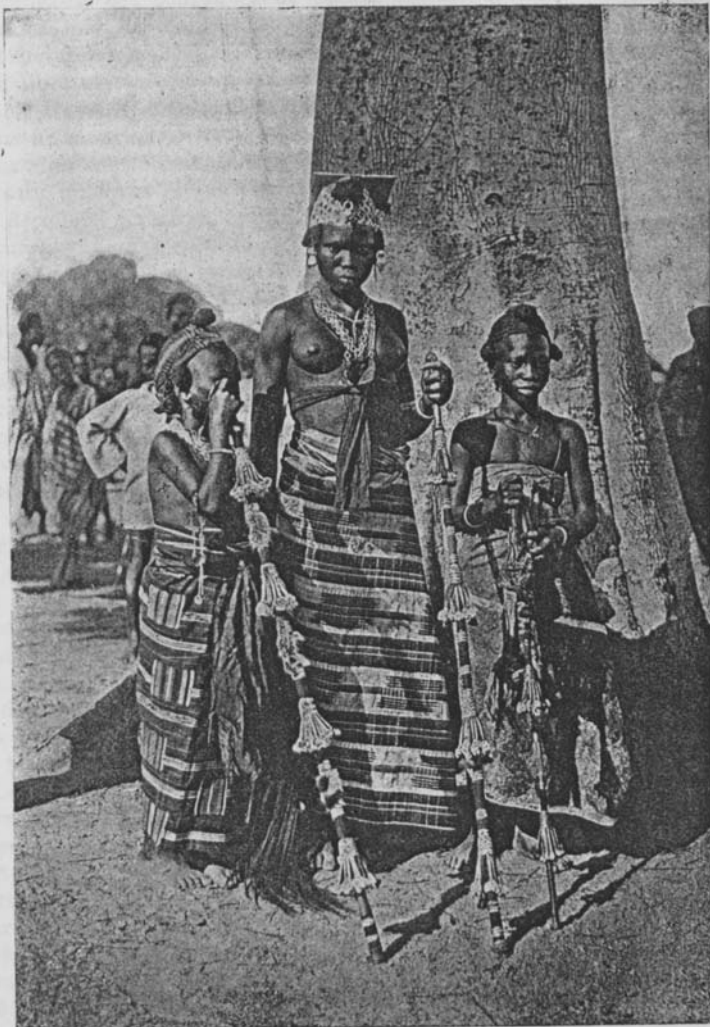


LE NOIR DE BONDOUKOU

Pl. X

Jeunes filles de Bondoukou en grand costume.

‘Young girls of Bondoukou in their best dress’ (Tauxier 1921).



Elégantes de Kong.

'Elegant girls of Kong' (Proteaux 1925).



FACUTEIT VAN DE LETTEREN EN WIJSBEGEERTE

Vakgroep Afrikaanse Talen en Culturen

Academiejaar 2004-2005

Performing displacements and rephrasing attachments
Ethnographic explorations of mobility in art, ritual, media, and politics

Karel Arnaut

Volume 2

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor (Ph.D.) in African Languages and Cultures

Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van
doctor in de Afrikaanse Talen en Culturen

Promotor: Prof. Dr. Jan Blommaert

Part II

National closures

Chapter 3

Autochthony and the postnational imagination in Côte d'Ivoire (1901-2003)

“Masquairides! Masquairides!

prêtes pour la défense de l'Ivoirité,

[...]

Luttons en créant,

Luttons en nous masquant, en portant des casques de combat.

Griotides, Eburniques, Africanides, Zahoulides,

Drummonides, Masquairides pour lutter.

Les masques rouges doivent anéantir les masques rouges-noirs,
valets de l'impérialisme, esclaves du néo-colonialisme”

[...]

Peaux blanches! Ne râtez pas les peaux noires masquées!

C'est une lutte sans merci.

(Niangoranh-Porquet 1994, 28-30)

The anthropological study of autochthony has made a good start and is thriving accordingly.¹ A definite forte is that it conceptualises autochthony by taking into account a combination of processes of identity-formation and the production of locality within a context of important global economic and political changes. The study of autochthony has historical ambitions but also prepares itself to figure out new ‘postnational’ forms of community-building:

“Such a view of millennial capitalism as rife with contradictions [...] can help us to historicize debates on globalisation.” (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000, p449)

“...the ideologies of ‘national duality’ [autochthons-allochthons] in the process contribute to the foundation of new imagined communities, instead of being merely mechanisms of disaggregation.” (Bayart *et al.* 2001, p193-4)²

Although the anthropological study of autochthony is largely the work of a relatively small group of Cameroon scholars who take their area expertise as their point of departure, from the onset, the authors show a genuine comparative concern and successfully elaborate cases of autochthony discourses in other parts of Africa and the rest of the world, most notably of extreme right-wing and regionalist political movements in Europe.³ The latter case studies allow us to see, for instance, how autochthony develops almost synchronically in Europe and Africa.

“the upsurge of autochthonie [sic!] in Cameroon (and in Africa in general) and Le Pen’s success in France occurred at roughly the same moment in time” (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000, p442)

However, this synchronicity between Africa and Europe appears severely challenged by the fact that in a number of texts the development of autochthony in Africa is marked out in a trajectory that appears almost exclusively African. In a working document which appears to largely inform Bayart *et al.* (2001) and to a lesser extent Geschiere & Nyamnjoh (2000), Pascal (2000) identifies the three ‘moments’ of autochthony in Africa as (1) the formation of states out of

1. Research for this paper was conducted between 2000 and 2002 in Abidjan, Paris and Ghent.

2. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from French are mine.

3. Before they turned to autochthony, the Cameroon scholars already had a proven interest in processes of ‘glocalisation’ (Bayart 1999; Geschiere & Konings 1993) and the emergence of ‘new’ political identities that accompanied them (Geschiere & Gugler 1998; Meyer & Geschiere 1999; Nyamnjoh & Rowlands 1998; Konings & Nyamnjoh 1999). Other authors joined the debate on autochthony, notably in Bayart & Geschiere (2001), with case studies from Belgium (Bambi Ceuppens), Italy (Marta Machiavelli), and Georgia (Thornike Goradze).

colonies, (2) the economic globalisation of the last decades, and (3) the post-1989 democratisation wave. While this selection of historic moments enables Pascal (2000) and Bayart *et al.* (2001) to capture the current manifestation of autochthony in Cameroon and large parts of Africa, these authors as well as Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000) also experience the limits of this periodisation/thematisation, and seek alternative framings for a coeval treatment of Africa and Europe. Building further on these suggestions, I will make an attempt at relabelling the three above-mentioned dimensions of autochthony and use this alternative framework as a heuristic device for programmatically reconstructing the *longue durée* of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire.

My reconstruction spans the colonial and the postcolonial era and engages with the prospect offered by Geschiere & Nyamnjoh (2000, p449) that autochthony can help to “historicize debates on globalisation”. Overlooking long-term developments, they find that autochthony discourses are extremely supple and able to accommodate different ‘Others’, and they conclude that:

“This suppleness may make such discourses better geared to the rapidly accelerating flows of peoples and images ... than more solid ethnicity discourses.” (ibid. 2000, 448)⁴

I take this contrast between ethnicity and autochthony as my point of departure to suggest a ‘postnational’ reading of autochthony. In my conception, ‘postnational’ has a spatial and a temporal dimension which transcends the traditional limits within which ethnicity has been conceived as situated within the space and history of the nation-state. In this chapter, ‘postnational’ refers to ‘spaces’ (territories, frontiers, public spheres) that are smaller or larger than the nation and to ‘times’ before, parallel with, or after the time of the nation-state: the colonial era, the period of neocolonisation, and the more recent crisis of the nation-state in the context of accelerated globalisation. This alternative analytic space-time is also essentially ‘post-ethnic’ in the sense that it focuses more on the colonial and postcolonial trajectory of groupings who saw/see themselves as crosscutting, recombining or transcending tribal spaces.

4. Geschiere & Nyamnyoh (2000, p448) also suggest to consider autochthony as a trope. This runs the risk, I think, of operating a divide between the whimsicality of autochthony rhetorics and the firmness of the ‘contradictions of capitalism’ that are said to underlie it. An example of such a ‘split’ reading of the Ivorian ethno-nationalist conflict from a ‘globalisation’ perspective is Marie (2002). The author spends almost 50 pages explaining (extremely well) the hard, local and global economic realities underlying the Ivorian class conflict which, he says, is (ideologically) represented by manipulative politicians and the population at large as an ethnonationalist, communitarian struggle.

In sum, this chapter is an attempt to further the use of autochthony in anthropological studies of long-term glocalisation processes by operating some conceptual re-engineering in dialogue with the existing literature and with material from Côte d'Ivoire. In the first part of this chapter, I suggest to relabel the above-mentioned 'three moments of autochthony' in a preliminary attempt to build an analytic scheme to study autochthony as a 'postnational' and 'post-ethnic' phenomenon. In the second section, I make an extensive but nonetheless programmatic reconstruction of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire. In this reconstruction I give special attention to the period between 1960 and 1990 when the colonial 'autochthony' discourse seems to have disappeared, making a come-back after the re-institution of multi-partyism in 1990. This come-back cannot be properly understood without taking into account the different constructs regarding nationals and foreigners that were built and distributed in opposition circles during the long period of single-party rule. With democratisation these constructs gained publicity and popularisation, entered the political arena and sooner than later began to inform government policies.

The three 'moments' of autochthony: biopolitics, the public sphere, and the frontier

The first 'moment' of autochthony, according to Pascal (2000) is that of state-formation and can contain processes of territorialisation, the formation of racial and ethnic identities, and the construction of categories of 'autochthons' (Pascal 2000; see also Bayart *et al.* 2001, p179-182). Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000, p442) make a productive entry into this issue by pointing to "the long history of freeing labour" in capitalist development in the colonies as well as in the metropole. This mobilisation of 'human resources' was sustained, the authors explain, by "a broad array of measures to classify the amorphous mass of potential labour, whether on the basis of its provenance or by dividing the work force through formal ranking" (*ibid.*, p447). Such "compartmentalisation of the labour force", they conclude, "provides the historical background to the spectacular re-creation of parochial identities today" (*ibid.*, p448). In my view, this joint reading of identity-formation and national economic development leads us straight to "the biopolitical management of human populations and their environments" which is as much a phenomenon of the industrial and post-industrial 20th century West (Lipschutz 2002, p3) as of the 'mise en valeur' of its colonies (Cooper 1996, p16-17).

In a seminal study of the relationship between the 'mise en valeur' of the Côte d'Ivoire colony and the formation of ethnic identities, Chauveau & Dozon (1985; 1987) perceive an interactive process between the ethnic-regional compartmentalisation introduced by the 'ethnographer state' (*l'Etat ethnographe*) and the internalisation of these identities by the differentially 'interpellated'

(pace Althusser) sections of the population.⁵ The work of the ‘ethnographer state’ as conceived by Chauveau and Dozon can be productively theorised, I think, in terms of governmentality (Foucault 1991). According to Pels, governmentality can best be understood as “a set of universalist techniques of domination – a *Statistik* or ‘state-craft’ at least partly grounded in ethnography – that developed in a dialectic between colonial and European states” (Pels 1997, p165).⁶ This enables us to extend the formation of ethnic identities to other “forms of identification, registration, and discipline [which] emerged in tension and in tandem with technologies of self-control” (idem).

In the deployment of its biopower, the state thus provides categories, institutions, and expertise which conduct the “processes through which the self is constructed” (Foucault 1993, p.203-204). This *compart-mentalisation* not only applies to ethnic groups, but also to groups which cross-cut or transcend tribal classifications. Among these ‘detrified’ groups, one finds manual workers (Cooper 1996), religious entrepreneurs such as Muslim merchants, ‘marabout’ (Triaud 1974), and Christian prophets (Dozon 1995), and diverse categories of migrants or ‘latecomers’ (Skinner 1963; Touré *et al.* 1993).⁷

Based on the myth of tribalism (cfr Cooper 1996) which firmly confines people to ‘their’ places (Appadurai 1988, p37), and on the self-image of the coloniser as the prototype of the ‘modern mobile personality’ (Asad 1993, p10), colonial ‘statecraft’ introduces categories of intermediaries that are flexibly situated between the radically localised indigene and the (virtually unattainably) mobile coloniser. Among these intermediaries which exemplify the possibilities of colonisation (modernisation and civilisation) feature the soldier, the worker, the lower civil servant, and the ‘évolué’. An essential aspect of their ‘identity’ is the fact that they

5. The model of Chauveau & Dozon (1987, p239-245) distinguishes between two phases, that of the ‘inventive forecast’ (*la prédiction créatrice*) which combines elements of ‘selffulfilling prophecy’ (Merton) and ‘invented tradition’ (Hobsbawm and Ranger), followed by the ‘productive misunderstanding’ (*le malentendu productif*), a period of self-realisation within the established categories.

6. This resonates with Arendt’s (1985, p184) when she claims that “two new devices for political organization and rule over foreign peoples were discovered during the first decades of imperialism. One was race as a principle of the body politic, and the other bureaucracy as a principle of foreign domination.”

7. Cooper (1996, p34) brings out well the biopolitical problematic when, concerning the ‘labour question’ in the 1930s and 1940s in French West Africa, he states that the choice was “between *helping* the African become a productive peasant and *forcing* him to be a worker” (original italics).

are, each in their way, auxiliaries: helpers and propagators of colonisation. In order to grasp this phenomenon, Mamdani introduces the term “subject race” for “those of the colonised who were identified as non-indigenous” and treated as “virtual citizens” as distinct from the large mass of “native subjects” (Mamdani 2001, p27-28). Instead of using this dyadic colonial category as an analytical one, I prefer to take it as my lead to note how colonial classifications function as a flexible machine for the production of different categories of relatively privileged crypto-colonials whose degree of ascribed (trans)locality or social mobility transforms them into propagators of colonialism. Not surprisingly, in this project, the Ivorian ‘ethnographer state’ introduces the term ‘autochthon’. This is what I explain below, in the first of a series of indented paragraphs in which I bring together some evidence and formulate a micro-argument which feeds into the larger argument developed in this paper.

Already in the earliest colonial ethnographies of Côte d’Ivoire the label “autochthon” is introduced to refer to local natives in contrast to translocal ones. In his account of the Mande Dyula, Delafosse (1901) explains that they settled down among the indigenous population of northern Côte d’Ivoire urban centres like Kong and Bondoukou, in “small colonies” which grew bigger due to “the arrival of additional Mande colonists and mainly by marrying the women of the autochthonous tribes.” As a result, “this tribe is dispersed across vast territories but nowhere does it constitute the *autochthonous* element” (Delafosse 1901, p3, italics mine). Delafosse’s further characterisation of the Dyula articulates their socio-economic and ‘mental’ mobility. He asserts that the Dyula have an open and cultivated mind due to their conversion to Islam, are politically superior, and able to impose their language as the *lingua franca* of commerce and local politics (ibid., p4). This characterisation of the Dyula can be found in earlier descriptions of their “energetic” character (Monnier 1894, p415) and in later accounts of their ‘non-sedentary existence’ (Nebout 1906, p181) which policymaking documents readily suggest make the Dyula into “agent[s] of [French] trade and [...] civilisation” (Clozel in Triaud 1974, p554).

The ethnographic work of Maurice Delafosse illustrates the colonial intervention of localising and variably mobilising the population. Delafosse (1904) is probably best known for providing the first scientific ethnic-linguistic map of the country.⁸ Within this ethnic mosaic, Delafosse identifies translocals like the Dyula, to whom he attributes a certain degree of “transculturality

8. Until this day, Delafosse’s ‘dialects’ underwrite the idea of the “more than sixty ethnic groups” and his ‘linguistic families’ form the template of the main ethnic regions of which Côte d’Ivoire is said to be composed. To give just one example, a recent publication ‘Ethnies d’Afrique: la Côte d’Ivoire’, lists exactly sixty ethnic groups.

and universalism”.⁹ Apart from the Dyula from the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire, the earliest development of the partly indigenous plantation economy in the south-eastern part of the country also ‘mobilises’ two other groups: the Lagoon and Agni peoples from the Southeast and the Baule from the South-Centre. The former profit from the plantation economy and participate in the early colonial projects of education and administration, while the latter deliver labour force and set up their own plantations from the 1920s onwards. The increased social mobility of the affluent and educated elites of the Southeast coincides with their self-representation as ‘autochthons’ (*autochtones, originaires*).

One of the most often-mentioned events in the autochthony literature on Côte d'Ivoire is the creation of the *Union fraternelle des originaires de Côte d'Ivoire* (UFOCI) in the 1920s, and of its successor, the *Association de la défense des intérêts des autochtones de Côte d'Ivoire* (ADIACI) in 1937. Members of the latter organisation are said to have been responsible for organising a ‘pogrom’ against Senegalese and Dahomeans (Beninese) in 1938. The leading figures behind both organisations belonged to the early educated and affluent elites mainly from the South East (Lagoon and Agni) region of the country (Loucou 1992, p58-59). ADIACI claimed to defend “the well-being and the evolution of the entire country” and was mainly composed of natives assimilated to French citizens (Carnot 1999, p7-8). By setting up the UFOCI and the ADIACI, the ‘autochthon’ elites of the Southeast tried to counter the rising importance of other ‘mobilised’ Africans. Among these featured to a lesser extent the Baule and Dyula immigrants who intervened in the Southeast plantation economy but who also contributed to the enrichment of the local planters. More treathening to the self-realisation of the Southeast elites were the ex-territorial elites from Senegal and Dahomey (Benin), active in the burgeoning public administration (Dozon 1997, p789). In their struggle with the latter, the Southeast *évolués* took the French as their equal partners in a shared project of further modernising and territorialising Côte d'Ivoire. Amon d'Aby, one of their main spokespersons, proposed a mixture of ‘Progress and Tradition’, between “the best of yesterday’s Côte d'Ivoire and the best Europe can offer it” (Amon d'Aby 1951, p67, 168). This symbiosis could be forged, he continued, by the autochthonous educated elites who, sadly enough, “have so far been excluded from conducting public affairs” (ibid., p66)

Thus, in confrontation with fellow-emerging elites, the South East intellectuals connect their self-realisation to that of the modern (colonial) Côte d'Ivoire territory (*pays*), and appropriate the ‘autochthon’ label which the prestigious colonial ethnography has prepared, to articulate their

9. These values, according to Triaud (1998, p223), are not just celebrated in the Third Republic but are also cultivated in Delafosse’s own family and family-in-law.

difference not only from the mass of common natives (*indigènes, aborigènes*) but also from the translocal or 'deterritorialised' elites.

By renaming Pascal's 'moment of state formation' into the 'biopolitical dimension' of autochthony, I intend to look at processes of 'statecraft' and self-realisation in states and national economies but also in spaces and territories other than states in the strict sense of the term. Colonies or groups of colonies such as the A.O.F. can be considered as instances of such non-state territories, but also within them 'space' is everything but homogenous and continuous. Apart from accommodating the unequal *compart-mentalisation* of the population, these spaces, as we will see in the analysis of Pascal's second and third 'moment', are cut through by fragmented public spheres and moving economic frontiers.

The second moment, according to Pascal (2000; see also Bayart *et al* 2001, p182; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000, p438-439) starts after 1990 when in many parts of Africa processes of democratisation see the light of day. From then onwards, autochthony emerges as a major political force often used by local minorities to retain the power they held under single-party rule. Like 'state formation' 'democratisation after 1990' may seem hardly comparable to synchronous developments in Europe unless we broaden our focus to other developments in the public sphere.¹⁰ This opening is strongly suggested by some authors on autochthony when they perceive the democratic turn of 1990 as a fresh step in the development of mass politics, accompanied by changing roles for the liberalised press, and for a newly reconfigured civil society.¹¹ Relabelling Pascal's 'moment of democratisation' into 'the public sphere dimension of autochthony', not only enables us to capture the above-mentioned transformations of democracy in late capitalist Africa, but also 'pre-La Baule' changes in the constitution of civil society, the media, and other forms of 'publicity'.

In Côte d'Ivoire, at the occasion of its first ever elections of 26 August 1945, Abidjan witnessed the creation of an 'autochthon' versus a 'metropolitan' constituency. Amon D'Aby (1951, p47-50) reports that in the running-up to the elections for the city council (*Commission Municipale*)

10 Unlike 'biopolitics', 'public sphere' is a more widely used concept and requires little explanation. In my analysis, I follow the 'material' conception of public sphere proposed by Larkin (2001) and Werbner (2002).

11. Concerning the press, see Konings & Nyamnjoh (2000, p13-17). For the role of new civil society organisations in the establishment of autochthony, see Nyamnjoh & Rowlands (1998) and Geschiere & Nyamnjoh (2000, p432, 436-8) on the role of elite associations, Konings (2003a) on the Maranatha religious movement, and Konings (2003b) on the youth organisation 'Parliament'.

the autochthons (*les autochtones*) decided to exclude Europeans from their candidates' list and formed the African Block (*Bloc Africain*). This proposal was launched, according to Amon d'Aby (1951, 48) by Houphouët-Boigny who had just created the *Syndicat Agricole Africain* (SAA) which defended the indigenous plantation-holders against the privileged European agricultural entrepreneurs. Houphouët had some difficulty convincing the South-eastern elites of the UFOCI who saw their relationship with the metropolitans severely challenged. They finally conceded but soon after the elections recovered their alliance with the French by creating the *Comité d'action patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (CAPACI) (Loucou 1992, p60-61). The shift from 'autochthon' to 'patriot' is an interesting one, and can be better understood when read in the broader reconfiguration of the public sphere in the post-war period and the running-up to decolonisation.

In protest to the creation of the African Block, the European candidates boycotted the elections and addressed a public letter asking for support to the "patriotic [French] associations" and to "the president of the Senegalese association of Abidjan" (Amon d'Aby 1951, p48-9). Most of the Senegalese in Abidjan provided from the so-called 'Quatre Communes' and were, like the 'patriotic' addressees of the letter, French citizens. In early post-war, indeed post-Vichy Abidjan, 'patriotic' evoked a strong commitment to France and brought to mind the participation of the Africans/Ivorians in the French war effort. Moreover, the project of the public letter reveals how the French/Senegalese citizens occupied the official public sphere not only by forming the bulk of the electorate and of the literate elites among a largely disenfranchised and illiterate indigenous population, but also by possessing exclusive rights to publishing newspapers and magazines (Amon d'Aby 1951, p61-2). The choice of the South-eastern elites to rename themselves 'patriots' was thus a way of positioning themselves in this metropolitan or 'civic' public sphere, but also a solution to the appropriation of the term 'autochthon' by Houphouët-Boigny and the SAA who played strongly on the contested but enduring division between privileged citizens and subaltern subjects. This move cleared the way for Houphouët-Boigny to become the leader of a nation-wide mass movement while the South-eastern 'assimilés' remained stuck in the elitist, French-oriented residual niche of the public sphere and provoked their own 'minoritarisation'.

Abidjan's first electoral confrontation illustrates how a politically mobilised civil society operated in a public sphere that was deeply fragmented and hierarchised along the subject-citizen divide. In this we observe how 'autochthon' loses its elitist character and becomes a lever for mobilising the emerging mass electorate of former subjects against the elites of French citizens and those 'assimilated' to them. In the early 1950s, the process of enfranchising and politically emancipating Ivorians is declared accomplished by Houphouët-Boigny, but that does not mean the end of autochthony's political career. Very soon, it is recuperated by the anti-Houphouët-Boigny opposition to indicate that the emancipation of the Ivorians from colonial (and later neo-colonial) hegemony and from interference by non-Ivorian (Senegalese, Dahomean and Togolese)

elites has yet a long way to go.

In 1958 Abidjan witnessed the creation of the *Ligue des Originaires de la Côte d'Ivoire* (LOCI) whose mainly youthful and largely unemployed members organise a 'program' against Togolese and Dahomean guest workers. As a consequence 20,000 migrants are shipped back to their 'territory' (Diarra 1997, p54-56). The chasers of the LOCI are not so much reprimanded by Houphouët-Boigny as they are integrated in a newly-created youth organisation JRDACI. The ex-LOCI people hardly fit ideologically into this anti-colonial left-wing movement, but they assist actively in turning the youth movement into an unruly organisation until, soon after independence, the JRDACI as well as other revolutionary (student) movements are disbanded and their leaders forced to find shelter in less political and less public activities and organisations (Zolberg 1971, p25; Diarra 1997, p65-66, 99, 107).¹²

That is the point where autochthony and political contestation enter the alternative public sphere of academic, cultural, and artistic activity which I will describe at length in the second part of this chapter. For the time being, it suffices to observe how autochthony features in (mass) mobilisation on the contested terrain of public life where civil society meets the state and its foreigners.

Economic globalisation, according to Pascal (2000; see also Bayart *et al* 2001, p188; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000, p443), constitutes the third moment of autochthony. The author thereby refers to 'glocal' dynamics of destabilised national sovereignty (privatisation, international interference) and efforts by people to reclaim control in an amazingly multilateralized world (Pascal 2000). In an interesting move, Pascal (2000) introduces the idea of the frontier in order to account for the rise of discourses of 'roots' in the liminal experiences of people. These betwixt-and-between experiences of people can be related to the moving borders of their habitats that are caught up in processes of urbanisation or rural exodus, gentrification or slumification; or they may be related to the economic activities that are subject to displacement, delocalisation or enclavation (think of high-security oil or diamant exploitation sites). Finally, people may seek 'rooting' in the face of experiences of religious or cultural displacements as diverse as secularisation, Islamisation, and Americanisation of popular culture.

Focusing on the 'frontier dimension' of autochthony enables us to foreground the spatial and, above all, the dimension of mobility in ongoing globalisation. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, it is

12. The JRDACI was a left-wing youth movement with revolutionary and communist aspirations (Zolberg 1963, p46). In 1990, Paul Péré, together with Christian Grogueh, one of the leaders of the LOCI, created the extreme nationalist Parti National de Côte d'Ivoire (PNI).

important to observe how regional claims about political participation and ethnic identity largely coincide with the moving frontier of the plantation economy from the Southeast over the South-centre, to the Southwest. Together with affirming their regional-ethnic identity, these three frontiers give rise to differential autochthony claims.

As we have seen, the Southeast (Lagoon/Agni) region is the main birthplace of the plantation economy and of the first elites, precisely those who manifested themselves in the ‘autochthon’ associational life (UFOCI and ADIACI) of the 1920s and ‘30s. By the 1940s, the frontier moved to the South Centre region of the Baule who not only transformed their land into a hugely successful plantation zone but also spread further west and initiated a large-scale plantation economy in Bété/Krou country. This economic expansion corresponded with the rise of the Baule politician Houphouët-Boigny in Ivorian politics at the time of independence and far beyond. Parallel with the hegemonic position of the Baule on the economic and political front, a ‘national’ mythology of the Baule as ‘natural born rulers’ and as ‘central’ to the unification of the country, was articulated by writers and academics alike in the course of the 1960s (Chappell 1989; Memel-Foté & Chauveau 1989). This ‘baulisation’ of Côte d’Ivoire was contested by the ‘old’ elites of the South East and by the emerging ones of the Southwest (Bété/Krou) region. The Southeast dissidence was culturally absorbed when, in the course of the 1970s, the idea of a common Akan culture of the Baule, the Agni and the Lagoon peoples was promulgated (Memel-Foté 1999). The Krou/Bété on the other hand, found themselves now politically decentred but were becoming economically *incontournable*. They occupied the ‘last frontier’ of Côte d’Ivoire with an increasingly successful cocoa production that was Côte d’Ivoire’s prime source of income. From the late 1960s onwards, South Westerners like Kragbé Gnagbé and Laurent Gbagbo actively partook in the opposition movement against Houphouët-Boigny. Between 1967 and 1970 Kragbé Gnagbé denounced the Baule as ‘allochthons’ and ‘colonists’ who operated under the protection of the Houphouët-regime (Gadji Dagbo 2002, p55). Later, in the first democratic elections of 1990, Gbagbo challenged Houphouët-Boigny and accused him of surviving politically with the electoral support of non-Ivorian migrants whom Houphouët-Boigny had granted voting rights (Dozon 1997, p782-5). The gradual process of political emancipation of the Ivorian ‘Far West’ not only resided in the ‘allochthonisation’ of political enemies but was also sustained by an increased production of historiographic and ethnographic work on this region. These publications not only tried to provide the Bété with a particular historical and cultural identity but also attempted to prove that the Bété, in the form of their ancestral Magwé, were “not only the first inhabitants of the West of Côte d’Ivoire but of Côte d’Ivoire as a whole” (Gauze 1975 in Gbagbo 2002, p34).

The above concise history of the shifting economic frontier of southern Côte d’Ivoire, amply illustrates that:

“This process of the ‘internal frontier’ has contributed to the constitution of the national Ivorian space, not only in an economic way but also in the construction of identities and politics.” (Chauveau 2000, p98)

However, the frontier process also reveals how autochthony features prominently amidst articulations of regional-ethnic identities and projects of political emancipation. The net result is that ‘the South’ not only comes to be seen as the economic and political heartland of the nation (Dozon 2000, 59), but is also elected as the breeding ground, and by extension, the battleground of autochthony. In this battle, the North appears to be firmly located beyond the economic frontier (Aubertin 1980; Person 1981) and ‘northerners’ only confirm their liminal status by massively migrating into the South (Marguerat 1981; Touré *et al* 1993). This liminalisation of the North comes to an abrupt end when, after almost one century of north-south migration, in the first half of the 1990s the ‘North’ appears to aspire to become the South’s fourth internal frontier by relocating itself firmly in the political and economic heart of the nation.

In 1990 ‘northerner’ Alassane Ouattara breaks into the political centre by becoming Houphouët’s first prime minister.¹³ Almost simultaneously, the so-called ‘Northern Charter’ (*La Charte du Nord*) is published in which the elites (*cadres*) from the northern part of the country claim full participation in Ivorian politics and the economy.¹⁴ When in 1994 the liberal political party *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR) is created, its constituency is that of the southern Ivorian plantations and cities and the impoverished north of the country. Concurrently, autochthony is reintroduced into Ivorian political life, and, in at least some of the literature, inscribed in the Ivorian xenophobic tradition which begins with the ‘progroms’ of 1938 and 1958. However, stating that history repeats itself obviously begs the question of in which aspects the early xenophobia differs from the more recent version. After all, it is the changing and context-specific signification of ‘xenos’ that requires elucidation. Up until the LOCI manifestations of 1958, autochthony movements almost exclusively targeted non-nationals,

13. The northern roots of Alassane Ouattara are generally accepted, only whether they need to be situated within or outside the borders of Côte d’Ivoire is a matter of discussion. While Ouattara himself situates his origins in northern Côte d’Ivoire (Kong and Dimbokro), he is often identified as a Burkinabé (from Sindou).

14. To my knowledge, the Northern Charter has never been published. Although it is very often mentioned both in academic and popular literature, there is no clarity about the authors or the precise content of the document. The fact that the charter lives on more or less as an urban legend only testifies to the moral panic or empowerment it caused.

while after 1990 they are also increasingly directed against people like Alassane Ouattara and millions of others who seem to have certain credentials as nationals (e.g. having been prime minister, or otherwise possess identity papers or birth certificates) but whose nationality, national roots or loyalty are discredited. In the remainder of this chapter, I concentrate on the ‘slow shift’ (Blommaert 1997) in the resignification of ‘allochthony’ during the reign of Houphouët-Boigny (1960-1993) which after his death served as a basis for defining and affirming autochthony. Both projects, I argue, are fundamentally postnational.

Dealing with the *longue durée*: autochthony and the postnational imagination

Given the fact that ‘autochthon’ is an ethnic-like identity expressly situated within the nation-state, it is surprising that autochthony is hardly mentioned in the literature on ethnicity and the state in Africa while it features prominently in studies of such postnational phenomena as globalisation and the ubiquitous emergence of translocalities.¹⁵ Interestingly, the literature that explores phenomena of what we could call ‘late ethnicity’ comes closest to that on autochthony in its considerations of postnational phenomena.¹⁶ Such a perspective on ‘life after ethnicity’ can for instance be found in the work of Nederveen Pieterse (1996, p26) who proposes to consider ethnicity also from without the limits of the nation-state and in such macro-processes as the retreat of the state, global recession, and post-Cold War politics.¹⁷ He also asks attention for “postnationalism” as “a shift of allegiance from the nation to units or networks smaller or larger than the nation”. This ‘postnationalism’ which Appadurai (1996b) analyses in terms of ethno-territorial identities and new cartographies, invites scholars to “identify the current crisis of the nation and [...] to provide part of the apparatus of recognition for postnational social forms” (Appadurai 1996a, p158). The ‘three dimensions’ introduced above are meant to prepare us to study autochthony as such a postnational social form which emerges in a dialogics between units ‘smaller and larger’ than the nation.

15. As representatives of the recent literature on ‘ethnicity and the state’ in Africa, I take Lentz (1995), Berman (1998) and Zeleza (2003). For the literature on autochthony and globalisation, see also footnotes 3 and 10. ‘Translocalities’ is a term used by Appadurai (1996b) to refer to such diverse phenomena as ghettos, refugee camps, tourist locations, cities, etc. that are the products of myriad “forms of circulation of people characteristic of the contemporary world” (1996a, p43).

16. Another instance of a ‘late ethnicity’ approach can be found in ‘the ideologies of home’ of Eyoh (1999).

17. “Ethnicities are clusters or crystallisations of cultural difference and there are as many ‘ethnicities’ as there are boundaries that social formations generate and positions to take along them” (Nederveen Pieterse 1997, p384).

The biopolitical dimensions focus our attention on the production and reproduction of identities both within and beyond the nation-state. Although “the modern state has been one of the most important agents of identification and categorisation” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000, p15), other transnational agents such as colonising states and the International Labour Organisation, and more recently, UN institutions, the EU, NGO’s, and the World Bank played/play an important role in population management and empowering subnational identifications (Bryant 2002). One such a category is that of ‘indigenous peoples’, a colonial category if ever there was one, which in the course of the 1990s has re-emerged at the convergence of discourses of ‘biodiversity’, poverty reduction, multiculturalism, heritage conservation, and local activism “concerning the key issues of identity, territory, autonomy, and development” (Escobar, 1998 p65). Given the present use of autochthony as a reactionary and exclusionary category featuring in extreme right-wing and nationalist projects, it is an unlikely candidate to become internationally recognised as a lever for development and empowerment. Nonetheless, considering that the autochthon-allochthon distinction is constantly gaining currency in European official policies, NGOs’ increasing concern with citizenship, popular movements, and social solidarity among subaltern groups (Hickey 2002), and the internationally acknowledged political demands concerning territory as “an ecological, productive, and cultural space” (Escobar 1997, p217), the encounter between the ‘international community’ and autochthony as “a naturalising allegory of collective being-in-the-world” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001, p254) seems imminent. In the mean time, it remains critical to consider these constellations also in the context of the colony and its huge biopolitical undertaking of ‘naturalising’ and localising as well as ‘denaturalising’ and mobilising people and groups (see Mbembe 2001, p9).

The frontier is a typical example of a ‘unit both smaller and larger than the nation’ and comes in many shapes, not only plantation zones, but also enclaves, off-shore sites, and reserves for the exploitation or conservation of natural resources (oil, diamonds, wildlife). Such economic frontiers have as much national (economic) significance as they partly escape the control of the state (Mbembe 2001, p278, 283). Mbembe is correct in pointing out that autochthony conflicts often erupt ‘around’ these infra/extra-territorial zones while Abdulmalik Simone (2001, p25) stresses the open-endedness of autochthony claims by saying that that they do not so much aim “to bring territory under the singular control of a particular force, but to enable local actors to feel that their operations in localised spaces are also conduits to or extensions of a much larger world”.

Finally, the public sphere is the site *par excellence* where the orders of the nation-state are

challenged by transnational media, international and diasporic civil society. In that respect, Appadurai (1996a) has pointed out that international media play an important role in the promulgation of what he calls 'large-scale identities' that circulate in the global public sphere and can be "transformed, and reified by modern state apparatuses" (Appadurai 1996a, p155), or, I should add, contested or appropriated by diverse groupings or networks, political or otherwise which operate within the state. 'Autochthon' together with native are such large-scale identities which circulate since colonial times and often appear in discourses in which they are distinguished from translocals such as Jews, Hamites, Fulani, or Dyula and who appear to enjoy the ambivalent appreciation of the colonisers. However, the transnational public sphere is not only a production site of identities, but also constitutes a "global ideological marketplace" where political ideas are authorised for local use (Bayart 1985, p363). After the capitalism-communism divide of the Cold War, European as well as African countries have been offered other alluring 'ideological' products such as multiculturalism, human rights, decentralisation, citizenship, and autochthony; all of which interrogate the relation of the state to its fragmented or homogenised populations.

From this brief overview one can conclude that there is a fair amount of circumstantial evidence to argue in favour of thinking autochthony postnationally. Such conceptualisation ultimately rests on the observation that "autochthony [...] has become so central in an epoch when nationhood seems at once critical and yet in crisis" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001, p254), and thus the apparent paradox that the decay of the nation-state generates "attachments to ideas of homeland that seem more deeply territorial than ever" (Appadurai 1996a, p176-7). However, more than that, a postnational reading of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire, enables me to foreground how over its long colonial and postcolonial history 'autochthony' emerges from projects to reform or revolutionise the nation from a specific 'location' or 'identity' within it and with explicit reference to its international context. In other words, in this chapter I will argue that autochthony to a large extent carries the Ivorian postnational imagination.

Looking back on the fragments of the colonial trajectory of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire presented above, we can already discern how autochthony movements like the UFOCI and the ADIACI take their privileged geographical and social position as a point of departure to claim a firmer territorialisation of the Côte d'Ivoire colony as a crucial step towards more equal and more successful Franco-Ivorian collaboration in the joint project of modernisation. Arguably this project is absorbed by Houphouët-Boigny since his first manifestation as a political figure in 1945 but mainly from 1950 when he opts for a more pro-French course. This turn features in the

ensuing postcolonial project of modernising the nation which is based on three pillars. The first one is the invention of the Baule ethnic group as occupier of the geographical centre of the country and as constituting the economic driving-force of the nation. The second pillar is the imposition of the single-party PDCI as a network of highly localised units and a nation-wide space for political mobilisation. And the third pillar is the figure of Houphouët-Boigny who is ambivalently portrayed as both deeply rooted in the nation-state (*l'homme de la terre*) and as an exemplarily 'metropolitan' (*l'homme de la France*) (Dozon 2003).

In the following section, I will show how the pro-French turn of 1950, understood as undergirding the Baule and the PDCI hegemony, is contested by those who interrogate Houphouët's national loyalty and belonging and who expose his 'allochthon' nature. In the course of the 1970s and mainly '80s these interrogations are systematised by two groups of authors. The first group of what I call 'anti-imperialists' unmask the political, social and economical dimensions of Houphouët's alleged allochthony by exposing his loyalty towards imperialist France and remote capitalist exploiters. The second group of 'national culturalists' rather focus on the cultural dimension of Houphouët's allochthony: his disdain for Ivorian national culture and his occidentalism.

The anti-imperialists, the national culturalists and their Others

In a volume on student movements in Africa (UNESCO 1994), the Ivorian scholar Barthélémy Kotchy (1994) contributes a chapter on the "cultural dimensions" of the left-wing Pan-Africanist student organisation FEANF (*Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France*). After attributing to the students of the FEANF the insight that "a people cannot express its true identity without having cultural roots" (ibid., p101) and the aim that the African people could be "reborn and rediscover itself through its own language, modes of thinking, and art" (ibid., p106), Kotchy concludes that some of the FEANF members, after their studies, returned home and started working towards:

"a genuine cultural renaissance that would tie in with the economic programmes of the African countries – since, in the final analysis, there can be no real social progress or economic development without a cultural substratum" (ibid., p107)

After his studies in France and his time in the FEANF, Kotchy himself at least returns to Côte d'Ivoire and in 1969 creates the *Club des Jeunes Chercheurs* (CJC) together with "*national and nationalist professors* like Memel-Fotê, Christophe Wondji, Christophe Dailly, Niangoran-Bouah, Joseph Mlanhoro and others..." (N'Gbesso 1987, p114; italics mine). In 1970 he organises an international conference on African theatre at the university of Abidjan (Kotchy,

1971a) and in 1972 the CJC transforms itself into the *Groupe de Recherche sur la Tradition Orale* (GRTO) which soon becomes an official university institute under the leadership of Zadi Zaourou. Already in 1961 Zadi Zaourou has created the *Association de la jeunesse de Côte d'Ivoire pour les Lettres et les Arts* (AJCILA) which aspires to “the total cultural decolonisation of Africa” (Gnaoulé-Oupoh 2000, p261).¹⁸

In an interview with Bernard Zadi Zaourou (2003), the latter explains to me that his is the third generation of those who are engaged in the quest (*une quête*) for true liberation from autocracy and (neo)colonialism. The first two generations (of the late 1940s and the early 1960s, respectively) had failed in their protest against Houphouët-Boigny who reigns since the 1950s, he says, and when he met with Laurent Gbagbo in France in 1969, they decided to change their strategy. Instead of voicing their protest or creating clandestine political parties, they chose to organise their political opposition in civil society and translate it into academic and cultural activity. Indeed, from 1970 one witnesses the creation of independent teachers' unions like the SYNARES and the SYNESCI, several semi-autonomous university research institutes such as the GRTO, and cultural-artistic circles such as the Club Cheikh Anta Diop.¹⁹

From the above fragments of history emerges a sketchy picture of what I will deal with in more detail in chapter six. It shows how one decade after decolonisation several young intellectuals (a) invent themselves as a ‘generation’ of malcontents within a genealogy of student protest and (neo)colonial resistance, and (b) organise themselves in networks of ‘heterotopia’ which serve as the operational base of anti-Houphouët opposition. Moreover, their joint insistence on ‘culture’ shows how much they assess the rotten situation in their country in terms of alienation (see below). However, ‘the national and nationalist professors’ do not at all form a homogenous group. After a brief period of concerted organisational activity and joint exploratory reflections in the early 1970s, they fragment into different ‘schools’ of thought, and engage in differential projects, without for that matter stopping to network and consult each other. Among the large and ill-studied group of anti-Houphouëtists, I distinguish two groupings, ‘the anti-imperialists’

18. For this subversive activity, Zadi Zaourou was accused in one of the ‘fake plots’ in 1963 (Gnaoulé-Oupoh 2000, p261).

19. The SYNESCI (*Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Secondaire de Côte d'Ivoire*) was first led by Djéni Kobina, and the SYNARES (*Syndicat Africain de Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur*) by Francis Wodié who was succeeded by Laurent Gbagbo in 1980. The GRTO was only one among the many research centres of which the *Institut d'Histoire, d'Art et d'Archéologie Africaine* (IHAAA) at some stage led by Gbagbo, the *Institut d'Ethnosociologie* (IES) of Niangoran-Bouah, and the *Institut de Littérature et d'Esthétique Négro-Africaine* (ILENA) founded by Bartélémy Kotchy and Christophe Dailly, are the most important.

and ‘the national culturalists’, represented respectively by Laurent Gbagbo and Zadi Zaourou – two figures who enable us to see the joint concern and the later bifurcation. What distinguishes them is the remedy they propose and elaborate to counter the alienation of ‘the Ivorian people’. While the anti-imperialists opt for a political solution which should bring democracy, economic and political sovereignty, the national culturalists suggest ‘reculturation’ as the basis for building a new Ivorian society.

The anti-imperialists, the phantom political economy, and the ‘fake local’

In the 1980s, Laurent Gbagbo, Marcel Amondji, Abdou Touré, and Pascal Koffi Teya enter into the debate on the successfulness of the extravert Ivorian plantation economy.²⁰ This discussion about the so-called ‘Ivorian miracle’ was initiated by dependency theorist Samir Amin who in the concluding chapter of *The development of capitalism in Côte d’Ivoire* explains that:

“The political stability, the popularity of the regime, which allows the superficial journalist as well as the smug sociologist to overlook the emergent structure of different social classes and strata, is unquestionably based on the great prosperity that comes with the remarkable development of foreign capitalism in Côte d’Ivoire.” (Amin 1967, p280)²¹

The system which Amin undertakes to unveil is one in which Houphouët-Boigny and his fellow members of the economic and political elites cheaply buy political tranquillity from the Ivorian people not only in order to reproduce their own domination, but also to secure the involvement of the foreign economic partners on whom the whole system of exploitation depends. In a series of publications, Gbagbo (1982;1983; 1984; N’Zembele 1984), Amondji (1984; 1988), Touré

20. Losch (2000, 14-15) labels this the ‘Ivorian debate’ and perceives certain resemblances with the ‘Kenya debate’ not only as far as content (export economy, dependency) is concerned but also in its ‘form’, the fact that it was largely conducted by non-Ivorians. On the latter point, Losch, I believe, is gravely mistaken. In fact, in this chapter, I show that Ivorians have been contributing substantially to the Ivorian debate since the early 1980s. The exclusion of Ivorians such as Gbagbo, Amondji and others from the Ivorian debate, as presented by Losch, may explain why he treats (ethno)nationalism, culturalism, and autochthony as rather recent phenomena. He obviously missed the fact that these ideas were cultivated in the academic and artistic projects since the 1960s, and finally prepared for political use in the course of the 1980s.

21. Apart from Amin, the anti-imperialists also refer to the work of dependency theorist Gunder Frank (Touré 1981, p64-74) and an article on capitalism and state-formation in Côte d’Ivoire by communist anthropologist Terray (N’Zembele 1984).

(1981), and Teya (1985) work out the dependency ideas and demonstrate the many ways in which the Ivorian people are exploited. The anti-imperialists not only deplore the lack of redistribution in favour of the enrichment of the local and international elites, they also denounce the lack of democracy and the fierce repression of political opposition under Houphouët-Boigny. The repression campaign for which the anti-imperialists demand a great deal of attention are the so-called ‘fake plots’ (*les faux complots*) in which hundreds of real, alleged or potential political opponents of the president are incarcerated between 1960 and 1967 on charges of conspiring against the president and the state.²²

‘Fake plots’ is an expression attributed to Houphouët-Boigny himself who uses it in 1971 when he announces that the conspiracies of 1960-1964 in fact never existed, and when he publicly offers his apologies to the hundreds of ex-detainees. The grossness of this apology can be measured from the fact that the victims are convinced that Houphouët-Boigny co-invented the accusations, supervised the interrogations and the beatings, and organised the incarceration in the specially-built prison of Assabou near the president’s natal village Yamoussoukro. In 1966 Assabou-prisoner Lamine Diabaté (in Diarra 1997, p246) writes:

Lord God!
They have made lying into an art²³
Treachery into a national institution
Money into a master without rules
Hatred into a blind frame
Fear into an implacable satrap.

The deconstructive exercises of the anti-imperialists can be argued to result from a combined reading of the writings of the dependency authors *and* of the ‘revelation’ of the fake plots. This triggers a transfer of the metaphors of delusion into the analysis of the Ivorian political economy and enables the introduction of the idea of capitalist exploitation or disappropriation (of labour and land) into a broader pathology of alienation from which the ‘Ivorian people’ emerge as

22. After the death of Houphouët-Boigny in 1993, a number of victims of the ‘fake plots’ published their memoirs. Seydou Diarra (1997), Kodiara Koné (2000), and Amadou Koné (2003) are the most important. Although, non-Ivorian authors had already mentioned the fake plots before (see e.g. Zolberg 1969, p 345-354; 1971, p16), they are for the first time extensively described by Gbagbo (1983, p25-52) and documented in Beti (1984, p144-226).

23. Later on, the ‘they’ are identified as ‘that cohort of gravediggers’ who are also responsible for “the parodies of my Justice” and “the dances on my Dignity” (idem, p247).

stripped of their political agency and disinherited from their cultural, linguistic, and religious means. On top of that, such a combined reading allows the anti-imperialists of the 1980s to situate themselves in the ideological history which connects them, via the victims of the ‘fake plots’, to the young, radically left-wing revolutionaries who contested the pro-French turn of Houphouët-Boigny after 1950.²⁴ Armed with this historical and ideological legitimacy, the anti-imperialists make a sustained attempt to deconstruct the ‘simulacral regime’ (Mbembe 1992, p14) of Houphouët-Boigny which they describe in terms of “masquerade” (Teya 1985 , p32) and “derision” (Gbagbo 1983, p49), and which Mongo Beti, in a special issue on Côte d’Ivoire of his militant periodical *Peuples Noirs - Peuples Africains* captures in terms of a theatre play in which Houphouët-Boigny is the main actor (Beti 1984, p5-6).

The anti-imperialists roughly distinguish three groups operating in the neocolony: the remote (mainly French) imperialists, the Ivorian bourgeoisie headed by the president, and the Ivorian people. The figure of Houphouët-Boigny “serves as a screen between the Ivorian people and its real exploiters who live mostly in France” (N’Zembele 1984, p77). In the political domain Amondji (1984, p230) observes how “behind the mask of F. Houphouët, the agents of imperialism govern directly and in the most minute detail”. A similar situation can be found in the domain of (popular) culture, according to Touré (1981), who perceives the occidentalisation of Ivorian society through primary education and the press – two “ideological instruments” (*appareils idéologiques*) (1981, p25, p108), operated by the Ivorian dominant classes who thereby act as disseminators of the globally dominant Western culture (ibid., p59).

The main victims of this triple alienation are the Ivorian people who are economically, geopolitically, and culturally disinherited, and ultimately “ridiculed and emptied of their value and significance”. This leads, Gbagbo concludes “to the dehumanisation [*dépersonnalisation*] of the Ivorian people as political actors” (1983, p66). But, this deep alienation does also affect the president. As an intermediary figure, he is as much a propagator of extravert capitalism as he is a victim of imperialism. Houphouët-Boigny, Amondji (1988, p132) says, “sacrificed Côte d’Ivoire’s finest sons to the voracity of the dragon who dominates him” only to have them replaced by (French) “expatriates” (*cadres expatriés*). In sum, the ‘mutual zombification’ (Mbembe 1992, p5) of the elites and the people is grounded in a parasitic process, the keystone of a phantom political economy in which ‘fake locals’ like Houphouët-Boigny and his

24. This turn is better known as the ‘désapparement’ (break) between the PDCI-RDA and its revolutionary partner in the French Assembly, the French Communist Party. Among the party members who were critical of this break and saw it as a pro-colonial turn, several were convicted in the ‘fake plots’.

bourgeoisie drain the physical and intellectual resources of the ‘real locals’ in order to feed the ‘remote globals’ who remain eternally hidden and hungry.

This three-party system, however, only functions through the presence (within the national borders) of different categories of people who work in collaboration with the ‘fake locals’. The most despised ones are the ‘local globals’: the “expatriate employers” (*le patronat expatrié*) (Amondji 1988, p102), the French political advisors, and the French military who occupy a large military base just outside Abidjan’s airport (N’Zembele 1984). Apart from, but linked to, the presence of European expatriates, the anti-imperialists mention non-European ‘translocals’ like the Lebanese merchants and the millions of migrants from northern Côte d’Ivoire and from neighbouring countries (Amondji 1983, p309). “The immigration of Africans [in Côte d’Ivoire] is directly linked to the predominance of the interests of the expatriates [French]” says Amondji (1988, p50). This implies that the non-Ivorian proletariat is not associated with its Ivorian counterpart, but portrayed as an objective ally of the imperialists in the capitalist exploitation of Côte d’Ivoire. That seems to be one of the points where the Marxist analysis succumbs to a deconstruction in terms of the phantom political economy. In the logics of ‘phantomisation’ or ‘mutual zombification’ the non-local henchmen of the ‘fake locals’ are as much infected victims of alienation as they are its disseminators and propagators.

This uncertain shift in the text of Amondji is an important one to follow up because it constitutes an issue on which the anti-imperialists are divided among themselves and vulnerable for interference by ‘nationalist’ ideas of diverse provenance. In the following section, I will argue that these nationalist ideas emanate not only from the anti-imperialists’ colleagues engaged in national culturalism but also from the government discourse of ‘Ivoirisation’. That both the government and the opposition engage with the matter bears of course witness to the fact that with millions of guest labourers on Ivorian soil, active in the plantation economy, commerce, and myriad *petits métiers*, the issue of immigration is rather difficult to avoid. In their analyses the anti-imperialists disapprove of the fact that Houphouët-Boigny has turned Côte d’Ivoire into a no-man’s land where “the land belongs to those who cultivate it”²⁵, or rather a *nomadsland* where expatriates and immigrants can claim their share in every sector of national activity. All this happens, Amondji (1988, p53) complains, as if there exists no “natural people, the nationals” (*un peuple naturel, des nationaux*). These ‘natural-national’ people require protection

25. Houphouët-Boigny launched this slogan in 1968 (N’Guessan 2002, p66; see also Chauveau 2000, p105).

against the onslaught of ‘depersonalisation’ signalled by Gbagbo. Amondji (1988, p144) proposes “the affirmation and the enhancement of the Ivorian personality” through the revalorization of national culture whose marginalisation he deplors (1984, p313-315). This remedy contrasts with the one proposed by Touré who prescribes the “auto-emancipation of the proletariat” (1981, p255), for instance through massive alphabetisation. This appropriation of the language of the bourgeois by ‘the masses’ may signal the latter’s liberation from the tyranny of occidentalism.

Summing up the endeavour of the anti-imperialists in the 1980s, their comprehensive critique of the Houphouët system can be read as the deconstruction of a neo-colonial governmentality. Inspired and empowered by such authoritative discourses as dependency (Samir Amin) and anti-neo-colonialism (Mongo Beti), the anti-imperialist discriminate a wide range of variously alienated ‘locals’ and ‘globals’. In a series of concentric circles, the real locals are surrounded by ‘translocals’ and ‘fake locals’ who in their turn are encompassed by ‘remote globals’. Where the anti-imperialists hesitate in their remedies is in the choice between liberation which, as Touré shows, is a more inclusive process, and reterritorialisation which, as Amondji indicates, is potentially a more exclusive one. This uncertainty resides to a large extent in the different options for de-alienation which were articulated in the course of the 1970s. Among these options we can distinguish three which had a considerable impact on later conceptualisations of who was to be de-alienated and with what: ‘Ivoirisation’, ‘liberation theatre’, and ‘post-Négritude cultural theory’.

Three ways to counter alienation

From the late 1960s onwards the government launches the Ivoirisation programme. This moderate programme of ‘nationalisation’ focuses on the economic emancipation of the Ivorian nationals to the detriment of non-Ivorian Africans while leaving the interests of the French largely untouched. In the alternative public sphere of theatre production, several anti-imperialists, launch the new genre of ‘liberation theatre’ which produces a revisionist African colonial history in an attempt to liberate it from French misrepresentation and use it as a lever for criticising the neo-colonial regime of Houphouët-Boigny. If the ‘liberation theatre’ project has strong affinities with Négritude, the ‘new cultural theory’ which is also articulated in the 1970s is explicitly ‘post-Négritude’ in that it works towards an ‘epistemological break’ with French and Occidental hegemonic culture. In the alternative public sphere of academia, a host of young researchers seek to rebuild a ‘new cultural community’ based on languages and knowledges

recuperated from so-far misrecognised ‘traditional culture’. From the late 1970s onwards this ‘post-Négritude cultural theory’ is further developed in the ‘combined’ public spheres of scholarly research, literature and performance, and gives rise to ‘national culturalism’.

1. Ivoirisation

The many-headed official programme of Ivoirisation comprises projects as diverse as the gradual replacement of non-national by Ivorian civil servants in the public administration and the education sector, and the promotion of the participation of Ivorians in the management of private enterprises and especially in commercial (wholesale and semi-wholesale) activity (Siriex 1975, p264; Loucou 1987, p298; Woods 1996). It is with the latter project that Ivoirisation starts in 1969, under the young minister of Economy and Finance, Henri Konan Bédié (1966-1977) before the programme fades out in the second half of the 1980s. That the programme of reterritorialisation is first confided to Bédié, is interesting in itself because it associates the young economy minister with the more nationalist wing of the PDCI party.

Ivoirisation can best be described as a project of reterritorialisation which connects with colonial times in two ways. On the one hand, it prolongs the process of territorialisation introduced by the French in the course of the 1950s in an attempt to operate a delinking (*décrochage*) of the West African countries and pre-empt regional political mobilisation (Cooper 1996, p426-9). On the other hand, Ivoirisation openly responds to ‘xenophobic’ remonstrations against non-Ivorian Africans like those of the LOCI in 1958 which continue in the 1960s (Cohen 1974, p105). In all, embedded in a discourse of post-independence ‘nation-building’, Ivoirisation is a discourse of territorialisation, which visibly targets all non-Ivorians, including the French. Leaving the ‘real’ impact or the ‘real’ aims of the programme aside, Ivoirisation certainly strengthens the nationalist image of the government, and sustains the legitimacy of ‘territorialisation’ claims, also if they are formulated by the opposition.²⁶ In accordance with their ‘phantom’ theory, these government critics rebuke Ivoirisation as a cosmetic operation which spares the hidden impact of the former metropole in all important economic, political and military matters. Moreover, it also provides the frame within which they can stage their more fundamental critique about ongoing alienation and depersonalisation, particularly in the domain that concern them most: education

26. Boone (1993), for instance, shows how under the cover of the emancipation of nationals, the government strengthens the impact of the political elite on the national economy and extends the modalities under which the political elite can profit from the benefits of the extravert economy.

and scientific research. Already in 1970, for instance, Djéni Kobina, president of the teacher's union SYNESCI, points out that the Ivorian educational system needs "to liberate, disalienate and rehabilitate the individual" in order to enable the student to really participate "in the national construction" (in Proteau 2002, p72).

While the discourse of territorialisation as method of nation-building is propagated by the official media and materialises in laws and institutions, the anti-Houphouët opposition articulates its alternative options in two 'projects'. 'Liberation theatre' resists and even reverses territorialisation, while the 'post-Négritude cultural theory' largely evades the question but opens the door to territorialisation, by grounding liberation in a 'new cultural community'.

2. 'Liberation theatre'

'Liberation theatre' can be said to introduce a 'thematic rupture' with colonial theatre in that it stops denigrating African history and 'traditional culture' and takes an explicit anti-colonialist stance (Gnaoulé-Oupoh 2000, p169). The first author is Bernard Dadié (1970) who writes *Monsieur Thôgô-Gnini* when he leaves prison after having been convicted in one of the 'fake plots'. *Thôgô-Gnini (togo nyini)* is the Dyula expression for 'name seeking' and the play tells the story of a former slave who becomes deeply corrupted by the money he earns by doing commerce with Europeans, and loses his identity in the process. The moral corruption that comes with colonisation is also the subject of Zadi Zaourou's first theatre play *Les Sofas* (1975, in 1979) that recounts the story of the Dyula warlord Samori Touré and his army of horsemen (*soo fa* in Dyula). In *Les Sofas* a morally upright warrior-imam Samori stands firm against the intrigues and the treachery of his own son who is corrupted by the French conquerors (see also chapter five). Laurent Gbagbo brings this line of 'liberation theatre' to its summit when in 1979 he reworks the epic of Soundjata Keita into a generic African anti-colonialist liberation struggle. *Soundjata, lion du Manding* (Gbagbo 1979) recounts how Soundjata faces the terrible situation whereby "the Manding is attacked", "Africa is disunited" and the people have "lost their rights", "their possessions [are] confiscated", and "their dignity spoiled". Together with his "soldiers of liberty", the founder of the Mande empire engages in a fight for "liberty, independence, and unity" (1979).

The blatant revisionism of Gbagbo in his *Soundjata* play merely indicates that the bits of African colonial history recuperated by the two other authors, are also meant to be read as a direct critique of neo-colonial Côte d'Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny. Such a topical reading of the 'liberation theatre' plays has a double effect. On the one hand, the authors reconnect with left-

wing, mainly student protest against the territorialisation ('balkanisation') of French West Africa of which Houphouët-Boigny was not only a supporter but also a propagator. On the other hand, by selecting their heroes and anti-heroes from the northern Mande zone of Côte d'Ivoire and far beyond (present-day Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea), the authors produce a deeply ambiguous positioning of 'the North', both as the locus of (neo)colonial alienation and as the historical site of resistance against it. This ambiguity is theoretically evaded in the 'post-Négritude cultural theory' of the early 1970s, and given a practical solution in the national culturalism of the 1980s.

3. Post-Négritude cultural theory

As the fragments of Kotchy's biography already indicate, the concerted theoretical work of the 'national and nationalist professors' begins in the early 1970s in the scholarly domain of theatre and literary studies. During an international conference on theatre, the convenor Kotchy (1970, p177-178) and the young anthropologist Memel-Fotê (1970, p25-30) signal the problem of the theatre's socio-economically and linguistically differentiated – "destructured" – public in the Ivorian postcolony. At a later conference on 'African literature and its critics' in Yaounde in 1973, Kotchy and Memel-Fotê (1974, p164-5) suggest that teaching African languages *and* values at schools is the precondition for the emergence of "an authentic Negro-African critique". Zadi Zaourou and Dailly (1974), two junior literary scholars at the time, further substantiate this claim but go much further by developing a linguistic theory which can serve as the basis for a kind of 'cultural revolution' in society as a whole. After Marx and Stalin, Zadi Zaourou and Dailly start from a materialist conception of language as "the blood of each civilisation" and argue that it is "the social product of the people as a whole" (*ibid.*, p477), the condition and expression of its production and reproduction (*ibid.*, p465). The insinuation of French (or any other foreign language) into African literature and African societies, they argue, alienates producers (artists), consumers (public) and intellectuals (critics) from (literary) production. In reply, they propose a new alliance between all three partners-in-alienation with the aim of a joint "reculturation" (*ibid.*, p479). This 'cultural revolution' is presented as exceeding the reformism of Négritude which is criticised for underestimating the "economic, political and cultural supremacy of Europe" (*ibid.*, p476).

This idea of what we could call a 'new cultural community' can be said to circulate widely among anti-imperialist authors during the 1970s, but the uniquely culturalist method to attain such a community, proposed by Zadi Zaourou and Dailly, is rather exceptional and contrasts with what many other anti-imperialists propose, that is, a combination of cultural reaffirmation

and political and economic liberation. This generalist option is neatly expressed by Christophe Wondji (1979) in a speech for the AJCILA cultural club of Zadi Zaourou in 1972. In this lecture, Wondji repeats that “the practical realisation of the Nation goes along with the mobilisation of culture” (1979, p129; capitalisation in the original) but points out in a clearly anti-Houphouëtist move that “the condition for the existence of culture is national liberation and the renaissance of the state” (ibid., p127). In the concluding section of his speech, Wondji elaborates this “primary importance of politics” when he states that “however important cultural reflection may be, it is only a part of a whole: only political reflection is totalising.” (ibid., p 133).

In conclusion, overlooking the different proposals which circulate in Côte d'Ivoire of the 1970s to build a more truly ‘national’ Ivorian nation-state, one finds that they are rather more precise in defining who the extreme ‘other’ is, than in specifying who the ‘we’ are. While all anti-Houphouëtists seem to agree that the remote capitalists and the French imperialists constitute the ‘other’ from whom ‘we’ need to liberate themselves, the ‘we’ is fundamentally destabilised by the presence of the ‘fake local’ who appears as ‘we’ but in reality is an ‘other’, and by the process of exploitation/alienation in which the ‘other’ progressively affects (alienates) the ‘we’. In all, two basic solutions are put forward. The predominantly ‘political’ solution can be found in the deconstructive work of the anti-imperialists, in ‘liberation theatre’, and in the ideas of Wondji, and works towards the liberation of all those who are exploited. This ‘negative’ project which is mildly inclusive is supplemented by the more constructive option of the cultural theorists who focus on alienation and work towards building a more totalising new or authentic cultural community of de-alienated people. Although the latter option is only potentially exclusive, it will become so when it is further elaborated by the national culturalists in the course of the 1980s.

The national culturalists

Mateso (1986, p297) borrows Althusser’s term ‘epistemological break’ (*coupure épistémologique*) to characterise the aspiration of Zadi Zaourou in his academic work and in his post-1980 ‘research theatre’ to document traditional African language-use and extract from it an African literary theory according to which it can be interpreted and evaluated by its own standards, instead of imposed, colonial or occidental ones (ibid., p317). In the work of the national culturalists in general one can discern a similar concern for ‘total cultural decolonisation’. This ‘programme’ consists in recovering fragments of the national cultural repertoire, and recombining and rethinking this material in order to restore its cultural and

epistemological integrity and prepare it for the re-culturation of the Ivorians as an antidote to their alienation. ‘National culturalism’ is realised in different projects among which the Drummologie of Niangoran-Bouah, the Bossonisme of Adiaffi, and the Didiga of Zadi Zaourou are the most relevant.

The concern for recovering and revalorising elements of the national cultural repertoire is most prominent in the Drummologie project of anthropologist Georges Niangoran-Bouah (1935-2002) which aims to register and learn to perform ‘drummophonie’ (drummed talks), to transcribe such performances in ‘drummographies’, and analyse and interpret the transcription with the help of ‘drummologie’ proper (Niangoran-Bouah 1981, p33; 1987b; 2003). The *raison d’être* of such a project is that talking drums ‘texts’ contain “the thoughts of precolonial peoples” and thus solve the problem of the “documentary vacuum in the precolonial history of our country” (1981, p21, p191; see also 1977).²⁷ By solving this problem, one prepares the way for drummed historical lore to be served at the site *par excellence* of scientific consumption: the university.

“Consuming Ivorian produce is a sign of real development and using the texts of illiterate African thinkers in a university document remains one of the most efficient ways of rehabilitating Africa at the university” (Niangoran-Bouah 1981, p24).

In the same way that Niangoran-Bouah tries to counter historical or rather historiographic ‘alienation’, the writer-philosopher Jean-Marie Adé Adiaffi (1941-1999) deals with religious alienation and the colonial misrecognition for African forms of spirituality. His Bossonisme project consists in the study (‘a theology’) and practice of African religion based on its own ‘animist’ premises, represented by the Twi (Akan) term for spirit: *bosson*.²⁸ Bossonisme is meant to remedy the impossible choice of Africans between a return to outdated religious tradition (including human sacrifices) and an alienating flight into hegemonic Christianity (*Ivoir Soir* 16/12/1999). Bossonisme does not merely offer an alternative for the spiritual self-affirmation of the African people, according to Adiaffi, it is also the beginning of a counter-hegemonic religion which is resolute enough to select the useful elements from its own traditions, and solid enough to incorporate elements from other religions such as Christianity (Riesz *et al.* 1986, p34-5).²⁹

Bossonisme shares an outspoken counter-hegemonic aspiration with the Didiga project of

27. Likewise, in his Akan gold weights project Niangoran-Bouah (1977, 1984, 1987a) argues that the gold weights constitute the “museum” and “library” of “Akan truths” (1977, p55).

28. Thus, like Drummologie, Bossonisme has Bossonist researchers as well as practitioners, in this case priests and priestesses who are called ‘comians’ (*Fraternité-Matin*, 20/12/1999).

29. In his literary work, Adiaffi (1980) also strongly thematises alienation as well as the idea that Africans need to reappropriate their ‘traditional culture’ in a counter-hegemonic move (Adiaffi 1983).

Bernard Zadi Zaourou (1938-) who seeks to reoccupy the domain of Ivorian theatre performance. In the Didiga project first presented in 1981, Zadi Zaourou brings together his theoretical findings and his fieldwork data on the traditional Didiga performance genre collected in Bété country. The traditional Didiga is a genre of initiation performance in which a talking cordophone plays a central role (Zadi Zaourou 2001, p7). For Zadi Zaourou this provides the starting point for introducing diverse ‘voices’ – “poetic speech, figurative dances, talking instruments, and secret languages” – and integrating them in a new performative language (Hourantier 1987, p85). Expressions in this language may be as such entirely unintelligible but “decodable in relation to the scenic situation” (idem, p87). This new language produces new knowledge and this is communicated by its inventor who calls Didiga “the art of the unthinkable” (Gnaoulé-Oupoh 2000, p162).

With Didiga, the ‘epistemological rupture’ of national culturalism is complete: theatre performance is articulated in a new synthetic ‘anti-language’ (Halliday 1976) which constitutes a new public of initiates, and generates a new authentic (almost secret) knowledge and a unique experience which can only be judged according to its own criteria. From this microcosm of performance, reception and reflection all alienation is ousted. The national culturalists have thus achieved the projected ‘reculturation’ of the three partners-in-alienation: the artists (the producers), the public (‘the people’), and the critics (the intellectuals).

In an extensive comment on Archie Mafeje’s critique on Africanist anthropology, Apter (1999, p591) proposes to take the discourse of ‘true liberation from colonial and neo-colonial domination’ in “African studies and cultural production” seriously by paying “*close ethnographic attention* to what goes on under the guise of cultural decolonisation” (my italics). In the case of Côte d’Ivoire, such a historical ethnography of ‘national culturalism’ has yet to be written. The present programmatic chapter cannot remedy this lack but merely indicate certain topics, and more particularly, signal particular shifts of national culturalism in relation to the anti-imperialist tradition from which it stems, and the government policies of the 1990s into which it spills over. As I will try to indicate, these shifts need to be further documented and understood from within the experiences and lifeworlds of the national culturalists.

The most obvious ideological shift from anti-imperialism to national culturalism involves the bracketing not only of the Marxist critique of neo-colonialist capitalism, but also of the analytics of the ‘phantom political economy’. Rather than launching a deconstructive attack to liberate ‘the people’ from their local and remote oppressors, the cultural nationalists arm themselves with modern and sophisticated weapons forged out of ‘traditional culture’ in an attempt to reoccupy the terrain of national cultural production. This shift from ‘politics’ to ‘culture’ mainly signals a

further retreat from the alternative public sphere of anti-Houphouëtist opposition into the subjunctive space of artistic-academic production. What Zadi Zaourou and his colleagues of the AJCILA and the GRTO collect in Bété country is transferred to, and reworked in the intimacy of Zadi Zaourou's artistic circles in Abidjan, first the KFK – the de-romanised acronym for CAFCA, the *Cercle d'Animation, de Formation et de Création Artistique* – and after 1985 the *Compagnie Didiga* for which he built a theatre in his own backgarden (Gnaoulé-Oupoh 2000, p371).

A second shift which requires further analysis is a geographical one and results in overlooking the North. In contrast to the 'liberation theatre' of the 1970s that borrowed – albeit in an ambivalent way – from the heritage of the Mande North, the three national culturalists concentrate on the traditional cultural repertoire of the South: the Akan, Agni, Abbron, and Bété countries (*terroirs*). This move is paralleled by a conspicuous shift from cities to rural villages as loci of authentic cultural production. For Zadi Zaourou (1987, p55) cities are either pre-colonial and northern or colonial phenomena. In the introduction to his *Drummologie* book, Niangoran-Bouah recounts that at the occasion of Independence Day in 1973, he presented an Agni sacred drum which for the first time had left its village, at the main Abidjan football stadium in the presence of Houphouët-Boigny. He recalls how he was booed by an "ignorant and acculturated audience" of fifty thousand people who obviously "had turned their backs on the most genuine cultural values" (Niangoran Bouah 1981, p14).

A third, theoretical shift is that from a pan-African orientation towards a synthesis of 'national culture'. Zadi Zaourou, for instance, explains his aspiration to devise the (theatrical) "language of this country" and to pave the way to a truly "national dramatic art" (Bielemeier 1986, p67). Before him, Touré (1981, p32-33) had warned that traditional African culture is "plurivocal", "dynamic" and "contradictory" and predicted that if out of this diversity one dominant national culture emerged, it would be the culture of the (new) dominant classes (1981, p34). Back in 1972, Wondji also argued against the 'particularism' of a single national cultural, and said that any future synthesis needed to be a "critical" one. It would probably be a mistake to miss the universalist dimension of the national culturalists, particularly in their aspired *reconquista* of the University (Niangoran-Bouah), the Church (Adiaffi), and Arts (Zadi Zaourou). However, given their retreat from the everyday realities of political opposition (shift 1), the association of the 'outside' (urban, northern) world with irreversible alienation (shift 2), and a strong focus on the national space (shift 3), national culturalism acquires an elitist, pastoral, and authoritarian taste which seems far removed from the internationalist ('socialist'), urbanite, and activist orientation

of anti-imperialism.

As said, how these shifts were articulated and negotiated within the anti-Houphouëtist network, needs to be further investigated. For our present purposes, it is important to consider what happens to the ‘fake local’, the central figure in the deconstructive work of the anti-imperialists. In the reculturation programme of national culturalism, the ‘fake local’ becomes an anonymous patient suffering from alienation: either rich or poor, either expatriate or immigrant, rather situated in the North than in the South of the country, more probably an urban dweller than a rural local. The ‘fake local’ is no longer the kind of allochthon figure from whom the degree and the threat of alienation of ‘the Ivorian people’ can be measured. Instead, in the constructive work of the national culturalists, the ‘fake local’ is displaced as an anti-figure of the culturally-empowered autochthon – he becomes an anti-national character, a *Thôgô-Gnini*, morally and culturally corrupted by the Occident and its capital. Although, until his death Houphouët-Boigny, remains the model of this ‘light version’ of the ‘fake local’, it becomes easily transportable to other figures and sections of the population. This is by and large the trajectory of ‘the allochthon’ after the democratic turn of 1990, a trajectory which I will describe in terms of the dissemination and extension of the idea of ‘rootlessness’.

From Houphouët-Boigny to Bédié: the transition towards a new ‘allochthon’ (1990-1994)

The post-1990 history of autochthony in Côte d’Ivoire is an eventful and rather complex one. In this section, I will give a brief overview of the main political and other events which feature in the history of autochthony in Côte d’Ivoire. In the next sections I will highlight three processes that are pivotal in the reworking of autochthony over the last decade: the comprehensive reformulation of the autochthon/allochthon divide by Niangoranh-Porquet in 1994, the introduction of autochthony in Ivorian politics under Bédié (1993-1999) which sets in motion the process of the democratisation of rootlessness, and the reintroduction of autochthony after the coup d’état of 1999 and the process of the ‘globalisation of autochthony’ under Gbagbo (2000-).

Like in many other African countries, the democratic turn in Côte d’Ivoire takes place in the context of a major economic crisis and witnesses the partial transfer of opposition figures from civil society activism to the political scene and the formation of a new civil society which claims autonomy but connects in myriad ways to political and economic patrons. The first multiparty elections since independence confirm Houphouët-Boigny as president and the PDCI as the leading political formation (Loucou 1992, p169-171). The new government is led by Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara who embarks on an austerity programme that provokes wide-spread

protest. On the one hand, the protesters are the left-wing parties which have crystallised around four old-time opposition figures (Laurent Gbagbo [FPI], Francis Wodié [PIT], Bamba Moriféré [PSI], and Bernard Zadi Zaourou [USD]) and of which the FPI of Gbagbo rapidly becomes the most prominent. On the other side, the protesters are numberless old and new civil society organisations among which the student union gains prominence because it is firmly backed by the four parties of the ‘democratic left’ and engages in a heroic ‘street fight’ with the government (Bailly 1995; N’Da 1999; see chapter 6).

While during the early months of 1990 the protesters target the octogenarian president with slogans such as “Houphouët thief” (*voleur*), very soon Prime Minister Ouattara becomes the preferred target of critique. In the discourse of the opposition, the former FMI administrator Ouattara comes to embody the harsh ‘liberal’, ‘anti-national’ and anti-social side of Houphouët-Boigny. This protest is aired in student-union protest songs like “Alassane Burkinabé” (interview Kohi Brou Sylvain, 2003). More than just illustrating Ouattara’s anti-national image, the catchphrase bestows on it a geographical location which recalls an earlier criticism launched by Gbagbo that the president and his team are in fact re-elected with the votes of non-Ivorian African migrants (of which the large majority are Burkinese) (Dozon 1997, p782-5). Thus, chanted by thousands of student protesters who are made to represent a cross-section of the Ivorian people, ‘Alassane Burkinabé’ reintroduces the ‘allochthon’ into mass politics, more than three decades after the short-lived attempt by the LOCI youth in 1958. This time around, together with the persisting presence of Ouattara in Ivorian politics, the figure of the political allochthon is there to stay.

When in December 1993 Houphouët-Boigny dies, the constitutional heir Henri Konan Bédié takes his place and immediately dismisses Prime Minister Ouattara and forms a new government in which the leader of the USD socialist party, Zadi Zaourou, becomes Minister of Culture. This conspicuous move from long-standing opposition to PDCI colleague is not the only one by a ‘national culturalist’. Somewhat later ‘bossonist’ Adiaffi joins the Ministry of Zadi Zaourou as head of the Department for Religious Affairs, while professor Niangoran-Bouah makes a career move and apart from being a government-friendly university professor also becomes director of

the National Museum.³⁰ With the introduction of social-democrat and ‘nationalist’ professors in the new Bédié government, Bédié confirms the left-wingish, nationalist image he had acquired since his patronage of the Ivoirisation programme in the late 1960s. In the aftermath of this change of direction in the ruling party, Ouattara and the ex-union leader Djéni Kobina leave the PDCI and create the ‘liberal’ party *Rassemblement des Républicains* (RDR) in 1994. The post-Houphouët regime confirms its ‘nationalist’ course when the government introduces a change in the constitution which demands of future presidential candidates that both of their parents are Ivorian, and when Bédié in 1995 launches the term *Ivoirité* as a “unifying sentiment, a national awareness and identity” (Bédié 1995 in 1999).

The joint reading of these two major interventions, has led many observers to conclude that *Ivoirité* was meant to legitimise the exclusion of Ouattara (and before him, Kobina) from politics with a vague concept of multiculturalism and national integration which was equally exclusive (see Dozon 2000). This may well be so, and to some extent it explains why *Ivoirité* in one form or another has been used by Bédié’s successors, Robert Guéï (1999-2000) and Laurent Gbagbo (2000-) who also wanted to discard Ouattara from the political race. However, this ‘instrumentalist’ perspective distracts the attention from the way in which the concept was constructed, disseminated, and reworked in political and civil society over the last decade and has become popularised as a viable scheme for political action.

The double project of ‘Ivoirité’

Like other commentators before him, Boa Thiémélé (2003) attributes the term *Ivoirité* to the playwright Niangoranh Porquet at the time when the latter launches his Griotique project in 1973/4. The author distinguishes this ‘cultural *Ivoirité*’ from the ‘political *Ivoirité*’ into which the old concept is transformed in 1995 and afterwards (2003, ch2). However, such a firm dissociation of the old term from its new content is however severely challenged by the fact that under the rule of Bédié, Niangoranh Porquet (1994) publishes a literary work in which the term *Ivoirité* features prominently and has a cultural as well as a political dimension. In our terminology, Niangoranh Porquet simultaneously resuscitates the discourse of the ‘anti-

30. The personal friendship between Niangoran-Bouah and Bédié dates back to the time before 1993 when Bédié was still president of the National Assembly (Niangoran-Bouah 1997, p5). The transfer of former left-wing radicals into the government carries on in 1998 when former union leader and president of the *Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs* (PIT), Francis Wodié, joins the Bédié government as Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

imperialists' and of 'liberation theatre', as well as that of the 'national culturalists'. Thus, Ivoirité, like Griotique, is a layered concept which requires, it seems, historical deconstruction rather than conceptual disambiguation.³¹

The Griotique project is given shape by Niangoranh Porquet in collaboration with Aboubacar Touré and their theatre group 'Masques et Balafons' in the early 1970s.³² Claiming to take its inspiration from the multi-generic practices of the Mande griot, Griotique aims to integrate "in a methodical and harmonious way the word and the song, music and dance, mime, and the history and literature of the Africans" in order to arrive at a new "authentically African theatre" (Kone, 1987, p91). Afterwards, the project conducted by Niangoranh Porquet alone results apart from theatre plays (*griodrames*), in literary work which is categorised as either *griopoésie* (Zahoulides, 1985) or *griotorique* (Masquairides – Balanfonides, 1994). Griotique shares at least two important characteristics with the 'liberation theatre' of the 1970s and the anti-imperialism in which it was embedded. Griotique strongly thematises the need for decolonisation and the burden of neo-colonialist dependence in all important (economic, political, and cultural) domains of national activity. Also, Griotique has an important 'northern' component in the figure of the griot. Like Dadié's Tôghô-Gnini, Zadi-Zaourou's Samori, and Gbagbo's Soundjata, Niangoranh Porquet's 'griot' is a Mande figure who, in this case, enables him to liberate "African theatre" from "inadequate Occidental forms of dramatic expression" (Niangoranh Porquet 1974 in Boa Thiémélé 2003, p111). As we have seen, this 'northern' bias of 'liberation theatre' entirely evaporates in the hands of the national culturalists who rather situate their sources of national cultural heritage in the southern part of the country. But this geographical shift is not the only

31. In response to Boa Thiémélé, I would argue that it is not so that the Niangoranh Porquet's Ivoirité is 'cultural' and the Ivoirité during the Bédié era becomes 'political', but that almost the opposite is the case. The Ivoirité which Bédié launches is culturalist (which does not preclude 'political use', of course), while Niangoran Porquet's is also heavily 'political'. That is in fact what Boa Thiémélé finds also. His analysis shows that Bédié stuck as close as possible to the cultural Ivoirité of its inventor. This ostensible confusion in the work of Boa Thiémélé (2003) has an interesting side-effect: it enables the author to exculpate Bédié of politicising Ivoirité and instead accusing other (opposition) politicians, political commentators, and academics (such as Dozon) of (unduly) politicising Bédié's use of Ivoirité. Whether Thiémélé's academic analysis of political misuse of Ivoirité, suffers itself from being politically motivated and is meant to result in saving Ivoirité as well as Bédié, is beyond my present concern.

32. From the 1980s onwards, Niangoranh Porquet systematically backgrounds Touré as co-inventor of Griotique (*Fraternité Matin* 23:03/1999). This puzzling fact could perhaps also figure in a future ethnography of 'what went on under the guise of cultural decolonisation' and illustrate the systematic backgrounding of the North in national culturalism.

one that likens Griotique to Drummologie, Bossonisme, and Didiga.

With ‘national culturalism’ of the 1980s Griotique also shares its combined aim to attain a national synthesis and theorise this synthesis into a counter-hegemonic concept. The national synthesis of Griotique is symbolised in the double name of the company ‘Masques et Balafons’ – two cultural artefacts which have a different cultural orientation and together cover the entire national space. But this synthesis also has a conceptual component. Its author explains that: “Starting from Négritude, I wanted to present a synthesis of my practical activities and my theoretical work. And I created griotique” (Koné, 1987, p90-91). Presenting Griotique in the above interview of the late 1980s, as a post-Négritude, artistic-theoretical project clearly betrays Niangoran Porquet’s affinity with the work of the national culturalists, and illustrates the theoretical leap Niangoranh Porquet made between 1973 and 1994.

In the title of his 1994 two-part ‘Griotorique’ work ‘Masquairides - Balanfonides’ Niangoranh Porquet relexifies the name of his former theatre group ‘Masques et Balafons’ in an operation which makes the cultural artefacts reappear as ‘concepts’. However, that does not make them lose their geographical referent. ‘Masquairides’ stages the central figure of Seu Gueu who appears as a Southern autochthon engaged in a battle “between the first inhabitants and the new conquerors” (1994, p35). At some stage, these conquerors are identified as “foreigners” who settle down in ever increasing numbers in the forest zone (ibid., p52). This apocalyptic imagery is less prominent in the second piece, ‘Balanfonides’, which is also shorter and more arcane. In ‘Balanfonides’ the reader meets the figure of Tiéba Kambeleba, a Dyula composite name which can be translated as ‘Big-man Important-attractive-bloke’. This ‘northern’ figure is situated in a space of travel and migration, of northern cities like Bondoukou and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and associated with a battle to attain the high office of ‘governor’. Taken together, ‘Balanfonides’ irresistibly evokes the history of Alassane Ouattara and his attempts to rule Côte d’Ivoire. This provokes a struggle which is situated in the South (of the Masquairides) and revolves around autochthons and aliens of different kinds. In sum, the national synthesis of masks and ‘balafons’ of the 1970s is reversed in 1994 when their parallel conceptualisation rather separates than unites ‘South’ and ‘North’. This unmistakable political topicality emerges from a narrative that heavily relies on the ‘anti-imperialist’ metaphors of the ‘phantom political economy’ and the ‘fake local’. However, the solution to the crisis is a cultural one and recalls what the ‘national culturalists’ proposed in terms of ‘reculturation’.

In *Masquairides*, Niangoranh Porquet transfers the imagery, developed in the 1980s to unmask Houphouët-Boigny and his bourgeoisie as ‘fake locals’, to the post-Houphouët era of Alassane Ouattara. In this new world of dissimulation loom countless masks of different colours (black, white, blue) and combinations of colours (red-black, green-blue). One of the more powerful persona of the ‘fake local’ is ‘Black mask, white skin’. With this reversal of Fanon’s image of ‘white masks, black skin’ the author recalls the anti-imperialist idea that behind the black faces of the local bourgeoisie operate the ‘white’ French capitalists. The most dangerous masks in *Masquairides* are the double-coloured ones like the “red-black masks”, the “masks of duplicity [and] complicity” (ibid., p24) behind which hide “the irremediable mercenaries, [...], the refugees (*apatrides*), [...] the liars, [and] the renegades” (ibid., p48) otherwise called “the servants of imperialism [and] the slaves of neo-colonialism” (ibid., p29). These servants and slaves are elsewhere presented as “vampires” who feed themselves “with the flesh of the others” and “with the blood of the innocent victims” (ibid., p33). The “fake bodies” (*factice leur vie*) do all this for “the gravediggers of this world” who want to “eliminate our race” in “a struggle without mercy” (ibid., p30). That is, in *Masquairides*, the ultimate aim of “whiteness” (*la blanchitude*) (idem).

Facing this existential menace, the leading character, Seu Gueu, implores his ancestors to show him the way out and he is advised to “return to the foundation of cultural Ivoirité” (*retour sur le socle de l’Ivoirité culturelle*), which, a few lines further, is presented as a “return to his plantation, [...] his sanctuary”. “That is where [Seu Gueu’s] life is, where his existence is” (ibid., p38-39) and where he finds the Grand Masks that can overcome the many small ones. All the latter are eventually superseded by a higher form of masking represented by the *Masquairides* that are “not falsehood” but presented as “ancestor-Masks” that ultimately merge into the “Grand Rainbow Mask”, and from which arises “a new man” (ibid., p54).

The 1994 literary work of Niangoranh Porquet above all illustrates how the discourse of ‘anti-imperialism’ as well as that of ‘national culturalism’ is thriving in the 1990s and can be successfully reconciled in a joint project which predicates the emergence of a ‘new nation’ on the riddance of the ‘fake local’. In retrospect, *Masquairides - Balanfonides* sets the autochthony programme of the 1990s which is carried out in two steps: its ‘national culturalist’ aspect is transferred into the Ivoirité concept of Bédié, while the ‘anti-imperialist’ aspect enters the political stage with the rise of Gbagbo to power in 2000.

Ivoirité under Bédié: the democratisation of rootlessness

As if to demonstrate the cultural, ‘apolitical’ nature of Ivoirité, the first time ever Bédié refers to it, is during a cultural ceremony at the presidential palace in February 1995. In his allocution, Bédié announces:

“a cultural project which will make the new man, an Ivorian man replete with all the substance of our diverse ethnic cultures, carrier of a national culture which is the foundation of his Ivoirité but at the same time keeps this culture open to all [...] the cultures of the world” (quoted in Bédié 1999)

Later, Bédié adds economic elements to the Ivoirité project but retains ‘national culture’ as its foundation (*un socle identitaire fort*) and a ‘new society’ as its principal aim. Ivoirité aspires to

“the promotion of our cultural personality” (1995 ch7; 1995b); and

“A society that will succeed, under the white cover of Ivoirité, in an original and fruitful synthesis of our traditions, the scientific and technical contributions of so-called advanced societies and the new economic and cultural global situation [...] which will determine the coming century and the coming millennium.” (Bédié 1995, in 1999)

These few excerpts enable us to see how Bédié, possibly assisted by the ‘national culturalists’ of his administration, gives the Ivoirité of Niangoranh Porquet the contours of a ‘national culturalist’ project. Ivoirité recuperates, synthesises, and modernises national cultural heritage, and is affirmative rather than critical in its confrontation with the outside world (of science and economy). Moreover, Ivoirité persists in presenting the South as locus of autochthony and confirms the reconceptualisation of the ‘fake local’, initiated by the national culturalists, as any alienated or rootless person irrespective of his/her socio-economic position. This, I argue, sets in motion a process of what I call the democratisation of rootlessness which consists in (a) extending the category of potential allochthons by introducing regional and cultural variables other than merely nationality, (b) popularising this category through propaganda and civil society organisations, and (c) inserting the issue of allochthons in democratic contests that are thereby redefined as struggles situated on the newly emerging and threatening frontier of the redefined allochthon.

The extension of the category of the allochthon is mainly the work of the national culturalists. In a prestigious government-funded publication (Touré 1996), Adiaffi and Niangoran-Bouah start from Bédié’s suggestion that “if you are a stranger, you are not concerned by Ivoirité” which is essentially a “vast movement of integration among nationals” (Bédié 1999), but give ‘national’ a clear ethnic and regional connotation. For Adiaffi (1996) the people of the four cultural regions (Krou, Akan, Gur, Mande) of the country can contribute to “the birth of our national consciousness” (1996, p68) while Niangoran-Bouah takes it on him to be more specific. “The individual who claims his/her Ivoirité must have Côte d’Ivoire as his/her country and must be born of Ivorian parents who belong to one of the autochthonous ethnic groups of Côte d’Ivoire”

(Niangoran-Bouah 1996, p46). He further explains that ‘autochthonous’ is an epithet restricted to those peoples who were present within the borders of the country on the eve of French colonisation in 1893 (ibid., p50). These, he calls, “the Ivorian ancestors” (ibid., p51) and their descendants the “aboriginal Ivorians” (*Ivoiriens de souche*) (ibid., p49). As if to give this statement ethnographic substance, Niangoran Bouah lists a number of ethnic subgroups that, according to their own myths of origin, have roots within the national borders. In line with the southern bias of the national culturalists in general and of the Niangoranh Porquet of ‘Masquairides’ in particular, merely four of the listed ‘autochthonous’ groups provide from the North against fourteen from the South which hereby sees its status as elected locus of autochthony reconfirmed by the country’s prime anthropologist.

Thus, about a decade after the anti-imperialists launched a critique of neo-colonialist governmentality with a deconstructive analytics of ‘locals’ and ‘globals’ centred around the figure of the ‘fake local’, the late national culturalism produces an alternative model for the categorisation of people. This model consists of a number of concentric circles with ‘aboriginal Ivorians’ at its centre, surrounded by several categories of rootless people who are all potentially allochthon.

This categorisation is disseminated in a multitude of ways, ranging from academic and civil society organisations, to pieces of legislation. Among the newly-created academic organisations, the *Cellule Universitaire de Recherche et de Diffusion des Idées du Président Henri Konan Bédié* and ‘Racines’ (‘Roots’) have an explicit propagandist function. But also existing organisations, such as the authoritative *Conseil Economique et Social* (CES), contribute to the debate by publishing a widely distributed special demographic report which advocates an immigration-stop for the sake of “security, national unity, and social peace” (*Le Jour*, 8/4/1999). The civil society organisations which participate in the dissemination of the autochthon-allochthon divide, are many, diverse, and spread all over the country. They range from debating associations like the ADIR (*Association de Défense des Institutions Républicaines*), over fan clubs like the CNB (*Cercle National Bédié*), to militia-type organisations such as the JMCI (*Jeunesse Milodienne de Côte d'Ivoire*).³³ Finally, people all over Côte d'Ivoire experience the

33. Apart from ADIR, also MILOD (*Le Mouvement Ivoirien pour la Légalité, l'Ordre et la Démocratie*) operates in political and civil society. The CNB sets up hundreds of sections in rural and urban localities all over the country. The MILOD’s youth section, the JMCI (*Jeunesse Milodienne de Côte d'Ivoire*) functions as a kind of vigilante group which survey and counteract oppositional protest actions by RDR members (*Notre Voie* 5&6/10/1999). Finally, on the economic front, the CNB spin-off, the CNPE (*Cercle National de Promotion Economique*) functions as an investors’ club of ‘nationals’ who want to buy shares in newly privatised Ivorian companies.

impact of the new categorisation in the government's grand-scale identification project, and in the new legislation concerning land ownership.³⁴ Apart from provoking wide-scale discussions in the national press (cfr. Beugré 1999; Touré 1999), Ivoirité spills over into extra-judicial and popular violence. Throughout the reign of Bédié the number of violent exchanges between security forces and alleged foreigners rises, and the number of clashes between groups of people who confront each other as 'autochthons' and 'allochthons' reaches unprecedented heights in 1999 (see e.g. N'Da 1999, p 265; Serhan 2002).

In this context of increased tension between allochthons and autochthons, the elections of 2000 are prepared, and the democratisation of rootlessness reaches its apogee. When in mid-1999 Alassane Ouattara gives up his job at the IMF and declares that he will stand as a presidential candidate in 2000, the Ivoirité debate refocuses on him, his allegedly false nationality, and his profit-driven national disloyalty.

“Alassane Dramane Ouattara is a political mercenary. After having been an immigrant contractor of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Alassane Dramane Ouattara wants to be an Ivorian and, like a Trojan horse, assist in the conquest of Côte d'Ivoire in order to turn it into the shared patrimony of all humanity.” (*Le Démocrate* 14/10/1999)

This excerpt from one of an endless series of articles on Ouattara published between May and December 1999 in the pro-Bédié press, shows how in the running-up to the elections, elements of the anti-imperialist discourse – so scrupulously evaded by the national culturalism of Bédié – seep into the PDCI press. They forcefully evoke the idea of treachery and dissimulation ('Trojan horse') with which 'fake locals' ('wants to be an Ivorian') assist ('mercenary') in the exploitation of the country by global forces ('all humanity'). More importantly, however, is that these characteristics of Ouattara as an alien intruder, a security problem, and a greedy appropriator of Ivorian patrimony are associated with other 'immigrant contractors' who are said to originate from the locus of alienation and allochthony which is increasingly labelled 'the

34. In July 1998 a new 'identification project' is run by the National Security Council (CNS) that announces that almost seven million Ivorians have no or no valid identity papers (*Fraternité-Matin*, 1/7/1998; *Le Jour*, 15/7/1998). The CNS launches its activities in a general atmosphere of paranoia about the "huge number" of foreigners who have wrongfully obtained identity documents. Thus, "the administration suspects everybody" of being a potential fraud, and the CNS announces that "all the swindlers will be unmasked and punished" (*Fraternité-Matin*, 16/7/1998; *Le Jour*, 11-12/07/1998). While the identification project results in many residents being bereaved of their identity papers, the new land law of December 1998 does not apply retroactively, but declares that the 'land' is "national heritage" and that it can henceforth only become the property of "the state, public collectivities, and Ivorian nationals" (Chauveau 2000).

grand North' (*le Grand Nord*) – a transnational space covering northern Côte d'Ivoire, and (parts of) Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea. The association of this massive group of people with Ouattara and the upcoming elections, presents them as a potential economic threat which can make its way into the country through a simple democratic contest. The 'democratisation of rootlessness' thus demands that democracy excludes the rootless.

Before Bédié is given the occasion to do so, the coup d'état of December 1999 removes him from office and legitimises itself as an anti-Ivoirité intervention to secure the Ivorian Republic from falling apart. General Robert Guéï takes power, but four months into his reign, he succumbs to the pressures of a widely disseminated Ivoirité discourse which is gradually finding another sponsor in the figure of Laurent Gbagbo. With the rise to power of Gbagbo in October 2000, autochthony continues to dominate the political scene, and this is even more the case when in September 2002, a military insurgency leads to the division of the country in a rebel-occupied North and a loyalist-held South – the kind of geographical frame within which the discourse of autochthony flourishes so well in Côte d'Ivoire.

Autochthony under Gbagbo: the globalisation of rootlessness

“Laurent Gbagbo is heir to this Ivorian political current which has never accepted [...] the 'Françafrique'. This opposition has been violently repressed, in court cases of the Stalian type staged by the right wing of the ruling party and with the more or less covered help of the French services, more precisely those of the 'Foccart network'. The Ivorian nationalist tradition has been smothered during more than thirty years of 'houphouëtism' under the weight of the French economical and political presence. These frustrations now manifest themselves today in what one could call the claim for a second independence on which Laurent Gbagbo now surfs.” (Bayart 2003)

Five months into the military insurgency, when Côte d'Ivoire witnesses a proliferation of 'patriotism' all over the country, Bayart (2003) makes a successful attempt to understand the conspicuous 'nationalism' of Gbagbo. In his reconstruction of it, Bayart closely follows the invented genealogy of what I call the 'anti-imperialists' as well as their self-declared *raison d'être*, which later in the interview Bayart describes as the aim to “deconstruct the myth of Houphouët” (idem). However, by explaining anti-imperialism in its own (historic) terms, Bayart seems less given to finding out the new and original operations of Gbagbo and his fellow contemporary 'anti-imperialists' on the nationalism which was already flourishing under Bédié (and on the democratised concept of rootlessness to which it gave birth). In my analysis of the hitherto 'last episode' of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire under Gbagbo, I will highlight these

operations which I bring together under the label ‘the globalisation of rootlessness’.

The rise of Gbagbo and his socialist party FPI to political prominence begins during the transition period under General Guéï. In the running-up to a referendum on the constitution and to new elections in October 2000, Guéï removes the RDR of Alassane Ouattara from his transition government. This leaves the FPI the sole important political formation within the Guéï government which in a spectacular turn reconfirms the Ivoirité laws concerning eligibility of presidential candidates and land ownership, voted under Bédié. As such, the FPI engages with Ivoirité, in a way it will continue to do after Gbagbo becomes president in October 2000: it leaves the autochthony laws untouched and even strengthens them when it introduces a new identification campaign in which people have to prove their national identity by indicating their ancestral village (within the national borders).

Parallel with the FPI’s involvement with Ivoirité and its opposition to the RDR in the running-up to, and in the aftermath of the elections, the ethnonym ‘Dyula’ is increasingly used to label the RDR constituency. In chapter five, I look more closely at the contribution of the FPI academia and press to the construction of ‘Dyula’ and remark that the ethnonym is made to suggest that the RDR is more than just a political phenomenon. In a series of articles published between late December 1999 and April 2000 in the FPI newspaper *Notre Voie*, one can observe a clear shift towards the characterisation of the RDR as a ‘cultural’ grouping with a particular history and mentality. In the last article of the series, the author – a professor of literature and a Dyula specialist – argues that the Dyula in their history, like the RDR in politics, fanatically pursue unattainable goals, decline to see when they are losing out, and thus, refuse to escape the dangers that await them. This irremediable stubbornness, the author predicts, may have serious consequences: for those who refuse to flee or quit, there will be “crumbling of dreams...and the running of tears (Nyadji)”. Nyadji is the Dyula expression for ‘tears’ and simply indexes that the defeat of the RDR will end in Dyula tears. Later in this section, I will come back to this extraordinary piece of morbid journalism in which a political formation is historically ‘identified’, when I look at the new way of reconstructing the Ivorian nation as a ‘historical community’, and again in the concluding section when I look at the emergence of a ‘necropolitics’ as a special variant of biopolitics in the discourse of autochthony in Côte d’Ivoire. For the time being, it suffices to retain that the rise to prominence of ‘Dyula’ as a political label in the year 2000, continues a process of othering the RDR, first as non-national (cf. ‘Alassane Burkinabé’), later as ‘fake local’ (cf. Ouattara and immigrants as ‘mercenaries’), and ultimately as some sort of ‘fake historical subject’ who partakes in a historical community to whom he/she does not belong (but from which he/she refuses to part).

Another continuity between the transition government of Guéï and the reign of Laurent Gbagbo is the virtual continuous state of alert, which is marked by the regular discovery of coup plans by army men who are either associated with the ‘Grand Nord’ (northern Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali) or with the RDR and Alassane Ouattara. Gradually, the image is built up that Côte d’Ivoire is mainly threatened from without its own borders, either by putchist Ivorian military who live in neighbouring countries or by these countries themselves who aspire to destabilise or take over power in Côte d’Ivoire. Thus, when in September 2002 a well-organised, but only partly successful military insurgency breaks out, this is immediately portrayed in the government media as a foreign attack on Côte d’Ivoire by terrorist forces who work on behalf of alien forces. In a speech to the Washington Press Club on 30 September Finance Minister Bouhoun Boabré launches the idea that the rebels are “supported by terrorist forces and company” (*des forces terroristes & cie*). The combination of “terrorist forces” “and company” suggests nothing short of a criminal private enterprise seeking to seize power in Côte d’Ivoire and to gain access to the country’s economic riches. “These terrorists”, the Minister concludes, “you are well acquainted with in the United States. It seems indeed that September is a propitious month for them to attack democracy”.

This intervention by an FPI minister demonstrates an important aspect of the ‘globalisation of rootlessness’. The problems which Côte d’Ivoire is facing are candidly internationalised. Not only are they situated in other (neighbouring) countries, they are also stated in the kind of rhetorics (‘terrorists’) that evokes transnational trouble. Moreover, the victims of these violent global forces are portrayed as the vulnerable, almost helpless ‘people’ who see their sovereignty and integrity (in the above case ‘democracy’) attacked. This is often expressed through the rhetorics of the anti-globalist movement. This combination of international evil and national weakness and resistance, sets the stage for the resurgence of the anti-imperialist discourse of the ‘phantom political economy’ and the three-part categorisation of ‘remote globals’, ‘fake locals’ and ‘the Ivorian people’.

In a speech for ‘La Sorbonne’, Abidjan’s most prestigious open-air ‘people’s parliament’, Charles Groguhet (see also chapters 5 and 6), a well-known leader of one of the organisations of the pro-Gbagbo patriotic movement, reminds his audience who the ‘fake locals’ are.

“We are tired of the Rally of Renegade Dyula (*Rassemblement des Dioulas Rénégats*), RDR, we are tired of the Rally of Rebels, we are tired of the Muslim fundamentalists, we are tired, and the Ivorians are tired of the local servants of imperialism and neo-colonialism [*applause*] and the Ivorians are tired of neo-colonialism and imperialism. Yes we are tired as a people.”

Further on in his speech, he addresses the issues of liberalisation and globalisation. First he associates them with Alassane Ouattara who is remembered as the prime minister who in the early 1990s started privatising certain state-owned companies of which the water company SODECI and the electricity company CIE are the most well-known. All of these companies were bought by French multinationals. One decade later, the orator explains, the ‘imperialists’ are using a novel instrument to break into Ivorian business: the so-called ‘audit’. And he continues:

“when he finishes doing his audit, he says, well, privatise!, and then they come to buy. That is how they have bought the telecommunications, that is how they have bought CIE [the electricity company]. I have spend nine years in Germany. No state can sell its water, no state can sell its electricity, no state can sell its telecommunications. Why do they impose it on us? That is the struggle, that is the struggle.”

Firstly, in these excerpts one can almost observe the different layers of the decades-old discourse of autochthony/allochthony projected on the new ‘rebels’. In chronological order, we detect (a) the “local servants of imperialism and neo-colonialism” of the anti-imperialist discourse and the 1994-publication of Niangoranh Porquet, (b) ‘the RDR and Alassane Ouattara who want to gain access to the assets of Côte d’Ivoire’, a theme developed during the high days of Ivoirité under Bédié, (c) the ‘Dyula’ identity which flourished during the transition period, and, finally, (d) the internationally circulating identity of “Muslim fundamentalists”. This composite of identities, which was so forcefully depicted in the multi-coloured masks of ‘Masquairides’, in itself strongly evokes a certain identitarian instability or shiftiness which contrasts heavily with the apparently solid identity of the ‘Ivorian people’ who appear united and resolute in their resistance against these myriad ‘foreign enemies’.

Secondly, the above quote makes ample use of the rhetorics of anti-globalisation in order to demonstrate how the new and ceaselessly transforming ‘fake locals’ insert themselves into sovereign countries on behalf of alien forces. That is also what distinguishes the current ‘globalisation of rootlessness’ from the earlier era of the ‘democratisation of rootlessness’. Since the coup d’etat of 1999, the ‘fake locals’ are accused of exploring alternative ways of insinuating themselves into the core of the nation, no longer via false claims to nationality and elections, but by using military violence the cost of which must be covered, it is argued, by future exploitation. But who is instrumentalising the new ‘fake locals’ or, otherwise, financing the rebels? Since the early days of the insurgency, several hypotheses circulate in government circles as well as in the national and international media. Mostly the foreign mandators are

identified as multinationals or as ‘the French’ or, indeed both.³⁵ This is picked up by the famous playwright Werewere Liking (2003) in her contribution to the conference ‘Europe Phantome’ (Brussels, April 2003).

Asked to make an artistic contribution to the conference theme of “the African imagination of Europe”, Werewere Liking tells the story of the origins of the present conflict in Côte d’Ivoire. In her narrative Werewere Liking identifies the hidden hand behind the rebellion as two British-American companies involved in international cocoa trading.³⁶ She recounts how these companies see their interest threatened by the Gbagbo government that wants its planters to have a fairer share in the profits. Near the end of her story, these companies come to represent the Occident in its typical relation to Africa: that of endless exploitation. While putting forward the image of Africa as the ‘cradle of humanity’ and as representing the evanescence of mankind, she likens the Occident to “the coffin of humanity” representing eternal death. This occidental ‘phantom’ requires, she explains, permanent feeding: it needs “to constantly drink the blood of others in order to retrieve the coffin every morning” (2003, p6). The remedy which she suggests is that of a simple tale, and by extension, art. Without this cultural antidote, she warns, “we will all become phantoms” (*c’est un destin de fantôme qui nous attend tous!*), (2003, p6)

Werewere-Liking’s powerful tale bears witness to almost forty years of ‘phantomising’ Ivorian economy and society in the hands of the anti-imperialists, from the poem of Lamine Diabaté, over the ‘masquerade’ of Amondji and the ‘depersonalisation’ of Gbagbo, to the ‘vampires’ of Niangoranh Porquet. Interestingly enough, as a playwright and director of the artistic village Ki-Yi M’Bock (signifying ‘ultimate knowledge’), Werewere Liking is heir to the research theatre of

35. In October-November the idea is launched that Ghanaian and ‘Anglo-Saxon’ multinationals are trying to control the cocoa and coffee trade. Later, French firms are suspected of seeking to strengthen their position in diverse economic sectors (public works, crude oil, etc). After the conclusion of the January peace agreement (brokered by the French in France) which many Gbagbo followers find too rebel-friendly, the French authorities are openly accused of supporting, if not commanding the rebels who lead attacks on French official buildings. For early conspiracy theories, see, e.g. “Origine des financements des mutins” [libres.org/francais/actualite/archives/archives.htm; 2/12/2003]. For a more recent account in which the French are identified as the sponsors of the rebels, see Koulibaly *et. al.* (2003).

36. The choice of the British-American hypothesis seems somewhat out of phase with the fact that by April 2003, the hypothesis that France was supporting the rebels was widely accepted by the ‘patriotic movement’. Whether Werewere Liking’s option is related to the fact that the French Cultural Centre in Abidjan (which was heavily attacked during the anti-French riots of ealy 2003 and is closed since) is her most important sponsor (Mielly 2003, p13-14), is beyond our present concern.

Zadi Zaourou.³⁷ The cultural remedy against zombification which she proposes, bears out that legacy as much as it indicates that ‘national culturalism’ even if it is heavily associated with Bédié, is not discarded in the Gbagbo era. One could say that national culturalism re-emerges in the combative shape it was given by Niangoranh Porquet. In this belligerent form, Ivoirité anno 2003 is becoming an acceptable cultural remedy, even for those who may be considered radical anti-Bedeïst.

In order to illustrate the current recuperation and restoration of Ivoirité by past anti-Bedeïsts, I quote from an unpublished, recently written text of an expatriate Ivorian student, now studying in Germany (see also chapter six). In 1994, then in his early thirties, he fled to Germany to escape the repression of the Bédié regime against the left-wing student union FESCI of which he was a leader.

In his text ‘Concerning Ivoirité’, the author celebrates Ivoirité as “the umbilical cord which connects every Ivorian to his/her Ivorian motherland” and as “the source of our liberty”. This he further explains by referring to the country’s history:

“The trade in black people, slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism have made the African lose all dignity to live, all pride to exist.”

He continues, entirely in unison with what Bédié said many years ago:

“Contrary to those who think that the Ivorian people have no right to an identity capable of providing it with a way of life, we think that human evolution shows the course of universal history, the importance and the necessity to forge oneself a national point of reference in order to merit the respect of other nations.”

And he concludes:

“The identity struggle (*le combat identitaire*) should be ours if only for winning the anti-imperialist battle”.

This essay which needs to be situated in the diaspora of Ivorian left-wing adherents to contemporary ‘patriotism’, reveals a third dimension of the ‘globalisation of rootlessness’ which makes that the ‘international, imperialist’ insurgency is not only interpreted as a recent

37. In the 1970s Werewere Liking was researcher at the ILENA (see footnote 19) and created, together with Marie-José Hourantier, the theatre workshop ARETNA (*Atelier de Recherche en Esthétique Théâtrale Négro-Africaine*). Much like the research theatre of Zadi Zaourou, the ‘ritual theatre’ of Werewere Liking is based on ethnographic research and often hermetic. One commentator explains that “Werewere Liking’s researches are too complex and rooted in the Bassa cultural universe to appeal to a public of non-initiates” (in Mielly 2003, p25).

phenomenon of the globalisation (of exploitation and violence), but also read into its long history (within ‘universal history’). In other words, the autochthony discourse which circulates today in Côte d’Ivoire and its diaspora, is not only, as Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000) suggest “an effect of globalisation”, but also a discursive space in which globalisation in its recent and past forms is being deliberated. Moreover – and the selection of above spokespersons was meant to bear that out – this is done by Ivorians who themselves partake in different phenomena of globalisation: from the Ivorian Minister who plays on the theme of Al Qaeda terrorism in front of an American audience, over the young patriotic militant Groguhet who spent seven years in Germany and explains the limits of privatisation to a local audience of urbanites, and the Cameroonian playwright who serves a Brussels audience an unsavoury version of ‘vampiric Europe’, to the expatriate student militant who through Ivoirité reconnects with his motherland and its long history of exploitation and misrecognition. Autochthony under Gbagbo, it seems, signals as much the globalisation of rootlessness as the globalisation of historical belonging.

Since the early days of Gbagbo’s rule, but mainly since the outbreak of the September insurgency, the issue of historical belonging is a central one. In all, one can observe a proliferation of ‘history’ and historiography in the public sphere. This takes the form of scholarly and popular writings and statements on radio and television, mainly concerning the Houphouët era, but also with a much broader scope.³⁸ In this oral and written ‘historiology’, also feature political genealogies in which people spell out with whom their ideological affinities lay or who their political ‘ancestors’ are. Since the election campaign of 2000, the Gbagbo propaganda uses this emerging genre that also receives a certain impetus from the hearings of the National Reconciliation Forum of 2001.³⁹ The current ‘historicisation’ of Côte d’Ivoire is

38. See Holy (2000) on the democratic turn of 1990, Gavier (2001) on the last years of the Houphouët regime, Coulibaly (2002) on the political history of Côte d’Ivoire since colonisation; Gadji Dagbo (2002) on the suppression of the liberation movement of Kragbé Gnagné; and Koné (2003) on the ‘fake plots’ and their consequences, are some of the more important publications.

39. In the context of the elections of 2000, Gbagbo is presented in the ‘anti-imperialist genealogy’, for instance as the “fighter for liberty” who once described himself in his Soundjata play (see *Notre Voie* 17/10/2000 and 30/10/2000). During the hearings of Forum for National Reconciliation, many contributors began by situating themselves in relation to the political history of Côte d’Ivoire. See e.g. the accounts of the Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs, the Région Sud-Comoé, Front Socialiste pour l’Indépendance et la liberté, and the SYNESCI [<http://www.woyaa.com/frn-ci/forum/interventions.html>; 17/12/2001]. In his concluding remarks president Gbagbo summed up the events which according to him “constitute our collective memory” and which consists mainly of the atrocities committed by Houphouët-Boigny (*Notre Voie* 19/12/2001).

strongly sustained by the general political project of Laurent Gbagbo, named the *Refondation*. Apart from being a comprehensive policy of rebuilding the country after forty years of what is sometimes called the PDCI monarchy (Gbagbo 2003), *Refondation* also materialises itself in a new lifestyle and discourse that mark a break with the (neocolonial) pacification of Côte d'Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny. President Gbagbo, for instance introduced the 'Refondation T-shirt', the colourful blouse which replaces the 'occidental' shirt-and-tie, and the 'Refondation greeting' whereby people touch each other with the sides of their foreheads instead of shaking hands. This new way of doing things is further embedded in a rhetorics of the 'new' or 'young' Ivorian nation that will soon be reborn and awaits an imminent 'renaissance' (once the rebellion is over) (see further chapter six). Thus, the 'second liberation' of Côte d'Ivoire is as much a political as a popular project, and civil society figures play an important role in the popularisation of the historical mission inscribed in the *Refondation*.⁴⁰

In a political debate on national television in March 2003, a pro-Gbagbo union leader launches the idea of the current historical and political 'awakening' (*conscientisation*) of the Ivorian people, which, according to him, forms the basis of their present resistance against the rebels and their French patrons. Asked to elaborate that point, the leader of the teachers' and researchers' union SYNARES, sketches an extensive genealogy of "the resistance of the Ivorian people"

"You know, the people of Côte d'Ivoire have taken a habit. Before independence, there was resistance; you remember the events of February 1949; [...] you also remember that the resistance has continued around 1951 against the break between the PDCI and the [French] Communist Party; [...] also during the early 1960s there was some resistance but all the militants were incarcerated in 1963. Thus he [Houphouët-Boigny] has pacified Côte d'Ivoire but the civil resistance has continued to organise itself around certain academics, around certain universities [...] but in 1980 we have arrived at a phase of exceptional conscientisation of Côte d'Ivoire, of its students, of its intellectuals, then

40. Of the many dozens of representatives active in 'patriotic' civil society, Nyamien Messou (secretary-general of the SYNESCI) and Charles Blé Goudé (leader of the Alliance of Young Patriots) are among the most articulate. While Messou explains that the independence of 1960 "was not a real independence but an unlinking (*un détachement*) in which the French largely maintained their power" (<http://IvoireDiaspo.com/infos>; 4/09/2003), Blé Goudé explains on the national radio that "Côte d'Ivoire will be the beginning of the total liberation of Africa, because the French have failed in Côte d'Ivoire" (RTI, 1/02/2003). To say that Côte d'Ivoire *is* the beginning, is in itself characterising it as a historical community.

everyday there were conferences and debates [...] we remember 1982 when Laurent Gbagbo went into exile [in France]. So, it is an old phenomenon; until finally in 1990 the people of Côte d'Ivoire have taken their chance to say 'we want to express ourselves' [...] from that moment onwards, the Ivorians have organised themselves in political parties in order to reconquer the spaces of liberty [...] until we arrive at the coup d'état of 1999 [...] then the people have insisted that the texts of the constitution come from Ivorians [...] so that is why the civil resistance takes this new form."

This excerpt abundantly illustrates the current re-emergence of the 'anti-imperialist genealogy' which begins with the anti-colonial protest around 1950, continues with the 'fake plots' of the 1960s, and the civil society opposition of the 1970s and '80s, and results in the democratic turn of 1990. The coup d'état of 1999 (as well as the insurgency of 2002, of course) is not slot in this series, but presented as an attack against 'the Ivorian people' that successfully resists. More important than inscribing himself and the SYNARES in this genealogy of resistance, is the fact that the speaker constructs 'the Ivorian people' as a historical community, from which he (at two points) excludes 'France' by elision, as well as the 'non-Ivorian' putchists whom elsewhere in the debate he associates with the French. This bipolar categorisation leaves out two groups of people: those who did not partake in the historical resistance (such as the pro-Houphouëtists), and those who refuse to join the current resistance against the rebels. While the former can be excused for having erred in the past, the refusal of the latter can only be attributed to their unwillingness to partake in the 'awakening' which is a fundamental characteristic of 'the Ivorian people' as a historical community. In other words, while the former may not be fully part of the Ivorian people's past, the latter exclude themselves from its future. As said, this categorisation articulates well with the construction of the 'Dyula/RDR' as a political-cultural group that partakes in a (historical) community to which it does not fully belong.

The geographical counterpart of 'the Ivorian people' as a historical community of resistance, is increasingly identified as 'the South'. In the context of the present division of the country in a rebel-occupied North and a loyalist South, the eyes of the Gbagbo regime are directed towards two groups of people. The 'displaced persons' (*les déplacés de guerre*) who have fled the North seem to defy the occupation and are given official support. Contrarily, those who stay in the North are associated with those in the South who refuse to actively participate in the 'resistance'. The outcome of this is that the 'North', apart from having been constructed as the geographical space of non-Ivorianness, is also becoming the historical locus of allochthony. Thus, the 'North' is doubly situated beyond the vibrant Southern frontier from which the new

Côte d'Ivoire of the *Refondation* is emerging.

In response to the quote with which I opened this section, I think we are now sufficiently equipped to deal with the alleged historicism of Bayart. Presenting “the Ivorian nationalist tradition” in the terms (genealogy, chronology) in which this ‘invented tradition’ currently presents itself, creates a confusion between history and historiography. This confusion is all the more critical because, like any other nationalism, that of the history professor Gbagbo also puts historical awareness at its very centre and uses historiography – as Gbagbo’s revisionist historical play ‘Soundjata’ already illustrates – as a major political weapon. Moreover, we have observed an attempt to transform the ‘nationalist tradition’ into the ‘tradition of the (Ivorian) nation’ and turn it into the historical substratum of an emerging Côte d'Ivoire. This, as we know, is not only an inclusive and empowering discourse for those who wish or are simply allowed to buy into it, but also an exclusive one for many others. Explicating this (national) exclusion in the terms of (nationalist) inclusion, it seems to me, is a slip one must try to avoid, mainly because it blurs the distinction between legitimation and scientific analysis – a grey zone which also in Côte d'Ivoire is the action terrain of many an academic entrepreneur. However, above all, Bayart’s quote – and the use of ‘frustrations’ accentuates this – brings out that nationalism as well as ethnicity and autochthony cannot simply be reduced to their exclusionary project, but also contain an important emancipatory dimension (Nederveen Pieterse 1996, p27, 40; Lentz 1995, p323-324).

Concluding remarks

I begin this chapter by raising the issue of synchronicity with respect to the world-wide emergence of autochthony. It should be clear by now that this move away from African or, for that matter, Ivorian exceptionalism does not signal a search for universal ‘homogenous empty time’ (Benjamin 1992, p252). Rather, in Fabian’s (1984) terminology, it is a search for coevalness in the construction of autochthony out of the dialogics of global and local categories. Autochthony constitutes such an interesting field of enquiry because it articulates itself, as Abdulmalik Simone (2001, p25) and Mbembe (2001, p283) grasp so well, in between the subnationally local and the transnationally global. After highlighting the postnational character of autochthony in general, and after briefly indicating that autochthony in colonial Côte d'Ivoire captures the postnational (strictly speaking, the ‘postcolonial’) imagination of certain groups, I embarked on a programmatic attempt to analyse the trajectory of autochthony in post-independence Côte d'Ivoire. This analysis largely confirms what it set out to do: demonstrate

that over the last four decades autochthony – and allochthony – has engaged increasingly large sections of the Ivorian population in their imagining of a new nation. That autochthony is, however, not a variant of nationalism, I submit by bringing out its postnational nature in the three dimensions of biopolitics, public sphere, and the frontier. Since, for the sake of narrative fluidity, I have not systematically discussed these dimensions with respect to the different historical moments in which my reconstruction could be broken up, I will do so now, not so much in an attempt to synthesise, as to point out certain lacks and unstated implications.

Like Wilmsen (1996, p5) said about ethnic identification, it seems that the terms – both as name and as condition – of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire were given from outside; possibly when Delafosse (1901) introduced the term 'autochthon' to differentiate localised natives from translocal ones such as the Dyula. Thus, 'autochthon' is a colonial 'large-scale identity' which, once introduced, is appropriated and reworked in various national political projects. Both the model of Appadurai (1996a) and the earlier one of Chauveau and Dozon (1987) largely distinguish between these two moments of introduction from outside or above and of local elaboration.

By proposing the term 'biopolitics', I insist on the fact that the dialogics between these two poles is a continuous one in at least two ways. Firstly, the locally developed identification can be re-appropriated by, for instance, the state; and, secondly the local identifications are continuously fertilised by other newly circulating 'large-scale identities'. A simple illustration of the first kind of process can be found in early post-war Côte d'Ivoire when Houphouët-Boigny appropriates the autochthon label, resignifies it as African 'indigène' and turns it into a category of mass mobilisation in the run-up to decolonisation. This identification then becomes the target of the deconstructive work of the 'anti-imperialists' who uncover it as that of the 'fake local' – an identity which merely exists, both 'conceptually' and 'in reality', by the grace of the 'remote global' – a category fostered by the widely circulating dependency theory and the anti-neo-colonialism of the 1970s. Houphouët-Boigny, in his turn, used this left-wing outlook of the opposition representatives to identify them as 'communists' who take their orders from Sekou Touré and Kwame N'Krumah, or even directly from Lybia or Moscow (Diarra 1997, p59; Gbagbo 1983 p34-5; p53). However, such identity-plays can be seen as rather elitist, and far removed from the population management and self-realisation which the term biopolitics is meant to cover. This is only partly true, because, it is in contrast to these rather restricted categories of 'fake local' or 'communist dissenter', that more broad categories like 'the Ivorian people' and the 'non-Ivorian African immigrant' are defined. Moreover, it is out of the

contamination of the more elitist and the more populous categories, that new identifications arise. The most pertinent example of this is the gradual blending, in the course of the 1990s, of the category of ‘fake local’ with that of the ‘non-Ivorian immigrant’. From this blending a new category of treacherous and profiteering allochthons emerges who become the subject of ‘statecraft’ in its many forms: official studies of migration (*Le Jour*, 8/4/1999), new laws (concerning land possession), policing (identity checks, exactions), government-sponsored militia-activity (see footnote 34) and popular violence involving newly empowered autochthons. Finally, with the increase and popularisation of violence in the late 1990s *and* with the relabelling of the characteristic allochthon as ‘Dyula’ and as a group who has maybe ‘a presence’ but ‘no future’ in Côte d’Ivoire, biopolitics seems to reach its limits and spills over into “necropolitics” (Mbembe 2003). A further analysis of the ways in which autochthony features in a general system “to regulate the distribution of death” (2003, p17), I think, may be well-suited to deal with the joint proliferation of mass-graves (such as the one of Youpougou), resistance groups who preach martyrdom, and a whole lot of ‘death-talk’ (e.g. reciprocal accusations of ‘genocide’) since 2000 in Côte d’Ivoire.⁴¹ Paradoxically, these signs of an apocalypse coincide with a rhetoric of total liberation and the rejuvenation, if not, the rebirth of the nation. Further research into necropolitics may try to make sense of this blurring of “resistance and suicide, martyrdom and freedom”, and begin to explain what the president of the Ivorian National Assembly wrote in a document distributed to his supporters:

“As Laurent Gbagbo said before, our mistake has been to believe that we must recreate (*refonder*) our Nation. In reality, it is now that we must create (*fonder*) the Ivorian Nation. The blood that was spilled was the price for it. Thus the rebellion makes us revert to the foundation of the Ivorian nation. A good lesson for us in the face of our history and of humanity” (Koulibaly 2002).

Considering the public sphere dimension of autochthony in Côte d’Ivoire leads us to contrast the

41. On the issue of ‘mass graves’ during the present conflict and the fact that collective killings are committed with the explicit aim to avenge a previous ‘mass grave’, see Amnesty International Report ‘Côte d’Ivoire: une suite de crimes impunis (2003). This report states that its publication was delayed because of fear that the international announcement of the discovery of yet another mass grave might provoke the further escalation of collective killings. On death-talk and what I call ‘the poesis of genocide’, see chapter five. On the website of the MPCRI rebel movement ‘genocide’ features prominently in the form of articles, photographs, and links to websites about the Rwanda genocide. For a clear statement from the ‘patriotic’ accusations of genocide, see the article “Alassane Dramane Ouattara, Blaise Compaoré, Chirac, and the genocide of the Ivorian people” (*Notre Voie*, 27/01/2003).

three decades of single-party rule (1959-1990) with the relative short periods of democratic contests (1945-1958 and 1990-2004). During most of the Houphouët era we witness an extended opposition network functioning in the alternative public sphere of academic and artistic activity, and producing rather diverging ideas, which I have somewhat polarised by distinguishing ‘anti-imperialism’ from ‘national culturalism’. Although there are remarkable ideological differences between the two groups, I have suggested that only a historical ethnography can begin to make sense of the many shifts and discontinuities which effect the bifurcation of the revolutionary, anti-Houphouëtist left. In terms of public sphere, the distinction between the two groupings can be restated as that between introversion and extraversion, between the artistic clubs of Zadi Zaourou and the voluntary exile in France of Laurent Gbagbo. If in the work of the national culturalists one can find a kind of blending between the ethnographer’s ‘going native’ and the Ivorian urbanite’s ‘retour au village’, the anti-imperialists seem to resist such a bucolic retrenchment. This eventually leads them to reforge the theoretically heavy armour of Ivoirité of Bédié and national culturalism into a light weapon to be used by the Ivorian people in the war of globalisation.

Since the 1980s, the ‘anti-imperialists’ keep organising their ‘voyage in’ into the academic and political institutions of the metropole. During his time in exile Gbagbo secures for the FPI the firm support of the French socialists which later results in a world-wide recognition by the Socialist International. This ‘internationalism’ remains with the next generation of PDCI opponents. For some time, the only recourse against repression for the student protestors are the French journalists, and the Amnesty International representatives who broadcast the breaking news about student repression. Later, when the student union FESCI features on the international list of persecuted organisations, its members find it easier to ask for political asylum in European countries and begin to organise the exile of thousands of their comrades. Less than a decade later, this former student diaspora is one of the main assets of Laurent Gbagbo in his struggle with the rebels, either because some (have) come back and position themselves as ‘big men’ in the patriotic civil society, or because they offer their support and expertise from within the diaspora. This is at least one of the processes which upholds what I have called ‘the globalisation’ of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire under Gbagbo.

A further contrast between autochthony under Bédié and under Gbagbo is that it is sustained by a different relationship between the government/presidency and civil society. What probably makes the difference is Gbagbo’s long acquaintance with civil society organisation *and*, from 1990 onwards, with political action which is partly canalised through sympathetic civil society

organisations such as the teachers' and students' unions. During the reign of Bédié we see how an impressive amount of organisations are created by the president himself or his direct entourage to disseminate his ideas and, even, convert them into militant action. The difference with civil society under Gbagbo is that an equally impressive series of unions, movements, 'parliaments', and militia's are formed, but appear to create themselves 'from below', deliver their self-made unvarnished truths, and set up their own unpredictable actions, sometimes to the embarrassment of the president. The quarrels between these organisations and their occasional critique of Gbagbo only strengthens the impression that they have their own agenda and enjoy a large amount of autonomy. Many commentators argue instead that this is just a matter of tactics, that Gbagbo is the hidden hand behind a multitude of seemingly spontaneous organisations, and that ultimately autochthony features in a kind of populism which Gbagbo and Bédié share. Again, further research should try to avoid lumping together differential organisations of mass politics and state-civil society relations under the same 'populist' label. To the extent that autochthony is a discourse of self-realisation of what Amondji (1988, p53) would call 'the natural people of nationals', its affinity with 'organic' intellectuals, 'lively' forms of organisation, 'animated' speeches, and 'spontaneous' actions, and thus with some sort of 'populism from below', however illusory it may prove to be, may be greater than we are now willing to admit.

'The frontier' is probably the dimension which I have least focused on in my analysis of Ivorian autochthony, and which requires most additional research. In the introductory part I tried to give an estimation of how the shifting southern frontier is not only an economic and a political phenomenon, but is accompanied by concurrent autochthony claims from within the new frontier. In this conception, the frontier is above all a zone of intensive and successful 'glocalisation' which "enable[s] local actors to feel that their operations in localised spaces are also conduits to or extensions of a much larger world" Abdulmaliq Simone (2001, p25). This is beautifully illustrated in a speech by president Gbagbo in October 2003 when he meets a delegation of 'the people' from his own Gagnoa region. His speech consists of two parts, an historical one in which he sums up the many fine politicians the Gagnoa region has produced in the course of its history, and an economic part in which he evokes the economic expansion of the region through cocoa production. While contrasting this to the production of coffee which is more situated in the South-central and South-eastern part of the country, he asserts

"Cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire has overtaken coffee. When we were kids, it was coffee and cocoa, now its is cocoa and coffee. We have even become the largest supplier on the

cocoa world market” (*Notre Voie*, 6/10/2003)

In the concluding part of his speech, he reminds his fellow Bété that cocoa has enriched Côte d'Ivoire since the time of Houphouët-Boigny, but that his aim is to use the cocoa money to enrich the Ivorians and, he adds, “that is not the same thing”. In this speech, Gbagbo opens the three registers mentioned by Abdulmaliq: the region (of production of economic and political ‘produce’), the world (of trade and consumption), and the autochthon (as the target of redistribution). Thus, Gbagbo comes to represent two ‘conduits’: an out-going one from a region that not only produces fine politicians like himself but also cocoa, to the world of cocoa consumption, and an in-coming one from a world who depends on “our” cocoa to the benefits of ‘the Ivorians’. With the latter term, the issue of autochthony is readily evoked, and features in a triple historical shift: one regional (from coffee to cocoa), one political (from Houphouët-Boigny to Gbagbo), and one ‘national’ (from Côte d'Ivoire to ‘the Ivorians’). Among the dozens of interviews and books and the hundreds of newspaper articles that have some bearing on autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire, there is hardly a better illustration to find not only of the frontier dimension of autochthony but also of the postnational and post-ethnic imagination which autochthony nurtures. The (Bété) frontier appears here as an explicitly subnational space which is the source of political pride and plantation produce. In a state or ethnic configuration, the redistribution would either target ‘Côte d'Ivoire’ (like in Houphouët’s time) or the Bété; two options which Gbagbo implicitly rejects. In the postnational configuration rather, redistribution takes place among the subnational *and* transnational group of ‘Ivorians’ which seems large enough to evoke the idea of solidarity and confirm the policy as socialist. At the same time, this example enables us to estimate the scale of exclusion involved in this blissful meeting between the president and ‘his region’. One estimates that the percentage of migrants in the Gagnoa region is about 60%; *they* do not fit into the ‘Bété’ delegation nor in the category of autochthonous ‘Ivorians’ mentioned in the presidential speech. Autochthony is among other things also a powerful discourse for a regional minority to reinvent itself as a ‘national’ majority, hide its political arrogance behind democracy and its stinginess behind solidarity. In other words, the postnational imagination nurtured by autochthony is maybe more imaginary than postnational.

References

- Abdulmaliq Simone 2001 'On the worldling of African cities', *African Studies Review*, 44/2, pp. 15-41.
- Adiaffi, Jean-Marie 1980 (2002) *La carte d'identité*. Paris: Hatier.
- Adiaffi, Jean-Marie 1983 'Les maitres de la parole', *Magazine Littéraire*, 195, pp. 19-22.
- Adiaffi, Jean-Marie 1996 'Diversité culturelle, nation et identité ivoirienne'. In: S. Touré *L'Ivoirité ou l'esprit du nouveau contrat social du Président Henri Konan Bédié*, pp. 61-77. Abidjan: Presses Universitaires de Côte d'Ivoire.
- Amin, Samir 1967 *Le développement du capitalisme en Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Editions du Minuit.
- Amon d'Aby, François 1951 *La Côte d'Ivoire dans la cité africaine*. Paris: Editions Laros.
- Amondji, Marcel 1984 *Félix Houphouët et la Côte d'Ivoire: l'envers d'une légende*. Paris: Karthala.
- Amondji, Marcel 1988 *Côte d'Ivoire: la dépendance et l'épreuve des faits*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Appadurai, Arjun 1988 'Putting hierarchy in its place', *Cultural Anthropology*, 3/1, pp. 36-49.
- Appadurai, Arjun 1996a *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minesota Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun 1996b 'Sovereignty without territoriality: notes for a postnational geography'. In: P. Yaeger (ed.) *The geography of identity*, pp. 40-58. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Apter, Andrew 1999 'Africa, empire, and anthropology: a philological exploration of anthropology's Heart of Darkness'. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 28, pp. 577-598.
- Arendt, Hannah 1985 (1968/66) *The origins of totalitarianism*. San Diego: Harcourt.
- Asad, Talal 1993 *Genealogies of religion: discipline and reasons of power in Christianity and Islam* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Aubertin, C. 1983 'Histoire et création d'une région "sous-développée". Le Nord ivoirien', *Cahiers O.R.S.T.O.M., série Sciences Humaines*, 19/1, pp. 23-57.
- Bayart, Jean-François 1985 'L'énonciation du politique', *Revue française de science politique*, 35/3, pp. 343-373.
- Bayart, Jean-François 1999 'L'Afrique dans le monde: une histoire d'extraversion'. *Critique*

internationale, 5, pp. 97-120.

Bayart, Jean-François 2003 'La seconde indépendance de la Côte d'Ivoire: Gbagbo et les nouveaux nationalistes', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1996.

[www.nouvelobs.com/articles/p1996/a90454.html, 15/11/2003].

Bayart, Jean-François, Peter Geschiere (eds.) 2001 '*J'étais là avant: problématiques politiques de l'autochtonie*', *Critique Internationale*, 10, pp. 126-194.

Bayart, Jean-François, Peter Geschiere & Francis Nyamnjoh 2001 'Autochtonie, démocratie et citoyenneté en Afrique', *Critique Internationale*, 10, pp. 177-194.

Bédié, Henri Konan 1995 *La Côte d'Ivoire: Une nouvelle société aux frontières nouvelles du développement*. Abidjan: Neter.

Bédié, Henri Konan 1999 Ecrits et propos du président Henri Konan Bedie sur les véritables principes de l'Ivoirité. In: *L'heure des vérités* [http://www.cotedivoire-libertes.org/hkb_livreblanc.htm, 10/02/2003].

Benjamin, Walter 1992 (1970) *Illuminations* [Edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt]. London: Fontana Press.

Berman, Bruce 1998 'Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: the politics of uncivil nationalism', *African Affairs*, 97, pp. 305-341.

Beti, Mongo 1984 'Africains, si vous parliez...', *Peuples Noirs – Peuples Africains*, special issue 'Côte d'Ivoire 1960-1984', pp. 1-7.

Beugré, Joachim 1999 'Les étrangers en Côte d'Ivoire: des bouc-émissaires', *Le Jour*, 9/04/1999.

Bielemeier, Günter 1986 'Interview avec Bernard Zadi Zourou sur son théâtre', *Bayreuth African Studies Series*, 8, 63-77.

Blommaert, Jan 1997 'The slow shift in orthodoxy: (re)formulations of "integration" in Belgium'. *Pragmatics* 7/4, pp. 499-518.

Boa Thiémélé, Ramsès 2003 *L'Ivoirité entre culture et politique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Boone, Catherine 1993 'Commerce in Côte d'Ivoire: ivoirianisation without Ivoirian traders', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 31/1, pp. 67-92.

Brubaker, Rogers & Frederick Cooper 2000 'Beyond "identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29, pp. 1-47.

Bryant, Raymond 2002 'Non-governmental organizations and governmentality: "Consuming"

- biodiversity and indigenous people in the Philippines', *Political Studies*, 50/2, pp268-292.
- Calhoun, Craig 1997 *Nationalism*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Carnot, Tiacoh 1999 *L'histoire de la conscience de l'Ivoirité de l'époque coloniale à nos jours*. Abidjan: Université de Cocody.
- Chappell, David 1989 The nation as frontier: ethnicity and clientelism in Ivorian history, *The International Journal of Historical Studies*, 22/4, pp. 671-696.
- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre 2000 'Question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d'Ivoire: les enjeux silencieux d'un coup d'État', *Politique africaine*, 78, pp. 94-125.
- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre & Jean-Pierre Dozon 1985 'Colonisation, économie de plantation et société civile en Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers ORSTOM, série Sciences Humaines*, 21/1, pp. 63-80.
- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre & Jean-Pierre Dozon 1987 'Au coeur des ethnies ivoiriennes . . . l'État'. In E. Terray (ed.) *L'Etat contemporain en Afrique*, pp. 221-296. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Comaroff, Jean & John Comaroff 2001 'Naturing the nation: aliens, apocalypse, and the postcolonial state', *Social Identities*, 7, 2, pp. 233-265.
- Cohen, Michael 1974 *Urban policy and political conflict in Africa: a study of the Ivory Coast*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cooper, Frederick. 1996 *Decolonization and African society: the labor question in French and British Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coulibaly, Alban Alexandre 2002 *Le système politique ivoirien: de la colonie à la Iie République*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Dadié, Bernard 1970 *Monsieur Thôgô-Gnini*. Paris: Présence africaine.
- Dadié, Bernard 2003 'La crise ivoirienne', *Africultures*, 56, pp. 169-174.
- Delafosse, Maurice 1901 *Essai de manuel pratique de la langue Mandé ou Mandingue*. Paris: Leroux.
- Diarra, Samba 1997 *Les faux complots d'Houphouët-Boigny: fracture dans le destin d'une nation*. Paris: Karthala.
- Dozon, Jean-Pierre 1995 *La cause des prophètes*. Paris: Seuil.
- Dozon, Jean-Pierre 1997 'L'étranger et l'allochtone en Côte d'Ivoire'. In: B. Contamin et H. Memel-Fotê (eds.) *Le modèle ivoirien en question: crises, ajustements et recompositions*, pp.

779-798. Paris: Karthala.

Dozon, Jean-Pierre 2000 'La Côte d'Ivoire entre démocratie, nationalisme et ethnonationalisme', *Politique africaine*, 78, pp. 45-62.

Escobar, Arturo 1997 'Cultural politics and biological diversity: state, capital, and social movements in the Pacific Coast of Colombia. In: L. Lowe & D. Lloyd (eds.) *The politics of culture in the shadow of capital*, pp. 201-226. Durham: Duke University Press.

Escobar, Arturo 1998 'Whose knowledge, whose nature? Biodiversity, conservation, and the political ecology of social movements', *Journal of Political Ecology*, 5, pp. 53-82.

Eyoh Dickson 1999 'Community, citizenship, and the politics of ethnicity in post-colonial Africa'. In: P. T. Zeleza & E. Kalipeni (eds.) *Sacred Spaces and Public Quarrels: African Cultural and Economic Landscapes*, pp. 271-300. New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Foucault, Michel 1991 'Governmentality'. In: G. Burchell *et. al.* (eds) *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality*, pp. 87-104. Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, Michel 1993 'About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self' (Transcription of two lectures delivered in Darthmouth, 1980), *Political Theory*, 21/2, pp. 198- 227.

Gadji Dagbo, Joseph 2002 *L'affaire Kragbé Gnagbé: un autre regard 32 ans après*. Abidjan: NEI.

Gallimore, Rangira Béatrice 1996 *L'oeuvre romanesque de Jean-Marie Adiaffi. Le mariage du mythe et de l'histoire: fondement d'un récit pluriel*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Gavier, Grebalé 2003 *Le dernier coup du 'Vieux': intrigues politiques de 1990 à 1993*. Abidjan: SNEPCI.

Gbagbo, Laurent 1979 *Soundjata, le Lion du Manding*. Abidjan: NEA.

Gbagbo, Laurent 1982 *Côte d'Ivoire: économie et société à la veille de l'indépendance (1940-1960)*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Gbagbo, Laurent 1983 *Côte d'Ivoire, pour une alternative démocratique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Gbagbo, Laurent 1984a 'Réponse à une réponse', *Peuples Noirs – Peuples Africains*, special issue 'Côte d'Ivoire 1960-1984', pp. 8-29.

Gbagbo, Laurent 2002 *Sur les traces des Bété*. Abidjan: PUCI.

Gbagbo, Laurent 2003 *Fonder une Nation prospère, démocratique et solidaire* [<http://www.presidence.gov.ci/lepresident/sonprogramme.htm>; 01/08/2003]

- Geschiere, Peter & Piet Konings (eds.) 1993 *Itinéraires d'accumulation au Cameroun/Pathways to accumulation in Cameroon*. Paris: Karthala.
- Geschiere, Peter & Josef Gugler 1998 'The urban-rural connection: changing issues of belonging and identification', *Africa*, 68/3, pp. 309-319.
- Geschiere, Peter & Francis Nyamnjoh 2000 'Capitalism and autochthony: the seesaw of mobility and belonging', *Public Culture*, 12/2, pp. 423-452.
- Gnaoulé-Oupoh, Bruno 2000 *La littérature ivoirienne*. Paris: Karthala-CEDA.
- Gruénais, Marc-Eric 1985 'Du bon usage de l'autochthonie', *Cahiers ORSTOM, Série Sciences Humaines*, 21/1, pp. 19-24.
- Halliday, M.A.K. 1976 'Anti-languages', *American Anthropologist*, 78/3, pp. 570-584.
- Hickey, Sam 2002 'Transnational NGDOS and participatory forms of rights-based development: converging with the local politics of citizenship in Cameroon', *Journal of International Development*, 14, pp. 841-857.
- Holy, Bedi 2000 *Divagations*. Abidjan: CEDA.
- Hourantier, Marie-José 1987 'La parole poétique de Didiga de Zadi Zaourou', *Notre Librairie*, 86, pp. 84-89.
- Kistner, Ulrike 2003 'Sovereign power and bare life with HIV/AIDS: bio-politics South African style'. Paper presented at the conference *Bio-Politics, States of Exception and the Politics of Sovereignty*, Wits Institute for Social & Economic Research (WISER), University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, 6-7 February 2003.
- Koné, Amadou, Gérard D. Lezou & Joseph Mlanhorho 1983 *Anthologie de la littérature ivoirienne*. Abidjan: CEDA.
- Koné, Amadou 1987 'La griotique de Niangoran Porquet', *Notre Librairie*, 86, pp. 90-91.
- Koné, Amadou 2003 *Houphouët-Boigny et la crise ivoirienne*. Paris: Karthala.
- Koné, Kodiara 2000 *Mésaventure 63: mes souvenirs des prisons d'Houphouët-Boigny*. Abidjan: Passerelle.
- Konings, Piet 2003a 'Religious revival in the Roman Catholic Church and the autochthony-allochthony conflict in Cameroon', *Africa*, 73/1, pp. 31-56.
- Konings, Piet 2003b 'Anglophone university students and Anglophone nationalist struggles in Cameroon'. Paper delivered at the Conference *Youth and the politics of generational conflict in*

Africa (24-25 April 2003). Leiden: African Studies Centre.

Konings, Piet & Francis Nyamnjoh 1999 'Construction and deconstruction: Anglophones or Autochthones?'. In: *Anthropology of Africa and the challenges of the third millennium: Ethnicity and ethnic conflicts*. MOST Ethno-Net Africa [www.ethnonet-africa.org/pubs/p95konings.htm, 17/10/2002].

Kopytoff, Igor (ed) 1987 *The African frontier: the reproduction of traditional African societies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kotchy, B. 1971a 'Discours inaugural'. In: *Actes du Colloque sur le théâtre négro-africain* (Abidjan, 1970), pp. 9-12. Paris: Présence Africain.

Kotchy, B. 1971b 'Théâtre et public'. In: *Actes du Colloque sur le théâtre négro-africain* (Abidjan, 1970), pp. 175-178. Paris: Présence Africain.

Kotchy, N'Guessan & H. Memel-Fote 1977 'La critique dans l'Afrique traditionnelle'. In: *Le critique africain et son peuple comme producteur de civilisation* (Colloque de Yaoundé, 1973), pp. 154-165. Paris: Présence Africain.

Kotchy, Barthélémy 1994 'The cultural dimensions of FEANF'. In: *The role of African student movements in the political and social evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Koulibaly, Mamadou 2002 *Rebellion ou colonisation du territoire ivoirien*. Abidjan. (17p)

Koulibaly, Mamadou (ed.) 2003 *La guerre de la France contre la Côte d'Ivoire*. Abidjan: La Refondation.

Larkin, Brian 2001 'Notes on Media and the Materiality of Qur'anic Recitation'. Paper presented at the conference *Media, Religion and the Public Sphere*, University of Amsterdam 6-8 December 2001.

Lentz, Carola 1995 "'Tribalism" and ethnicity in Africa: a review of four decades of anglophone research', *Cahiers des Sciences Humaines*, 31/2, pp. 303-328.

Lipschutz, Ronnie 2002 'The clash of governmentalities: The fall of the UN republic and America's reach for imperium'. In: *Exploring Imperium: History, Theory, Practice* (A postgraduate workshop in international relations. Sussex University). [www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/CGPE/Events/Imperium/lipschutz-Imperium.pdf, 12/10/2003].

Losch, Bruno 2000 'La Côte d'Ivoire en quête d'un nouveau projet national', *Politique africaine*, 78, pp.

- Loucou, Jean-Noël 1987 *Mémorial de la Côte d'Ivoire*. Vol III: *Du nationalisme à la nation*. Abidjan: Ami.
- Loucou, Jean-Noël 1992 *Le multipartisme en Côte d'Ivoire*. Abidjan: Editions Neter.
- Mamdani, Mahmood 2001 *When victims become killers: colonialism, nativism and the genocide in Rwanda*. Kampala, Cape Town, Oxford: Fountain Publishers, David Philip, James Currey.
- Marie, Alain 2002 'Une anthropo-logique communautaire à l'épreuve de la mondialisation: de la relation de dette à la lutte sociale (l'exemple ivoirien)', *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, 166, 42/2, pp. 207-255.
- Marguerat, Yves. 1981-82 'Des ethnies et des villes: analyse des migrations vers les villes de Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers ORSTOM, Série Sciences Humaines*, 18/3, pp. 303-340.
- Mateso, Locha 1986 *La littérature africaine et sa critique*. Paris: ACCT & Karthala.
- Mbembe, Achille 1992 'Provisional notes on the postcolony', *Africa*, 62/1, pp. 3-37.
- Mbembe, Achille 2000. 'At the edge of the world: boundaries, territoriality, and sovereignty in Africa'. *Public Culture*, 12/1, pp. 259-284.
- Mbembe, Achille 2001 'Ways of seeing: beyond the new nativism. Introduction', *African Studies Review*, 44/2, pp. 1-14.
- Mbembe, Achille 2003 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture*, 15/1, pp. 11-40.
- Memel-Fote, Harris 1971 'Anthropologie du théâtre négro-africain traditionnel'. In: *Actes du Colloque sur le théâtre négro-africain* (Abidjan, 1970), pp. 25-50. Paris: Présence Africain.
- Memel-Fotê, Harris 'Un mythe politique des Akan en Côte d'Ivoire: le sens de l'État'. In: P. Valsecchi et F. Viti (eds.) *Mondes akan. Identité et pouvoir en Afrique occidentale*, pp. 21-42. Paris: 'Harmattan.
- Memel-Fotê, Harris & Jean-Pierre Chauveau 1989 'L'identité politique baule (Côte d'Ivoire)', *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 34, pp. 33-40.
- Meyer, Birgit & Peter Geschiere (eds.) 1999 *Globalization and identity: dialectics of flow and closure* (Series: Development and Change Special Issues). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mielly, Michelle 2003 *Werewere Liking and the aesthetics of Necessity: re-considering culture and development in post-colonial Africa*.
[<http://www.southwestern.edu/academic/bwp/pdf/2003bwp-mielly.pdf>; 10/10/2003]
- Monnier, Marcel 1894 'Une jeune colonie: Côte d'Ivoire et Soudan méridional', *Annales de*

Géographie, 3/12, pp. 409-427.

Mouffe, Chantal 1988 'Hegemony and new political subjects: toward a new concept of democracy'. In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, pp. 89-104. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

N'Da, Paul 1999 *Le drame démocratique africain sur scène en Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Nebout, A. 1906 'Monographie du cercle et de la ville de Bondoukou'. In: F.J. Clozel *Dix ans à la Côte d'Ivoire*, pp. 169-184. Paris: Challamel.

Nederveen Pieterse 1996 'Varieties of ethnic politics and ethnicity discourse'. In: E. Wilmsen & P. McAllister (eds.) *The politics of difference: ethnic premises in a world of power*, pp. 25-44. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Nederveen Pieterse 1997 'Deconstructing/reconstructing ethnicity', *Nations and nationalism*, 3/3, pp. 365-95.

N'Gbesso, Hélène 1987 'Itinéraire du groupe de recherche sur la tradition orale (G.R.T.O.)', *Notre Librairie*, 86, pp. 114-115.

N'Guessan, Kouamé 2002 'Le coup d'Etat de décembre 1999: espoirs et désenchantements'. In: C. Vidal & M. Le Pape (eds.) *Côte d'Ivoire: L'année terrible 1999-2000*, pp. 51-80. Paris: Karthala.

Niangoran-Bouah 1977 'Problèmes de la recherche en milieu de tradition orale', *Annales de l'Université d'Abidjan*, série F (Ethno-sociologie), 6, pp. 45-59.

Niangoran-Bouah, G. 1981 *Introduction à la drummologie*. Abidjan: Université Nationale de Côte d'Ivoire, Institut d'Ethno-sociologie.

Niangoran-Bouah 1987a 'Les mots des poids: Les poids akan à peser l'or', *Notre Librairie*, 86, pp. 70-78.

Niangoran-Bouah 1987b 'La drummologie c'est quoi même?' *Notre Librairie*, 86, pp. 79-83.

Niangoran-Bouah 1996 'Les fondements socio-culturels de l'Ivoirité'. In: S. Touré *L'Ivoirité ou l'esprit du nouveau contrat social du Président Henri Konan Bédié*, pp. 39-51. Abidjan: Presses Universitaires de Côte d'Ivoire.

Niangoran-Bouah, Georges 1997 *Le trésor du Marahoué: sculptures lithiques de Gohitafla*. Abidjan: Université nationale de Côte d'Ivoire, Institut d'ethno-sociologie.

- Niangoran-Bouah, Georges 2003 *La Drummologie*
[perso.wanadoo.fr/herve.baudet/nouvelle1.htm, 12/09/2003].
- Niangoranh Porquet, Dieudonné 1994 *Masquairides – Balanfonides (Griotorique)*. Abidjan: Le Qualitorium.
- Nyamnjoh, Francis & Michael Rowlands 1998 'Elite associations and the politics of belonging in Cameroon', *Africa*, 68/3, pp. 320-337.
- N'Zembele, Luftatchy [pseudonym of Laurent Gbagbo] 1984 'Côte d'Ivoire: l'envers du miracle'. *Peuples Noirs – Peuples Africains*, special issue 'Côte d'Ivoire 1960-1984', pp. 69-87.
- Pascal, Valérie 2000 *Problèmes de l'autochtonie et ethnocitoyenneté en Afrique*.
[www.defense.gouv.fr/das/etudes/autochtonie/synthese.htm, 9/10/2003].
- Pels, Peter 1997 The anthropology of colonialism: culture, history, and the emergence of Western governmentality. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, pp. 163-183.
- Person, Yves 1981 'Colonisation et décolonisation en Côte d'Ivoire', *Le Mois en Afrique*, 188/189, pp. 15-30.
- Proteau, Laurence 2002 *Passions scolaires en Côte d'Ivoire: école, Etat et société*. Paris: Karthalla.
- Riesz, János et.al. 1986 'Interview avec Jean-Marie Adiaffi (Côte d'Ivoire)', *Bayreuth African Studies Series*, 8, 29-48.
- Serhan, Nasser 2002 'La Côte d'Ivoire et ses étrangers'. In C. Vidal & M. Le Pape (eds.) *Côte d'Ivoire: L'année terrible 1999-2000*, pp. 173-190. Paris: Karthala.
- Siriex, Paul-Henri 1975 *Félix Houphouët-Boigny: l'homme de la paix*. Paris: Seghers.
- Skinner, Elliott 1963 'Strangers in West African Societies', *Africa*, 33/4, pp. 307-20.
- Teya, Pascal Koffi 1985 *Côte d'Ivoire: le roi est nu*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Touré, Abdou 1981 *La civilisation quotidienne en Côte d'Ivoire: proces d'occidentalisation*. Paris: Karthala.
- Touré, Moriba 1999 'La notion de seuil tolérable' relève de la xénophobie', *Le Jour*, 20/05/1999.
- Touré, Moriba, Souleymane Ouattara & Elizabeth Annan-Yao 1993 'Dynamique de population et stratégies de développement en Côte d'Ivoire'. In M. Touré & T.O. Fadayomi (eds.) *Migrations et urbanisation au sud du Sahara*, 1-47. Dakar: Codesria.

- Touré, Saliou (ed.) 1996 *L'Ivoirité ou l'esprit du nouveau contrat social du Président Henri Konan Bédié*. Abidjan: Presses Universitaires de Côte d'Ivoire.
- Triaud, Jean-Louis 1974 'La question musulmane en Côte d'Ivoire (1983-1939)', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, 61/225, pp. 542-71.
- Triaud, Jean-Louis 1998 'Haut-Sénégal-Niger, un modèle "positiviste"? De la coutume à l'histoire: Maurice Delafosse et l'invention de l'histoire africaine'. In: J.-L. Amselle & E. Sibeud (eds.) *Maurice Delafosse: entre orientalisme et ethnographie: l'itinéraire d'un africaniste (1870-1926)*, pp. 210-232. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose.
- Werbner, Pnina 2002 *Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Werewere-Liking, Gnepo 2003 'L'Humanité fantôme'. Paper presented at the *Europe fantôme* conference, Brussels, April 2003.
- Wilmsen, Edwin 1996 'Premises of power in ethnic politics'. In: E. Wilmsen & P. McAllister (eds.) *The politics of difference: ethnic premises in a world of power*, pp. 1-23. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wondji, Christophe 1979 'Culture et renaissance nationale'. *Revue de littérature et d'esthétique négro-africaines*, 2, pp.123-134.
- Woods, Dwayne 1996 'The politicization of teachers' associations in the Côte d'Ivoire', *African Studies Review*, 39/ 3, pp. 113-129.
- Zadi Zaourou, Bernard 1979 *Les Sofas suivi de L'oeil*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Zadi Zaourou, Bottey 2001 *La guerre des femmes suivi de La Termitière*. Abidjan: NEI & Neter.
- Zadi Zaourou, B. & Christophe Dailly 1977 'Langue et critique littéraire en Afrique Noire'. In: *Le critique africain et son peuple comme producteur de civilisation* (Colloque de Yaoundé, 1973), pp. 441-480.
- Zolberg, Aristide 1971 'Political development in the Ivory Coast since independence'. In: P. Foster & A. Zolberg (eds.) *Ghana and the Ivory Coast: perspectives on modernization*, pp. 9-31. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Zolberg, Aristide 1969 *One-Party Government in the Ivory Coast*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chapter 4

‘Out of the Race’:

History and the *poiesis* of genocide in three newspaper articles

“Man, it turns out, can lose all so-called Rights of Man without losing his essential quality as man, his human dignity. Only the loss of a polity itself expels him from humanity.”

(Arendt 1985, p297)

“The political system no longer orders life and juridical rules in a determinate space, but instead contains at its very center a dislocating localization that exceeds it and into which every form of life and every rule can be virtually taken.”

(Agamben 1998, p175)

Introduction¹

This chapter presents a case-study which needs to be situated in the longer history of the national and postnational imagination presented in the previous chapter. The time of the case-study is the first six months after the coup d'état of 24th December 1999 which removed president Henri Konan Bédié from office and saw General Robert Guéï become head of state. This introduced a transition period which ended with the presidential elections of 22nd October 2000. During that period a major political shift occurred which, in retrospect, lay the foundation for later political unrest that on 19 September resulted in another military insurgency. The political shift was operated by the Socialist Party FPI of Laurent Gbagbo. During the first months of the transition the FPI worked together with the Republican Party RDR of Alassane Ouattara who in 1993 had been sidelined as Prime Minister by president Bédié. Since then Ouattara and the RDR had been seeking political rehabilitation through regular elections and the alliance with the FPI in the aftermath of the coup d'état appeared to open this prospect. But a few months later in a number of sudden moves, the FPI changed its position, distanced itself from the RDR and adopted the kind of anti-RDR attitude that reminiscent of the Bédié era.

This party-political repositioning operated by the FPI between December 1999 and May 2000, was sustained by the FPI-sponsored press, not in the least by the official FPI newspaper *Notre Voie*. In this chapter, I analyse three newspaper articles which appeared in *Notre Voie* and focus on how they operate both the gradual repositioning of the FPI and the political dislocation of the RDR. The analytical tools for this analysis derive from anthropology and linguistic anthropology. One of the main anthropological tools is the 'grammars of identity/alterity' recently devised by Baumann and Gingrich (2004). Within the anthropological literature Baumann detects three 'grammars' used in selfing and othering: the grammar of orientalisation or reverse mirror-imaging (adapted from Edward Said's *Orientalism*), the segmentary grammar of contextual fission and fusion (adapted from Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer*), and the grammar of encompassment by hierarchical subsumption (adapted from Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus*). Furthermore, Baumann explores situations where the three grammars appear to implode and give way to an 'anti-grammar' that leads to violent confrontations (Baumann &

1. This chapter is based on research conducted in Côte d'Ivoire, France and Belgium between 1999 and 2002. A previous version of this chapter is published under the title "'Out of the Race": The *poiesis* of genocide in mass media discourses in Côte d'Ivoire' (In: G. Baumann & A. Gingrich (eds.) *Grammars of identity/alterity: a structural approach*, pp. 112-141. London: Berghahn).

Gingrich 2004). In this chapter, I combine Baumann's suggestions concerning 'implosions' of identity with analogous analytical models for understanding brutal ethnic violence, formulated by Appadurai (1996) and Tambiah (1996).

While these models providing from anthropology offer a general frame of interpretation, I turn to linguistic anthropology for specific analytical tools for the analysis of the text of the articles. The point of departure is that all three articles make use of code-switching, more particularly, they carry the Manding expression 'bori bana' in their titles. More than an instance of code-switching, the use of 'bori bana' in the articles is understood to be an instance of 'code-crossing' as defined by Rampton (1995, 1998) and Hill (1999, 2000). As I did in chapter two for interpreting code-crossing by young males into 'femininity', I here rely on these authors in order to identify crossing into Manding by quoting 'bori bana' as an attempt to appropriate a 'token-expression'. In the various articles, the expression 'bori bana' variably indexes a person or a group, in this case Alassane Ouattara, the RDR, and, through further resignification, the (Manding speaking) Dyula people as a whole. Put in terms of Baumann's grammars, the appropriation of a Dyula token-expression is understood as an act of encompassment operated not only from above (hierarchical), but also from below (through fission and fusion) and resulting in a radical dichotomisation (orientalism). In other words, code-crossing – when performed in its most radical way, such as in the third and last of the three newspaper articles – is the discursive technique accompanying the 'implosion of grammars'.

As said the 'implosion' of identities needs to be situated in a longer and multilayered history of ethnic and political identities in Côte d'Ivoire as presented in the previous chapter. Some important sections of that story are being re-told in this chapter but here I focus specifically on the construction of 'Dyula' as an ethnic-political identity. In addition, I begin and end this chapter by looking at identity discourse and performance in the aftermath of the implosion effected in the newspaper articles. The picture arising from this very partial description of the post-implosion era is one of utter confusion about who is who and which identity hides another 'more real' identity. This is the breeding ground for imaginative and comprehensive conspiracy theories in which alleged simulacra are exposed and identities reversed.

Simulacra, reversals and mistaken identities

On 26 October 2000, two days after General Robert Guéï had claimed victory in the presidential elections, Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the Socialist Party FPI did the same. The latter's claim resulted in three groups of people taking to the streets of Abidjan: the Gbagbo supporters who

expressed their joy, the supporters of Alassane Ouattara who contested the claim and recalled that their leader had been barred from participating in the elections, and finally the security forces some of whom still offered their support to Guéï while a growing number took sides with Gbagbo. In the process many hundreds of civilians, protesters, militants of different political parties, and security forces were killed in street violence. One day later, some fifty-seven corpses, mostly of young men, were discovered in a mass-grave in the suburb Yopougon of the capital Abidjan. It was, however, the mass-grave that caught international attention. The United Nations established a Commission of Enquiry that identified the perpetrators as members of the security forces and their henchmen as civilians, some of them militants of the victorious Socialist Party FPI (United Nations 2001, p17). Most prominent among the executioners, the report said, were state policemen (*gendarmes*) who wanted to take vengeance for the killing of one of their commanding officers. The policemen had attributed this murder, as well as other aggressions in Abidjan, to militant members of the Republican Party RDR (*Rassemblement des Républicains*) that had been massively contesting the presidential elections because their leader, Alassane Ouattara had been excluded from standing as a candidate.

The relatives of the mass-grave victims found support from the Belgian NGO *Prévention génocides* which provided assistance in filing a case of ‘crimes against humanity’ in a Belgian court (see Arnaut 2001). The accused were four political leaders, among them President Gbagbo himself and the former head of state Robert Guéï. In addition, *Prévention Génocides* set up a media campaign spearheaded by the video film *Côte d’Ivoire, poudre à canon identitaire* (Côte d’Ivoire, powderkeg of identities). The film claimed to present a scientific, sociological analysis of identity politics and violence in Côte d’Ivoire over the past decade. Since the death of the ‘Father of the Nation’, President Houphouët-Boigny in 1993, the film explained, one group of people had been the target of discrimination and inferiorisation by subsequent governments: this referred to an ethnic group labelled ‘Dyula’ and comprising Muslims, RDR militants, people from the northern part of Côte d’Ivoire, and migrants from other West African countries. The film observed how ‘the Dyula’ had been increasingly diabolised in government-sponsored mass media, and it concluded that the Yopougon murders were part of a genocidal build-up in which ‘the Dyula’ were being threatened with annihilation.

The resignification of the Yopougon mass-grave as evidence of a genocidal action against an identifiable group of people sparked off a series of reactions which revealed, contested, and at times completely reversed the identities of the victims and the perpetrators.

The Gbagbo government rejected both the UN's and the NGO's enquiries. Their findings were invalidated, subverted, and even reversed in different ways. The UN report was 'scientifically' re-appropriated and its conclusion turned on its head in a government publication containing an alternative report by a national commission of enquiry and distributed free of charge across the country (Côte d'Ivoire 2001). The volume featured a presidential statement in which the UN Commission was accused of merely defending the cause of the RDR opposition party against the Gbagbo government. Moreover, it contained a report of a government-sponsored medical committee which concluded that: 'the mystery of *the constitution* of this "mass-grave" remains intact' (ibid., p155, emphasis in the original). The stress on 'the constitution', and the scare quotes around 'mass-grave' conveyed the government's view that the Yopougon mass-grave was a fabrication. According to this view a number of dead bodies had been brought together by RDR militants and 'shot' with police guns in order to frame policemen and accuse the Gbagbo government. The president of the Parliament, Mamadou Koulibaly, spelled out the desired conclusion in public: 'National and international opinion is now aware that it [the mass-grave of Yopougon] is but a *montage*' (Koulibaly 2001).

This statement by Koulibaly implies more than meets the eye, for the word *montage* entails a *double entendre*: *monter* may not simply mean editing, assembling or mounting, but also setting up, framing, and trapping. While most of the victims were indeed never identified officially, the implication is that they may well have been followers of the governing FPI, some of whom were certainly killed during the street violence that accompanied the presidential elections. In combining the 'scientific' conclusion that the mass-grave remained an enigma and the political assertion that it was an act of 'framing' by post-mortem impersonation of the other party, the issues of police and political violence were evacuated into a space of make-believe and morbid manipulation. A similar strategy was also used for discrediting the film *Côte d'Ivoire, poudrière identitaire* which was appropriated, destabilised and subverted during a spectacular, mass-mediated debate on national television.

Even before its official release, the 'Powderkeg of Identities' film was shown and debated widely in Côte d'Ivoire. As early as 14 August 2001, the government organised its broadcasting on national television, followed by a seven-hour debate among a panel of experts. The debate opened with a question about the 'real' intentions of the filmmaker, Benoît Scheuer. This question cleared the ground for all sorts of speculations. One of them, put forward by Deputy Mamadou Ben Soumahoro and widely accepted among government supporters, was that Scheuer

was a paid agent of Alassane Ouattara. The leader of the opposition party RDR was thus accused of organising a media campaign against the Gbagbo government because he was excluded from standing as presidential candidate. The RDR, after all, was notorious for operating and instrumentalising the international mass media, as Deputy Soumahoro could imply. Once a member of the RDR, Soumahoro had changed his political alliances twice in the previous two years, now to end up as a Gbagbo activist and a virulent opponent of Ouattara.

Like the mass-grave before, the Powderkeg film was characterized in the debate as ‘a *montage*’, a deceptive mixture of fake testimonies and unrelated images of violence. Soumahoro, now introduced as a media expert, exposed the fictional character of the film. He pointed out, for instance, that the film did not have credit titles at the end and thus obscured its sources and ‘actors’. Anyone who had seen the film broadcast just before the debate had seen its credit titles; but no-one contradicted Soumahoro’s ‘expert’ observation. Instead, the next day’s newspapers stressed that so many viewers had found Soumahoro’s explanations pertinent and even enlightening. The film, it was argued, falsely represented one group of people, which it called ‘the Dyula’, as the victims of discrimination, political exclusion, and state violence. One participant in the debate demonstrated in the most tangible way how identities were deceitful and manipulable, and he did so by performing a remarkable act of impersonation. This was the former student-leader, now turned Gbagbo enthusiast, Charles Blé Goudé. He was remembered, by those Ivorian youth who fell within the category of RDR members, such as ‘northerners’ and Muslims, for having spread hate speech and violence against them on the university campuses of Abidjan during the summer of 2000, just preceding the elections. In the television debate, they saw the Christian Blé Goudé dressed in a *grand boubou*, the festive dress of Muslims. In other words, the victims saw their hangman wearing their clothes.

Both the film by the Belgian NGO and the UN report aimed at confronting people with the naked facts: demonstrating how the Ivorian state dealt with an identified group of political enemies and reconstruing the Yopougon mass murder as a violent explosion of identity politics. In pro-government Côte d’Ivoire, however, this international expertise was turned on its head by a whole succession of nationally staged ‘games’ of mistaken identities. Members of the UN Commission of Enquiry were ‘identified’ as militants of the opposition party RDR; corpses of RDR victims were re-‘identified’ as corpses of FPI members; the film director Scheuer was ‘identified’ as an aid agent of the RDR’s excluded presidential candidate Ouattara. At the same time, the mass grave was neutralised as a ‘mystery’ and discredited as a ‘*montage*’ ‘without

actors' credits' by the most grotesque denials of reality. To top it all, blatant mock impostures and disguises billed Deputy Soumahoro as a media expert and the Christian radical Blé Goudé as a Muslim in festive garb.

The above story of the Yopougon mass killing and its mediatisation did not end on 14 August 2001, nor did it begin on 27 October 2000. Some of what happened to the conspiracy theories of 'mistaken identities' can be found in the last section of this chapter as well as in the next chapter (five) where I observe the more recent collapse of political identities into two opposing categories: the authentic and home-loving 'authochthon' as opposed to the ever deceitful and opportunistic 'allochthon'. A related observation which I touch upon in the final part of this chapter as well as in passing in the other chapters (see chapter three and five; also Arnaut 2004) is that the debate over the Yopougon mass grave initiated the nation-wide circulation of an imagery of 'necropolitics' (Mbembe 2003) comprising announcements of impending genocides and the need for self-sacrifice and preventive mass murder in order to turn the tide (see e.g. Amnesty International 2002). In the main part of this chapter I focus on what preceded the violent implosion and try to disentangle it by analysing how it was formulated and publicised in three newspaper articles.

Disentangling Implosions

Baumann (2004) situates 'implosion' right at the moment when all dynamic selfings/otherings are stopped by being made to collapse into the deadly game of 'us good, you bad; us alive, you dead': the 'ungrammatical binarism' of ethnic cleansing or genocide. Such implosions, one may add, are accompanied by a triple silence: victims or witnesses find it impossible to narrate their experience (Agamben 1999); the executioners find it redundant to engage in any dialogue at all (Jackson 2002, p190); and the researchers find themselves almost tongue-tied as they face, in Appadurai's words, 'not only the limits of social science but of language itself' (1996, p154). Such deadly silences, however, are often preceded by the opposite: loud hate speech, racist propaganda, and mobilising orations. As Chrétien (1995, p307) has shown in the case of the Rwandan genocide, 'violence is in the words before it is in the acts'. This confirms Baumann's hunch, that one can discern a pronounced 'brutalisation of language' even before a regime turns to massive violence against its stereotyped others. Yet how, one must ask now, can things go so far: what is the basis of the self-confidence, the noisy hybris, the sheer brutality of the propagandists' dehumanising discourse ?

Baumann postulates a gradual inscription of racism, ‘first [in] *parole* and soon afterwards [in] *langue*’. The issue of inscription is also raised by Appadurai (1996) and Tambiah (1996) who in try to account for the massive and profound support enjoyed by movements aiming at radical political violence. Both these authors use Raymond Williams’ concept of ‘structures of feeling’ to investigate how ‘ethnic claims and sentiments and ethnic stereotypes [...] are imprinted simultaneously in our minds and bodies as patterns of ideas and sentiments’ (Tambiah 1996, p140). Appadurai and Tambiah thus sharpen their attention on what happens in everyday life. This may comprise an ‘unmarked daily domestic life’, but also ‘marked’ festivals and rituals (idem); it may also reach further, going from ‘casual conversations’ through a ‘low-key editorialising’ to ‘collective reading’ (Appadurai 1996, p153). All three authors, however, put forward a further suggestion for investigation, and which I want to pursue in order to come to grips with the dynamics of implosion.

In tracing these dynamics, I no longer seek to locate mass-mediated political manoeuvres in the kind of dramatic contexts illustrated above. Instead, and *pace* Appadurai (1996) and Tambiah (1996), I shall turn to the manufacture of genocide by analysing the manufacture of language. I shall do so, not by homing in on cheap targets such as openly genocidal rhetorics, but rather by focussing on three apparently ‘serious’, sometimes seemingly ‘scientific’ newspaper articles that were published in the months preceding the Yopougon mass grave. The three articles here examined can be seen to expose the main characteristics of an ‘implosion of grammars’ in the making: they spell out a radical resignification of the ‘other’ into a non-entity, and they do so both in a global setting of official identities and in the intimate sphere of private relationships.

In tracing genocidal politics to the poiesis of texts, I follow Tambiah’s call to give detailed attention to the ‘performative devices’ that are deployed in ‘mass participatory politics’ (1996, p141) in order to mobilise people in a dynamics of ethnic polarisation. Broadly speaking, Tambiah uses the phrase to point to the political uses of genres of performance ‘taken from public culture and popular religion’. Other scholars, such as Achille Mbembe (1992) and Andrew Apter (1999), have provided a wealth of material to analyse the ‘stagings’ by which both politicians and ‘civil society’ operate profound resignifications and revaluations of reality. Mbembe describes this strategy as the very condition of the postcolony: ‘its unusual and grotesque art of representation [and] its taste for the theatrical’ (Mbembe 1992, p14). Apter (1999) has successfully applied Mbembe’s idea of a ‘simulacral regime’ to the ‘politics of illusion’ of a former Nigerian president. These analyses show how resignifications, such as the identification and characterisation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ privilege those formats and genres of

communication which enjoy a high degree of what Gramsci would call ‘plausibility’: they may be grounded in popular culture or religious ceremonial, or they may employ established media-formats such as discussion programmes led by experts or, in one case here discussed, a newspaper column authored by a university professor.²

The three articles that I will analyse in detail appeared in the newspaper *Notre Voie*. Like all other major newspapers in Côte d’Ivoire, *Notre Voie* is allied to a political formation, in this case the Socialist Party FPI of Laurent Gbagbo³. As stated by OLPED, the media watchdog for Côte d’Ivoire, such an allegiance means that it is a ‘tool[s] for political struggles and the conquest of government power’ (OLPED 2001, p9-10). The political struggle in which the three articles under consideration engage, is that of the Socialist Party FPI, first against its traditional opponent, the former ruling party PDCI of Henri Konan Bédié, and later, against the new enemy, the Republican Party RDR of Alassane Ouattara.

The three articles exemplify three different formats: the report, the editorial, and the column. Each of them exhibits its own way of resignifying ‘the other’: the report constructs the Republican Party RDR as one among various ‘political others’; the editorial turns it into an ‘ethnic enemy’ embodied in the life-style of its leader Alassane Ouattara; and the column turns this ethnicised adversary into a racialised other – ‘the Dyula’ who have all the attributes of ‘a people’, comprising a typical character, a historical tradition and a common destiny. I have chosen the term ‘poiesis’ for three reasons: to stress the performative character of this overall ‘low-key’ editorialising, to trace how the techniques of ‘staging’ allow for increasingly radical modes of resignification, and to document how the authors imaginatively exploit these techniques to other the other ever more blatantly. ‘Poiesis’ is meant to express the semantic re-engineering that takes place in the subjunctive spaces of mass-mediated (popular, religious, political) ritual and writing, and it indicates one way of comprehending the process of ‘implosion’.

2. ‘Plausibility’ is one of the three conditions that Gramsci sees in the formation of counter-hegemonic movements. The other two are equally useful for understanding mass-mediated resignifications: the presence of organic intellectuals and the relative isolation in which the resistance is organised (Billings 1990). My understanding of the potential of resignification in the ‘subjunctive’ spaces of mass media is largely based on Bayart’s Foucaultian reworking of Gramsci, more particularly, on his use of ‘discursive genres’ and ‘espaces-temps’ (1985) and the Comaroffs’ critique of civil society resistance (1999).

3. Since its creation in 1991 and until it changed its name in 1998, *Notre Voie* was called *La Voie*. On the website of the Socialist Party FPI, it is listed under ‘The Journals of the FPI’ (*Les journaux du FPI*) (<http://www.fpi.ci/publications.html>; 02/12/2002).

The term 'implosion' is perhaps best explained by Appadurai (1996) who proposes to examine brutal ethnic conflicts less as 'explosions' than as 'implosions' since they reveal how public political identities are made to 'fold into [... the] local imagination and become dominant voice-overs in the traffic of ordinary life' (1996, p154). Appadurai thus calls up the spectre of how, in the global-local articulation of conflicts, friends and neighbours become redefined, or rather 'uncovered', as, for instance, 'foreign invaders', 'labour migrants', 'allochthons', 'Muslim fanatics', or even potential 'international terrorists'. Such 'glocal' articulations are 'implosive' due to their encompassing, that is, world-wide and indeed 'cosmological', dimension and by a transfer of this dimension into the intimacy of the private sphere. Here, too, one could refer back to Mbembe's suggestions that the political leaders of the 'postcolony' offer their nations a comprehensive 'cosmology', as well as to Apter's observation that Nigerian presidents succeed in creating a simulacrum of their autocratic regime as a proper democracy. Appadurai goes one step further, however, and invites us to look well beyond national mythologies and observe how they collide with transnational ones. This is where Appadurai locates the experience of ethnic or other conflicts as reckoning with 'deep categorical treachery'.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, it is crucial to stress that political identities, such as 'the Dyula', have been defined, at least since the period of colonisation, not only in a local/national space of ethnic differentiation but also in a regional/international space of migration and allochthony, as well as in a global space of 'racial' (white-black) hierarchies. The three newspaper articles demonstrate precisely this gradual 'unmasking' of members of the RDR party as 'the Dyula people'. This 'unmasking' is of a double, glocal encompassing nature. On the one hand the image of 'the Dyula' conjures up the global system of cultural and religious differences and socio-economic inequalities, on the other hand it inserts these into the private sphere of mixed families and town quarters and of 'cross-ethnic' civil society (see Bazin 1999). One could go so far as to say that the newspaper articles' gradual unmasking of the RDR as a 'Dyula' party was later thematised in the government-sponsored debate on the Yopougon mass-grave, in the frantic search to reveal the 'real' identities of the UN commissioners, of the 'powderkeg' filmmaker, of the 'victims' and the 'executioners'. "The revelation of hated and hateful official identities behind the bodily masks of real (and known) persons seems crucial to the perpetration of the worst forms of mutilation and damage", writes Appadurai (1996, p155) as he tries, in the words of Jackson (2002, p126), to "existentialise" the phenomena of modern ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Combining Tambiah and Appadurai will help, I propose, to specify Baumann's idea of an 'implosion of grammars' as a gradual process and as a choice of techniques in transforming selfings and otherings. The 'poiesis of genocide' exemplified by the three newspaper articles can be situated, structurally if not historically, *before* the actual (or final) implosion takes place. At the same time, it is this poiesis of language and techniques, of manipulating genres and formats, that spells out the process of implosion in the making. The moment of 'poiesis' is thus situated in the 'revealing' moments of the construction of radical (global/local; public/private) identities in the subjunctive spaces of creative ritual and inventive writing.

Examining implosion as a process, this chapter uses the three grammars identified by Baumann in order to examine when and precisely how they are made to implode into the anti-grammar of genocide. My approach to testing the three grammars is thus to see how far they may characterise the different stages in the genesis and formulation (poiesis) of a genocidal discourse. To analyse the three newspaper articles, I shall arrange them according to a genocidal crescendo. The first article, imperious in tone, works with a segmentary construction in which the journalist reports on a quarrel between two parties. The second article, antagonistic in tone, constructs an orientalist grammar in which the journalist takes sides against the victim. The third article presents a final encompassing moment and is the only one that can be called explicitly 'genocidal'. This genocidal quality resides in the fact that it effects a dehumanisation of the 'other' from without (the global, the official, and the scientific) as well as from within (the local, the 'known', and the 'humane'). This dehumanisation not only constructs a radical difference from without between 'us' humans and 'them', the less than humans, but it shows a moment of identification which allows the advocate of genocide to situate himself right inside the victim, and as we will see, make him demand the latter's physical elimination.

This reconstruction adds a new dimension, I think, to Appadurai's *problématique* of 'violence in relation to treachery, intimacy, and identity' (1996, p155). It asks how the public deals with revelations of identity in its private sphere, and it enquires how such 'intimacy' is actively created by the authors of revelatory ritual and writing. In reconstructing the process of implosion, I concentrate on one specific technique of code-switching which is particularly effective in integrating the other into the discourse of the self: the technique and performance of code-crossing (Rampton 1995) or double-voicing (Bakhtin 1984 [1929]). The genocidal crescendo effected by the three newspaper articles is due to an increasingly sophisticated and complex use of code-crossing. This technique allows one to see the sophistication employed in discursive projects of a genocidal nature. Genocides may not rely so much on the single-minded

butcher as on the cultured professor, and they may not dwell so much in blood-thirsty hate speech as in the well-crafted, reflective, and even seemingly compassionate text. Before hate speech and butchery aim at ‘getting rid of the other’, the poiesis of genocide uses its skill and sophistication to get ‘right into the other’, and it does so by the technique of code-crossing.

The term ‘code-crossing’ or ‘crossing’ was coined by Ben Rampton (1995) and designates ‘the use of a language which is not generally thought to “belong” to the speaker ... [and] involves a sense of movement across quite sharply felt social or ethnic boundaries’ (Rampton 1998, p291). Rampton explains code-crossing with reference to Bakhtin’s (1984 [1929]) concept of ‘double voicing’ in which ‘speakers use someone else’s discourse (or language) for their own purposes’ by inserting a new semantic intention into another discourse. Thus, ‘in one discourse, [there appear] two semantic intentions, two voices’ (Rampton 1998, p304). In some cases, this semantic intention may correspond to the original one; in other uses, such as ironic or inimical ones, the speaker ‘introduces into the original discourse a semantic intention directly opposed to the original one’ (Rampton 1998, p305, quoting Bakhtin 1984 [1929]). Parallel to manipulating the meaning of the original discourse, code-crossing allows for transforming the identity of the original speaker. The issue of speakerhood in code-crossing performances is raised by Jane Hill (1999, 2001). She observes how the use of a particular quote or token-expression within another code (e.g., the Spanish ‘cojones’ in an English statement) can project certain characteristics (e.g., vulgarity) on to the original speakers of the quoted code (‘the’ Spanish speakers as against ‘the’ English speakers) or on to individual speakers associated with the quote, be it explicitly or implicitly.

Let me then use these theoretical insights to analyse how the code-crossing use of the phrase *bori bana* acts as a discursive instrument in the poiesis of genocide. In order to ease the reader’s way through the complexities of the case, I shall distinguish between Dyula as a language and ‘Dyula’ as an ethnonym or quasi-ethnonym, be it self-ascribed or ascribed by others.

***Bori bana*: a token of Dyula language and history**

Between January and May 2000, the important newspaper *Notre Voie* published three articles which carried the expression *bori bana* in their titles.⁴ The phrase is Manding for: ‘the running is finished’, with *bori* signifying running or racing.⁵ In each case, the phrase *bori bana* is attributed to a different target person or group, but all of them are (political) opponents associated with the Republican Party RDR.

The use of Manding, or for that matter any other regional African language is rare in the predominantly Francophone mass media of Côte d’Ivoire. The use of the expression *bori bana* is thus an instance of marked code switching: unexpected and thereby especially significant.⁶ Moreover, the expression indexes a linguistic group and represents a historical feat associated with a political ‘other’. In printing the phrase *bori bana*, *Notre Voie* not only transgresses a linguistic boundary, but it also appropriates an expression attributed to a historical culture that it sees as radically distinct. This, too, identifies the use of *bori bana* as an instance of code-crossing.

In order to analyse *bori bana* as a code-crossing performance, this section will briefly reconstruct the ‘original’ meaning of the phrase as a personal quote and as a token of the history of Manding speakers, often designated as ‘Dyula’. The latter term designates an emerging ethnic-political identity produced and transformed throughout the history of colonial and postcolonial Côte d’Ivoire which is programmatically presented in chapter 4 of this dissertation. Here, I will show how, in the articulation of an ethno-nationalist ideology called *Ivoirité*, this ‘Dyula’ ethnicity

4. *Notre Voie*, together with *Le Patriote*, *Fraternité-Matin*, and *Ivoir’ Soir* are the most popular daily newspapers in Côte d’Ivoire (HPCI & Panos 2001). The full text of the original newspaper articles is printed in annexes at the end of this chapter.

5. Following Derive (1990) and Boone et al. (1999) I use ‘Manding’ to refer to the Mandekan languages (Bamana, Maninka, Dyula) spoken from Gambia to Burkina Faso and from Mali to Côte d’Ivoire. In Côte d’Ivoire, Mandekan is most often labelled ‘Malinké’ as distinct from Southern Mande languages such as Guro and Dan.

6. Code-switching is the alternative use of two or more languages within the course of one speech event (Hinnenkamp 1987: 138). It ‘may convey certain meanings about the speaker’ as well as function to redefine the relationship between interlocutors. Code switching is ‘marked’ when it ‘does not conform to expected patterns’ (Mesthrie et al. 2000: 169).

crops up as a composition of several aspects of ‘foreignness’ developed across the *longue durée* of Ivorian history.⁷ This deconstruction of *bori bana* and ‘Dyula’ attempts to identify the resources which the three authors use to take their readers on a code-crossing trip into the discourse of their (political) opponents. Who, then, ‘are’ these Manding-speaking ‘Dyula’?

Manding languages are spoken in large parts of West Africa, and thus in many countries to the west and north of Côte d’Ivoire: Gambia and Senegal (Mandinka), Guinea (Maninka), Mali (Bamana), and Burkina Faso (Dyula) (Derive 1976). Within the territory of precolonial Côte d’Ivoire, Manding was spoken by two groups of largely Islamised peoples: the so-called Malinke of the north-western region, and the Dyula speakers of the merchant cities of Kong and Bondoukou further to the east. After many generations of labour migration and the penetration of Dyula-speaking merchants from the Manding areas into southern Côte d’Ivoire, several millions of Manding speakers now reside in the southern zones of Côte d’Ivoire: in the urban centres such as Abidjan, Bouaké and Daloa, and in the coffee and cocoa plantation areas in-between. In this southern and diasporic area, the Manding language is often named Dyula; it is a *lingua franca* of the informal sector, of long-distance commerce, of the town or village marketplace, and of religious (Muslim) communication, used by first-language speakers of Manding as well as many others (Derive 1976, 1990).⁸ The expression *bori bana* is readily intelligible to any of them.

Explained this way, one could conclude that the code-switching performance of *bori bana* is merely a straightforward language shift between two *linguae francae*, the formal French and the informal Dyula, written by authors and read by an audience who are at least bilingual. The phrase *bori bana*, however, is also easily recognised as an emblem or token of a ‘Dyula’ historical era, with ‘Dyula’ construed as an ethnonym or quasi-ethnonym.

7. There is a long-standing discussion whether ‘Ivoirité’ is a strategically vague concept employed to exclude ethnic/political opponents, or, as its proponents argue, a model for peaceful coexistence in a multicultural Côte d’Ivoire. Together with Dozon (2000), I choose to characterise ‘Ivoirité’ as an ethno-nationalist ideology which can be put to diverse political uses (see below).

8. The linguistic situation in the urban and rural migration areas is a complex one. In ‘urban Dyula’ Partman (1975) further distinguishes between ‘Dioula véhiculaire’ which Manding speakers use to communicate with each other and ‘Tagbusikan’, a slightly pidginised Dyula used by non-Manding and despised by Manding speakers.

The composite 'Boribana' ('the fleeing is finished') is the name given by the late 19th-century warlord Samori Touré to a fortress he built in present-day northern Côte d'Ivoire in order to resist attacks from the French and British colonial armies. Built in 1897, the purportedly unconquerable fortress called 'The Fleeing is Finished' embodied Samori's military and personal defiance, but it also foreshadowed the end of his reign less than a year later and his death in exile in 1900. The story of Samori and Boribana has been well-publicised ever since colonial times. The colonial literature praised Samori's bravery, his military strength and tactical shrewdness, the better to allow its French authors to glorify their own colonial heroes who outmanoeuvred him (Person 1968-75, I). In the post-independence era, Samori was re-styled into an anti-colonial resistance hero and a state-builder (Ki-Zerbo 1978). Crucial to this postcolonial re-invention of Samori is the work of Yves Person (1968-1975) and his three-volume book entitled: 'Samori: A Dyula Revolution'. By the latter term he meant a military revival movement led by the Muslim Manding Samori and blocked by the European colonial forces.⁹

Bori bana is thus not only an expression in Dyula language, but also a token of a 'Dyula' history. To appreciate it as such, one can rely on at least two textual traditions: the colonial one that is cunningly complimentary, and the postcolonial one that is forthrightly nationalist and empowering. Instances of the latter can be found in the more recent work of two prominent Ivorian artists who themselves grew up in a Manding environment: the song *Bori Samory* (1984) by reggae star Alpha Blondy (born Seydou Koné) and the novel *Monnè outrages défis* (1990) by the prize-winning novelist Ahmadou Kourouma. In the song *Bori Samory*, Alpha Blondy (1984) associates Samori with other victims of colonial or racial violence, such as Patrice Lumumba, Kwame N'krumah, and Malcolm X. 'Bori' here is in the imperative form; the singer exhorts Samori to run fast ('*bori*'), because the 'white man' ('*nazarew*', '*tubabu*') is out to kill him. In his second novel *Monnè outrages défis* (1990) Ahmadou Kourouma recounts the story of Samori's Boribana fortress and contrasts Samori's resolve as a leader with the weakness of other chiefs who meekly accepted French colonial rule and turned their submission into a source of despotism and self-aggrandisement.

9. In the wake of Person's publications (see also 1969 and 1977), Samori became 'the symbol of the new African nationalisms' (Mandingue, s.d.). Sekou Touré, the first president of Guinea, claimed to be Samori's successor (Baba Kaké, 1987) and Samori featured prominently in the popular music theatre piece *Regards sur le passé* performed by Sekou Touré's national orchestra, Bembeya Jazz National (1969). In Côte d'Ivoire, Samori was the subject of the much-acclaimed play, *Les Sofas*, by former Minister of Culture Bernard Zadi Zaourou (1969).

Yet however strongly these popular lyrics/texts advocate the image of Samori as a defiant Manding ancestor, they did not herald the demise of the ‘colonial’ Samori. In the three *bori bana* articles in *Notre Voie*, the authors progressively unearth a fortress Boribana that is a mere delusion of haughtiness. Moreover, they reactivate the colonial texts about Samori in an attempt to situate the expression *bori bana* in the immediate context of Samori’s capture and deportation, and they thus relocate Samori’s statement in the voice of the person who captured and expelled the ‘Dyula’ trouble maker. Such an astonishing re-invention and inimical appropriation (or recolonisation) of the ‘Dyula’ token *bori bana* amounts to a historic *tour de force*, which takes place in a context of shifting political power balances between the ‘Dyula’ and their antagonists. Before delving deeper into how three *Notre Voie* contributors in the first months of 2000 undermine ‘Dyula’ audacity and transform its defiance into failure, we must situate such shifts in a longer history of socio-economic, political, religious and cultural differentiation and emergent inequalities.

‘The Dyula’ as triple strangers

Early ethnography and colonial ethnic policy constructed a ‘Dyula’ tribe of Muslims active in long-distance trade and spread all over the northern parts of Côte d’Ivoire¹⁰. Such a proliferation was deemed synonymous with rootlessness, as exemplified by Delafosse (1901, p3) who contended that “nowhere does [this tribe] represent the autochthonous element”.¹¹ Even if colonial ethnographers such as Nebout (1904) granted certain Dyula communities the status of an ‘indigenous population’, they retained the distinct aspect of an itinerant, quasi nomadic people. In the east of Côte d’Ivoire (Kong and Bondoukou), Delafosse hinted at the existence of a few Dyula “of pure race”, an observation to which the French colonial agent in Bondoukou, Nebout, subscribed by lending these Dyula communities the status of an “indigenous population”. Nonetheless, he stressed the aspect of itinerancy when he stated that, “with the exception of the Dyula [of Bondoukou,] all the natives are sedentary” (1901, p181).

10. According to Person (1968-75) and Lewis (1973), this is an amalgamation. In northwestern Côte d’Ivoire (and beyond, in Guinea and Mali) the term ‘Dyula’ referred to a category of Islamicised merchants, while in the northeastern part of the country (Kong, Bondoukou) ‘Dyula’ referred to an ethnic group.

11. Unless stated otherwise, all translations from the French are mine.

Currently, many authors agree that ‘Dyula’ as an ethnic identity in Côte d’Ivoire is characterised by a combination of at least three elements: ‘northern people’ associated with ‘commercial activity’ and ‘Islam’ (Launay & Miran 2000; Boone 1993; Lewis 1973). A related element concerns the ‘Dyula’ penetration of certain “geosocial spaces” (LeBlanc 2000a, p89). These may be regional, establishing ties with other countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso, or global, tying links with the world-wide Muslim community (Launay and Miran 2000, p71). Related to such positionings, then, emerges the factor of nationality, which see the ‘Dyula’ as either partly foreigners (Marguerat 1981-82, p321; LeBlanc 2000b, p447) or at least, in Bayart’s term, relatively “extravert” (Bayart 1999).

Like any ethnic identity, however, that of the ‘Dyula’ in Ivorian society cannot be recounted in a unilinear narrative of invention, reproduction and transformation. Rather, one needs to embrace the many changing collateral relationships that incessantly reconstitute this shifting ‘identity’¹². Instead of opting for a complex, and probably inconclusive, historical reconstruction, and with an eye to relating these shifting ‘Dyula’ ‘identities’ to the antagonisms of the most recent past, it is sensible here to turn to some theoretical guidance provided by Mamdani (1998, 2001). In relating colonial legacies to the creation of political identities in Africa, Mamdani distinguishes three aspects in the creation of political selves and others: the socio-economic, the civic, and, perhaps less obviously, the so-called ‘racial’.

In the domain of race relations, African colonies witnessed, in the terminology of Mamdani, not only the imposition of a ‘dominant race’ of white Europeans over the different groups of ‘subject[ed] natives’, but also the invention of a ‘subject race’ situated on a racial scale in between the colonised natives and the white colonisers. ‘Subject races’ were deemed to share with the dominant race a certain proclivity toward ‘civilisation’ and later ‘modernisation’ and were therefore openly instrumentalised as agents of progress (Mamdani 2001, ch. 1).

12. Excellent examples of such complex reconstructions of ethnic identities can be found in Bazin (1985) and Amselle (1998). In his reconstruction of ‘Fulani, Bambara, Malinke’ identity in West Africa, Amselle perceives how this ‘trinity’ forms a ‘system of transformations with a logic of its own’ (1998: 56). Although I find the term ‘system’ debatable, Amselle takes an important step, I believe, towards unpicking the interrelations between local identities, without neglecting the regional and global layers of identity formation.

It can be argued that during the first decades of the colonisation of Côte d'Ivoire, the role of 'subject race' was ascribed to the 'Dyula' Muslim merchants who, as translocal busybodies, disseminated French produce and were seen as bringing 'natives' into contact with 'civilisation'.

“In his capacity as a merchant, the Muslim Dyula must be protected; small agent of our trade, he insinuates himself everywhere, even in the smallest village he distributes the European products, tangible proofs of our power, our richness, and our know-how; the Dyula is almost as much an agent of our civilisation as he is a carrier of our products...”
(Clozel in Triaud 1974, p554)

By the same token, the Dyula language became a direct instrument of colonial rule. Dyula language was seen as a *lingua franca* transcending the linguistic fragmentation of the colony and enabling communication across French West Africa at large: it became the language of commerce and of the African section of the army (*tirailleurs sénégalais*). Only French was ranked above it as the language of official communication in administration and education. Although 'the Dyula' probably played no larger role in the official administration than the other, 'native' peoples, Dyula-speaking Muslims did achieve some feeble participation in the French secular and missionary educational systems.

Other ethnic groups, however, such as the southern Baule people, showed a far keener interest in French education, and in the process formed an educated elite that gathered the kind of symbolic capital that turned out to be a strategic asset in their repositioning as a newly emerging alternative 'subject race'. The two other assets that were critical in the rise of the Baule were the economic wealth they accumulated through active participation in the expanding plantation economy, and the capital of governmentality which they acquired by reinventing themselves as the nation-builders *par excellence*. The repositioning of the 'the Dyula' in late colonial and postcolonial times needs thus to be related to the Baule's rise to socio-economic and political prominence. In postcolonial times, the competition between the Dyula and the Baule and other Akan elites retained a softly racialised dimension. This was palpable in the ways in which both categories claimed a special relationships with the hegemonic powers now increasingly situated outside the national sphere: France, the United States, the *umma* of the Muslim world, and the world of international finance and politics (Bazin 1998, 1999).

Economically, the Baule were well equipped for this replacement of a former 'subject race' identified as 'Dyula'. Populating the central part of southern Côte d'Ivoire, they participated fully in the coffee and cocoa economy by providing labour for the French and 'indigenous' plantations, as well as establishing their own plantations not only in the Baule region but also far

beyond. They migrated and expanded first into Agni lands to the east and later into Bété lands to the west. The Baule thus situated themselves at the heart of the economic success of Côte d'Ivoire, a feat that also attracted millions of other labour migrants from the hinterland of northern Côte d'Ivoire and the neighbouring colonies and countries. Although they deeply permeated the southern societies, these northern migrants largely assimilated the culture considered to be 'northern' or 'Dyula'. With the northern migrants, the Dyula language was disseminated exponentially and Islam became the most important religion in Côte d'Ivoire. With this simultaneous influx of both southern (Baule) and northern migrants, the plantation belt gave rise to an emerging identity of the autochthon or native, as opposed to the allochthon or immigrant settler (Chauveau 2000).

In this polarisation however, the position of the Baule underwent a gradual shift throughout the postcolonial period. It turned from ethnic allochthons (which they had been, for instance, in Agni and Bété country) to national autochthons, that is, people who, unlike the Dyula, were credited with having ethnic roots at least somewhere within the nation-state boundaries. The classification of the 'northern' settlers, and more importantly here, 'the Dyula', by contrast, was increasingly highlighted as 'allochthonous'. Both the Ivorian and the non-Ivorian northerners came to be perceived as having no ancestral roots within Côte d'Ivoire, and for the purportedly footloose and extravert 'Dyula', this spelled out the demotion from colonial 'subject race' to postcolonial 'allochthons.' This development of 'national allochthony' went hand in hand with a specific articulation of Ivorian nationalism in the 1990s, the governmentally enforced ethno-national programme called *Ivoirité*.

To address the 'civic component of subjection', Mamdani (2001) poses the question how, and how far, the political and civil rights of nationals are granted to natives as opposed to settlers, autochthons as opposed to allochthons. From the 1930s on, the cosmopolitan southern region of Côte d'Ivoire had witnessed the emergence of a distinct Ivorian national awareness, voiced at the level of civil society (Chauveau & Dozon 1985). With decolonisation, the central issue was increasingly articulated in ethnic terms: who could best voice this national concern? It happened to be the Baule – joined in time by the Agni and the Lagune peoples to form the Akan people – who were credited with possessing a distinctive '*sens de l'Etat*' (Memel-Fotê 1999, p24). Through an ingenious reinvention of tradition, the precolonial 'Baule State' was ascribed 'the value of a model of governance [and] of [the] political management of an ensemble of local diversity' (Memel-Fotê and Chauveau, 1989, p38). In managing this 'diversity', the first president of independent Côte d'Ivoire and a Baule 'chief', Houphouët-Boigny (1960-1993) can

be seen to have deployed a double strategy. Political opposition from southern ‘autochthons’ (first the Agni and later the Bété) was delegitimised as being ‘ethnic’ and directed against the integrity of the nation-state (Gbagbo 1983). At the same time, the president tried to disempower the northern ‘Dyula’ elites by eliminating their leaders (Diarra 1997), then to take control of their trade networks by means of a nationalist programme of ‘ivoirianisation’ (Boone 1993). In the long run, however, these strategies were only partly successful. What emerged against them were two major political parties, one predominantly southern, the other predominantly northern.

The effectively southern Socialist Party FPI seeks its origins in Houphouët’s clampdown on the Bété insurgencies of the 1960s and 1970s, while the effectively northern Republican Party RDR is said to find its origin in the so-called ‘Northern Charter’ – a document edited in the early 1990s and expressing the frustrations of the ‘northerners’ whose aspirations had been neglected for decades by Houphouët-Boigny.

This translation of emerging political, socio-economic and ethnic identities into ideological projects and political parties was a complex process which, in 2000, resulted in three major formations (Dozon 2000). The former unitarist PDCI-RDA of President Houphouët’s successor, Henri Konan Bédié, abandoned its self-ascribed ‘national’ vocation and was increasingly seen as a southernist ‘Akan’ Party defending the interests of the plantation elite, the autochthonous populations and, increasingly, the nationals as against the large groups of residents whom it labelled ‘dubious’ Ivoirians and foreigners. The Socialist Party FPI of Laurent Gbagbo shared this proclivity for autochthons with the PDCI-RDA and linked its consideration for the economically and educationally underprivileged with its ethnic profile as a party representing the Bété, the historical underdogs in Ivorian political society. Finally, the Republican Party RDR of Alassane Ouattara, a 1994 break-away from the PDCI, was readily seen as representing the interests of ‘the Dyula’ as triple strangers: (a) ‘internationals’, ‘national allochthons’ or even non-nationals by their ‘civic’ status, (b) economically associated with formal and informal international trade, commerce and finance, and, through this (c) ‘racially’ associated with the ‘white West’, the space of international politics and economics.

The presidential candidate of the RDR, Alassane Ouattara, however, had been prevented from standing at each election preceding our three articles, and the RDR had thus never participated in any presidential or parliamentary elections before. At the same time, the three-party configuration as just described was the result of almost a decade of multipartyism and a concomittant ethnicisation of politics. This ethnicisation gained all the more ground when Houphouët-Boigny’s successor as president, Henri Konan Bédié (1993-99) proclaimed an

ideology of national unity and ‘multiculturalism’ called *Ivoirité*. A series of presidential statements and academic documents inscribed the precolonial inhabitants of southern Côte d’Ivoire as ‘national autochthons’ and thus awarded them a privileged role in creating the melting-pot of a future Ivorian society (Touré 1996; Bédié s.d.). Complementing inclusion by exclusion, *Ivoirité* nominally disqualified ‘the Dyula’ from being ‘national autochthons’ and thus full Ivorian citizens, and instead ‘invited’ allochthons, settlers, and non-nationals to adapt themselves to the national-culture-in-the-making (Niangoran-Bouah 1996).

The end of Bédié’s presidency in 1999 hastened increasing international isolation and deepening intranational divisions. The latter seemed suddenly to be halted when a military mutiny turned into a coup d’état and Bédié was thrown out of office in December 1999. The new military head of state, General Robert Guéï, announced the end of all exclusions and in January 2000 set up a government that combined the two former opposition parties, the Socialist FPI of Laurent Gbagbo and the Liberal RDR of Ouattara to leave out the previous government party, the PCDI. In the course of the next four months, however, this unity collapsed when Guéï reintroduced *Ivoirité* with the support of the FPI and against the RDR. General Guéï launched a campaign to delegitimise the RDR as a proper political formation and now supported a rewriting of the Constitution again to marginalise national and non-national allochthons. Events took a decisive turn in May 2000. The three articles here discussed were published within the period between General Guéï’s coup d’état of December 1999 and his sudden and vigorous revival of a renewed new policy of *Ivoirité* in May 2000.

Three *bori bana* Articles: A Genocidal Crescendo

The three *bori bana* articles published in *Notre Voie* comment on topical issues in Ivorian politics and voice the opinion of the Socialist Party FPI. To do so most effectively, they instrumentalise words from a linguistic group (Dyula) and a historical personage (Samori) in the form of an established expression with strong cultural overtones. In other words, the acts of code-crossing function in a discourse that culturalises or ethnicises political events and adversaries. To this end the code-crossing actor engages in complex and entangled processes of political and ethnic selfing/othering. My analysis of the newspaper articles will identify which political and ethnic ‘others’ are evoked and how this is achieved by activating certain voices and particular meanings by way of the token *bori bana*.

Following their chronological order, the three articles combine to a crescendo on several levels. On the level of selfing/othering, one can perceive a widening of the ‘other’ group from political

opponent via ethnic antagonist to racialised other. In terms of the three grammars introduced by Baumann, this hardening and broadening of selfings/otherings is achieved by operating, successively, the segmentary, the orientalist, and the encompassing grammar. On the level of code-crossing, this crescendo is matched by an ever-deepening implication of the author into the broadening category of the 'other' which almost leads to the authors identifying with the 'other'. This combination of a hardening othering and a deepening incursion reaches its climax in the third article when the author radically transforms the voice and the meaning of *bori bana* in order to let the racialised other express his exclusion not only from the political arena or as an ethnic stranger, but from humankind in general. That is the 'moment' when I will dare to speak of a genocidal encompassment of the other through radical discursive penetration. Let me thus reconstruct the gradual build-up in the ways in which *Notre Voie* contributors construct their political adversaries by crossing into their language.

The first article, hereafter called 'the Bédié article' (see Annex 1), dates from six days after the coup d'état of December 1999 and is entitled: 'That's it, *bori bana* for Bédié' ('*Ça y est, bori-bana pour Bédié*'). In the short piece journalist Maurice Lohourignon (2000) reports on the whereabouts of President Bédié who had been ousted and chased from Côte d'Ivoire just a few days before. He begins by saying that 'Bédié has fallen', has been ousted, and has left the country: first to Nigeria, then to Togo, and finally to Mali. But his travels and travails are to no avail: no-one is willing to support him. The article ends with: "In Bamako [Mali], Bédié bursts out in tears. His long and foolish race is over. Bori-bana! Pity for N'Zuéba". The last sentence repeats the *bori-bana* of the title to summarise the ousted president's fruitless search for international support, but it also adds in another ethnic marker: '*N'Zuéba*.'

N'Zuéba is the self-attributed nickname of Bédié and means 'small river' in Baule, the mother tongue of the ousted president. Bédié (1999) claims that he was given this name when on the day of his birth it started to rain and the water formed a small river in the village. Not only was this a sign of benediction, but also, according to Bédié himself, an indication of his future career as a leader and president (1999, p16). In the article, this instance of code-switching utilises a Baule expression to point to the ousted Bédié while the Dyula language expression *bori bana* indexes its main opponent: Alassane Ouattara and the Republican Party RDR.

Until the coup d'état of December 1999, the Socialist Party FPI of Gbagbo had indeed considered *Ivoirité* as a battle-ground engaging two political elites that were erstwhile united in the unitary PDCI party: the Baule or Akan planters who continued to dominate the PDCI-RDA party versus the commercial and financial elites represented by the RDR. The first *bori bana*

article reflects this constellation and reports on the antagonism between the two camps. Its last sentence indicates both camps by a code-switching manoeuvre: the Baule expression ‘*N’Zueba*’ points to Bédié and the PDCI-RDA, while the Dyula expression *bori bana* indexes their main opponents: Ouattara and the RDR. Now, the article makes it clear, the small river of Bédié has ceased to flow. In order to signal this end, the journalist uses the Dyula expression *bori bana*. In the absence of any explicit reference to Samori’s unconquerable fortress, the expression is associated with Bédié’s *fin de carrière* – a desperate end that, according to the official FPI view, was directly provoked by the RDR, initially suspected of organising the December coup d’état.

In the juxtaposition of *N’Zueba* and *bori bana*, the topical political reality is reported and explained quite literally in ethnic terms within a textual construction that is clearly ‘segmentary’. In terms of code, the French-speaking journalist distances himself from both the Dyula-speaking RDR and the Baule-speaking PDCI-RDA. Making use of the language ideology in which French outrivals the national vernaculars, he places himself above both parties whose quarrel is presented as an ethnic one. In terms of political ideology, the journalist plays on the idea launched by Houphouët-Boigny and repeated by Bédié that ‘ethnic’ opposition (*tribalisme*) is politically illegitimate and detrimental for the nation as a whole. Thus, in the segmentary construction at hand, the journalist reserves for himself, his newspaper and the Socialist Party FPI, the position of state-builder. This attitude would soon be translated into political action: a few days after the article was published, the FPI decided to join the RDR in the government of coup leader General Guéï, and it announced that it would help to rebuild the nation after the disaster of the Bédié administration. In this project, which later came to be known as the ‘refoundation’ (*la refondation*) of Côte d’Ivoire, the FPI faced one main competitor: the RDR led by Alassane Ouattara. This political ‘other’ would be dealt with a few months later in the second of the *bori bana* articles.

This second article was published in May 2000. During that month, a split had occurred within the transition government whereby the head of state General Guéï took sides with the FPI-members in his cabinet and started to work towards excluding the RDR from the political arena. On Friday 12th, Guéï publicly announced his volte-face by openly accusing the RDR of planning a coup d’état and by stating that the constitution would exclude presidential candidates if both or one of their parents were not Ivorian by birth. This was widely read as a frontal attack against the RDR-leader Alassane Ouattara whose Ivorian nationality had been cast into doubt ever since he had first entered into competition with Bédié for the highest office in 1995.

Now, in May 2000, *Notre Voie*'s top journalist and senior editor, Freedom Neruda, published an article under the title 'Dramane Ouattara: bori bana' (Neruda 2000), hereafter called 'the Ouattara article' (Annex 2). In this long piece, Neruda rereads the history of Côte d'Ivoire from the moment when Ouattara first appeared on the political scene as a prime minister under President Houphouët-Boigny in 1990. The author holds Ouattara responsible for destabilising the country ever since, and he links this with the personal history of Ouattara who is presented as a person constantly travelling in and out of the country and changing his nationality as he sees fit. In the final paragraph of the article, the author asserts how General Guéï's recent announcements will put an end to Ouattara's political aspirations. The article ends: 'Dramane Ouattara is now completely out of the race. The man can retire to [...the village] Sindou, because BORI BANA.'

Like the Bédié article, the Ouattara article seems simply to report on the end of a major politician's career, and thus merely to reactivate the general sense of *bori bana* as a *fin de carrière*. The obvious difference is that, while the first article focuses on Bédié's final career moves, the second article narrates in broad lines the story of Ouattara's entire political curriculum and life-style. Its narrative features all the stereotypes of the typical 'Dyula' which had been inscribed by Bédié's version of *Ivoirité*: the RDR leader is portrayed as a 'national allochthon' who, apart from economic profit, also seeks full political citizenship and power, and therefore lies about his real roots outside the country. This 'lie' is evoked by 'Sindou' which is presumed by Ouattara's political opponents to be his place of birth in Burkina Faso – something which Ouattara himself denies. The ethnic profile that emerges from the meticulous description of Ouattara's life is that of the 'national allochthon': born abroad and leading a life of migration and fortune-seeking (*bori*, 'running') while changing loyalties and identities in the process. The article concludes with a verdict that calls an end (*bana*) to this wandering existence and shows people of the Ouattara type that they have no place as full citizens of, or even in, Côte d'Ivoire and had better seek their rights in the countries where their roots are. This narrative of Ouattara's life draws a 'phantom portrait' that offers a wide scope for further applications. To the extent that '*bori*' stands for the endless mobility of a typical 'Dyula' life, the *bana* calls for an end to it and asks the Dyula to go back to wherever they came from.

By contrast to the first Bédié article, the Ouattara article implicitly broadens its target from the individual politician's fate to a whole ethnic group's future. In the Bédié article, the author places himself at the seemingly neutral apex of a segmentary order, where one of the branches had lost the battle. In the Ouattara article, the author clearly situates himself as one of the parties and uses a grammar of the orientalisising kind. Here, the senior editor uses the editorial column to

merge observation and opinion in order to express the repositioning of the FPI in the changing political landscape. Politically, the author-editor engages the FPI in a cross-party alliance that at the time is beginning to be known as ‘TSO’ (*Tout sauf Ouattara* – ‘Anything but Ouattara’). In the ethnic register, the author-editor fully reactivates the discourse of *Ivoirité*. Sketching a paradigmatically non-Ivorian way of life, he insinuates a consensus about an Ivorian way of life. The latter is directly imported from the discourse of *Ivoirité* which now re-appears not as the Akanist project of the isolated President Bédié, but as part of a general programme to rebuild the nation (Dozon 2000).

To summarise, the code-crossing use of *bori bana* shows a crescendo from the neutral, if perhaps ironic tone of the first article to the partisan and sarcastic tone of the second. This change of tone signifies a change in the political position of the FPI. Having been a relative outsider to the main developments (*Ivoirité* and the coup d’état), it proceeded actively to take part in a programme to ‘refound the nation’. In pursuing this programme, it meets the same major opponent as Bédié had met in his own time: Ouattara and his Republican Party RDR. At this stage, it tries to exclude the RDR, not by furthering an ethnic quarrel within the nation, but by constructing a new national narrative in which there is no space for the itinerant, border-crossing, ‘running’ (*bori*) ‘Dyula’¹³.

The third article (Annex 3) will go even further in widening the code-crossing scope of the word *bori*. Here, as I will show, all movement by ‘the Dyula’ is interpreted as treason, and all ‘breathing space’ is to be made impossible. In order to persuade his readers to such a conclusion, the author further manipulates the meaning and voice of the original *bori bana*. If the two previous articles vaguely situated *bori bana* in a *fin-de-carrière* context similar to the one of Samori, the third text blatantly relocates the phrase in a context of capture, deportation, and exclusion from the human race. Remarkably, its author uses the *gestus* and *ductus* of ‘scientific’ language to do so. While the Ouattara article had ‘only’ sought to expatriate Alassane Ouattara and ‘the Dyula’ from the confines of the nation, the third article seeks to exclude ‘the Dyula’ from humanity.

Vivisection of a code-crossing performance

13. In the period following the *bori bana* newspaper articles, the chat section of Côte d’Ivoire’s major website, Abidjan.net, featured one intervention that spoke of the RDR militants as *boribaga* (‘those whose profession/nature it is to run/flee’), and one which resigified the acronym of the Republican Party RDR (*Rassemblement des Républicains*) as: ‘*Rassemblement des Réfugiés*’ (‘Party of the Refugees’).

Dramane Koné, University Professor of Literature at the University of Abidjan and since October 2000 also Minister of Culture, runs a weekly column in *Notre Voie*. His Saturday column entitled *Dire bien* ('Well-spoken'), often presents highly technical linguistic analyses of topical political discourse. On 21 May 2000, Koné published his column under the title: "'Bori bana", Autopsy of an Expression'. This article, hereafter called the Koné article, sets out to analyse the use of the expression *bori bana* in the Ouattara article of the journalist Neruda, published four days before. The text consists of two parts. In the first part Koné reveals the historical origin of the expression *bori bana* while the second part is reserved for linguistic considerations and personal reflections on what *bori bana* might or should mean at the time of writing. In searching for the historical origin of the expression *bori bana*, Koné's text negotiates between the Ouattara article written by his colleague Freedom Neruda and the established historiography of Samori. Neruda, like his colleague who wrote the Bédié article, firmly placed the phrase *bori bana* in the context of a political *fin de carrière*. In the first part of his article, Koné lends this position a 'scientific' endorsement by situating the historical *bori bana* in the story of Samori's final flight. In the second part, however, Koné exploits this image to broaden its target and meaning in an astonishing text about 'final stages'.

The origin of the expression *bori bana*, Koné states, is the capture of Samori Touré by the French in 1898. More precisely, he points out that *bori bana* is part of a quote from a Malinke lieutenant who was pursuing the fleeing Samori and who exclaimed in Dyula, the colonial army language that he shared with Samori: '*i lo Samori, i lo Samori, bori banna!*' – 'Hey you stop, Samori, hey stop, Samori, the fleeing is finished!'. This remarkable rendition of the story entirely dissociates *bori bana* from the unconquerable fortress Boribana and removes the words from Samori in order to relocate them in the voice of Samori's captor. With this displacement, Koné turns the motto of a defiant hero into a symbol for his final humiliation. In a couple of sentences, the entire postcolonial, empowering text tradition about Samori is turned on its head.

Does this mean that Koné reverts to the French colonial tradition that only used Samori as an excuse to demonstrate the strength and wit of those who captured him? In some ways it does; but Koné obscures this congruence by playing two classic tricks of his trade: first, he provides a seemingly objective bibliographic reference to a book by an African historian; secondly, he calls the expression 'an utterance sadly renowned' (*un énoncé tristement célèbre*), thus inferring that his re-attribution represents common knowledge and simply recuperates local/national historical lore.

Tracing the bibliographic reference indeed leads us to the right author, but to the wrong book. Koné cites a biography of Sékou Touré in which the author, the Guinean historian Ibrahima Baba Kaké (1987), mentions Samori Touré as the presumed forefather of the postindependence leader Sékou Touré. In this book, however, there is no mention of the ‘i lo’ anecdote which, so far as I can trace it, only occurs in another publication by Kaké (1989). The latter is an anthology of short articles written during the colonial period and published previously in French colonial periodicals. This collection contains a short essay on the capture of Samori, based on a report written by the French Colonel Lartigue in 1898/1899. Lartigue narrates how the French army took Samori by surprise in his village and how he fled while African soldiers (*tirailleurs*) went after him. Then, ‘the soldiers who were ahead shouted: ‘Ilo Samori; ilo Samori! Stop Samori!’ (*les tirailleurs de tête crient: ‘Ilo Samory; ilo Samory! Halte Samori!*) (Baba Kaké 1989, p83).

In the hands of Professor Koné, this colonial report is turned into: ‘a Malinke lieutenant, Al Kamissa, pursues Samori and exclaims, while gasping for air: “i lo Samori, i lo, bori banna”’. In other words, Koné replaces the French *Halte Samory* by the Dyula expression *bori bana*. Koné’s palimpsest not only hides the French colonial source of the story, but also replaces the French rendition by a superimposed translation into Dyula: *bori banna!*

What the article thus insinuates as common historical lore and African historiography, is a piece of French colonial propaganda with the ‘French’ writer removed and the French language translated into Dyula. The place of the French is not simply taken by Africans, but more specifically by a Malinke sergeant, that is, by a speaker of Manding or specifically Dyula. The story that it was a Malinke sergeant who captured the Malinke warlord Samori is indeed told by the Malinke historian Baba Kaké, born and raised in Kankan, the ‘Dyula’ capital of Guinea. Exploiting this Manding version of rewriting French colonial history, Professor Koné can now pursue his code-crossing journey into the present situation of ‘the Dyula’, and not only those far away in the north, but also those nearby in the capital Abidjan. This second manoeuvre takes place in the second part of the text which contains the following important passages:

In Dyula, the verb ‘bori’ has the peculiar characteristic of allowing for two postpositions, namely *nya* and *kô*, which correspond to the French prepositions ‘ahead’ and ‘behind’. [...]

In the second case, where you are after something in order to catch it, if you get it, *boli banna*, but if the thing that appears unattainable escapes you, *bori banna*. Such as power. So good judgement advises this: ‘what you pursue, if you can’t get it, stop and let go’. It is without doubt the latter representation that one finds among the inhabitants

of the town quarter *bori bana* of Bamako (Mali) and the town quarter ‘Boribana’ of Attécoubé (commune of Abidjan) [...]

‘We call this quarter “Boribana” because we have searched everywhere, we haven’t found a place to stay, we have enough of it, we stay here where we are, because we have not reached the goal we were after,’ thus confided in me, sombrely, an Ivorian resident in one of the streets called street of broken dreams.[...]

[Its inhabitants] are, half-lost like the militants of a political party (which I don’t need to name because you know it) in a complex network of streets and gutters, awaiting an event that hovers over their heads like a thunderstorm of deception and gestation. They don’t even know that the negative that is presented to them risks to turn into parody, into humiliation. The summit of the satanic, really, for all the vanquished who refuse *bori bana*. To be taken into consideration, without respite before the crumbling of dreams....and the running of tears (Nyadji).

The second part of the article highlights the present-day dimension. It is introduced by a linguistic analysis that connects the Ouattara article with Koné’s subsequent political and socio-economic considerations. Koné points out that one can either run ahead of something or behind it. Running ahead of something means that one is fleeing or being chased. In this case, *bori bana* means that one is caught. This is obviously the matter in the Ouattara article where Alassane Ouattara is caught by the two interventions of Guéï announced during the previous week. Koné, however, says he chooses to focus on the second case, when somebody is running behind something, more specifically something ‘unattainable’, as he specifies wryly, ‘like power’. Subsequently he identifies the two (interrelated) groups that are pursuing unachievable ‘power’: first, the Republican Party RDR which, if the Ouattara article is correct in its verdict, has lost its leader Alassane Ouattara, and secondly, the people who share the same itinerant (*bori*) ethnic profile with the RDR but who, instead of being prosperous and successful, inhabit a quarter of the capital that ‘we call [...] “Boribana”’ (emphasis mine). Koné makes it clear that he is referring to non-national migrants and settlers when he specifies that *Boribana* quarters can be found both in Abidjan and in Bamako (Mali), and he characterises the socio-economic situation of the settlers by referring to their habitat: impoverished and hopeless. Again, as in the historical part, Koné appears merely to register what his sources tell him: it were the people themselves who called their own town quarter *Boribana*, and it was they who told him about the significance of the term.

Koné uses *bori bana* to associate the two groups and construct them into one constituency of political and socio-economic desperados. The first group, the RDR, is a political formation with an ethnic profile which, already in the Ouattara article, was built around the idea of itinerancy and border-crossing (*bori*). The second group consists of non-national settlers (Malians) and ‘national allochthons’ (with Malian or ‘northern’ roots), both equally impoverished. Together, they form a kind of political ‘people’ who share Dyula as a common language and who, by virtue of the phrase *bori bana*, share a common history and a common fate. Like Samori who is their historical model, the ‘Dyula’ have a tradition of fanatically pursuing unattainable goals. Like Ouattara who is their contemporary model, ‘the Dyula’ are coming to a point where they have to let go, unless, Koné cogitates, they want this pursuit to turn ‘into a humiliation’ and into ‘the summit of the satanic’: ‘the shattering of dreams and the running of tears (Nyadji)’. This last word of the article, the Dyula language word for ‘tears’, is a cunningly implicit way of indexing, again through code-switching, that the tears will be shed by ‘the Dyula’. At that point, the title of the article begins to make sense: Koné performs an ‘autopsy’ of an expression, but the pre-empted death of the expression prefigures the death of the people whose fate is sealed by it.

In the crescendo of the three *bori bana* articles, the column by Koné represents the apex of selfing through othering in that it combines a most complex code-crossing performance with a selfing/othering grammar of radical encompassment.

To contrast the stages of this crescendo, the first (Bédié) article had presented a rather simple case of code-crossing whereby an author lends a quote from one party to address it to a third party. In this segmentary structure the French-speaking journalist stands above the Dyula-speaking accuser (RDR, *bori bana*) who targets the Baule-speaking victim (Bédié, *N’Zueba*). In the second (Ouattara) article, the voice of the journalist collapses into, or merges with, the voice of the opponents of Ouattara. Only two positions remain: Ouattara versus the TSO, the ‘Anything but Ouattara’ movement. This second discursive strategy of dealing with the ‘Dyula’ code word *bori bana* may lend itself to a comparison with the English adage of ‘making the other eat his words’. By force of this merger into an orientalist scheme, *bori bana* is turned into a bi-local statement that originates in the Ouattara (‘Dyula’) constituency, is then appropriated by the TSO movement against Ouattara, and is finally fed back to Ouattara for him to mull over when he retires to his ancestral village. To remain in this, admittedly somewhat gargantuan metaphor of ingestion, the journalist swallows the Dyula expression only to spit it out again in the form of a venomous judgement.

The third (Koné) article, finally, adds different layers of speakers (the Mande soldier), authors (the historian Kaké), sources (Samori) and targets (RDR voters and migrants/settlers) to the *bori bana* affair. This inextricable maze of voices, however, collapses, as we have seen, into one ‘Dyula’ voice and the *bori bana* expression. Above this manoeuvre, there presides the author. First, the Dyula voice is appropriated by Koné the historian who hands it over to Koné the linguist, who in turn surrenders it to Koné the Everyman. Immediately after explaining the syntax of *bori*, Koné engineers a change of character introduced by: ‘Therefore, good judgement advises this’. From then onwards, Koné leaves the ivory tower of historiography and linguistics and takes his place among ‘the people’ when he reports what an inhabitant of the Boribana slums ‘confided’ in him ‘somberly’ (*me confia, l’air navré*). Here at last it becomes clear that ‘Dyula’ is now also the language that links Koné to the subjects of his enquiry. The linguist Koné not only has a certain expertise in the Dyula language (Koné 1988), but he is also, most probably, a first-language speaker of Dyula. Born in Bouaké and carrying the patronym Koné makes him readily recognisable as ‘a Dyula’. Thus, once Koné mixes among ‘the Dyula’, he can do so simultaneously as ‘a Dyula’ and as their fiercest antagonist. These different positions correspond to different targets. Koné the historian evokes the historical ‘Dyula’, Koné the linguist is facing the (perpetual/traditional) ‘Dyula speaker’, while Koné the Everyman or Koné ‘the Dyula’ confronts the ‘RDR/Dyula’ people in their general condition as human beings.

The crescendo of successive ‘generalisations’ reaches its climax when Koné formulates his conclusions about the foreseeable end of ‘the Dyula’. One might call this the moment of ultimate encompassment: all the multiple voices are captured by one personage: the sensible, humane voice that represents humanity and finds in its midst ‘the Dyula’ who ‘do not even know that the negative that is presented to them risks to turn into parody, into humiliation’. The parody is that ‘the Dyula’ themselves are a parody of what it means to be a human being: they do not listen to good advice, they do not know their past, their language and their nature, and they are thus incapable of facing their future which holds nothing short of an ill-fated end. Such encompassment is sustained by a triple movement of insinuation. As a scientist, a historian and linguist, Koné penetrates ‘Dyula’ tradition and language from above. As a visitor credited with confidences in Dyula language, he meets them as an empathetic observer. As a purportedly neutral Everyman (‘Dyula’ or anti-‘Dyula’) he prophesises the imminent ‘tears’ that ‘the Dyula’ will shed.

Bori bana, civil war, and three dynamics of implosion

Since the last of the three newspaper articles was written, Côte d'Ivoire has witnessed continuous spells of violence and the increasing 'brutalisation of public life' which has resulted in a civil war that is tearing apart Côte d'Ivoire (Le Pape & Vidal 2003). Since 19 September 2002, insurgent military have occupied most of the northern half of the country. Ever since the rebels (Forces Nouvelles) started negotiating with the Ivorian government, they have brought up two critical issues of 'nationality' and 'identification' (*Projet d'accord*, 2002). These issues revolve around the questions: who is Ivorian, and how can someone identify oneself as such? These questions linger at the heart of the ongoing conflict, and they are being discussed against the background of continuing suspicions and 'revelations' about the 'real' identities of the rebel soldiers, and the 'real' intentions of the different parties in the conflict: the Gbagbo government, the French peace-keeping troops, the insurgent military, the neighbouring countries, etc..

Soon after the conflict broke out, the government launched the idea that the rebels are in fact 'international terrorists'. It chose the Washington National Press Club to let its Economy Minister announce:

"I do not exclude the hypothesis that they [the rebels] enjoy the support of terrorist groups and you [Americans] know these groups. After all, the attack against our democracy took place in September; maybe there is a link" (in *L'Inter*, 5 November 2002).

On 30 September, the original day of this government announcement, the American Section of the Republican Party RDR organised a demonstration in Washington to protest against the way in which the government was handling the rebellion. The protesters stressed that in government-held territory, non-national migrants were the object of persecution and abuse. Thereupon, the Ivorian Embassy in Washington issued a statement on the internet, saying that the RDR-U.S. "organised a manifestation in support of the terrorists" (Ambassade de Côte d'Ivoire à Washington, 2002).

Following the revelations that the rebels were terrorists and the RDR militants their supporters, the government announced that it would start to smoke out the insurgents who remained in the government-held southern part of the country. One measure taken in that respect was the systematic destruction of all "precarious quarters" (*quartiers précaires*) of the capital Abidjan, because they could conceal weapons and hide terrorists from neighbouring countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. Soon afterwards, an article appeared in the pro-government newspaper *Le National*, welcoming the government's measures but asking for the immediate and

total destruction of the Boribana quarter of Abidjan. Boribana, so *Le National* wrote, needed to be “razed immediately” and “without worries” (*sans état d’âme*). After all, given its strategic position near the lagoon and the presidential palace and because its allegedly large stock of arms, it was to be considered a ‘powderkeg’ (*poudrière*) (P.L. 2002).

The ‘powderkeg’ word made its re-appearance in a series of articles published on the pro-government website *Ivoire Forum* dealing with a new mass-grave of about 120 corpses that was discovered in early December 2002 along the frontline in central-west Côte d’Ivoire. One article (Bakary 2002) ‘revealed’ that this mass grave was a “montage” set up by the rebels. The explanation was that the rebels swear by their own immortality and are convinced of their immunity against bullets. After many of its troops had been killed in a battle with government soldiers, the author explained, the rebel leaders had tried to hide the corpses in a mass-grave in order to “mask the trickery of the immortality of their troops” (*idem*). If the corpses would succeed in fooling the rebels, another article argued, then they would also mislead Benoît Scheuer, maker of the film *Côte d’Ivoire, poudrière identitaire*. Scheuer, the author said, was absolutely right when in his film he predicted a future genocide. Only, the recent mass-grave proved, according to the author, that the filmmaker mistook victims for executioners: it should be obvious to the international community that the north was now implementing its long-planned genocidal project against the south (Ebrokié 2002). The rebels for their part are equally making use of Scheuer’s prediction of genocide when on their website they publish articles such as “Gbagbo legalises the genocidal machine” and “Gbagbo, Goebbels, Goudé” (MPCI 2002). The former article likens the FPI youngsters to the Rwandan ‘Interahamwe’ while the latter text compares the ex-student leader Blé Goudé with the Nazi minister of information because, it states, both are responsible for encouraging people in expressing their xenophobic hatred. These observations make clear how the discourse of the ongoing Ivorian conflict over ‘nationality’ and ‘identity’ is expanding both in time and in space. Speaking of time, one observes how the conflict accommodates chunks of national and global, recent and ancient history.

In this chapter, I have focussed on the phrase *bori bana* in order to elicit the re-working of history in terms of the ongoing conflict. In passing, I also mentioned that *Ivoirité* unearthed precolonial history in order to identify the ‘national autochthons’ of Côte d’Ivoire, or, that the history of recent genocides (Nazi Germany, Rwanda) and global conflicts (‘September 11th’) is being inscribed into the arguments of the conflicting parties. Perhaps more obvious is the geographic expansion of the conflict’s discourse in the way it implicates Côte d’Ivoire’s neighbouring countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea), the international community (UN,

Prévention Génocides), and global politics ('the war against terrorism'). Here, too, *bori bana* in its guise as the capital's quarter Boribana, provides an instructive case. In the Koné article, Boribana housed historically 'hopeless' people who found themselves literally and metaphorically in a dead-end street. In the recent conflict the overcrowded Bori-bana is said to hide weapons and international terrorists in a site that becomes redefined as a strategically positioned base camp for attacking the president and the entire population of Abidjan.

The case presented in this chapter exemplifies the way in which the ongoing conflict in Côte d'Ivoire expands globally while it gets articulated in the local idiom of *bori bana*. Therefore, I think, this case productively illustrates the process of implosion in the three senses pointed out in the introductory parts of this chapter.

First, *bori bana* is the site where, in the terminology of Appadurai (1996), nationally constructed identities collide with transnational ones and the latter are 'discovered' to be the disguise of the former. In the *bori bana* token, the journalist uncovers his former President Bédié as a political pariah both in his own country and in the West African region. In the same Dyula expression, the senior editor unmaskes his former prime minister Ouattara as a migrant and a foreigner with no political future in his host country. In merging the phrase *bori bana* and the capital's quarter Boribana, the university professor discovers that the destitute urban population of a town quarter in the heart of Abidjan are national and non-national allochthons who have a history of self-isolation and thus a future of self-annihilation. In sum, *bori bana* represents the discursive site where Ivorians reckon with 'deep categorical treachery' and insecurity in the immediacy and intimacy of their own historical and contemporary society.

Second, *bori bana* is turned into an object of resigification in the subjunctive spaces of the printed, mass, and electronic media. The long history of the renarration of *bori bana* features a broad range of media that obviously illustrate rival interests. In colonial diaries and magazines, the fortress Boribana recounts the history of Samori's overconfidence and French superior strength and wit. In the heavy volumes of Person's post-independence historiography, the colonial story is discredited as ideological, and Samori is given back the kind of historical importance which is later broadcast in the early postcolonial genres of spoken and musical theatre, followed by the internationally acclaimed African literature of Kourouma and the reggae music of Alpha Blondy. From the 1990s, *bori bana*, now firmly established as a token of Dyula language and turned into a token of an ethnicised 'Dyula' history and identity, is reworked in a newspaper, the favoured medium of the multiparty Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. These newspapers offer a wide variety of genres, ranging from the standard report through the editorial piece to the

weekly column of a university professor. The latter's *bori bana* article permits him to insert into the chief medium of party-political propaganda such conventions and strategies as bibliographic references and sociological generalisations from his domain of 'science'. The result is a 'mobile' analysis whereby the analyst approaches his target – defined as a 'sitting duck' – from above (scientific interest) and from below (human interest). These two positions collapse, however, in the overall 'familiarity' of the author with Dyula language and the 'Dyula' predicament. Finally, we observe how, in the most recent phase of the Ivorian conflict, the worldwide web gains prominence. Were it not for the internet, how could a rather minor journal like *Le National*, as biased a source as the Ivorian Embassy in Washington or a needy organisation like the MPC, ever hope to reach transnational audiences?

In sum, the uses, appropriations and reappropriations of the phrase *bori bana* may well serve to illustrate the apparent explosion in reach, but also the fragmentation by bias, of the mass media. More interestingly perhaps, they also demonstrate how increasing links of intertextuality (clustered around concepts such as 'migrants', 'terrorists', 'Muslims', etc.) interact with an increasing intensity of generic amalgamations (ranging from the popular to the 'scientific'). Combining these two factors, both local and global meanings are transformed, resignified and revoiced in a continuous exchange, and the resulting mixture can indeed be made to implode into local and national articulations of violence.

Focusing on the third dynamic of implosion, the crescendo of the three *bori bana* articles shows how the former two dynamics are paralleled by the kind of implosion in selfing/othering that Baumann identifies as an essential precondition of genocide. Among the three grammars that Baumann proposes, encompassment is probably the most ambiguous scheme of selfing/othering. In this grammar, or at least in the way I have defined this grammar, inclusion and exclusion seem to be inextricably bound together. The study of code-crossing or double-voicing may perhaps offer a productive way of tracing genocidal phenomena to implicitly genocidal rhetorics: the *poiesis* of genocide. This *poiesis* seems to require discursive techniques of 'getting *into*' the other, while at the same time it must engineer a major distancing operation. To express this in terms of discursive strategies, this double operation is paralleled by, first, a radical appropriation

of the other and secondly, a resignification of the appropriated other as a non-partner in any possible dialogue.¹⁴

The introductory and concluding parts of this chapter have illustrated how the resignifications of the three articles were put to new uses and staged in mass-mediated performances. These new uses purported to ‘unmask’ events and identities and to ‘explain’ them in broader, global ‘cosmologies’ of interests and antagonisms. This shows how, in their search for plausibility and legitimacy, the authors of what Mbembe would call ‘simulacral’ universes activate the globally dominant mythologies of their times. During the Cold War, Houphouët-Boigny imprisoned and eliminated political opponents on accusations of being communist revolutionaries. In the post-Berlin Wall era, Bédié and his professors built *Ivoirité* around the concepts of international migration, autochthony and multiculturalism. In present-day Côte d’Ivoire, the migrants, allochthons and cultural ‘others’ are being investigated and persecuted for being potential ‘international terrorists’. These subsequent dominant identities circulate globally and are inscribed in the encompassing projects of selfing/othering and the implosions that they feed into. ‘Genocide’ therefore lends its local implosive strength from the plausibility and the legitimacy of the identities that are manufactured in the hegemonic centres of the globe. It may be easy to identify the producers of the ‘poiesis of genocide’ in Côte d’Ivoire, but their sources and providers are found far beyond the confines of this nation that seems to be thoroughly captivated by the global open economy of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ identities.

14. Here, too, the linguistic processes leading from civic exclusion to genocidal annihilation bear a chilling resemblance to Benveniste’s distinction between binary grammars of possible dialogue and ternary grammars of total exclusion (in Baumann 2004).

References

- Agamben, Giorgio 1998 *Homo Sacer: sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Agamben, Giorgio 1999 *Remnants of Auschwitz: the witness and the archive*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books.
- Alpha, Blondy 1984 *Bori Samory* (album: Cocody Rock).
- Ambassade de Côte d'Ivoire à Washington. 2002. 'Le RDR organise une manifestation en faveur des terroristes à Washington' (30 September 2002)
[[http://www.abidjan.net/actualites/article/index.asp?n=31351, 2/12/2002](http://www.abidjan.net/actualites/article/index.asp?n=31351,2/12/2002)].
- Amnesty International 2002 'Côte d'Ivoire: Daloa massacres recall the spectre of Youpougon' (28 October 2002). Report: AFR 31/006/2002.
- Amselle, Jean-Loup 1998 'Fulani, Bambara, Malinke: A system of transformations'. In: J.-L. Amselle (ed.) *Mestizo logics: anthropology and identity in Africa and elsewhere*, pp. 43-57. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun 1996 *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Apter, Andrew 1999 'IBB = 419: Nigerian democracy and the politics of illusion'. In: J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff (eds.) *Civil society and the political imagination in Africa: critical perspectives*, pp. 267-307. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, Hannah 1985 (1968/66) *The origins of totalitarianism*. San Diego: Harcourt.
- Arnaut, Karel 2001 'De miskennis van het globaliseringsconflict. Internationale inmenging in Ivoorkust', *Samenleving en politiek*, 8/10, pp. 48-52.
- Arnaut, Karel 2004 *Reckoning with 'scales' in media anthropology: the Patriotic Movement and the mediatization of autochthony in Côte d'Ivoire*. Paper delivered at the 8th EASA Conference, Vienna (8-12/09/2004), at the Workshop *Media and the Global* (Convenors: Dorle Dracklé and Ulf Hannerz).
- Baba Kaké, Ibrahima 1987 *Sékou Touré, le héros et le tyran*. Paris: Jeune Afrique Livres.
- Baba Kaké, Ibrahima 1989 *Journal de L'Afrique, Tome 3 (1885-1949)*. Abidjan: Edition Ami.
- Bakary, Koné 2002 'Le charnier de Monoko-Zohi un montage du MPC? ' *Ivoire Forum: La voix de la diaspora*, 8 [[http://www.ivoireforum.com/develop; 20/12/2002](http://www.ivoireforum.com/develop;20/12/2002)].

- Bakhtin, M.M [1929] 1984 *Problems of Dostoyevsky's poetics*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Baumann, Gerd 2004 'Grammars of identity/alterity: a structural approach'. In: G. Baumann & A. Gingrich (eds.) *Grammars of identity/alterity: a structural approach*. London: Berghahn.
- Baumann, Gerd & André Gingrich 2004 'Foreword'. In: G. Baumann & A. Gingrich (eds.) *Grammars of identity/alterity: a structural approach*. London: Berghahn.
- Bayart, Jean-François 1985 'L'énonciation du politique', *Revue française de science politique*, 35/3, pp. 343-63.
- Bayart, Jean-François 1999 'L'Afrique dans le monde: une histoire d'extraversion', *Critique Internationale* 5, pp. 97-120.
- Bazin, Jean 1985 'A chacun son Bambara'. In: J.-L. Amselle & E. M'Boloko (eds.) *Au coeur de l'éthnie: ethnologie, tribalisme et Etat en Afrique*, pp. 87-128. Paris: La Découverte.
- Bazin, Laurent 1998 *Entreprise, politique, parenté: une perspective anthropologique sur la Côte d'Ivoire dans le monde actuel*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Bazin, Laurent 1999 'Domination extérieure et dénonciations ethniques en Côte-d'Ivoire', *Autrepart* 10, pp. 77-90.
- Bédié, Henri Konan 1999 *Les chemins de ma vie*. Paris: Plon.
- Bédié, Henri Konan s.d. *Ecrits et propos du Président Henri Konan Bédié sur les véritables principes de l'Ivoirité* (http://www.cotedivoire-libertes.org/hkb_livreblanc.htm; 2/08/2002).
- Bembeya Jazz National 1969 *Regard sur le passé* (album: Bolibana Collection).
- Billings, Dwight 1990 'Religion as Opposition: A Gramscian Analysis', *American Journal of Sociology*, 96/1, pp. 1-31.
- Boone, Catherine 1993 'Commerce in Côte d'Ivoire: Ivoirianisation without Ivoirian Traders', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 21/1, pp. 67-92.
- Boone, Douglas & Catherine Boone 1999 'Enquête sur les dialectes Mande Nord de Côte d'Ivoire', *Mandekan* 35: 17-71.
- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre 2000 'Question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d'Ivoire', *Politique africaine* 78, pp. 94-125.

- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre & Jean-Pierre Dozon 1985 'Colonisation, économie de plantation et société civile en Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers O.R.S.T.O.M., Série Sciences Humaines* 21 (1), pp. 63-80.
- Chrétien, Jean-Pierre (ed.) 1995 *Rwanda: les médias du génocide*. Paris: Karthala.
- Comaroff, John & Jean 1999 'Introduction'. In: J. and J. Comaroff. (eds.) *Civil society and the political imagination in Africa: critical perspectives*, pp. 1-43. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Côte d'Ivoire, République de 2001 *Rapports sur les événements d'octobre et décembre 2000 en Côte d'Ivoire*. Abidjan: CEDA.
- Delafosse, Maurice 1901 *Essai de manuel pratique de la langue mandé ou mandingue*. Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- Derive, Marie-Jo 1976 'Dioula véhiculaire, dioula de Kong et dioula d'Odienne', *Annales de l'Université d'Abidjan, Série H. Linguistique* 9/1, pp. 55-83.
- Derive, Marie-Jo 1990 *Etude dialectologique de l'aire Manding de Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Peeters.
- Diarra, Samba 1997 *Les faux complots d'Houphouët-Boigny: fracture dans le destin d'une nation*. Paris: Karthala.
- Dozon, Jean-Pierre 2000 'La Côte d'Ivoire entre démocratie, nationalisme et ethnonationalisme', *Politique africaine* 78, pp. 45-62.
- Ebrokié, César 2002 'Enfin, le génocide de Benoît Scheuer', *Notre Voie* 9 December 2002.
- Gbagbo, Laurent 1983 *Côte d'Ivoire: pour une alternative démocratique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Hill, Jane H. 1999 'Styling locally, styling globally: what does it mean?', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3/4, pp. 542-56.
- Hill, Jane H. 2001 'Language, race, and white public space'. In: A. Duranti (ed.) *Linguistic Anthropology*, pp. 450-464. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hinnenkamp V. 1987 'Foreigner Talk, Code-Switching and the Concept of Trouble'. In: K. Knapp et al. (eds.) *Analysing intercultural communication*, pp. 137-80. Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Jackson, Michael 2002 *The politics of storytelling: violence, transgression, and intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Ki-Zerbo, Joseph 1978 *Histoire de L'Afrique Noire*. Paris: Hatier.

- Koné, Dramane 1988 'Pour une caractérisation syntaxico-sémantique de la notion de verbo-nominal, dans le Dyula de Côte d'Ivoire', *Journal of West African Languages* 18/2, pp. 70-82.
- Koné, Dramane 2000 'Bori bana', autopsie d'une expression', *Notre Voie* (21 May 2000).
- Koulibaly, Mamadou 2001 'Ni révision constitutionnelle ni reprise des élections: la construction de la nation doit continuer', speech held at the Forum for National Reconciliation (Abidjan, 30 October 2001) [<http://www.woyaa.com/frn-ci/forum/30102001/assemblee.html>; 5/12/2002].
- Kourouma, Ahmadou 1990 *Monnè outrages et défis*. Paris: Seuil.
- Launay, Robert & Marie Miran 2000 'Beyond Mande *mory*: Islam and ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire', *Paideuma* 46, pp. 63-84.
- LeBlanc, Marie Nathalie 2000a 'From *Sya* to Islam: social change and identity among Muslim youth in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire', *Paideuma* 46, pp. ???-109.
- LeBlanc, Marie Nathalie 2000b 'Versioning womanhood and Muslimhood: "Fashion" and the life course in contemporary Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire', *Africa* 70 (3), pp. 442-81.
- Le Pape, Marc & Claudine Vidal 2003 'Questions à Marc Le Pape et Claudine Vidal', *Documentation française* [http://www.ladocfrancaise.gouv.fr/dossier_actualite/crise_cote_divoire/questions.shtml; 12/08/03].
- Lewis, Barbara 1973 'The Dioula in the Ivory Coast'. In: C. T. Hodge (ed.) *Papers on the Manding*, pp. 273-307. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lohourignon, Maurice 1999-2000 'Ça y est, bori-bana pour Bédié!!!', *Notre Voie*, (31 December 1999 to 1-2 January 2000).
- Loucou, Jean-Noël 1996 'L'Ivoirité ou l'esprit du nouveau contrat social du Président Henri Konan Bédié'. In: S. Touré (ed.) *De l'Ivoirité*, pp. 19-24. Abidjan: Presses universitaires de Côte d'Ivoire.
- Mamdani, Mahmood 1998 When does a settler become a native? Reflections on the colonial roots of citizenship in Equatorial and South Africa. Inaugural Lecture held at University of Cape Town, South Africa, 13 May 1998.
- Mamdani, Mahmood 2001 *When victims become killers: colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mandingue. n.d. *L'épopée Mandingue*. [<http://mandingue.levillage.org/histoire.php>; 12/08/2002].

- Marguerat, Yves 1981-1982 'Des ethnies et des villes: analyse des migrations vers les villes de Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers O.R.S.T.O.M., Série Sciences Humaines* 18/3, pp. 303-40.
- Mbembe, Achille 1992 'The banality of power and the aesthetics of vulgarity in the postcolony', *Public Culture*, 4/2, pp. 1-30.
- Mbembe, Achille 2003 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture*, 15/1, pp.11-40.
- Memel-Fotê, Harris 1999 'Un mythe politique des Akans en Côte d'Ivoire: le sens de l'Etat'. In: P. Valsecchi & F. Viti (eds.) *Mondes akan: identité et pouvoir en Afrique occidentale*, pp. 21-42. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Memel-Fotê, Harris & Jean-Pierre Chauveau 1989 'L'identité politique baule (Côte d'Ivoire)', *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 34, pp. 33-40.
- Mesthrie, Rajend *et.al.* 2000 *Introducing sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- MPCI 2002 *Support MPCI*. [<http://www.supportmpci.org/>], accessed 19 December 2002.
- Nebout, A. [1904] 1906 'Le Cercle de Bondoukou: renseignements historiques et économiques'. In: F.-J. Clozel (ed.), pp. 169-84. *Dix ans à la Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Challamel.
- Neruda, Freedom 2000 'Dramane Ouattara: bori bana', *Notre Voie*, 15 May 2000.
- Niangoran-Bouah, Georges 1996 'Les fondements socio-culturels de l'Ivoirité'. In: S. Touré (ed.) *L'Ivoirité ou l'esprit du nouveau contrat social du Président Henri Konan Bédié*, pp. 45-52. Abidjan: Presses universitaires de Côte d'Ivoire.
- Olped [Observatoire de la liberté de la presse, de l'éthique et de la déontologie de Côte d'Ivoire]. 2001 *OLPED, a Pioneer in Media Self-Regulation in Africa*. Brussels: International Federation of Journalists.
- Partman, Gayle 1975 'Quelques remarques sur le Dioula véhiculaire en Côte d'Ivoire', *Annales de l'Université d'Abidjan, Série H, Linguistique* 8 (1), pp. 241-59.
- Person, Yves 1968-75 *Samori: une révolution dyula*, Mémoires de l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, 80. Dakar. IFAN.
- Person, Yves (avec la collaboration de Françoise Ligier). 1969. *Samori: la renaissance de l'empire mandingue*. Paris: Editions ABC.
- Person, Yves 1977 *Samori, construction et chute d'un empire*. Paris: Jeune Afrique.

- P.L. 2002 'Avis. Situé à quelques metres de la présidence et de la base nasale: Bori-Bana est une poudrière', *Le National* 26 October 2002.
- Prévention Génocides 2001 *Côte d'Ivoire, poudrière identitaire* [video]. Brussels.
- Projet d'accord 2002 *Intégralité du projet d'accord soumis à l'appréciation du gouvernement ivoirien et du MPCCI*. [<http://www.abidjan.net/actualites/article/index; 15/12/2002>].
- Rampton, Ben 1995 *Crossings: Language and ethnicity among adolescents*. London: Longman.
- Rampton, Ben 1998 'Language crossing and the redefinition of reality'. In: P. Auer (ed.) *Code-switching in conversation: language, interaction and identity*, pp. 290-320. London: Routledge.
- Tambiah, Stanley 1996 'The nation-state in crisis and the rise of ethnonationalism'. In: E. Wilmsen (ed.) *The politics of difference: ethnic premises in a world of power*, pp. 124-43. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Touré, Sekou (ed.) 1996 *L'Ivoirité ou l'esprit du nouveau contrat social du Président Henri Konan Bédié*. Abidjan: Presses universitaires de Côte d'Ivoire.
- Triaud, Jean-Louis. 1974 'La question musulmane en Côte d'Ivoire (1983-1939)', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 61/225, pp. 542-71.
- United Nations 2001 *Côte d'Ivoire: rapport de la commission d'enquête internationale pour la Côte d'Ivoire*. New York: United Nations.
- Zadi Zaourou, Bernard 1969 *Les Sofas*. Abidjan: NEA.

Annexes: The three 'bori bana' newspaper articles

Annex 1

Sous nos yeux. Ça y est, Bori-Bana pour Bedie !!!

Par Maurice Lohourignon

[Notre Voie n° 494 – 31 December 1999, 1st & 2 January 2000]

Or donc, le pouvoir de Bédié ne reposait sur rien. Mais sur quoi comptait-il alors pour être si arrogant, méprisant, haineux, méchant et vindicatif ? Il est tombé aussi facilement qu'une feuille morte poussée vers le bas par la brise.

Bédié est tombé. Sans heurt ni résistance. Le mouvement irrésistible de l'histoire l'a emporté dans sa fureur. Le coup a été fatal pour lui mais salvateur et salutaire pour le peuple de Côte d'Ivoire et surtout pour l'Afrique toute entière. L'acte des militaires ivoiriens s'est passé comme un couteau dans du beurre. Parce qu'en réalité, Bédié ne savait peut-être pas du tout que ses suiveurs n'étaient qu'une bande de petits escrocs et de fieffés menteurs dominés essentiellement par le mouvement de leur ventre. Et dans la plupart des cas, ces oiseaux de mauvais augure colportent à leur chef, et c'est la marque de tous les régimes dictatoriaux, des informations que celui-ci préfère entendre. Bien évidemment et nous en sommes sûrs ils faisaient croire à Bédié qu'il est aimé de son peuple et contrôlait tout le dispositif administratif, militaire et de l'information. Et c'est ce château de cartes et d'illusions bâti sur du sable qui s'est écroulé le 24 décembre dernier, confirmant ainsi la naïveté, la non clairvoyance et l'ignorance même de Bédié. En réalité, Bédié n'a rien appris dans l'anti-chambre d'Houphouët où il attendait le pouvoir. Il se tournait les pouces ou se suçait les pouces comme un candide bébé. Il dormait et ne se réveillait tout juste que pour manger, danser et boire abondamment. L'attente a été longue, et cela aurait pu permettre à tout individu sérieux et consciencieux de connaître son peuple et savoir tous les contours de son métier. La politique est un métier et ça, Bédié ne l'avait jamais compris. Il a amassé des richesses matérielles en misant sur la naïveté de certains ivoiriens face à l'argent. Là aussi, il s'est trompé. Aujourd'hui, comme un oiseau, il erre de pays en pays à la recherche d'une branche solide pour faire son nid, et se donner l'espoir de vivre. C'est maintenant qu'il va redécouvrir le monde, les vicissitudes du monde, les méchancetés du monde et la cruauté des hommes. C'est l'autre face cachée et réelle du monde fermée à l'ignorance, à la niaiserie et à l'arrogance. Aujourd'hui, Bédié pousse des cris à travers le monde comme un bébé à qui on vient d'arracher son jouet de Noël. La Côte d'Ivoire était devenue un jouet dans les bras de Bédié. Et les soldats ont pris leur responsabilité de lui arracher son jouet de peur de l'abîmer définitivement. Alors il traîne ses sanglots du Nigeria, au Togo jusque devant ses ex-pairs africains de la CEDEAO réunis à Bamako là où Houphouët avait pris le pouvoir avec le RDA en 1946. Bédié fond en larmes à Bamako. Sa longue et folle course s'est arrêtée. Bori-bana ! Pitié pour N'Zuéba.

Annex 2

Sauf surprise au cours du prochain référendum: Dramane Ouattara : bori bana

[Notre Voie, n° 604 – 15 May 2000]

Par Freedom Neruda

En décidant, enfin, de prendre son courage à deux mains pour non seulement prendre à témoins les diplomates accrédités en Côte d'Ivoire mais encore et surtout annoncer clairement les points saillants des dispositions du projet de Constitution qui va être soumis aux Ivoiriens et le calendrier électoral tant attendu, le général-président Robert Guéi a fait d'une pierre plusieurs coups. Objectivement, on peut se permettre de pronostiquer aujourd'hui que pour le leader du RDR, Dramane Ouattara, les carottes sont pratiquement cuites.

A moins d'un revirement de l'opinion au cours du référendum, l'homme est hors-jeu pour les futures élections présidentielles. Analyse d'un parcours et des ambitions démesurées qui prennent ainsi fin.

Depuis qu'en un jour de 1990, feu Félix Houphouët-Boigny, à l'étonnement général, l'avait introduit publiquement dans la vie socio-politique ivoirienne en le nommant d'abord président du Comité interministérielle chargé de stabiliser puis relancer l'économie ivoirienne moribonde au bord du chaos, puis en le nommant au poste de Premier ministre de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, Dramane Ouattara n'avait eu qu'une seule ambition : devenir un jour, envers et contre tous, président de la République de Côte d'Ivoire.

Pour atteindre cet objectif, l'homme n'a pas hésité à se lancer dans une course effrénée qui a été marquée par moult péripéties, étapes et sauts d'obstacles. Retour sur un parcours qui a rythmé la vie politique ivoirienne et qui s'achève en laissant les partisans de Dramane Ouattara avec une terrible gueule de bois digne des lendemains d'une victoire annoncée qui s'est transformée en terrible désillusion, à moins que ...

Tout commence en 1992, le 1er novembre exactement. Ce soir-là, invité sur le plateau de la télévision ivoirienne par Ali Coulibaly au cours de l'émission "Questions au premier ministre", M. Ouattara, répondant à une question sur ses ambitions, laisse entendre clairement qu'il se prononcerait le moment venu. Et qu'il était en train d'apprendre auprès du président Houphouët-Boigny, son maître en matière politique.

En même temps qu'il manœuvrait pour apparaître définitivement comme le seul homme capable de sauver le Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) et d'en être le candidat tout à fait naturel, Dramane Ouattara avait compris trop tôt que pour aller loin, il fallait s'attaquer à la force montante incontestable, le Front populaire ivoirien (opposition socialiste) de Laurent Gbagbo qui avait été le seul homme en Côte d'Ivoire à avoir affronté aux élections présidentielles Houphouët-Boigny.

Cette attaque va se faire d'abord à travers la presse. Puisque Dramane Ouattara va créer "Le Patriote" qui fera découvrir aux Ivoiriens, un nouveau genre journalistique: le journalisme de poubelle. Objectif : salir les membres du FPI, salir le FPI et partant, traîner dans la boue tout ce qui flirte avec l'opposition. Mais et, il ne faut pas le perdre de vue, il fait autoriser "Radio Nostalgie" qu'il confie à l'un des ses fidèles. On sait le rôle que cette radio a joué dans le coup d'état du 24 décembre 1999 puisque c'est sur ses antennes que le général Robert Guéi a fait diffuser ses premières déclarations annonçant sa prise de pouvoir et, par conséquent, l'éviction de M. Bédié.

Ne voulant pas s'arrêter en si bon chemin, M. Ouattara, de mèche avec des irréductibles du PDCI, décide de réduire M. Gbagbo et les démocrates au silence. Ainsi est conçu et exécuté le complot du mardi 18 février 1992. Dieu merci, les noirs desseins ne se réalisent pas jusqu'au bout.

Malgré le réveil des conservateurs du PDCI qui n'ont vu en Dramane Ouattara que celui derrière qui s'abriter pour laisser passer la tempête du mécontentement social, l'homme venu "redresser l'économie" tient ferme la barre. Surtout que Houphouët-Boigny, malade et visiblement atteint par l'âge, n'a plus la possibilité de peser sur le cours des choses.

Puisqu'il est toujours Premier ministre en titre, M. Ouattara saisit l'occasion du décès de Félix Houphouët-Boigny pour tenter son premier véritable coup de force et s'installer sur la plus haute marche du podium. Etant entendu que, sur le principe il rejoignait l'opposition qui critiquait les tripatouillages de la Constitution, notamment en son article 11 et le mode de succession monarchique qu'il introduisait dans une République, Dramane Ouattara va tenter de s'opposer à l'accession de Henri Konan Bédié au pouvoir pour achever le mandat du défunt président. Au bout de cette mini-crise, c'est Dramane Ouattara qui perd la partie. Non sans avoir gagné au change. Non seulement il obtient le poste de directeur général-adjoint au FMI, poste prestigieux et juteux s'il en est.

De Washington où il est en service, M. Ouattara déclare s'en tenir à son "obligation de réserve" s'agissant des affaires politiques ivoiriennes, mais cela ne l'empêche pas d'alimenter la subversion au sein du PDCI. Ainsi, se dote-t-il d'un appareil politique, le Rassemblement des Républicains qui voit le jour en 1994.

Quoique dirigé par feu Djéni Kobina, personne dans ce parti ne fait mystère de ce que le mentor, mais, aussi le financier est Dramane Ouattara. Il est annoncé, attendu même pour les échéances électorales immédiates, la présidentielles de 1995. Mais sous le prétexte qu'il a signé un accord avec Henri Konan Bédié, comme on l'a appris plus tard, mais aussi arguant de ce qu'il ne veut pas semer de troubles dans son pays et que, légaliste, il ne peut pas se présenter parce que les dispositions en vigueur l'en empêchent, Dramane Ouattara ne répond pas à l'attente angoissée de ses partisans pour qui, toutes les occasions sont bonnes pour brandir son effigie.

Régulièrement, M. Ouattara met à profit ses "vacances au pays" pour huiler sa machine, régler les problèmes et prendre les contacts qui vont lui être nécessaires au moment où il décidera de franchir le

rubicond. De bouts de phrases, en déclarations plus ou fracassantes, il laisse clairement entendre qu'à la fin de son mandat au FMI, il rentrera dans son pays, la Côte d'Ivoire, pour se consacrer à la politique.

Entre-temps, le Seigneur rappelle à lui Djéni Kobina qui a dû faire face à plusieurs frondes au sein du parti, alimentées notamment par l'entrée d'Adama Coulibaly, alors n° 2 du RDR, au sein de l'équipe gouvernementale de Bédié. Pour pourvoir à son remplacement, M. Ouattara porte son choix sur une personne qui, du fait de toutes ces turbulences dommageables à ses ambitions, n'est pas susceptible de lui porter ombrages tout en restant une fidèle parmi les fidèles : Mme Henriette Dagri-Diabaté.

Les batailles menées sur le terrain dans le cadre du front républicain sous la houlette du FPI pour obtenir du PDCI et du gouvernement ivoirien des conditions d'élections justes, démocratiques et transparentes sont présentées à une partie de l'opinion internationale comme un combat de M. Gbagbo et FPI pour préparer le terrain à Dramane Ouattara. Les gens du RDR, oubliant royalement que le FPI ne pose des actes que si cela lui profite politiquement, disent que leur mentor n'a plus rien à prouver et que Laurent Gbagbo devrait lui laisser la place.

Or, le poste de président de la République n'est pas un banc où on peut se serrer pour faire la place à d'autres, il s'agit d'un fauteuil à une seule place. Et qu'il était hors de question pour le FPI d'avoir lutté toutes ces années durant pour défendre les valeurs démocratiques, les droits de l'homme, pour refonder une vraie nation moderne pour venir céder la place à quelqu'un qui n'a ni programme, ni projet de société, qui, de toutes les façons, n'a jamais lutté et attend simplement de cueillir des fruits déjà mûrs.

Poursuivant ses stratégies de conquête du pouvoir, Dramane Ouattara propulse son épouse Dominique Ouattara au devant de la scène. Il l'amène donc, pour qu'elle puisse faire campagne pour lui à travers les actions de marketing socio-politique comme du temps de Thérèse Houphouët-Boigny avec N'Daya et de Henriette Bomo Bédié avec SERVIR, à créer l'ONG "Children of Africa".

Arrive le moment tant espéré par les militants et sympathisants de Dramane Ouattara et du RDR. Le retour au pays du champion. Cela se passe dans l'euphorie la plus totale au cours d'un congrès extraordinaire-meeting au palais des Sports de Treichville le 1er août 1999. Emporté par l'ivresse d'un accueil si triomphal, Dramane Ouattara croit l'heure venue d'évacuer des questions importantes en empruntant des raccourcis. Il brandit ses papiers d'identité qui datent, le plus ancien, de 1982. Il clame à qui veut l'entendre qu'il a étudié au Burkina Faso, alors Haute Volta, qu'il est fier d'avoir servi ce pays, lui est reconnaissant de ce qu'il a fait pour lui, mais qu'il est bel et bien de retour, prêt à s'engager dans la lutte politique. Dans la foulée, le congrès décide de le consacrer président, mais surtout candidat du RDR pour l'élection présidentielle de l'an 2000. Naturellement, peu avant son retour au pays, "Le Patriote" est ressuscité. Qui n'hésite pas à revenir à ses premières amours, à sa vraie nature de journal fait pour traîner dans la boue tout ce qui peut gêner le "brave tchê" dans sa marche vers le fauteuil présidentiel.

Mais naturellement, Dramane Ouattara, qui croyait que tout était prêt, n'avait pas du tout compté avec la contre-attaque virulente du clan Bédié. Les tracasseries politico-administratives doublées d'une campagne

de presse indécente et incendiaire avec comme principal support "Le national" se multiplient. Au plus fort de la bataille sur la nationalité, l'éligibilité du président du RDR le pouvoir Bédié, profitant d'un séjour hors de Côte d'Ivoire de M. Ouattara, lance contre lui un mandat d'arrêt national.

Ses partisans restés au pays multiplient les déclarations, les manifestations. L'une de ces dernières tourne au vinaigre. Les responsables du RDR sont mis aux arrêts.

De son exil forcé, Dramane Ouattara met au point avec des généraux de l'armée ivoirienne qui lui sont restés favorables ou fidèles, Lassana Palenfo et Ibrahima Coulibaly, bien en évidence au cours d'un des galas de "Children of Africa" en France, un plan pour éjecter Henri Konan Bédié du pouvoir. Leur putsch, soutenu par un pays de la sous-région en particulier, est prévu pour le 26 décembre 1999.

La mutinerie des ex-éléments de l'armée ivoirienne envoyés pour le compte de l'ONU dans les forces de la MINURCA en Centrafrique risque un temps de faire capoter le projet. Mais, très rapidement, Palenfo et Coulibaly apportent des munitions à des mutins qui avaient trop tiré en l'air depuis le 22 décembre et parviennent ainsi à intégrer le groupe des militaires mutins et transforment la mutinerie pour des raisons essentiellement matérielles en une prise de pouvoir par les armes, la première de ce mode d'accession au pouvoir que la Côte d'Ivoire n'avait jamais connu.

Dès lors les choses semblent s'accélérer pour le leader du RDR qui rentre au pays, précédé d'un malheureux communiqué remis à la presse étrangère et annonçant son retour au pays comme celui du futur président de la république de Côte d'Ivoire. Heureusement, des personnes vigilantes au sein du CNSP font un communiqué pour dénoncer cette plaisanterie de mauvais goût.

Rentré au pays, Dramane Ouattara revendique le coup d'état et en fait une victoire du RDR sur l'arbitraire. Partout, ses partisans et militants présentent le général Robert Guéi comme un homme de paille mis là pour permettre à leur patron d'accéder au pouvoir. Dans le même temps, il laisse mener, sans vergogne, une campagne complaisante qui fait de lui une sorte de génie. Son ph. D., ce fameux doctorat des universités américaines, qu'il a obtenu à l'université de Pennsylvanie comme tant d'autres ivoiriens en ont obtenu d'autres universités dans diverses disciplines est présenté comme une panacée, comme quelque chose d'exceptionnel. De sorte que pour ses inconditionnels, "personne d'autre que lui ne peut prétendre à ce poste taillé à sa mesure." L'homme devait en être à ce point convaincu qu'en attendant d'accéder à la magistrature suprême, il voulait, selon des sources dignes de foi, piloter tout de main de maître les actions du gouvernement et aurait voulu dès le coup d'état être nommé encore ... Premier ministre.

Hors de ce terrain de la mystification, Dramane Ouattara, pour promouvoir son image, s'est mis à attaquer certains Ivoiriens par leur point le plus faible : l'argent. Tant en sa résidence qu'à l'occasion de ses sorties, il s'est mis à distribuer de l'argent à tour de bras et à promettre monts et merveilles aux uns et aux autres. Le goudron Odienné -Gbéléban; le goudron Ferké - Kong; le pont de Jacquerville; l'électricité pour tel ou tel village; un lycée ici, un dispensaire là.

A côté de cela, le président du RDR s'est lancé dans une ahurissante campagne de pronostics. "Je remporterai les élections dès le premier tour." ou encore "Je serai élu avec 60 % des voix". Grisé par on ne sait quoi, l'homme va même améliorer son score en très peu de temps. Il se crédite de 70 %, puis de 80 % des voix. S'il a sans doute été perçu comme un martyr du fait de la guerre menée contre lui par le régime Bédié, et a pu bénéficier de la faveur de l'opinion publique, Dramane Ouattara avait totalement ignoré que lui-même revenait dans l'opinion à son vrai niveau d'estime. Et celui-ci n'était guère fameux. En effet, un sondage réalisé dans l'armée peu de temps après le coup d'état, tous grades confondus, toutes armes confondues, le crédite de moins de 15 % des intentions de vote. Un autre sondage réalisé par une ambassade présente en Côte d'Ivoire indiquait également que dans un face-à-face avec Laurent Gbagbo, Dramane Ouattara serait battu avec pas moins de 80 % des voix en faveur du leader du FPI, tandis qu'il serait à peine à 20 %. Enfin, dans aucun des multiples sondages réalisés à la demande du RDR lui-même, M. Ouattara n'avait dépassé la barre des 15 % d'intentions de vote.

Pour corriger cette tendance fâcheuse et persistante, l'homme fait publier dans des journaux proches de lui ou financés par lui que d'après un sondage réalisé sur l'Internet, il avait plus de 80 % d'opinion favorables. Or, les personnes sérieuses savent que sur l'Internet une seule et même personne peut aller et voter mille fois. Ce n'est qu'une vaste farce. En tout état de cause, c'est en Côte d'Ivoire que le vote se ferait et par les seuls vrais Ivoiriens.

Dans son désir effréné de devenir président des Ivoiriens, Dramane Ouattara manipule deux armes dangereuses : l'ethnie et la religion. Il fait entrer dans la danse des imams certainement passés à la caisse et joue sur la fibre régionaliste. N'avait-il pas déclaré qu'on voulait l'écarter de la course à la présidence parce qu'on ne voulait pas qu'un musulman devienne président de la République en Côte d'Ivoire. Des gaffes qui ont permis de situer les Ivoiriens sur les desseins de cet individu, mais il en avait cure. Tous les moyens étaient bons, pourvu qu'il arrive à ses fins.

C'est dans cette perspective qu'il essaie de banaliser la fraude massive observée sur les cartes nationales d'identité. Se contredisant, à force de trop parler, sur une question aussi sensible que le bradage de la nationalité ivoirienne. Sans doute que son idée à lui était d'espérer bénéficier du vote de ces faux Ivoiriens. Plus pernicieux, il fait inscrire tous ces malfrats sur les listes électorales qui sont aujourd'hui inacceptables et inutilisables.

Avant dernier baroud d'honneur de Dramane Ouattara en deux volets, d'abord la tentative de noyautage des sous-commissions. A l'initiative du CNSP et sous l'égide de la Commission consultative constitutionnelle et électorale (CCCE), les Ivoiriens, toutes tendances confondues, toutes origines, toutes croyances confondues, devaient plancher sur les textes qui allaient dessiner un nouveau destin pour les hommes et les femmes de ce pays et permettre de refonder la Côte d'Ivoire. Puisque la tendance n'était pas bonne pour l'homme à problèmes qu'est devenu Dramane Ouattara et les décisions se prenant à la majorité, en quelques jours, bien après la constitution des sous-commissions, plus de 180 ONG sont créées à l'instigation du RDR et complaisamment autorisées à prendre part aux travaux. Par la suite, ce

sont les textes de la sous-commission transmise par la CCCE au gouvernement sans les disposition avec le "et" puis celle disant qu'il ne faut "s'être jamais prévalu d'une autre nationalité" qui ont été modifiées par des hommes de M. Ouattara au sein du gouvernement. C'est à la suite de ces magouilles de l'ombre que transgressant toutes les interdictions qui frappent les partis politiques que le leader du RDR, convaincu de son affaire s'en est allé au Centre demander aux populations de voter "oui" au référendum.

Enfin, dernière cartouche, Dramane Ouattara s'est mis à tenir un discours guerrier, usant de chantage déjà - n'avait-il pas dit détenir des dossiers sur chaque Ivoirien - il s'est mis à menacer carrément. Criant sur tous les toits que "jamais, jamais, jamais", personne ne l'éliminerait de la course à la présidence. Ses partisans et autres lieutenants faisant planer sur le reste des Ivoiriens la menace d'affrontements sanglants. Comme s'il s'était agi d'éliminer un individu. Avec la déclaration du général Guéi, ils sont avertis. Les Ivoiriens ne veulent pas de guerre, mais ils ne sont pas prêts à laisser faire les agitateurs.

En tout état de cause, on peut le dire aujourd'hui, si, comme le général Robert Guéi l'a affirmé devant les ambassadeurs, plus de 90 % des Ivoiriens voulaient que le "ET" soit maintenu de même que le "ne s'être jamais prévalu", on peut l'affirmer, les carottes sont cuites pour le leader du RDR. Devenu ou redevenu Ivoirien seulement en 1982 soit quand il a eu ... 40 ans, cet homme s'était prévalu d'une autre nationalité avant. Il avait été Voltaïque, ensuite Burkinabè avant de retrouver ce qu'il présente comme étant sa vraie nationalité. Mais à qui la faute s'il a eu un tel parcours ? Ainsi, à moins qu'il ne réussisse à acheter tous les Ivoiriens comme Jean-Jacques Béchio prétend qu'il peut le faire du fait des moyens colossaux dont on le crédite, pour qu'ils puissent rejeter le projet de Constitution par un "non" massif, Dramane Ouattara est totalement hors course désormais. L'homme peut aller se reposer à ... Sindou, car BORI BANA.

Annex 3

Dire bien. "Bori bana", autopsie d'une expression

Par Koné Dramane

[Notre Voie, n° 609 – 21 May 2000]

Contemporain de la transition, témoin des servitudes qui en découlent, c'est en linguistique engagé que j'observe les rebondissements de la vie politique.

J'observe, avec une vigilance sans défaut, les moindres motifs, les multiples incongruités, les expressions verbales fortes de l'actualité politique qui ont, à des moments les effets de la foudre sur tous ceux qu'elle prend pour cibles. Ainsi, sur la liste des foudroyés, j'ai retenu pour vous, chers aimables lecteurs, la phrase suivante : "Dramane Ouattara : bori bana !", titre du journal "Notre Voie" n° 604 du 15 mai 2000" après la prise de position vigoureuse du Général Guéi Robert devant les ambassadeurs le 12/05/2000 pour signifier que "les carottes sont pratiquement cuites" pour le leader du RDR, ou que "l'homme est hors-jeu" pour les futures élections présidentielles. Sauf (touchons du bois) surprise au cours du prochain référendum.

Étymologiquement, bori banna est une expression dioula (ou malinké) qui s'écrit en fait "bori bana" de bori à la fois nom (course, fuite, poursuite) et verbe (courir, fuir, poursuivre), de ban (finir, achever, terminer) et de na (suffixe qui marque l'action accomplie). Du point de vue discursif, bori banna est tiré d'un énoncé historique tristement célèbre, à savoir "i lô, Samori, i lô, bori banna". (Arrête-toi Samori, arrête-toi, ta course est finie et il n'y a plus moyen de t'échapper). Ces paroles ont été dites le 29 septembre 1898 à Guélérou (dans la région de Man) par le lieutenant malinké Al Kamissa, tirailleur engagé dans l'armée française et courant, hors d'haleine, après l'Almamy Samori Touré, pour la reddition humiliante de ce chef politico-religieux qui jusque-là fut un conducteur d'hommes, un monstre froid et calculateur possédant, selon le Général français Baratier, "l'audace, l'esprit de suite et de prévision et par dessus tout une ténacité irréductible, inaccessible au découragement". Suivez mon regard. "Samori, i lô, bori banna !" (Samori, arrête-toi, abandonne, il n'y a plus moyen d'échapper à ton destin) sonne comme un refrain. A ce propos, l'histoire nous enseigne que Samori, après avoir étendu son autorité à partir de 1870 sur la moitié de la Guinée et une partie de l'actuel Mali, fut refoulé par les colonnes françaises vers la Côte d'Ivoire où il exerça, à partir de 1892, son contrôle sur le Nord de ce pays, sur le Sud de l'actuel Burkina Faso jusqu'à Bobo-Dioulasso et sur une grande partie du Ghana. Pendant près de sept (7) ans, il poursuivra encore la lutte avant d'être capturé par les Français le 29 septembre 1898 à Guélérou. A ses côtés, son ami fidèle, Morifindjan Diabaté (symbole de la fidélité chez les malinkés). Deux ans plus tard, Samori mourra au Gabon où il avait été déporté. (cf. Ibrahim Baba Kaké, "Sékou Touré, le héros et le tyran", Collection Destin, Paris 1987, P. 21). Que Dieu fasse que chacun de nous ait une bonne fin de vie. Amina (Amen !).

De fait, ces paroles de Al Kamissa marquent une fin de randonnée, de course-poursuite où l'un des coureurs apprend à ses dépens qu'il n'y a plus d'espoir et qu'il est même plus intelligent de s'arrêter et d'abandonner la course. En dioula, le verbe "bori" a la particularité d'admettre deux postpositions que sont nya et kô qui correspondent aux prépositions françaises (devant et après). Ainsi, "i be bori fên nya", ("tu cours devant quelque chose", autrement dit "tu la fuis !" ou i bé bori fên kô ("tu cours après quelque chose"). Dans les deux cas, il y a deux issues. Pour le premier cas (où tu fuis) si tu es rattrapé, bori banna (il n'y a plus de course). En revanche, si tu as pu semer ce qui te poursuit, boli banna. Tu peux même t'asseoir et souffler.

Dans le deuxième cas, où tu suis quelque chose pour t'en saisir, si tu la rattrapes, boli banna, mais si la chose qui semble inaccessible t'échappe, boli banna. Comme le pouvoir. Alors la sagesse recommande ceci : "ce que tu poursuis, si tu ne peux plus l'atteindre, arrête-toi, abandonne". C'est sans doute cette dernière représentation que l'on retrouve chez les habitants du quartier "Bori bana" de Bamako (Mali) et du quartier "Boribana" d'Attécoubé (commune d'Abidjan), quartier immensément gardé par la lagune, infranchissable à pied. "Nous appelons ce quartier "Boribana" parce que nous avons cherché partout, nous n'avons pas trouvé de logements, nous en avons assez, nous restons là où nous sommes, nous abandonnons parce que nous n'avons pas atteint le but poursuivi", me confia, l'air navré, un résident ivoirien dans une des rues appelée Rue des illusions-perdus. Une rue qui fait corps avec la situation

singulière de ses habitants. Ceux-ci, à demi égarés comme les militants d'un parti politique (qu'il ne m'est pas besoin de citer pour que vous le reconnaissiez) dans un réseau complexe de chemins et de caniveaux, attendent un événement qui plane au-dessus de leur tête comme un orage de déception en gestation. Ils ne savent même pas que le tout négatif qu'on leur sert risque de tourner à la parodie, à l'humiliation. Le comble du satanique, vraiment, pour tout vaincu qui refuse le bori bana. A méditer, sans relâche avant l'évanouissement des rêves... et l'écoulement des larmes (Nyadji).

Chapter 5

Re-generating the nation:

Youth, revolution, and the politics of history in Côte d'Ivoire

“...because students are more mobile, their social universe more metropolitan, than immigrant labourers.”

(Hobsbawm 1994, p221)

Talking about ‘generation’¹

“It is our generation that is in the centre of attention these days. There are rebel chiefs who are of our generation, patriot chiefs who are of the same generation, and leaders of youth sections of political parties who provide equally from that generation. You can observe with me that the effervescence which reigns in our country today is a feat of that generation. So we have an important role to play not only in the FESCI but also in Côte d’Ivoire” (*Notre Voie*, 2/6/2003).

The above statement is from Damana Adia Pickas in an interview with *Notre Voie*, the oldest and most prestigious newspaper of the socialist party FPI (*Front Populaire Ivoirien*) of current president Laurent Gbagbo (2000-). Pickas is a former leader of the Ivorian student union Fesci (*Fédération Estudiante et Scolaire de Côte d’Ivoire*), and (afterwards) of the youth section of the FPI (JFPI).² At the time of the interview, Pickas is coordinating the pro-Gbagbo movement of Ivorian students in France and speaks as a representative of the ‘patriots’, more specifically of the nationalist youth movement, the Young Patriots (*Jeunes Patriotes*) whose paramount leader is the former Fesci secretary-general Charles Blé Goudé. The ‘patriots’ are opposed to the ‘rebels’ who first called themselves the Patriotic Movement of Côte d’Ivoire (*Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d’Ivoire – MPC*) and later adopted the name New Forces (*Forces Nouvelles*).³ Since September 2002 and until this day (September 2004) the New Forces’ heavily armed military occupy the northern and north-western zones of Côte d’Ivoire, while their political wing headed by former Fesci leader Soro Kigbafori Guillaume has negotiated its way

1. Research for this paper was conducted in Côte d’Ivoire and among Ivorians in Europe (France, UK, Germany, Belgium) between 2000 and 2003. An earlier and more concise version of this article is being published under the same title in J. Abbink & I. van Kessel (eds.) *Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa* (2004) Leiden: Brill.

2. By ‘Fesci leader’ I mean all members of the national executive bureau (*Bureau Exécutif National – BEN*) and the administrative council (*Conseil d’Administration – CA*), the two most important national organs of the student union. These national structures command the local *sections* (at the level of the campus or the hall of residence) and the regional *coordinations* (federations of ‘sections’). In annex 1, the reader finds a list of the Fesci secretary-generals and the national leaders.

3. Although in October 2002 both groups adopted the name ‘patriot’, very soon afterwards the insurgents mainly labelled themselves ‘rebels’ or ‘liberation movement’, while ‘patriots’ became the label of the self-declared resistance movement that operated in Abidjan and the towns and villages in the southern (unoccupied) part of the country.

into a new so-called reconciliation government.

Most of the interview, from which the above quote is taken, deals with the history and the current orientation of the Fesci, and with Pickas' involvement in it, and brings home the fact that "our generation" in Pickas' statement is that of the student union activists who began to militate in 1990 when the Fesci was created and continue to do so, albeit divided in a 'patriotic' and a 'rebel' movement. Regarding the predicament of Côte d'Ivoire in the face of this partition, Pickas explains that:

"This war has allowed the birth of a nation, [...] the Ivorian nation is in the process of constructing itself in response to this crisis." (*Notre Voie*, 2/6/2003)

Given the widely-known opinion – in fact their self-declared *raison d'être* – of the Young Patriots that the war was unleashed by the rebels who want to destroy Côte d'Ivoire, Pickas does obviously not call upon the entire 'our generation' to solve the Fesci and the national crisis and assist in their rebirth, but only upon those who have joined the camp of the 'patriots'. This exclusion is important, because it reveals how the "we" in the last sentence of his statement does not cover the 'our' in the opening sentence – the difference being the group of ex-Fescists who have joined the rebels. In the interview, Pickas dispenses with this shift in two different ways. At some stage in the interview he portrays the ex-Fescists who have joined the insurgency as a "few individuals" and associates the Young Patriots with the 'overwhelming majority of the Ivorian people'. In the above quote he uses the same first person plural ('our' and 'we') to refer to a different group at two distinct historical moments: the past 'our' of the historic Fesci and the present 'we' of the pro-'patriot' Fesci and of the emerging new nation. Blommaert (in press, p134) calls this kind of discursive operation "synchronicity" and he proposes to restore its historicity by analysing it as "layered simultaneity". Following his advice, we can already add the Fesci age cohort of the 1990s as a layer to the 'patriotic' Fesci 'generation' of 2003.

The same technique of synchronicity can be found in an interview with the rebel representative and former-Fesci leader Soro Guillaume. Estimating the support of the Ivorians for 'his' rebellion, he explains:

"[...] we are in the majority in Abidjan. [...] The day we will be in Abidjan, you will understand that the Ivorians were thirsty for liberty. I give you an example. Before the 24th of December 1999, Mister Bédié had never imagined that so many people were against him. [...].

Dictatorship is characterised by manifest violence. Mister Gbagbo is inherently violent.

His whole political career is made of violence. In 1990, when he spoke of multipartyism, he sent the students in the streets in order to smash the traffic lights, burn a few shops, and steal loafs of bread in the baker's shop. In 1992, he burned all of Plateau [a city quarter of Abidjan]. You know, before going to prison in order to pay for it.

[Journalist:] With the help of the Fesci?

[Soro Guillaume] “(laughs). Let me finish my answer to your question.[...]” (*Fraternité Matin* 2/4/2003)

In the first part of this excerpt Soro Guillaume establishes an important historical continuity between the coup d'état 1999 and 'now'. The coup of December 1999 saw a group of young soldiers remove president Bédié from office and bring General Robert Guéi to power. The coup gave rise to massive manifestations in Abidjan in support of Guéi such as the music concert for 50.000 youngsters organised at the main Abidjan football stadium by Soro Guillaume, then leader of the Rally of Ivorian Youth (*Rassemblement de la Jeunesse Ivoirienne*) (*Le Jour* 4/02/2000; *Notre Voie* 7/02/2000). Conversely, the insurgency of September 2002 did not give rise to manifest Abidjanese public support for rebel leader Soro Guillaume. Rather it led to mass demonstrations against the rebels and in support of 'defiant' president Gbagbo such as the rally organised by Blé Goudé and 'his' Young Patriots in November 2002 (*Fraternité Matin* 4/11/2002). The contrast between '1999' and '2002' is explained away by Soro Guillaume in at least two ways. Elsewhere in the interview, he denounces the pro-Gbagbo support as bogus and intimates that the *Abidjanais* are either forced to join the pro-Gbagbo marches or otherwise coerced to stay hidden and keep silent. In the above quote, Soro Guillaume suggests the existence of a hidden majority in favour of the rebels by identifying the manifest “so many people” of 1999 with the thus far invisible “the Ivorians” of 2003.

The synchronicity construed by Soro Guillaume is further worked out in the second part of the quote. The young soldiers of the coup d'état of 1999 are identified as the insurgent 'we' of 2002 and both are distinguished from the Fesci students of the 1990s whom Soro Guillaume speaks about in a particularly dismissive way. When the journalist presses Soro Guillaume to comment on the heavy involvement of the student union Fesci in the opposition movement of, among others, Gbagbo, Soro Guillaume declines and, indeed, never comes back to the issue of the Fesci again later in the interview. However, by presenting the Fesci students as a gang of rascals and pilferers 'thrown into the streets by Gbagbo', Soro Guillaume construes a historical homomorphism between the instrumentalised Fesci demonstrators of the early 1990s and those 'forced' to manifest in favour of Gbagbo after the insurgency of 2002.

The above attempts at synchronicity have an interrelated vertical (temporal or historical) and a horizontal (grouping) dimension. The choice of the historical moments with which synchronicities are construed implies a choice of groups with which one equates one's own group. Synchronicities in the above quotes thus function as 'identifications' of different groups at different moments in time. An additional element in these identifications is 'Côte d'Ivoire' or the 'nation', in the case of Pickas, and the 'Ivoriens' in the case of Soro Guillaume, with which, in each case, the 'we', constructed through synchronicity, is associated. This 'we' is ambiguously presented as a *pars pro toto* of the entire population and as a special, youthful and/or active component of it. The latter stance is taken by Pickas who asserts that "we" have an "important role to play" and are responsible for national 'effervescence'. Soro Guillaume sees his movement rather as part and parcel of 'the Ivoriens' whose (latent or suppressed) thirst for liberty it elicits. In all, the two former Fesci leaders imagine an emerging population caught in an irreversible dynamic of rebirth and reconstruction, in the case of Damana Pickas, and of liberation, in the case of Soro Guillaume.

The above quotes give a rather precise image of the millenarian atmosphere in present-day Côte d'Ivoire to which relatively young political entrepreneurs such as Soro Guillaume and Damana Pickas contribute with antagonistic violent projects and sweeping statements in the media. Apart from the fact that dozens of fellow age-mates occupy important positions in either the rebel or the Young Patriots movement, the antagonism between the movements represents the contrasting choices which confronts Ivorian civil society and defines the extreme poles of the contemporary political spectrum. In short, the future of Côte d'Ivoire is presented as being in the hands of a 'new generation'. However, the two quotes also indicate to what an extent youth and generation are differentially evoked. The quote of Soro Guillaume in which he takes his distance from the student youth fits into a larger discourse in which the 'rebels' claim a relative maturity (Arnaut 2003). In contrast youthfulness and the 'new generation' feature prominently in the discourse of the 'patriots'.

This chapter is an attempt to analyse how 'youth' and 'generation' are deployed by former Fesci members in conversations with me about their personal history of activism in political and/or civil society. In these narratives I focus on how the Fescists, in Côte d'Ivoire and in the diaspora, situate themselves in the history and the future of their country and make use of 'generation' and

‘youth’ to mark continuities and discontinuities.⁴

Before presenting this material, I provide an extensive, three-part review of (a) the literature on generation and youth in the social sciences in general, (b) the anthropological literature on Africa, and (c) the literature on Côte d'Ivoire. The leading question with which I interrogate this literature is how ‘generation’ serves to address the issue of continuity (historical depth, genealogy, reproduction and renewal) versus discontinuity (historical rupture, new socialities of equality and bonding). The counterpart of this problematic in dealing with adolescence concerns youth’s dependency or autonomy: whether they constitute a break with the past or need to be seen as a transitional age cohort in a long chain of social being.

‘Generation’ and ‘youth’, and the problem of time and agency in social sciences

In the social sciences, ‘generation’ is ambivalently defined in terms of alternation and flow, inclusion and exclusion. A textbook definition says that members of the same generation are “contemporaries *or* [...] descended by the same number of degrees from a common ancestor” (Bacon 1964, p284; italics mine). Under the first condition (‘contemporaries’), one can emphasise “simultaneity” (Dithey in Mariás 1968, p89) or “coevalness” (Ortega in idem) and stress intra-generational cohesion, inclusion and solidarity, and inter-generational conflict (Turner 1998). Under the second condition (descent) one takes into account the generation’s specific location in historical time and social space. One can emphasise the fact that a generation constitutes itself or is constituted by events external to it (Mannheim in Bundy 1987, p305). More importantly in that respect is that generation can include as well as exclude coevals such as women, non-initiates, or strangers (see Rintala in Mariás 1968, p94). Such a conception can

4. The concept of ‘diaspora’ being a contested one, its use is warranted in the case of the Fescists, not as a “vogueisch (sic) synonym for peregrination or nomadism” (Gilroy 1994, p207) but as “galvanising a new creative energy outside the natal homeland” (Cohen 1995, p5). In general, diasporic Fescists show a “dual orientation” (Werbner 2000, p5): struggling to affirm themselves in their host countries, while living “with a sense of displacement and of loyalty” (idem) to Côte d'Ivoire. As explained later, the expatriation of Fescists started in 1994 with an exodus to different European countries with the exception of France, and diversified – with the advent of Fort Europe – to the US, France, and African countries in the late 1990s and early years 2000. The ‘dual orientation’ of the Fescists became clear in the aftermath of the 1999 and 2002 insurgencies. On the one hand, these events provoked a new dynamics of repatriation and expatriation. Returnees took up important positions in the new political and civil society formations, while new exiles asked national and international organisation to intervene, or prepared interventions themselves. On the other hand, old and new Fesci émigrés mobilised existing and newly-built civil society networks in their countries of settlement for addressing national and international authorities and media as well as those of Côte d'Ivoire.

stress inter-generational ‘dependency’ (Blaikie 1999, p128) or “the relations through which successive generations are bound in the reproduction of social life” (Irwin 1998, p307), or, indeed, ask attention for intra-generational inequality and exclusion (Irwin 1996).

Since its early use in anthropology, ‘generation’ induces research and reflections on social and cultural conceptions of time, more particularly, on how social formations (including the anthropologists’) deal with continuity and discontinuity. In one of the rare anthropological volumes dedicated to generations, age cohorts and social change, Spencer (1990, p18) remarks that “the perception of time in regard to ageing goes in steps rather than a smooth flow, for it is embedded in a chequered development of social relationships.” The opposition between time as continuous flow and as gradual process, reminds one strongly of the ideas Leach developed in two related essays – ‘Cronus and Chronos’ (1953) and ‘Time and false noses’ (1955) – in which he distinguishes between ‘eternal time’ that goes on and on (Chronos) and time conceptualised as zigzagging (Cronus) (in Hugh-Jones & Laidlaw 2000, p177, 181). In the latter case, “time is experienced as something discontinuous, a repetition of repeated reversal, a sequence of oscillations between polar opposites: night and day, winter and summer, drought and flood, age and youth, life and death.” (ibid., p176). Interestingly enough, Leach illustrates this zigzag or pendulum conceptualisation of time with Radcliffe-Brown’s findings about the identification of alternating generations (of grandmother and grandchild).⁵ Otherwise, Leach’s pendulum conception of time – which he sees as underlying all *rites de passages* – rules out a continuous Chrono(s)-logical understanding of time (ibid., p183). Contrarily, that is the point which Spencer extracts from Van Gennep’s and Turner’s work on *rites de passage*, namely that “history is not just concerned with the [eternal] succession of [age] cohorts, but with the symbolic elaboration of [historical, unprecedented] events”. In sum:

“all persons are similarly structured in relation to the historical transitions of their time; and the symbols and myths that compose this structure are interwoven with those of the more personal and routine transitions of life” (Spencer 1990, p22).

As such Spencer’s view helps us out of the impossible choice between time as rupture and time as flow, it allows us to see how people can mobilise metaphores of the ‘routine transitions of life’, that is birth, youth and age-cohorts, adulthood and death, in labelling, experiencing and/or

5. Ruel (2002) develops Radcliffe-Brown’s observation and perceives a major distinction between conceptions of generation in West and East Africa. While in West Africa the dominant way of perceiving generation is in a simple dyadic model of parents versus children, among the Bantu-speaking peoples of East Africa, this is combined with identification or merging of kin in alternate generations.

contesting ‘historical transitions’ in terms of rebirth or infantilisation, rejuvenation or senescence, and such like.

A differential stress on continuity and discontinuity also seems to affect the way in which youth is dealt with in anthropology, and more particularly how youth agency is valued. In her overview of the anthropological literature on youth, Bucholtz distinguishes between an approach in terms of ‘adolescence’ or transition towards adulthood, and an emerging anthropology of youth that stresses the “here-and-now of young people’s experience”.

“Youth foregrounds age not as trajectory, but as identity, where *identity* is intended to invoke neither [...] adolescence as a prolonged ‘search for identity’, nor [a] rigid and essentialized concept...” (Bucholtz 2002, p532; italics in the original)

This quote advocates avoiding both ‘transition thinking’ and reification in favour of accentuating youth agency and identity. Such a view may prevent authors from summarising, for instance, the history of the Senegalese students of the twentieth century, in the following phrase:⁶

“The intention of students to be involved in the life of their nation as members of civil society [...] does not take into account the fact that they are only in transition, over which they have no control because they have no impact on the socio-economic stakes. So instead of being actors/initiators of this change, they have turned into mere artifacts of this evolution...” (Bathily, Diouf & Mbodj 1995, p401)

However, it is easier to be scandalised by the reduction of youth to a residual category (see Federici 2000, p50), than to remedy it without ending up with – in Seekings’ terminology (1993) – either a ‘liberatory’ or an ‘apocalyptic’ view of youth that may crudely overstates the youth’s impact on society.

This chapter makes an attempt to pave itself a way out of this dyadic trap by focussing on how youth at particular moments in time is politically, socio-economically, and culturally constructed *and* constructs itself in contested discourses of history and society. My overall stance concerning the constructedness of ‘youth’ is aptly expressed in the following quote by Durham in a review of the anthropological literature on youth in Africa:

“the conceptualization of cohorts and generational experience is deeply embedded in a politics of history. This is a politics of the present [...] Claims to the position of youth, claims about the nature of youth, and moral claims about youth are centrally involved in the reinvention of political and social space. They are used to mobilize similar *kinds* of temporal frameworks, in the negotiations of what kinds of power are available and where

6. This quote does not do justice to an otherwise richly documented and properly argued paper.

they can be exercised, and by whom.” (Durham 2000, p118; italics in the original) In this dense statement Durham can be seen arguing in favour of a doubly deconstructive focus on ‘identities’. First, ‘generation’ features in particular mobilisations of ‘temporal frameworks’ or in what Werbner calls “politicised memory” (Werbner 1998, p15). In that respect, Hall remarks that:

“Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.” (Hall 1990, p225)

Secondly, ‘youth’ as an identity category is seen as the temporal and local outcome in hegemonic struggles of subjectification and power distribution. The negotiation of historical positions described by Hall takes place as Roseberry (1996, p77) has it, “in the dynamic tension between discursive fields and social fields of force”. Thus, identity constructions articulate “within present social reality *to create* a specific route of empowerment” (Van Dijk 1998, p156; italics in the original).

Accordingly, in examining how two momentary groups of emerging political actors in present-day Côte d'Ivoire position themselves as (relative) youngsters or even a ‘new generation’, this chapter will look at how they evoke the past, remember and forget, mark momentary ruptures and construe historical bridges in different ways. In the following section I will briefly review the ways in which other authors have dealt with the question of history and agency in anthropological studies of youth and generation in Africa.

Youth, history, and agency in the anthropological literature on Africa

The idea that youth (generation) is a historically constructed social category is an established one and both its economic and political dimensions have been accentuated.⁷ In a recent article the Comaroffs (2000, p101-102) claim that in post World War II capitalism, “the *teenager* – the term itself was invented by the marketing industry – has become the new model of the consumer-

7. “Divisions in age cohorts or generations are entirely variable and constitute the object of manipulation”, says Bourdieu (1985, p144). Commenting on “the present fashion for separate ‘youth cultures’”, Hobsbawm (1994, p260) states that “the concept of ‘youth culture’ uniting an entire age group across social distinctions is either superficial or commercial”.

citizen” (italics in original).⁸ Giving the construction of ‘youth’ a more political twist, other authors remark how it features prominently in the modernist imagination of social actors and social scientists alike (Gable 2000, p201; Diouf & Collignon 2001, p9). That such is not limited to the capitalist sphere, is illustrated by Bundy (1987) and Burgess (2003) who show that communism and left-wing revolutionary movements in Africa constructed youth as a vanguard revolutionary force, a substitute proletariat.⁹ For Mbembe (1985) such inscriptions of youth in national narratives of progress form the hallmark of the era of the single-party rule in postcolonial Africa, but like Bayart (1983, p117; 1989, p151-153) he observes how such encompassment is necessarily partial and contested. Together with Toulabor (1981; 1985), Mbembe (1985) is among the first authors to explore the different terrains (religion, sexuality, popular culture, everyday conversation) other than the narrowly political, where African youngsters consolidate or otherwise challenge, escape or subvert the “neo-gerontocratic regimes” (Werbner 1999; see also Argenti 2002).

The ‘anthropology of youth’ that arises in African studies in the course of the 1980s may have many different sources of inspiration but it produces equally powerful claims for the recognition of youth agency (Argenti 2002).¹⁰ Seekings (1993, p16) states that “youth need to be treated as actors in a meaningful sense, and not simply as bearers of structural conditions such as education, employment or political crises”. Such a claim can be translated into general appeals to see youth as “active citizens” (Maxted 2003, p69) or “rational human actors” (Peters & Richards 1998, p184) whose “voices should be central to the [scientific] discourse” (Nsamenang 2002, p68). Bundy (1987) goes even further, when he ‘theorises’ the experience and skills of the Cape

8. Some authors claim also the reverse of this thesis. Aguilar (1998, p23) claims that: “Perceptions of age are different in industrial and non-industrial societies, whereby the latter can be considered as ‘distinctly old-age oriented.’”.

9. Ly (1992) provides a beautiful case-study of how in Mali (*Soudan*) ‘youth’ was gradually redefined by the political party Union Soudanaise-RDA, as it transformed itself from a revolutionary opposition party into a government party within a single-party state. In between 1947 and 1962 ‘youth’ shifted from being constructed as an avant-garde battle force (*la jeunesse était de toutes les batailles*) to constituting “the dimension of integration and discipline” of the new nation (Ly 1992, p88, p96).

10. Among those sources of inspiration figure Bayart’s ‘Study group of popular modes of political action’ and its spin-offs, (Bayart 1983; Denis-Constant 1989, 1998), the ‘praxis’ paradigm of feminist and critical anthropology of the 1980s (see Ortner 1984), and the Subaltern Studies Group (Diouf 1999). More generally, interrogating gerontocratic orders may lead ... to the awareness that “anthropology belongs to discourses of power” (Fabian 1998, p31).

Town youth of the 1980s and credits them with possessing:¹¹

“[...] the street sociology of taunting armed soldiers, the pavement politics of pamphlet distribution and slogan painting; the geography of safe houses and escape routes; and the grammar and dialectics of under-cover operation.” (1987, p321)

However empowering such appraisals may be, they become even more interesting when integrated into research projects that try not so much to celebrate youth's self-awareness and competence, but attempt to foreground the ways in which youth negotiate the structures, ideologies or discourses that attempt to shape or position them. When, for instance, looking at how rural youth of the RUF rebel movement in Sierra Leone took to all-out brutal violence in the name of an ideological programme adapted from that of the student movement, Bangura (1997, p185) asks “how this ideology was *negotiated* by the young estranged fighters to suit their own ambitions and goals” (italics in original). Likewise, in his study of young female guerrillas in Mozambique's FRELIMO movement, West (2000, p182) notes that they “were not merely indoctrinated by FRELIMO but also themselves contributed substantially to the narratives that would frame their experiences as combatants”. Nyamnjoh & Page (2002) make a similar move in their study of young Cameroonians “mental representations of whiteness” (2002, p607). Instead of situating these representations in a single ‘archive’ of Occidentalism, the researchers remain attentive to the doubts of the youngsters concerning “the ‘truthfulness’ of the images of the West that are available” (ibid., p630), and the way these images are interpreted as themselves expressions of Western domination (ibid., p630-632). The same interest for the critical stance of youth towards received wisdom can be found in Gable's study of a youth association (the Club for the Development of Culture) in Guinea-Bissau. Here youngsters reconnect with ancestral traditions and institutions, which their elders are accused of having abolished, in an attempt to remake society in “ways that seem modern, familiar, modish, fashionable” (Gable 2000, p202). Gable's is among the few studies of how youth in Africa deal with ‘history’ in projects of

11. Neither a declared fan of Bayart & co nor an adept of praxis anthropology, Bundy seems to base his acclaim of youth agency rather on Marxist literature and more particularly on the British Marxist historian Hobsbawm, whom he quotes several times. In all Bundy's approach recalls Hobsbawm's stated attempt to “restore to men of the past and especially the poor of the past, the gift of theory” (in Kaye 1984, p229).

intergenerational antagonism partly of their own making.¹² Although in his general assessment of the project of the Culture Development Club, Gable (*idem*) prefers Appiah's term 'neo-tradition' over Ranger's 'invented tradition', his characterisation of the former largely corresponds with Ranger's (1993) revised version of 'imagined tradition' which stresses "a fully historical treatment" of "colonial hegemony" *and* "African participation and initiative in innovating custom" (1993, p81). Such an approach is, for instance, brought to fruition in Diouf's analysis of youth movements in Dakar in the late 1980s and early 1990s that played with the idea of destroying and rebuilding (cleaning, painting) the city. This bears witness, according to Diouf (1996, p43), to "a will to break with the historic [nationalist] memory [...] that still furnish[es] the guidelines for the political discourse of consensus and unanimity". Knowing that "youth and the young are a key theme in the discursive project of nationalist ideology" (*ibid.*, p48), these Senegalese youth movements try to mark ruptures and launch projects of renewal which also consist in inventing new traditions (*ibid.*, p64).

With reference to Hall's earlier remark about identities and positioning, the above sketchy overview of some of the literature on youth in Africa shows that one can differentially stress how 'youth is positioned' and how 'youth positions itself'. Rather than choosing an intermediate position, this chapter opts for an approach which considers the (discursive) positioning processes as dialogic ones, situated within larger 'social fields of force'. What retains our specific attention in these repositioning processes, is how 'history' or the 'past' is mobilised as a resource in the hegemonic struggle among youth and with their perceived elders.

As far as I am aware, the postcolonial literature on youth and generations in Côte d'Ivoire has not produced any specific case studies of the use of history in youth struggles. Nonetheless, there is a substantial and interestingly varied corpus of literature on generation and youth in Côte d'Ivoire in which the shift from 'transition' to 'youth identity' is paralleled by other shifts in the choice of subject matter: from party-politics over social issues to juvenile 'cultural worlds'. In all, one can see in this corpus of literature the gradual disappearance of the gerontocratic perspective (transition) and the emergence of a more 'juvenocratic' perspective in terms of affirmation of

12. Other research projects such as Ndarishikanye's (1998) and Jewsiewicki's & Létourneau's (1998) that try to elicit the 'historical consciousness' of youth in Africa by means of interviews, are valuable in themselves but fall outside my present concern with youth's 'historiological' ventures.

social and cultural identity.¹³ However, Diouf & Collignon (2001, p5) invite us to see these changes not only as the expression of a paradigm shift or a changing research focus internal to the social sciences, but also as ‘motivated’ by changes in society at large. In other words, insofar that ‘youth’ and ‘generation’ are historical constructs, the social scientific study of these phenomena is part of that history.

A ‘conjunctural’ reading of the literature on generation and youth in Côte d’Ivoire

The different perspectives on youth developed in the literature on generations and youth in Côte d’Ivoire seem heavily influenced by the (national or international) conjuncture in which they are elaborated, and by the specific focus of research. Overall, the early postcolonial literature initiates a focus on the constitution of ‘political generations’ within the process of the gradual establishment and the later fossilisation of single-party rule (Zolberg 1975; Chazan 1976; Médard 1981; Bakary 1984; Toungara 1994). Together with the economic decline of the 1980s there develops an interest in the emergence of ‘social generations’ of demographically daunting, economically desperate, and politically restless groups of youngsters (Touré 1984, 1985; Le Pape 1986; Le Pape & Vidal 1987; Daddieh 1988). The democratic rupture of 1990 and the deployment of youth in the partly liberalised public sphere, set off a growing interest in ‘cultural generations’ or rather ‘youth identity’ constituted by popular culture (Gnahore 1992; de Latour 2001a, 2001b, Konate 2002, Bahi & Biaya 1996), political contestation (Bailly 1995; Konate 2003), socio-economic claims (Chauveau & Bobo 2003), and educational marginalisation (Proteau 2002).

Embedded in an extensive literature on state-formation and national integration in Côte d’Ivoire that seems to combine political stability with economic success¹⁴, several authors document how the one-party state of president Houphouët-Boigny (1960-1990) and the PDCI-RDA (*Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire – Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*) deal with emerging ‘political generations’. Among them, Zolberg (1975) is an exception in that he – like he had done before (Zolberg 1963; 1969) – describes in detail the political manoeuvring preceding the firm establishment of the single-party rule. More specifically, he recounts the different ways in which

13. As far as I am aware, the useful neologism ‘juvenocracy’ was coined by Michael Eric Dyson (see <http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/0913dys.pdf>).

14. See Zolberg (1963, 1967, 1971), Cohen (1973, 1974), Tice (1974), Liebenow (1986), Woods (1988), Crook (1989), and Bakary (1991).

party leader Houphouët-Boigny manages the open conflicts with successive youth and student movements between 1950 and 1963/4. The subjects of controversy are manifold, but they mainly concern the nature of the decolonisation process (evolution or revolution), and the degree of ‘leftism’ (communism, socialism, or ‘state capitalism’) in the PDCI policies. In his description, Zolberg highlights the strategic side of this ideological struggle by focussing on how the internationalisation and the pursuit of autonomy of the students is counteracted by the single party and/or the government. The PDCI party-leadership is systematically challenged by new ‘generations’ of (former) students coming back from abroad (mainly Dakar and Paris) and by student movements that operate outside Cote d’Ivoire, like the AECIF (*Association des Etudiants de la Côte d’Ivoire en France*) in France, or movements like the UGECI (*Union Générale des Etudiants de Côte d’Ivoire*) that form part of international federations, such as the FEANF (*Fédération des Etudiants d’Afrique Noire en France*). The transformation of the rebellious UGECI into the UNECI (*Union Nationale des Etudiants de Côte d’Ivoire*) is one among many attempts to bring student activism and its headquarters within the national borders. This process of ‘nationalisation’ is partly concluded with the creation of a National University in the capital Abidjan in 1963. Another attempt by Houphouët-Boigny to fasten his grip on the youth movement is effected by assisting in the creation of alternative youth movements, like the JRDACI, which are ‘disciplined’ by co-opting their leaders into the government. This chapter of gradual incorporation and national encompassment is concluded in 1963 when a ‘conspiracy of the youngsters’ (*Le complot des jeunes*) forms the pretext for arresting and incarcerating, amongst others, hundreds of youthful dissenters both active in and outside the single party.

Later authors document the management of youth organisations and political generations after the ‘pacification’ of the mid-1960s and through continuous supervision and manipulation. Chazan (1976) stresses the almost panoptical supervision of youth movements, by “maximising government intervention” and restricting “interaction between the different youth organisations” which are kept “small and financially weak” (1976, p52, 59). Médard (1981) highlights the manipulation of young politicians in his description of the 7th PDCI party congress of 1980. The author argues that Houphouët-Boigny merely uses the image of possible elite circulation to frighten the party establishment into accepting far-reaching measures such as the trimming down of the party institutions which implies job losses for the elder generation (*ibid.*, p112-3). Moreover, he notices how the few new political figures who enter the power centres of the party, issue from the official student union MEECI (*Mouvement des élèves et étudiants de Côte d’Ivoire*). The MEECI was created in 1968 to replace the UNECI (see above) when it had turned itself against the president, and like the UNECI before lacked any autonomy from the PDCI

party and thus from the state. In conclusion, Médard suggests that the discourse of generational antagonism, however manipulative or ‘virtual’ in nature, has real effects in the sense that it provides a general frame in which the succession of Houphouët-Boigny is perceived (ibid, p113).

That such a perception of political succession in terms of generation is not only shared by political actors but also by scholars, becomes clear from Bakary’s (1984) analysis of the presidential *succession problématique* in terms of elite generations. From this analysis Bakary concludes that “the ruling group has become ‘petrified’ and reproduced, consolidated rather than transformed” (ibid, p49). Much later, Toungara (1995) revisits Bakary’s generational model, refines it, and accentuates possible intragenerational differences. In spite of these revisions and the fact that she inserts a good deal of theoretical substance into her analytic scheme, Toungara’s findings differ little from Bakary’s in that she confirms the PDCI’s gerontocratic attitude and its incapacity to come to terms with the younger political generations (1995, p33; see also Fauré 1990-1991, p144).

In the course of the 1980s members of the increasingly assertive and internationally recognised anti-Houphouëtist opposition publicly denounce the autocracy and the failing economic policies in Côte d’Ivoire,¹⁵ Partly related to this nascent and public opposition activity, a number of publications register the emergence of ‘social generations’ of youngsters that are positioned with respect to an educational system that contracts under the stress of economic recession. Working further on the idea of students as ‘the fortunate few’ (Clignet & Foster 1966), Touré (1985) distinguishes between privileged and underprivileged youngsters. Among the privileged students and young professionals, Touré (1985, p287-288) detects two growing groups of malcontents on which the government more or less retains its grip: (a) the ones that find it increasingly difficult to remain in education because of government austerity measures (see also Le Pape & Vidal 1987), and (b) the educated political discontents who refuse for instance to join the official student union MEECI and seek ways of expressing their disagreement (see also Daddieh 1988). The underprivileged are the growing group of half-educated or non-educated, mainly urban,

15. See e.g. Gbagbo (1983), Amondji (1984), Teya (1985), Touré (1981). For a fuller treatment of the anti-Houphouëtist opposition, see Arnaut (2004a).

underemployed or overemployed youngsters.¹⁶ When Touré claims that this “large mass of youngsters is abandoned to its fate” (1985, p288), he highlights the sharp contrast between the relative intensity with which the government polices the (emerging) elites, for instance through the instrument of the MEECI, and its lack of concern for the socio-economic integration of lower class youngsters. For Le Pape (1986, p112) the mid-1980s are the moment when “antagonisms between generations and antagonisms between fractions of social classes converge”. This ‘amalgamation’ thus sets the stage on which students can translate their (financial, educational) problems in terms of class and the supremacy of the fortunate (*les grands*) (Le Pape & Vidal 1987, p73).

Although one may overstate the case by speaking of a gradual ‘reciprocal assimilation’ of the ‘poor’ and the ‘juniors’ in the course of the 1980s, the fact is that the democratic turn of 1990 in Côte d’Ivoire witnesses the emergence of a more or less unified opposition block composed of socialist political parties and independent unions on the one hand and the student union Fesci on the other hand. The distinction between the adult and the adolescent side of the opposition remains important, because of the specific role of the students as an avant-garde battle force (*fer de lance*, Konate 2002, p780) in the extensive street fights and media wars between the government and the opposition, which accompany the slow democratisation process from early 1990 onwards. Whether it is the result of a gradual shift, in the 1980s, towards the recognition of youngsters as a social group in its own right (Traoré & Essienne 1994, p88), or a direct consequence of the sudden and massive eruption of the youngsters into the public sphere of violent street demonstrations and mediatised aggressive rhetorics (Bratton & Van de Walle 1992, p422-3), the ‘youth’ which emerges from the literature of the 1990s has all the makings of a ‘youth identity’ in Bucholtz’ terminology.¹⁷ Concomitantly ‘youth’ sheds its transitory or ‘adolescent’ character: it is neither a ‘political generation’ defined in terms of succession and assimilation, nor a ‘social generation’ characterised in terms of marginality and frustration.

In what remains one of the most well-documented accounts of the democratic turn in Côte

16. In Touré’s (1985) description the distinction between underemployed and overemployed youngsters coincides largely with the division between ‘nationals’ who show a lack of initiative and creativity in looking for job opportunities, and ‘strangers’ who perform a wide variety of low-paid jobs from dawn till dusk.

17. The post-1990 attention for ‘youth culture’ is of course not limited to Côte d’Ivoire. In a recent volume on ‘Africa’s young majority’, about half of the papers are on religious and cultural dimensions of youth (Trudell *et al.* 2002).

d'Ivoire, Bailly (1995) expresses his appreciation for the stoutness of the youth who after two months of almost uninterrupted manifestations (February-April 1990), force the PDCI party into accepting (a) multiparty elections, (b) the liberalisation of the press, (c) the creation of the independent (anti-government) student union FESCI, *and* (d) the disbandment of the government-controlled student union MEECI. As if to demonstrate that he himself forefelt the rise of a new youth, Bailly prefaces his book with an earlier newspaper article of his about the funeral of the popular TV star and musician Roger Fulgence Kassy (RFK) in 1989. In this article entitled 'The RFK generation' he basically describes how he looks in awe at the thousands of youngsters who invade the streets of Abidjan to attend the funeral, and speculates about the possibility that one day the mobilisable youth masses may chose other causes than the death of a popular artist to manifest themselves (1995, p.26-28).

More than announcing the birth of a new combative generation, Bailly's 'RFK generation' article heralds a series of publications in which youth identity and agency are linked to particular expressions of popular culture. Gnahore (1992) harks back to a popular dance rhythm of the 1970s, the *Aloucou*, which youngsters substract from a local Bété tradition and introduce within the emerging popular culture of the urban South of Côte d'Ivoire.¹⁸ Entirely in tune with the post-1990 consideration for youth agency, Gnahore finds in *Aloucou* an expression of how youth "becomes conscious of itself, of its responsibility and its dynamism" and how this leads them "to break the ties that maintain them in the status of minors"; and he concludes that "this aspiration for independence, [and] responsibility is yet to be understood properly by the adult generation". Bahi and Biaya (1996) and Konate (2002) give the popular music genre of *Zouglou* very much the same treatment in the sense that they also connect the music genre to the yearning of youth's for intergenerational independence and intragenerational solidarity. *Zouglou* is presented as the soul of a "counter-culture" (Konate 2002, p792), a generation that "refuses to be incorporated (*embrigader*) or recuperated [...] by the dominant class" (Bahi & Biaya 1996, p113). This escape from state paternalism also signals a rupture of family and ethnic ties, and results in a wholesale "deconstruction of the identity of the student" and its reconstruction based on new solidarities (Bahi & Biaya 1996, p108, p114). For Konate (2002) this solidarity, mediated by the new urban idiom *Nuchi*, transcends the group of what he calls "the socially acculturated and elite" students and extends to "the little folks, the desperate, the shoe polishers and other parking guards" (2002, p778).

18. Bété is the ethnonym of a large and diverse group that occupies large parts of the South-West region of Côte d'Ivoire (on its position in the ethno-political landscape of Côte d'Ivoire, see chapter three).

The literature that addresses more recent, and sometimes post coup d'état phenomena, often thematises the development of new solidarities and documents the emergence of new socialities. In two texts on the *ghettomen* of Abidjan, de Latour (2001a, 2001b) makes a case for 'the new Nuchi family' which differs from the traditional family of what she calls "generational reproduction" and "repetition", in the sense that it fosters protection and exchange but allows each individual's quest for "personal autonomy and hegemony" (2001a, p165-6, 153). From rural southern Côte d'Ivoire after the 2002 insurgency, Chauveau & Bobo (2003) report the emergence of new solidarities between local youngsters and urbanites who have come back to the village for different reasons, and who directly confront the elder family members and/or the village authorities. The power claims of the youths are not only nourished by new resources (weapons and money) which stem from the vigilante services they deliver for the village, but are also sustained by official policies and rhetorics that, since the early 1990s, advocate the 'modernisation' and the 'rejuvenation' of the agricultural business in rural areas (2003, p27-30). Finally, Proteau's (2002) recent study of the educational system in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly after 1990, endorses the 'youth identity' approach by stressing the extent to which students of what Konate calls the 'Zouglou generation' were concerned with their autonomy (as self-sufficiency) and engaged in struggles to safeguard their cultural capital (diplomas, status, and thus, job-opportunities) (2002, p155-158). Considering how in 1990 many (teachers') union activists converted themselves into opposition politicians, Proteau concludes that the syndical protest of the students may ultimately be considered a call for the autonomy of their cultural capital in the context of the parallel autonomisation of 'political capital' with the advent of multipartyism in 1990 (ibid., p346-50).

The above overview of some of the social scientific literature on youth and generation in Côte d'Ivoire reveals a number of shifts which crosscut or run parallel to certain conjuncture-related changes in research focus, and to the general tendency away from a transitional conception of youth towards studying 'youth culture' as perceived by Bucholtz.

The most obvious shift in Ivorian literature on youth is that from stressing continuity (in political succession) from the 1970s onwards, to accentuating discontinuity (in new youth-driven 'cultures' and socialities) in the 1990s. The growing attention in the 1980s for the 'accumulation' of a new youth generation both in politics and in society at large, almost announces the ruptures of the 1990s, but this is also part of another shift, from a focus on elites (students, PDCI apparatchiks) to more attention for youth as part and parcel of the 'populus', its changing demographic structure, the mass politics and popular culture in which it expresses itself. Finally,

one can discern a more recent emphasis on ‘youth identity’ and agency that contrasts heavily with the earlier foregrounding of the political instrumentalisation or socio-economic marginalisation of youth or younger generations. This reconstruction helps us to perceive how shifting academic interests are as much ‘epochal’ as the social, political constructions of ‘youth’ and ‘generation’ observed by academics in society.

So far we have identified three ways in which youth/generation is a ‘historical construction’: (a) it is situated in time and history; (b) it takes place in historical society, and (c) in (historical) academia. In the next section, these findings will serve to sharpen our critical awareness for analysing a recent article by Konate (2003) in which he describes the advent of the ‘Zouglou’ or ‘Fesci’ generation into the Ivorian political scene after 1990. Apart from introducing the subject matter of my own research, a critique of this article proves helpful to detect how social scientific analysis of youth/generation may turn gerontocratic in spite of it stressing youth identity and agency.

Three ambiguities or how to prevent the return of the gerontocrat

The article of Konate (2003) recounts the origins of the Fesci movement in 1990 in terms of a radical discontinuity: as the sudden emergence of an ethos of protest and defiance embodied by a new generation of activist youngsters, and expressed in equally novel idioms of, among other things, Zouglou music and street violence (2003, p50-57). In the historical reconstruction that follows, Konate emphasises the increased use of violence not so much in the Fesci’s struggle against the government but for settling internal disputes (*ibid.*, p58-61). This shift is characterised as fundamentally political in that it is accompanied, particularly after the coup d’état of 1999, by Fesci leaders hooking up with one or other political formation. This process reaches its apogee, according to Konate, with the insurgency of 2002. Then a number of Fescists create the Young Patriots movement which explicitly defends the cause of president Gbagbo and operates in – as well as substantially contributes to – the explosion of informal violence both on campus and in the country as a whole. Together with the dissemination and popularisation of informal violence, its propagators, the Fescists themselves, are described as shaking off their spirit of defiance, and becoming political employees in the criminogenous regime of president Gbagbo (*ibid.*, p.62-66) The ‘rebel’ Fescists, on the other hand, radicalise in another direction, Konate says, by opting for all-out violence and “absolute defiance” (*ibid.*, p69).

Although Konate’s reconstruction is enlightening and informed by an intimate knowledge of the Fesci student movement, it suffers from three ambiguities which turn the analysis into a

gerontocratic exercise in the sense that the agency of the youngsters is ultimately misrecognised.¹⁹ First, Konate foregrounds the discontinuity/rupture of 1990 while stressing a certain continuity (in the form of a gradual decadence) between 1990 and the present. This construction relies heavily on the term ‘Fesci spirit’ which he sees emerging in 1990, going astray in the course of the 1990s, and bifurcating into a ‘defiant’ line (the ‘rebels’) and an ‘instrumentalised’ line (the ‘patriots’) (ibid., p50, 56, 69). Konate’s genealogy contradicts the historical imagination of both Pickas, who invents the ‘patriotic’ Fascists as the honourable heirs to the defiant Fesci of 1990, and of Soro Guillaume who perceives neither a tradition of defiance nor a historical decay but a continuity of instrumentalisation and criminal violence of the Fesci. Although these alternative and diverging constructions do not in themselves discredit Konate’s, it is difficult to see how Konate can accommodate them without profoundly interrogating his reification of the ‘Fesci spirit’ and without spelling out the historical position from where he oversees the continuities and the discontinuities in the deployment of the Fesci ‘generation’. In other words, the ‘gerontocrat’ appears as situated in an ahistorical locus above and beyond the historic battles of the youngsters, as a time-honoured researcher who has ‘been there, seen that’.

Secondly, the gradual disintegration of the ‘Fesci spirit’ accompanies its steady replacement by violence. Also here, Konate perceives a certain unity when he asks whether “the violence of the rebellion and that of xenophobic nationalism [i.e. of the Young Patriots] are two faces of the same medal: the eruption into politics of a rebellious youth, formed among the ranks of the Fesci, who refuses to remain under the power of the elders?” (ibid., p50). Konate does not provide an answer to that question but strongly plays on the double face of violence when he calls the present “leaders of the Zouglou generation” “the children of the ball” (*les enfants de la balle*) whereby ‘ball’ can either be taken as a ‘football’ or a ‘bullet’. When he then presents the Young Patriot movement as a multitude of stone-throwing and slogan-shouting louts (ibid., p63-66), and the ‘rebels’ as opting for all-out violence (ibid., p69), Konate may be seen differentiating between a ‘football’ and a ‘bullet’ kind of violence in the hands of the two respective groups of former Fascists. As in his reconstruction of the ‘Fesci spirit’, also in his interpretation of ‘Zouglou violence’ Konate prefers ambiguous unity (*two faces of the same medal?*) from a vaguely neutral observer’s position, over differential articulation in the words

19. Yacouba Konate is professor of Philosophy at Abidjan University and knows many of the (former) Fascists personally or at least as students. Moreover, Konate is a scholar of popular culture (see Konate 1987 and 2002) and as a consultant of a major Ivorian politician also an expert witness in national politics and political culture.

and actions of the Fescists themselves. Thus, here the ‘gerontocrat’ appears as a unifier, as a composed observer situated above and beyond the violent factional strife of the youngsters.

If the two ambiguities listed above bring out in Konate’s approach a certain deficiency in dealing with the agency of the Fescists, their historical imagination and their discourse of violence, the article further shows a profound ambiguity in its description of the Fescists as *political* actors. More broadly understood, the ‘children of the ball’ metaphor addresses the questions of whether the emerging generation plays a political game (‘football’) or is deadly serious (‘bullet’), and *a fortiori*, is a plaything in the hands of veteran politicians (instrumentalisation) or a time bomb under Côte d’Ivoire’s entrenched gerontocracy (defiance). These ambiguities Konate further elaborates in terms of ‘role-play’ that in the end does not only disempower the Fescists but also subverts the entire political domain in which they are currently operating.²⁰ First, Konate remarks that:

“the leaders of the Zougrou generation [...] have no jobs, no professional qualifications whatsoever [...] neither political tourists, nor political amateurs, they are the children of the ball. They play politics at the age when others play with a ball.” (ibid., p67)

In his conclusion then, Konate observes how over the last decade the state seems to give in more and more to the militant youngsters’ demands and is perhaps changing its “*philosophy* of the hen” – chicks (youth) follow their mother (the government) – into “a *strategy* of the duck” – ducklings lead (define the objectives of) their mother (ibid., p70; my italics). In the latter image, the shift from respectable ‘philosophy’ to mere ‘strategy’ amounts to a turn from gerontocracy to juvenocracy which the former image further infantilises and renders particularly jocular. In other words, a degrading role-reversal between political seniors and juniors is accompanied by a collapse of the distinction between politics and play. In sum, through the combination of role-reversal and ‘play’, the eruption of a new generation into Ivorian politics provokes the latter’s

20. The same ambiguities are taken over by the editors in their introduction to the special issue on Côte d’Ivoire in which Konate’s paper features. Commenting on the “reconfiguration of the generational relationships”, the editors (Banégas & Marshall-Fratani 2003, p8) state that “one must take the measure of this sociological transformation of the Ivorian political class and the affirmation of youngsters in the public space”. All the more so, it seems, because the militants of the new generation “experience a certain form of political subjectification through war which opens for them the doors of autonomy and power” (idem). These reflections, however, contradict their own earlier conjecture that the Young Patriots “are on the pay-role of those in power, instrumentalised by the presidency in a strategy of popular nationalist mobilisation” (ibid. p7).

transformation into a subjunctive space and the end of politics as we know it. Referring to Habermas, Konate (2003, p69) observes that the violent eruption of the youngsters into politics signals the end of “a regular debate (*discussion normée*) according to the rules of the exchange of ideas”. In other words, the third *persona* of the ‘gerontocrat’ is the one who defends norms and normality against the unruly and playfully deviant youngsters. In the end it is tempting to call Bourdieu for help in identifying Konate as a ‘gerontocrat’. When asked to comment on the concept of youth, Bourdieu (1985, p143) recounts that in sixteenth century Florence “the elders proposed to the youngsters an ideology of virility, of *virtú*, and of violence, which was a way to reserve for themselves wisdom, that is power.”

The above extensive analysis of the literature on youth and generation in Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, and of Konate's paper in particular, is meant to illustrate the salience of the theoretical approach advocated above and to introduce (the subject matter of) the ethnographic research presented below. Above all, the analysis of the literature is an extensive critique of gerontocracy, not a celebration of juvenocracy. This critique brings out the need for taking historical positionality as advocated by Durham and Hall, seriously. First, by remaining attentive to the ways in which youth differentially constructs and negotiates (through synchronicity, remembering and forgetting) the histories (traditions, genealogies, ‘spirits’, ‘generations’) in which it operates, one avoids the kind of essentialisations of identities (‘spirit’, ‘generation’) which Bucholtz warned against earlier.

Secondly, by perceiving history as profoundly ‘political’, and ‘memory’ as a (historical) ‘route of empowerment’ as proposed by Van Dijk (1998), one cannot remain blind to the ‘reality’ of the hegemonic struggles in which (historical) positions are held, released or reconquered. Thus, situating the struggles of the youngsters in the ‘social fields of force’ as Roseberry (1996) suggests, one avoids, at the very least, ‘subjunctifying’ the field of juvenile politics and the hegemonic struggles in which it is embedded. Finally, this alternative approach foregrounds the ‘politics of memory’ in which not only the historical actors are involved (in their struggles with each other and with their ‘generational’ others) but of which also the researcher partakes. In other words, one needs to be constantly aware of where one ‘stands’ as a researcher in relation to the actors whose historical discourse and actions one analyses in order to avoid taking the gerontocrats’ position under the guise of neutrality, aloofness and normality.

In the ‘ethnography of the past’ of youth in Côte d'Ivoire, I distinguish between three ‘moments’ or ‘ruptures’ as among the main ingredients with which the former Fesci youngsters I spoke to differentially construct their ‘political’ history. In the reverse chronological order from present to

past adopted in this reconstruction, these ruptures are: (1) the coup d'état of December 1999, (2) the democratic turn of 1990, and (3) the beginning of a fundamental controversy concerning the decolonisation of Côte d'Ivoire around 1950. To each of these ruptures or discontinuities my interlocutors sometimes associate the rise of a 'generation' of different 'quality', each with its own historicity, materiality, and metaphoric. I try to grasp these different appreciations by distinguishing between: (1) the 'political generation' of former Fescists who after 1999 understand their political engagement and the antagonisms that go with it, as a sign of their 'coming of age' in national politics; (2) the 'social generation' of Fesci militants who since 1990 shared experiences and built solidarities in the face of repression and marginalisation; and (3) the 'national generation' of Fesci-predecessors who began to militate in the early 1950s for the rise of a new sovereign nation, and whose struggle is deemed unfinished.

These three 'generations', I argue, all remain discursively active today. That means, they do not stop where the next one begins, while later generations can (or may refuse to) present themselves as successors to a previous one. In other words, the three generations form a sort of 'repertoire' for present 'generations' or political actors to identify with or to position themselves against either politically or socially, and within the broader confines of national history.

The 'Coup d'état des jeunes' and the new 'political' generation

Two months after the coup d'état of 24 December 1999, Charles Blé Goudé, then secretary-general of the student union Fesci, and Martial Joseph Ahipeaud who preceded him in that position between 1990 and 1993 (see Annex 1), meet again for the first time in many years at Ghent University (Belgium).²¹ Blé Goudé is on a European tour to explain the importance of the Christmas putsch for the future of Côte d'Ivoire, while Martial is on his way back to Côte d'Ivoire from London where he has been in voluntary exile for about six years, since the early days of the regime of president Bédié (1993-1999) which has now come to an end. In one of his talks to the students of Ghent University, Blé Goudé recounts the outbreak of the coup.

“The Ivorian people were extremely annoyed, above all by the campaign [of president Bédié] to diabolize Alassane Dramane Ouattara, whom he accused of being a non-Ivorian. [*Then Goudé explains that Alassane Ouattara is certainly an Ivorian because he*

21. Blé Goudé's trip to Belgium (Ghent, Brussels, Liège) was coordinated by Sarah Verhees who was then a student at the Department of African Languages and Cultures (Ghent University) and had made contact with Blé Goudé while doing fieldwork in Abidjan.

was governor of the West African Central Bank (BECEAO), and later Prime Minister under Houphouët-Boigny] The Ivorian people, as I said, were extremely annoyed and waited for a precise moment in order to take their responsibilities.

On December 22nd, the students organise a sit-in at the campus of Cocody [Abidjan] and demand the re-opening of their halls of residence. There is a clash between them and the police. Many are arrested. I am [already] in prison.

One day later, shots into the air resound from the military camp Akouédo. Young military of our generation, I specify; [...] leave for Plateau, that is the town quarter where our ministers reside. [*Goudé further narrates that the rebels invite Bédié to discuss their claims but Bédié refuses and counts on the support of the French military.*]

The day after, General Guéï organises a press conference in which he announces that Henri Konan Bédié is no longer the president of Côte d'Ivoire. [*Several hours later*] From the residence of the French Ambassador, Henri Konan Bédié on RFI [Radio France International] calls upon the people to take to the streets [...]. In point of fact, [...] the entire people of Côte d'Ivoire have taken to the streets, but not to resist. The people have taken to the streets to express their delight, to celebrate the departure of Bédié.” (Blé Goudé, 21/02/2000)²²

In this detailed account of the putsch, Blé Goudé begins and ends by stressing the unanimity of ‘the Ivorian people’ in their massive rejection of president Bédié who seems to be left with a sole ally: France, its military force, its media (RFI), and its Ambassador. On behalf of the exasperated Ivorian people, two groups are presented as coming into action (‘taking their responsibility’): first the students and, one day later, the young military ‘of the same generation’. The concord between these two groups is not only illustrated by their almost simultaneous action but also by presenting their actions as basically non-violent (‘sit-in’, ‘shots into the air’, ‘negotiations’) and meeting with similar aggression and arrogance from the waning regime.²³

22. The parts between brackets and in italics paraphrase and summarise certain passages.

23. By mentioning Alassane Ouattara, Blé Goudé also invokes a political consensus between the two main opposition parties: the RDR (*Rassemblement des Républicains*) of Alassane Ouattara and the socialist party FPI (*Front Républicain*) of Laurent Gbagbo. During the reign of Bédié an alliance had been forged between these two – and a few other, small – political parties in the form of the *Front Républicain*. Apart from a number of army officers, the transition government of General Guéï, formed in January 2000, consisted exclusively of ministers providing from this cross-party anti-Bédié alliance.

Three years later, talking about the coup d'état, identifying its causes, evoking the popular and political 'national' consensus, even minimally labelling it as 'the coup d'état of the youngsters', is deeply problematic. *Kouadio Gilbert*, an ex-Fescist and since September 2002 a Young Patriot enthusiast, explains the coup d'état of 1999 as an act that went against the ideology of the youngsters at the time.²⁴

“When, under the military transition, Ahipeaud [Martial] returned in 2000, we were together all the time until the moment he decided to offer his political support to the leader of the military junta in power. Me and certain comrades said that this was against our basic ideology. We were a generation of youngsters decided to struggle for democracy. We had suffered for it, we had been in prison for it. You know that the slogan of the Fesci was ‘There can be no New School without a genuine democracy’. [...] I said that we should not call this ideology into question. The military junta could not be in favour of democracy.” (*Kouadio Gilbert* 20/09/2003).

This statement contrasts heavily with what *Koné Koné* has to say about the putsch. *Koné Koné* is an ex-Fescist and *compagnon de route* of Soro Guillaume, who since 2002 is an active member of the rebel movement.

“Prior to the coup d'état, we had created the Youth Forum (*Forum de la Jeunesse*), an organisation of NGO's and of youngsters from different political parties. After the coup, we had a meeting and concluded that it was a sign of hope for re-launching the political debate and for the democratisation process in Côte d'Ivoire. [...] However, power has transformed Guéï. When he decided to run for president, we distanced ourselves from him; we were against his candidature.” (*Koné Koné* 21/09/2003)

The major contrast between the two quotes lies in their appreciation of violence and/or the military. While 'rebels' like *Koné Koné*, portray armed intervention as potentially liberatory, Young Patriots like *Kouadio Gilbert* pride themselves on resisting this professional, military violence with the 'weapons of democracy': demonstrations and elections.

The position of the rebels is stated clearly by Soro Guillaume in a public speech for the people of Korhogo on 2 February 2003. On his return from peace negotiations in Marcoussis (near Paris),

24. *Kouadio Gilbert*, like all the other names of the former Fescist I spoke to, is a pseudonym. All pseudonyms in the text are in italics. I use the real names for the authors of public statements, such as Blé Goudé in his lecture at Ghent University in 2000. It is thus possible that Fescists figure twice in my text: under their real name and under their pseudonym.

the rebel leader explains that the intervention of the New Forces has facilitated a frank debate on what he calls the “xenophobic” aspects of the Ivorian laws and the constitution, introduced by Bédié, voted under Guéï, and upheld by Gbagbo. To emphasise the liberatory potential of the insurgency, he recounts how certain representatives of non-rebel political formations have drawn courage from the rebellion and during the Marcoussis negotiations expressed themselves freely against the constitution. All this, ultimately resides, he claims, in the rebels’ military supremacy.

“Let their be no doubts about that, our military superiority is such that we are strong enough to destroy the regime of Gbagbo in twenty-four hours” (MPCI 2003)

One day before the above speech, during a mass-meeting in the capital Abidjan, Blé Goudé explains that the Young Patriots reject the Marcoussis peace agreement because it only takes notice of what the powerful are able to impose on the weak, that is, in his words, ‘the Ivorian people’:

“Or is it because we have no weapons in our hands that we are not taken seriously and that the rebels are imposed on us? [...]

Democracy has been assassinated at Marcoussis [...]

Well, we have been to school where they have told us that in order to gain access to power one must pass the ballot box. Therefore we cannot understand that France imposes the rebels on us. It is in the jungle that the strong devour the weak.” (Blé Goudé on RTI news, 1/02/2002)

The above speeches of Soro Guillaume and Blé Goudé, and the quotes of *Koné Koné* and *Kouadio Gilbert*, show how far we are removed from the popular and political ‘consensus’ about the benign nature of the military insurgency as evoked in Blé Goudé’s lecture three years earlier. To measure the gap between the former allies, it suffices to note that since his Ghent lecture Blé Goudé has identified Alassane Ouattara as a Burkinabe (*Fraternité Matin* 27/10/2001), as a sponsor of both the 1999 and the 2002 insurgencies (*SoirInfo* 9/08/2001; *SoirInfo* 11/11/2002), and (like Bédié in 1999) as a figurehead of the French economic and military interests (*Notre Voie*, 25/04/2003).

What lies between the opposed views of *Kouadio Gilbert* and *Koné Koné* concerning the ‘coup d’état of the youngsters’, is three years of intense political struggle between shifting configurations of political parties from which new electoral constituencies emerge and which make Côte d’Ivoire enter into a new phase of intensive and deeply antagonising mass politics. In this reconfiguration of the political domain, youngsters emerge as particularly active entrepreneurs in the dynamic frontier between state and civil society. In order to illustrate this,

one could easily refer to the period following the ‘February 2000 consensus’: the gradual politicisation and criminalisation of the student union Fesci under Blé Goudé who is suspected of acting on behalf of Gbagbo (*Le National* 6/10/2000; see also Konate 2003, HRW), the civil-society and political projects of both Soro Guillaume, who is increasingly seen as a follower of Alassane Ouattara (*Soir Info* 20/11/2000), and of Martial Ahipeaud who ends up running the election campaign of General Guéï (*Sour Info* 12/09/2000).²⁵ More important, however, is that already in the period preceding the ‘February consensus’ and even before the December coup, the ‘youngsters’ have been positioning themselves as political entrepreneurs – *that* is also what the above quotes of my ex-Fesci interlocutors bear witness to.

Both *Kouadio Gilbert* and of *Koné Koné* situate their deliberations of the coup d’état in conversations among peers. *Kouadio Gilbert* recounts the intensive meetings among former Fescists, which begin soon after the coup and, as he points out later in the conversation, lead to the creation of the Movement of Former Leaders of the Fesci (MARFES – *Mouvement des Anciens Responsables de la Fesci*). The MARFES is led by ex-Fesci secretary-general Jean Blé Guirao but *Kouadio Gilbert* explains that he refuses to join it because it is far too sympathetic to General Guéï. *Koné Koné* makes reference to the Youth Forum, an organisation that is co-founded by Soro Guillaume, and later joined by the Ivorian Mouvement for Youth Rights (MIDJ – *Mouvement ivoirien des Droits de la Jeunesse*) of two other ex-Fescists, Yoro Bi Raymond and Karamoko Yayoro. In February, the Youth Forum organises mass demonstrations in support of “the young rebel soldiers” and to celebrate the fact that after the coup d’état “youth is experiencing a new era of liberty” (*Le Jour* 4/02/2000). This ‘call for liberty’, Soro Guillaume has already launched in 1999 through another of his NGOs, the International Forum of Francophone Students (FIEF). The FIEF is among a dozen or so organisations and political parties that in late 1999 form the anti-Bédié Forum of the Forces for Change (*Forum des forces du changement*). Also the MARFES, as one of my interlocutors explains, grows out of an earlier albeit informal organisation, composed of ex-Fescists who teach in secondary education and are members of the independent teachers’ union SYNESCI. Together they form the unofficial group

25. A symbolic date which signals the end of the ‘February consensus’ is February 28th 2000 when the socialist newspaper *Notre Voie* (28/02/2000) announces that according to General Guéï “Ivoirité is a good concept”. With this statement Guéï reopens the debate on nationality and immigration which had divided Côte d’Ivoire for many years and led directly to the insurgency which brought Guéï to power (*Le Jour* 29/02/2000). In other words, near the end of February Guéï redefines his mission and spreads dissension among his government and his military entourage.

SYNESCI-Authentique and look after the interests of the Fesci.

Apart from the Synesci-Authentique/MARFES and the FIEF/Youth Forum, a third organisation grows out of an informal debating club and is formally constituted as the Action Front for Renewal (FAR – *Front d'Action pour le Renouveau*) on 31st December 1999, “at midnight” as *Kouba Georges* (21/04/2003), one of its co-founders points out to me. He further explains that the FAR is a clandestine political formation that emanates from more than one year (1998-1999) of thorough political debate among a limited group of Fesci and ex-Fesci members and an elder person, a former Ambassador and left-wing ideologue. Together they draw up a societal project (*projet de société*) which must establish a “new socio-political culture” resulting in “the emergence of a new Ivorian” (FAR 2000, p5-6).

Finally, also the former Fescists in the European diaspora join forces in the wake of the coup d'état. In the mid-1990s, the expatriation of Fescists resulted in two organisations: the USP (People's Socialist Union) and the MLTCI (Movement for the Total Liberation of Côte d'Ivoire).²⁶ Both organisations call themselves ‘political parties’ with a left-wing ideology, and are based in London, but certainly the MPCCI has a considerable part of its membership living in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. One day after the coup d'état, the MLTCI and the UPS decide to overcome the personal conflicts that have divided them for half a decade and create the Allied Forces for Progress (*Forces Alliées pour le Progrès – FAP*) (*Faga Remi* 24/05/2003; *Ramses Séry* 25/05/2003). In a press release, the FAP reminds “the Ivorian people” of the “important role which youth, mainly incarnated by the Fesci, has played from 19th February 1990 until the 24th December 1999 and in the fall of the [PDCI] dictatorship” (*Notre Voie* 28/12/1999).

The above incomplete overview of the organisations of (former) Fescists active in the months before and after the coup d'état of December 1999, illustrates a certain *fin de siècle* frenzy that expresses itself in intensive debates and myriad forms of organisation. With the exception of the initiatives taken in the diaspora and which are explicitly political, the youth projects are mostly situated in what one habitually calls ‘civil society’, in spite of their sometimes explicit political content and the real connections with local and national politicians. Stressing these continuities, like the FAP does in its press release, in youth political activity is important in order to perceive that (former) Fescists in the late 1990s are politically active outside the confines of their student union as well as seeking to build ‘transversal’ – nation-wide, sometimes border-transgressing,

26. See footnote 36.

and youth-centred – or, should we say ‘generation-like’, alliances of the ‘Front’, ‘Forum’, ‘Forces’ or ‘Movement’ type. However, only after the coup d’état of 1999, ‘generation’ seem to make its appearance as a specific term that captures this phenomenon of ‘front formation’ in the sense given to it by Blé Goudé. ‘Youth’ in the latter’s Ghent lecture is situated against the background of a more inert but receptive and politically unified ‘Ivorian people’, and is specifically associated (or identified) with the sudden and effective assertion of the young military in the last days of the past millennium.

Without necessarily speaking of a recuperation of the ‘coup d’état of the youngsters’ by the (former) Fescists, one needs to recognise that in their private discussions and public statements, the Fescists construct a historic moment of consensus and rupture within which they deploy themselves as a new political generation. What this ‘political’ means is clearly expressed in a public letter which Ahipeaud Martial writes just days before he leaves London to come to Ghent and which is addressed to the newly-created organisation of former Fescists, the MARFES. In its official announcement, the leader of MARFES, Blé Guirao has stressed the new “responsibility” of the organisation “to act as a guide for the new generation” (*Notre Voie*, 28/02/00). This aspiration is restated by Ahipeaud when in his long letter he first welcomes the MARFES initiative and then explains why the Fescists are capable of assuming the responsibility for “reconstructing our country”:

“[MARFES expresses] the absolute will to regroup by an elite that has formed itself in the course of the past decade and that today is clearly the backbone of the political class irrespective of its different tendencies.”

“[The coup d’état of December] has reconciled the Youths of the schools and the university with those in the army. This dynamic or reconciliation of the different sections of our people should be the leitmotiv and the rationale of the Transition”

“Without a leadership marked with the stamp of FREE THINKING and an organisation based on the AUTONOMY OF ACTION, the FESCI would never have been the kind of defiant structure that has produced and continues to produce NEW IVORIAN ELITES in the course of a heroic battle for FREEDOM. Let personal ambitions not spoil the result of

our struggle.” (*Le Patriote* 28/02/00; capitals in original).²⁷

In this excerpt one finds the same kind of rupture-and-consensus rhetorics as in Blé Goudé’s Ghent lecture but Ahipeaud Martial adds to this an explicit ‘political’ task of the Fescists: they need to lead the country with independent actions and ideas situated above and beyond any partisan (party-political or personal) considerations. This association of ‘youth’ with politics-without-party-politics but in the interests of ‘the people’ as a whole is what makes the new generation imagining itself as a ‘political’ one. The invention of a ‘political generation’ needs to be situated in the context of the ‘February 2000 consensus’. As we will see shortly, between 1990 and 1999, the relationship between the Fesci/youth and ‘politics’ is of a different shape, while less than a month after the February declarations of Blé Goudé and Martial Ahipeaud, the illusion of ‘generation’ explodes into myriad fractions and its self-declared representatives engage in intense party politics. As we have seen in the quotes of *Kouadio Gilbert* and *Koné Koné*, in the present context of civil war and political dichotomisation between ‘rebels’ and ‘patriots’, the coup d’état, its (political) causes, (youth) operators and (violent) methods are differentially appreciated. Nonetheless, the current ‘generation’ discourse, the revisionist and populist ‘we’ in the statements of Damana Pickas and Soro Guillaume, emanate, at least partially, from the kind of rupture, consensus, and potential youth responsibility which are given shape by youth spokespersons like Blé Goudé and Martial Ahipeaud during the early post coup d’état period.

In all, it is clear now how in February 2000 the two youth spokesmen build on the continuity with respect to the emerging (Fesci) generation of the 1990s, supplemented by the discontinuity represented by the coup d’état. Moreover, they magnify the transversal inclusion represented by the popular and political consensus while reducing the exclusion to the single figure of an isolated Henri Konan Bédié. This isolation is all the more emphasised by dissociating Bédié from the interests of ‘the Ivorian people’ and associating him with the interests of their ‘other’: the French. If from early 2000 we look into the future, we can observe how the exclusion of Bédié is gradually transformed (by the FPI of Gbagbo) into that of Alassane Ouattara and his

27. The fact that Ahipeaud’s letter is published in the RDR newspaper *Le Patriote* is itself an expression of the political consensus reigning just before and after the coup d’état. Editor-in-chief of *Le Patriote*, Meité Sindou (personal communication 22/09/2003) explains how his newspaper helped the Fesci in broadcasting its denunciations of the Bédié regime and was, for instance, the first in publishing the picture of Blé Goudé chained on a hospital bed in late September 1999, “an image which shook the world and heralded the international disqualification and the demise of the Bédié regime”.

RDR constituency (Arnaut 2004b) and later (by the Young patriots) into that of the ‘rebels’ (Arnaut 2004a) who are all dissociated from the ‘Ivorian people’ and associated with French or other foreign interests. However, in this chapter, I look into the past, and enquire what kind of ‘generation’ or ‘youth’ was available in 1999 for its representatives to transform it in the context of the coup d’état into a ‘political generation’.

2. The democratic turn of 1990 and the emergence of a new ‘social’ generation

In September 2003, I meet *Koné Koné* in one of Abidjan’s most luxurious hotels where he spends his days in the company of Soro Guillaume and the other ‘rebel’ ministers who since March 2003 have entered the new reconciliation government that emanated from the Marcoussis peace talks. When we begin to discuss the actions of the Young Patriots and of Blé Goudé, his former colleague at the Fesci, *Koné Koné* picks up his mobile phone and says “We still call each other, let me call him now while you are here, you will see”. He then selects Blé Goudé’s number from his pre-programmed directory but there is no answer at the other end. He then explains:

“There is something that connects us beyond everything; it is the Fesci that connects us. I cannot see Blé in danger and not rescue him; that is not possible. I cannot see Eugène Djué in trouble and not help him; that’s not possible. Zéguen, all of them, he is my elder at the Fesci. [...].”

For me there is no hatred; we are of the same family and that family is the Fesci. [...]

[One day] we will meet again; in any case, our generation, Côte d'Ivoire belongs to us; we will meet again.”

Given the tangibility of the telephone experiment, it is perhaps tempting to take the candour of *Koné Koné* too literally and conclude with Konate (2003) that there is a profound Fesci family ‘spirit’ connecting the former student activists and, that therefore, they may be presently playing a deadly game of fake opposition against each other. However, such a view leaves many questions unanswered. Perhaps one could appreciate the fact that *Koné Koné* has a special relationship with Blé Goudé which dates back to the time when Soro Guillaume was Fesci secretary-general (1995-1998), and when, for almost four years, they shared the two most important functions in his ‘administration’: *Koné Koné* as secretary for information and Blé Goudé as secretary for organisation. But what to make of Eugène Kouadio Djué and Touré Moussa Zéguen who were Fesci leaders several years before, and who, at the time of our

conversation, are both leading youth militias that have the explicit goal of destroying the New Forces of whom *Koné Koné* is a representative?²⁸ How far can the Fesci family ties stretch before they break?

In support of what Konate argues, the idea of the Fescists presently ‘playing’ a political game with new military means, is even corroborated by other former Fescists who sometimes stress the fact that what divides Soro Guillaume (MPCI) and Blé Goudé (Young Patriots) is not an ideological schism but merely a difference of strategy or tactics. But also this is less of a clear-cut explanation than it seems. Terms like ‘ideology’ and ‘strategy’, as much as ‘family’ and the ‘compassion’ or the respect for ‘elders’ linked to it in the quote of *Koné Koné*, have a particular sense within the discourse of the Fescists. Therefore, before drawing hasty conclusions about the seriousness or triviality of the present intra-Fesci war, or about the sincerity or the nerve of *Koné Koné*, we must make ourselves familiar with the ‘structure of feeling’ of the former Fescists and the key terms with which they give meaning to the realm of the student struggle which they shared/share for more than a decade.

Together with Martial Ahipeaud and Touré Moussa Zéguen, *Aganda Soul* can be considered as one of the ‘elders’ (*anciens*) of the Fesci. By the end of 1989, then in his last years at a Lycée in the turbulent Abidjan town quarter of Yopougon, *Aganda Soul* joins Martial Ahipeaud in the CESCOCI (*Conscience Estudiante et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire*), one of the student associations

28. Less than two weeks after the insurgency, on 28th September 2002, Eugène Djué (personal communication, September 2003) creates the *Union des Patriotes pour la Liberation Totale de la Côte d'Ivoire* (UPLTCI), a paramilitary structure which, in his own words, “wages a war of independence” (*guerre d'indépendance*) against the foreign (French) occupation by the rebels. Djué who calls himself ‘Marshall’ – in contrast to Blé Goudé who is often named ‘General’ – is also founder of the ANP (*Armée National des Patriotes*) otherwise called the FNLTCI (*Front National de la Libération Totale de la Côte d'Ivoire*) or the NF (*Nouvelles Forces*). The ANP is a federation of four smaller militias or commandos: GSP (*Groupement des Soldats Patriotes*), GGR (*Groupement Gardien de la République*), FBI (*Forces Béni Invincibles*), Mi-24 (*Mouvement des Invincibles du 24 Septembre 2002*). Touré Moussa Zéguen is co-founder (together with Charles Groguhet) of the *Groupement des Patriotes pour la Paix* (GPP), for some time one of the more militarised of the ‘patriotic’ militias.

which on 21 April 1990 merge into the Fesci federation.²⁹ Although he never becomes a national Fesci leader, *Aganda Soul* is a fierce activist and an important recruiter for the Fesci until 1995. Later he co-founds the Ivorian Mouvement for Youth Rights (MIDJ), refuses to choose between the ‘rebels’ or the ‘patriots’, and presently he directs an internationally operating anti-globalist organisation in Abidjan. Looking back on more than a decade of what he calls his communist engagement in the struggle of the Left (*la lutte de gauche*), *Aganda Soul* muses:

“It is my second family. Well, at a certain time we did not have the occasion to live with our natural families but we had the chance of living with another political or trade union family (*famille politique ou syndicale*) [...] What a political friend or a friend from the union (*un ami politique ou syndicale*) has done for me, even a relative (*un parent*) has not done. My studies have been paid by my political friends. My parents said that I was lost. It is only now that some of my kinsfolk speak to me. If not, when I joined the Fesci, my elder brother chased me from the house.”

As was also observed by Konate (2002, p785) and Proteau (2002, p152-4), the family-talk of the Fescists is both important and highly significant and may serve to express certain ruptures as well as establish old and new alliances. ‘Family’ can be used to refer to a kin-based or an activism-based sociality, but can also function as a metaphor for the educational or the state ‘system’, administered by school and university authorities and ultimately controlled by the ‘Father of the Nation’. In the next section we will see how the political patricide pursued by the student activists signifies a break with a certain national past and its particular political ancestors, and aim at their replacement with a different history and an alternative genealogy of ideological forebears. In the present section I concentrate on the ‘contemporary’ dimension of the *family* in its different shapes.

The reactions of parents to their sons’ and daughters’ activism in the Fesci ranges from explicit agreement, over resignation, to fierce opposition. These reactions have often direct effects on the material situation of the students and even on the very possibility of the students to continue their studies or not. The ill-fated like *Aganda Soul* who lose all family support because of their activism either seek alternative funding among the sponsors (elders, professionals) of the wider

29 CESCOCI is, if not the largest, at least one of the most influential among the pre-Fesci student associations. It provides the first secretary-generals of the Fesci, Amos Beugré and Ahipeaud Martial, and enjoys the financial and ideological support of Professor Bamba Moriféré, an old-time opponent of the PDCI regime, founder of the PSI (*Parti Socialiste Ivoirien*), and leading figure of the independent teachers’ and researchers’ union SYNARES, which plays a prominent role in the creation of the Fesci.

opposition movement or join the personal support networks of the more privileged students. *Kakou Bi*, presently a colleague of *Aganda Soul* in the anti-globalist movement, is among those fortunate to have had a father who supported his activism, and recalls that during his time in the Fesci:

“My room was called ‘the palace of the people’. I kept my key in a place where everybody knew where it was. You come in, you eat, you sleep. [...]

One’s natural family had become one’s comrades-in arms (*camarades de lutte*). Really, it was all about sharing. Hence the word *parent*. Many comrades have been rejected by their parents. For many years they have lived with Fesci members. We pay their fees, we board, and we feed them, because that was the idea: one must share everything, the misery and the joy; this idea we have put forward.” (*Kakou Bi* 23/09/2003)

While *Aganda Soul* uses ‘relative’ (*parent*) and ‘friend’ (*ami*) to distinguish between the ‘natural’ and the ‘new’ family, *Kakou Bi* intimates the substitution of the latter by the former and situates this switch in the term *parent*. Indeed, the ‘new family’ in the fullest sense of the word is given shape in the resignification of the word ‘parent’. Already very soon after the formation of the new student movement in 1990 the word *parent* comes to be used to refer to any fellow activist.³⁰ Moreover, *parent* is sometimes used as a term of reference, like in the sentence *j’étais le chef des parents à Yopougon* (‘I was the chief of the student activists at Yopougon’), but also as a term of address, like in the salutation ‘*hé parent*’ (‘hey comrade’) or in the address of a pamphlet ‘*parent – parentes*’ (fig. 3 – see Annex 2). As becomes clear from the statements of *Aganda Soul* and *Kakou Bi*, the resignification of *parent* consists not so much in changing the meaning, rather than the referent of the term: *parent* comes to point to any member of the *famille syndicale*, but retains its full meaning in terms of material and moral support, and even, sometimes, to the extent of excluding sexual relationships. One interlocutor explains that when he went into hiding together with a female Fesci member from the University of Bouaké (in the centre of Côte d’Ivoire), they lived together, dressed and undressed, and slept together “like

30. According to *Bila Foté* (22/09/2003), in the early days of the student movement *parent* was used as a password among student activists. When a student entered a room where a clandestine meeting was being held, one asked him whether he or she was a *parent*. Soon, the password was known by friend and foe, and became to be used publicly as an identity label.

brother and sister”.³¹

Like any ‘natural family’, the new family also has its relative elders and youngsters. As we saw in the quote of *Koné Koné* with which this section opens, ‘elder’ and ‘youngster’ can be used to indicate seniority in the student movement or length of service in the struggle (*la lutte*).

Moreover, these terms can also be used to refer to members of the extended ‘political family’ or those assimilated to it because of their sympathy or practical assistance. Among the extended family of the FESCI feature the many, more elderly and experienced members of the political left-wing opposition parties or of the independent teachers’ unions SYNARES and SYNESCI. Not only the widely known figures like Marcel Etté, Bamba Moriféré, and Laurent Gbagbo, but also lesser known FESCI-friendly members of the educational establishment actively support the Fescists in general or individual members or small groups of them.³² Talking about these, *Mandège Louis* (1/03/2003) says “there were these elder brothers (*grand-frères*), I mean, these teachers, who supported us”. The same former Fescist also recounts a story very similar to that of *Aganda Soul*, about how at one stage he is not only excluded from his family, but also from university. In both instances, his ‘elder sister’, even though she is not a supporter of the Fesci, successfully intervenes to try to get her activist brother out of his quandaries. While ‘elder sisters’ or ‘mothers’ is used to refer to sympathetic or compassionate ‘outsiders’, many of the *new* ‘elders’ or ‘elder brothers’ are said to coach (*encadrer*) the movement or specific groups or individual militants. The term ‘*encadrer*’ is often used in contrast to ‘*embrigader*’ (capture) which is what the *old* ‘elders’ like Houphouët-Boigny or the single-party system tried to do.

The ‘new family’ thus constituted, the stories about the ‘natural family’ and the break away from its stifling grip (*embrigadement*) lead us into the realm of repression against the Fesci activists. This repression takes the form of open violence by armed forces, official exclusion from school (*radier*) or from particular departments (*réorienter*), but also penetrates into the private sphere and leads to tragic family ruptures and exclusion from home. In a group conversation with

31. I am of course not implying that student activists abstain from sexual intercourse. Indeed, I have come across ‘Fesci couples’ in Abidjan and in Europe and heard of long-term friendships between Fescists. However, in this research project, I have not actively addressed the issue of sexuality and courtship.

32. Among the principal sponsors of the Fesci feature the leaders of the four left-wing parties: Laurent Gbagbo (FPI), Bamba Moriféré (PSI), Zadi Zaourou (USD), and Francis Wodié (PIT). Apart from them, the often-named elder Fesci supporters from civil society organisations are Marcel Etté and his son Jean Etté, Désiré Tanoé, Gore Bi, Nyamien Messou, and Koudou Kessie Marcel.

former Fescists now living in Germany, *Mandège Louis* (1/03/2003) recalls the conflict with his elder brother who was financially responsible for him, after his father died at an early age. It was not so much that his brother was against his student activism, *Mandège Louis* explains, but that the people from the ruling party PDCI threatened to fire his brother if he could not persuade his younger relative from leaving the Fesci. The threat was serious: if his elder brother lost his job as a civil servant, the whole extended family would suffer severely. For *Marc Dounga* this kind of individualised pressure, either conducted through the extended network of the ruling party or by secret service agents, took place before but is quite typical of the regime of president Bédié (1993-1999) and he illustrates this with the following anecdote.

“When Houphouët died and Bédié took over [in December 1993] I was in prison [together with a number of other Fescists]. Within weeks, Bédié sent one of his ministers to come and tell us that ‘the Côte d’Ivoire of the grandfather is no more’ (*la Côte d’Ivoire du grand-père est dépassé*). We knew what it meant: the system would become even more repressive and [this repression was to be] directed against specific personalities.”
(*Marc Dounga* 01/03/2003)

Thus, when ‘grand-father’ Houphouët-Boigny dies, Bédié takes on the role of the ‘father’ who is seen as more directly supervising, personally manipulating, and (if unsuccessful) more mercilessly penalising his disobedient ‘children’. For *Sanga Dogon* (24/05/2003) there is a clear shift from the (often violent) repression of Houphouët-Boigny which retains its “paternalist character” to the more “ruthless” methods of Bédié.³³ This, according to my interlocutor, has the important effect of rendering the Fesci leadership more mistrustful and more rude, and results in the movement stepping up its “logic of rupture” (*logique de rupture*). In the course of 1994, at least two kinds of ruptures animate the movement: the massive exodus of Fescists from Côte d’Ivoire to Europe and the deposition of secretary-general Eugène Djué.

1994 witnesses the start of a process of expatriation and repatriation that continues until this day

33. After an anti-Fesci student is killed during a Fesci demonstration on June 17th 1991, the student union is officially disbanded but continues to demonstrate while its members and sympathisers are constantly persecuted. Fescists who fall into the hands of the security forces (*forces de l’ordre*) – whom the Fescists call *les forces du désordre* – are retained in prisons, army camps, and police stations around the country, or in the security forces’ headquarters in Abidjan often without any form of process. There they undergo different forms of physical torture like beatings or being walked over by a platoon of soldiers, and other psychological forms of maltreatment like being lined up for execution or eating one’s vomit.

(see footnote 4). The expatriation of Fescists to Europe starts in early 1994 with a relatively massive exodus to London, and comes more or less to a standstill in 1996, when apart from the UK, also other European countries that attract Fescists (Germany, Holland, and Denmark) have introduced visa for Ivorian visitors. *Faga Remi* (24/05/2003), a founding member of the Fesci, is one of the first of the Fesci contingent to leave Côte d'Ivoire for the UK and estimates that about three thousand youngsters seek refugee status in the UK as persecuted members of the Fesci, during this two-year period.³⁴ This exodus is organised both in Côte d'Ivoire and in the countries of destination. In London *Faga Remi* assists in the creation of the IRAG (Ivorian Relief Action Group). Based in Brixton, the IRAG provides practical and financial help as well as legal assistance to newly-arrived comrades. Back in Côte d'Ivoire *Bila Foté* (22/09/2003) attempts to set up a funding scheme for Fescists who want to leave the country.³⁵ Also during that period, the Fesci refugees organise themselves in political associations that are either defined in terms of the host country, like the MOÍRA (Movement of Ivorian Opponents in Germany) in Cologne, or try to regroup former Fesci militants dispersed all over Europe, like the USP (People's Socialist Union) and the MLTCI (Movement for the Total Liberation of Côte d'Ivoire).³⁶ Such a degree of organisation makes the expatriation not so much look like an escape from the everyday reality of 'fatherly' repression under Bédié, but as an astute contribution to the Fesci struggle. My interlocutors stress the fact that nobody of the Fescists went into exile in France.³⁷ "We are all

34. Official figures confirm a considerable rise in the number of Ivorians asking refugee status in the UK from 600 in 1993, over 840 in 1994, to 1,360 in 1995 (Home Office 1995). According to several interlocutors, in the early 1990s Amnesty International put the Fesci on the international list of persecuted organisations, something which helped many students in their demands for refugee status. Whether that is the case or not, the AI annual report on Côte d'Ivoire of 1994, says that "since Henri Konan Bédié has taken over power in December 1993, the rights to freedom of expression and of association are more and more violated", and speaks of "systematic persecution of students" (Amnesty International 1994)

35. Several of the exiles were neither Fesci members nor persecuted leaders, but acquired a Fesci membership card before their departure. The scheme of *Bila Foté* consisted in 'selling' Fesci membership cards at a high price (up to 400,000 Fr) and using the money for buying air tickets for impecunious 'real' Fescists.

36. The MOÍRA (*Mouvement des Opposants Ivoiriens Résidants en Allemagne*) is created in 1994; the USP (*Union Socialiste du Peuple*) and the MLTCI (*Mouvement pour la Libération Totale de la Côte d'Ivoire*) are both created in 1996 in London.

37. The Fescists also avoid Belgium, *Ramses Séry* (25/05/2003) explains, because Belgium is seen, at the time, as a country which follows the same political line as France.

anti-French”, explains *Sanga Dogon* (25/05/2003) from London where he resides with his wife since 1994 and recently obtained a Ph.D. in History, “for us the Houphouët system only survived because of its neocolonial relationship with France”. “We need to entirely rethink the relationship between France and Côte d'Ivoire”, says *Ramses Séry* (25/05/2003), a founding member of the MLTCI in London where he lives since 1995 and works as a lawyer in the City, “we need to make links with other countries and see whether they have something better to offer to us than our former colonisers”.

At the same time, the Fescist students see themselves preparing for a ‘new’ Côte d'Ivoire. Recalling a conversation with Guillet Mampo Gérard in early 1994 when several of their former colleagues at the BEN had already left for London, *Bila Foté* (22/09/2003) says:

“Gérard told me that we really had to leave. The situation is difficult as it is, he said, but apart from that, there is no future (*les horizons sont bouchés*), the Côte d'Ivoire of tomorrow is the Côte d'Ivoire of the doctors. So we must try to obtain a doctorate.”

In other words, with the student migration, the Fescists find ways of expressing not only their ideological aversion to neo-colonialism and their intra-group solidarity, but also their concern to contribute intellectually to the (second) decolonisation of Côte d'Ivoire. The latter objective could be attained by means of advanced degrees obtained outside the confines of the historically charged and continuously suffocating bilateral relationship with the former/persisting metropole. Thus, in the Fesci exodus, the rupture from the ‘old’ family of relatives is paralleled by inventing novel transterritorial bonds with the ‘new’ family of *parents* and this gives the struggle (*la lutte*) a pungent geopolitical dimension.

In the other major event of 1994, the deposition of Djué, the Fesci finds a way of expressing its autonomy and of marking a break with a particular national tradition of corruption and complicity, thus giving the ‘logic of rupture’ an unmistakable historical dimension. In September 1994, secretary-general Eugène Djué is accused of having surreptitiously accepted money from president Bédié in return for gradually destabilising the Fesci from within. This kind of accusation of secret dealings either with government figures or with opposition politicians is not new and remains a constant feature of the Fesci organisation. Djué, for instance, enters the BEN of Ahipeud Martial in September 1993 after the latter is accused of having been ‘bought’ by the

regime (during his time in prison in 1992).³⁸ However, the accusers do not succeed in destituting Ahipeaud Martial but see themselves replaced by other administrators. Conversely, Djué cannot resist the pressure of his colleagues who precipitately replace him at the head of the Fesci by Jean Blé Guirao who in a pamphlet explains this decision to the Fesci membership:

“Beyond the sanctions against Djué, it is the manifest wish of a generation to break with this ancestral past that pursues us relentlessly” (Pamphlet 12/10/1994)

The pamphlet of Blé Guirao illustrates how the Fesci decounces and dramatises (subsequent) attempts of the system or the politicians to buy themselves a way into the student movement, and offers an occasion for the latter to express its independence and demonstrate its defiance; features which Blé Guirao and others present as conspicuously ‘new’. The ‘ancestral past’ in the above pamphlet is not only a long tradition of violently persecuting rebellious students (see, e.g. Zolberg 1975), but also the perceived unwillingness of the many preceding ‘generations’ of elites to put a stop to it, either actively or passively. This is explained in another Fesci publication of 1995 in which secretary-general Soro Guillaume states:

“Facing the persistent attitude of surrendering, of compromising, and even of betrayal of the People by the intellectuals, there is, for the Present New Generation and in the Superior interest of the People, a challenge to take up.” (Fesci 1995, p11; capitals in original)

Although the latter text does not refer to the Djué case, it situates the alleged ‘betrayal’ of the secretary-general in a historical and ongoing tradition of the Ivorian elites to favour personal gains above political ideals. Clientelism, corruption and cooptation, are therefore seen as emasculating the entire political domain: they do not only result in the ruling party systematically muzzling certain opposition figures, but also in a fragmented political opposition movement built around certain ‘big men’. Fescists, therefore, often speak of the post-1990 “multipartisan” instead of “multiparty” system. In contrast to this, the Fesci posits a ‘new generation’ that breaks with these established practices. Without implying that ‘generation’ is

38. The list of Fesci leaders who are either accused of collaborating with ‘the system’ or eventually give in to pressures from it, is long. Already the first-ever secretary-general of the Fesci, Koné Alexis Laurent (see Annex 1), gave in to the pressure exerted by the PDCI on his relatives. The gradual fragmentation of the opposition alliance (Republican Front) between the FPI of Laurent Gbagbo and the RDR of Alassane Ouattara in the course of 1999, is accompanied by rising suspicions and confrontations among Fescists about alleged dealings with one of these ex-opposition parties.

solely an invention of the Fesci in the post-Houphouët era, we can observe how the concept articulates well with the combined ruptures of scholarly ‘expatriation’ to Europe and of anti-political (*politique politicienne*) ideational ‘independence’, as well as with new forms of intra-group solidarity and dependability which extend the family of *parents* well beyond the national borders. ‘The Present New Generation’ thus gains salience in the Bédié era and sees itself as founded on a novel sociality (family, *parents*, exiles) whose members share the new ‘values’ of meritocracy (intellectuals, ‘doctors’) and defiance (‘anti-political’ tenacity). Given its foundation, the ‘generation’ of 1990 can best be conceived of as a ‘social’ one. Moreover, it is an anti-political generation whose social life is based on a revolutionary ideology of meritocracy and defiance – two values which the Fescists find entirely lacking from the domain of politics in the 1990s.

If meritocracy and defiance figure prominently in the Fesci ideology, it does not mean that they are extensively theorised (even named) or embedded in an elaborated package of general precepts. Rather, as the above examples of the Fesci exodus to Europe and the Djué affair indicate, these ‘values’ are above all strongly articulated, dramatised and publicised. They are ‘performed’ in the daily revolutionary practice of mass demonstrations, street violence, and hidden operations of the student union. Talking about ideology, *Sanga Dogon*, a founding member of the Fesci and considered by many of his colleagues as one of the few *idéologues* of the union in its early years, explains his ‘practical’ stance towards ideology as it is articulated in what he calls the ‘organisation’ and the ‘concrete’ of the movement:³⁹

“I found the ideas of Mao applicable to the situation of developing countries like the one in which we were operating: peasant masses, disconnected elites [but] connected to international capital and exploiting the masses. The idea of Mao was to create an organisation in order to revolutionise the masses. I find this analysis correct and above all [I am keen on] the aspect of organisation. Mao says that it is the organisation that constitutes the basis of action. Therefore one must adapt theory to practice and the other way around. That is what I said to the comrades: ‘we must be concrete’.” (*Sanga Dogon*

39. In the case of *Sanga Dogon*, his communist option resides in an actual connection through an uncle of his who in the 1980s provided him with “the military writings of Mao, books by Stalin and Lenin”. In the 1960s this relative was a militant member of the clandestine Marxist-Leninist party MIL (*Mouvement Ivoirien de Libération*). After the dissolution of the MIL in 1968, he left Côte d'Ivoire for Kiev where he followed a training course in “techniques of collectivist production”, before returning to Côte d'Ivoire in the 1980s.

24/05/2003)

Sanga Dogon may be seen explaining here that the Fesci ideology is a kind of practical ideology, or better still, an ideology, not about, but *of* revolutionary praxis. ‘Revolutionising the masses’ starts of course with the students among whom the Fesci presents itself as an “organisation of mobilisation” (*Boda Goro* 15/03/2003) and the Fescists portray themselves as exemplary busy-bodies. “That was our method of mobilisation, our method of conquest” says former secretary-general *Oko Ménéda* (22/09/2003), “we were toilers (*bosseurs*), we were robots; we taught the youngsters to sacrifice themselves and to receive nothing in return”. For *Ramses Séry* who was responsible for organisation under *Oko Ménéda*, this constituted a real problem: how to mobilise students on a voluntarist basis, without any guarantees of real effects other than being identified and prosecuted as a pro-Fescist? One of the major solutions, according to *Ramses Séry* is the militarisation of the Fesci. This consists for instance in attributing leaders with military ranks like ‘general’ for the secretary-generals, ‘colonel’ or ‘captain’ for their deputies (*adjoints*), and ‘sergeant’ for the common member:

“That was first of all a question of discipline, but also [meant] to give a bit of courage to all of us who were confronting the police and the army. At the moments when they attacked us grievously we did not have weapons but only our ranks.” (*Ramses Séry* 25/05/2003)

Surely, the ‘militarisation’ of the Fesci leadership goes much further than that: some of them use nicknames with clear military overtones, like Che, Sankara, or Saddam, or name their local sections after sites of (past) military conflict like Kivu or Kosovo. Also, the students have indeed a number of self-made weapons, like the ‘lacrymogène Baule’ (mixture of kaolin and pepper powder) which is terribly effective in any counter-attack against policemen in the streets but even more so when used indoors to disturb written-exam sessions of students who do not obey a strike call (*Hien Bla* 20/09/2003). More generally, some interlocutors go as far as conceptualising the entire struggle as a military undertaking consisting of overt, public demonstrations and vociferous mass meetings, and covert procedures of decision-making and secret operations (*Nien Fa & Marc Dounga* 05/08/2003; *Boda Goro* 15/03/2003). How these two parallel circuits of power function, is explained by *Sanga Dogon*:

“During these [mass] meetings students take the habit of talking in public and some do very well. There are those who really stir up the crowd, who guide (*orienter*) the students. Those we recuperate afterwards for a function in the BEN. [...]

But we could not have complete confidence in the crowd (*la foule*), because the crowd

needs to be organised. Therefore we used the technique of the ‘guided synthesis’ (*la synthèse orientée*). When everybody had spoken, somebody of the [Fesci] leadership provided a synthesis of the debate whereby the conclusion which the leadership favoured was presented as the only feasible one and was then approved by the crowd.” (*Sanga Dogon* 24/05/2003)

The above description of the populist techniques used by the Fesci leadership show a sophisticated combination of student empowerment which brings out the ‘values’ of meritocracy and defiance, and crowd management which turns the inflamed student masses into compliant followers of the Fesci leadership. This distribution of power may indeed partly reside in the fact that the Fesci leadership lionises itself through associations with the military in general and with specific revolutionary heroes in particular. However, the Fesci does not only buy into the military system but also into the school system for giving shape to its command structure.

In the absence of any government-independent or easily accessible media (television, radio, newspapers), the political opposition of the 1970s and ‘80s had recourse to pamphlets or flyers (*feuilles volantes, tracts*) to distribute its messages (Bailly 1995). In the hands of the Fesci this becomes the ‘TD’. In normal university life, TD stands for *Travaux Dirigés* (lit. guided works) and regroups all sorts of written assignments performed in the class room under the supervision of the teacher or lecturer (fig. 2). Most of the Fesci TDs are quite similar in form and content: they consist of a piece of paper, often holding a call (*mot d’ordre*) for a strike, a demonstration, or any other impromptu action (fig. 3). In other words, with the TD the Fesci formulates a task to be fulfilled, and as such arrogates the position of an ‘academic authority’. But more than an appropriation of a schoolish procedure, the TD is embedded in a whole public performance of commitment and courage in which its author, distributor/broadcaster and audience alike perform meritocracy and defiance.

TDs most often emanate from the national bureau (BEN) and are sometimes anonymous but most often signed by the secretary-general or one of his direct collaborators (fig. 4, 5), but they can also be drawn up by one or the other brave student (fig 6). Depending on whether the author uses a real or a false name, he or she exposes him/herself to persecution or harassment either by the authorities or by the Fesci militants. Furthermore, TDs are either handed out by militants or posted against a wall or tree. This task is mostly performed by new Fesci recruits of the ‘sergeant’ rank and is about as risky as that of the ‘whistler’ (*le siffleur*). The latter goes around the university campus or the halls of residence whistling and shouting “Fesci” when there is a local student meeting or “There is a document” (*Il y a un doc!*) or “Information

information”(info info!) when an emissary of another Fesci section has arrived with new information that requires urgent deliberation by the students (*Bila Foté* 22/09/2003). The distributors of TDs, like the whistle-blower, publicly identify themselves as student activists and their activity is considered by the Fesci leadership as a first and necessary test of nerve and of loyalty to the student movement (*Sanga Dogon* 24/05/2003). Lastly, by responding or not to the message of the TD, students show their courage by identifying themselves as activists and confronting the university and national authorities.

Lending authority from the military and school system, the Fesci leadership of ‘toilers’ and busy-bodies, succeeds in creating a kind of popular frenzy whereby action reigns:

“In order for the movement to become a societal phenomenon, it is necessary that the students crystallise themselves around the structure of the Fesci. An organisation that does not demonstrate, that does not mobilise, dies. So, whenever there was an occasion we protested but not only by means of declarations, but also with the masses, with meetings.” (*Sanga Dogon* 24/05/2003)

By creating ‘incidents’ and responding readily to provocations (arrests, measures) by the authorities, the Fesci constantly demonstrates its capability of mobilising crowds of students, whether by assembling them in a car park on the Cocody campus, by bringing them together for a sit-in in front of the town hall, or by having them traversing the city from the halls of residence (*cit *) of Yopougon to the administrative centre of Plateau. Apart from some sticks and stones, and a few charges of ‘lacrymog ne Baule, the students use no other weapons than their own bodies that block the streets and their slogans and songs that offend the regime and its sympathisers. Occasionally, the students engage in vandalism, attack government cars or public buildings. *Mandeg  Louis* speaks of the motivation behind the use of such street violence.

“I was a rebel (*r volt *), the system bothered me. While smashing up a car or blocking a street, I felt comfortable because I told myself that they prevented the school system from developing, they prevented the people from fully playing their role. [...]

“The whole issue was to pass from the stage of a rebel (*r volt *) who blocks the streets to that of a revolutionary (*r volutionnaire*) who speaks of the advent of a new society” (*Mandeg  Louis* 1/03/2003)

The step from rebel to revolutionary is made possible, according to *Mandeg  Louis*, by the Fesci “philosophy” summarised in the slogan that figures on every Fesci membership card: ‘There can be no New School without a genuine democracy’ (fig. 1). “However, there was never much time

to reflect on what all this meant”, he adds. Apart from the few who bring themselves to reading Mao or Marcuse or who receive further ideological guidance from ‘elder brothers’ in the broader opposition movement, for the majority of the militants, there is no other training than that ‘in the field’ (*sur le terrain*) and dictated by the always pressing needs of the moment such as the liberation of a Fesci leader from prison or the cancellation of a decision by a school authority to expel a group of insubordinate pupils. Such concerted and urgent action requires more organisation than justification, and indeed more information than explanation. Indeed, the ‘practical ideology’ of the Fesci is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the national secretary responsible for instruction (*formation*) is a far less important post than the key-functions of ‘organisation’ and ‘information’ – the two pillars on which the *movement* of the students, their mobility and the direction in which they ‘march’, rests.

In conclusion, we have gone well beyond the somewhat mysterious ‘Fesci family’ and tried to unpick its underlying mechanisms of power distribution, self-empowerment, and mobility which characterise the student movement. This leads us to conclude that the ‘Fesci family’ of *Koné Koné* could refer to different phenomena or different stages of the student movement. The Fesci family could be that of the *parents* of the early student movement to which elder brothers and sisters were easily admitted or it could be the more exclusive membership of the Fesci generation which emerged after 1993. Moreover, ‘family’ could mean the inner circle of Fesci ‘military commanders’ who possess the know-how of populism and crowd management, or to the extensive ‘New Generation’ that defends the values of meritocracy and defiance against the complicity, silence, or passivity of their ‘elders’. What is more important than deciding in favour of one or another meaning of ‘family’ is to observe how their meanings are interwoven in the metaphoric and the structuring of a generation that can best be described as ‘social’ in that it is centrally concerned with its reproduction, both as group of revolutionaries and of students. The practical ideology described above makes the Fesci leaders emerge from among the new student family as their ‘new elders’ who guarantee the continuation of the struggle. In the same way ‘the students’ emerge from ‘the people’ as a whole as their newly born leaders. The latter claim is almost formalised in one of the few official Fesci documents.

“The autonomous and apolitical mission which we take upon ourselves, expresses the will of a new Ivorian youth to fight for a better life and to assume its *historical role* which consists in taking position in a societal project which takes shape in the popular aspirations.” (FESCI 1993; italics mine)

While the Fesci populism sufficiently sustains the claim that the students voice “the popular

aspirations”, the above excerpt indicates that ‘the people’ also have a history in which the students try to inscribe themselves and to which they connect their reproduction. This constitutes the third layer of the ‘new generation’ and is dealt with in the following section.

3. The new ‘national generation’ and the *Refondation* of Côte d’Ivoire

“Most of the nationalistic movements in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa have consisted of young people, students, or officers who rebelled against their elders and the traditional familistic setting with its stress on the latter’s authority. At the same time there usually has developed a specific youth consciousness and ideology that intensifies the nationalistic movement to ‘rejuvenate’ the country.” (Eisenstadt 1995 (1962), p77)

This quote is used by Zolberg (1975, p105) in order to explain the conflicts between the first ‘political generation’ of Houphouët-Boigny, who enters Ivorian politics in 1946, and the second generation of intellectuals who become politically active in the course of the 1950s. Zolberg highlights the controversies of 1956 and 1958 when Houphouët-Boigny and other first generation PDCI leaders choose to undergo the decolonisation agenda proposed by the French contrary to the demands of the second generation of intellectuals who press for early and radical independence.⁴⁰ With the help of Eisenstadt, Zolberg perceives how the first generation is seen by the second generation as betraying the anti-colonial nationalistic struggle. The author further recounts that in the late 1950s many members of this second generation are incorporated into government politics while in 1963, in two successive trials (January and August), the same leftist ‘youngsters’ are accused of plotting against the Houphouët-Boigny regime and collectively incarcerated (ibid., p120-121).

Although the plots which in 1971 Houphouët-Boigny himself qualified as ‘false’ and ‘entirely fictitious’, have been denounced before (see e.g. Gbagbo 1983), Samba Diarra (1997) is the first former prisoner to publish a comprehensive account of the ‘fake plots’.⁴¹ Interestingly, in his prison memoirs, Diarra (1997) distinguishes between the same two generations as Zolberg (1975) but shows convincingly how *both* generations are victim of the repression. In January 1963 the ‘second generation’ is accused in the ‘Conspiracy of the Youngsters’ (*Complot des*

40. The controversies of 1956 concerned the *Loi-Cadre* which the youngsters found not going far enough in the direction of independence. In 1958 Houphouët-Boigny and the PDCI proposed a yes-vote to the referendum to join the Franco-African community, a stance which different student organisations rejected.

41. The former prisoners who have written their memoirs are particularly shocked by the cynical way in which Houphouët-Boigny in 1971 denies all responsibility for the accusations, trials, and tortures of the 1960s, which they saw him inventing and stage-directing almost single-handedly (Diarra 1997, p215-218; Koné 2000, p111-118; Koné 2003, ch. 5).

jeunes) while in August dozens of prominent members of the ‘first generation’ are prosecuted in what Diarra calls the ‘Conspiracy of the Elders’ (*Complot des anciens*). Although Zolberg could notice the incarceration of some of the ‘elders’ in 1963, what is far more difficult to observe at the time when Zolberg is writing, is that the Houphouët opponants are busy inventing genealogies of ‘resistance’ against the single-party rule. In the course of the 1980s, authors like Gbagbo (1983, 1984), Amondji (1984), and Teya (1985) explicitly situate their political opposition in a ‘tradition’ which goes back to the late 1940s and thus to members of the first generation that dared voicing its opposition to Houphouët-Boigny (Arnaut 2004a).⁴² Among the ‘founding’ moments of this tradition of political defiance, is the decision made by Houphouët-Boigny in 1950 to disconnect his PDCI-RDA party from the French communist party (PCF). In this disputed move, the authors of the 1980s say, some really nationalist and revolutionary ‘first generation’ comrades of Houphouët perceived the beginning of a gradual shift towards a pro-colonialist repositioning of the PDCI (Koné 2003, p37-40). More generally, the break (*le désengagement*) with the French communists is taken to signal the refusal of Houphouët-Boigny to engage Côte d'Ivoire in a process of real decolonisation and liberation from French imperialist and international capitalist hegemony (Gbagbo 1983, p66; see Arnaut 2004a).

Taking into account the ‘generation discourse’ of the anti-PDCI opposition since the 1980s and well into the 1990s, not only enables us to discern a weak spot in the Eisenstadt-Zolberg model, but in any model that naturalises conflicts between elders and youngsters as a generational clash between conservative firstcomers and progressive latecomers, while underrating the extent to which ‘political generations’ are constructs that serve to express ideological positions and ‘imagined’ genealogies of opposition. As much as was the case for ‘political generations’ within the PDCI party (Médard 1981, Bakary 1984), since the 1980s at least, the PDCI opposition was busy inventing its generations and genealogies, and, as I try to show in this section, from its naissance, the Fesci was inscribed in it.

Concerning the origins of the Fesci, most observers (Proteau 2002, p100; Konate 2002, p780, Bailly 1995, p36) and indeed several interlocutors recount the anecdote that the first student demonstrations of 19th February 1990 are provoked by repeated power cuts which prevent

42. Among the former prisoners of Houphouët-Boigny, Koné (2000) most explicitly constructs a continuity between ‘1946’ and ‘1963’. He entitles his memoirs ‘Mesaventure 63’ (Misfortune 63) which is a pun on the name of the boat ‘l’Aventure’ (Adventure) with which in 1946 147 Ivorian students were shipped to France to continue their education. Several of the returnees as well as many other later generation students (like Koné himself) were accused in January 1963 of plotting against the state.

students from properly preparing their exams. While discussing the Fesci pre-history *Bila Foté* already a senior student in 1990, says: “I prefer to look at what happens 10 days before”, and he tells the story of a conference organised by the writer and anti-Houphouëtist activist Jean-Marie Adiaffi and the Club Cheikh Anta Diop. “I don’t remember the exact theme of the conference”, he says, “but that is not of much importance because conference themes were often a cover-up for voicing our collective protest against Houphouët”. Near the end of the conference, Prof. Goré Bi of the Department of Oral Literature and member of the newly-created social democratic party (USD) of playwright and professor Zadi Zaourou, intervenes:

“[Goré Bi] said he was deceived by our attitude: we shouted, we were happy, but that was not what was expected from us. ‘All the revolutions in the world’, he said ‘were conducted by youngsters’ and we were happy to listen and shout. This has remained in my mind ever since. And in retrospect, I have connected it to the protest which broke out 10 days later, on the 19th February 1990. It is true what he said. If you look at the French Revolution, Danton and Robespierre, they were youngsters. What Gore Bi asked from the youngsters was to make the country progress.” (*Bila Foté* 22/09/2003)

If *Bila Foté* makes it sound as if the intervention of Goré Bi provides a kind of ‘marching order’ for revolutionary students, other interlocutors stress that also in this early period students deliberate about the potential import of their movement, reflect on their actions as rebels (*révoltés*) and on their conversion into revolutionaries (*révolutionnaires*). A fellow activist of *Bila Foté* in the early days of the Fesci, *Sanga Dogon* (24/05/2003) recalls a debate which takes place on the evening of the 19th February. Reflecting on the significance of the power cuts and the street violence which it has provoked, according to *Sanga Dogon*, two opinions divide the assembly. One group sees students as an intermediary class between the elites and the masses, he says. For them the power cuts signal the gradual “pauperisation of the intellectual elite [of students], who are thereby turned into some kind of proletariat.” The second group, according to *Sanga Dogon*, is that of the real revolutionaries who “considered the power cuts as the symbol of the failure of the political system to cope with economic recession since the early 1980s”. They argue that “we needed a new system altogether, a new social and economic dynamic”. The second group sees its demands for better working conditions (electricity at night) or for scholarships, *Sanga Dogon* concludes, as appeals to provide the minimal conditions for the continuous existence of ‘students’ in the real sense of the word: “people who think, who reinvent the future of the nation”. In the debate, the second option wins, according to *Sanga Dogon*, and with it the revolutionary ideas of the CESCOCI of which he himself as well as *Bila Foté* are

members.⁴³

The above reconstruction of the initial nightly debate confirms the central concern of the students with their own reproduction either as an intermediary class or as the reinventors of society. But that reproduction, it seems, was from the very beginning, a co-construction of elders and youngsters. In recalling Goré Bi's intervention, *Bila Foté* illustrates how, from its inception, the student movement is framed by some 'elder' opposition figures as a potential vanguard force in the revamping, indeed the rejuvenation of protest in the form of a youth revolution of some form or other. This is corroborated by notorious 'elder brothers' I spoke to. *Bilé Fay* (29/08/2003), a former member of the SYNARES and of the socialist political party PSI, talks about the Fesci as the end result (*aboutissement*) of a long battle. *Geubre San* (24/09/2003), a former leader of another, equally small, left-wing party, identifies the student movement of 1990 as the last in "four generations" of opposition resistance, considers himself as a founding member of the third generation, and dates back the first generation to the anti-Houphouëtism of the late 1940s. Very much in tune with what *Geubre San* has to say about the civil society activities of his political age mates, *Bilé Fay* (29/08/2003) further explains that:

"It is this [third] generation which decides to introduce the mass struggle (*engager la lutte de masse*). [...] Our slogan was 'one must be where the masses are' (*il faut être là où sont les masses*)".

One of the major instruments of this mass struggle, he continues, is the independent teachers' union SYNARES which is rebuilt in the 1980s and in the 1990s functions as the base camp (*la base arrière*) of the Fesci:

"We have always marched with the Fesci and, of course, we have coached (*encadré*) the youngsters [...]. You understand, the methods of struggle, we were always behind them at different levels" (*Bilé Fay* 29/08/2003)

If it transpires from the accounts of former Fescists like *Bila Foté* and their 'elder brothers' like *Bilé Fay* and *Geubre San*, how the Fesci generation is cogently constructed as the latest offspring of a lineage of opposition activity, almost all former Fescists I spoke to situate their juvenile activism in personal genealogies and family narratives which some way or other connect with historical anti-Houphouëtism. Some like *Sanga Dogon* (24/05/2003) and *Kablan Kofi*

43. According to Bailly (1995, p36), the students protested against "obscurity and obscurantism". In *Sanga Dogon's* classification, the first group can be seen as reacting against 'obscurity' while the second group rather protests against the 'obscurantism' of the government.

(24/09/2003) evoke the fact that their fathers or uncles were already opponents to Houphouët-Boigny in the 1940s and '50s either within the PDCI party or outside it, i.e. in the Progressist party (*Parti Progressiste de Côte d'Ivoire*). *Marc Dounga* (1/03/2003) recalls how his uncle was accused in one of the later 'fake plots' invented by Houphouët-Boigny in the 1970s and attributed to Captain Sio. Others like *Abdou Bolon* (21/09/2003) and *Mandegue Louis* (1/03/2003) break with their families because of the latter's clientelist obligations towards the PDCI party. But even if their families have no political history, several former Fescists recount the predicament of their forebears as resulting from the despised politics of the PDCI. *Kpon Balou* (21/02/2000) portrays his parents as poor peasants who had small plantations but whose revenues were limited by the fact that the single-party state paid low prices to planters, received high prices on the world market, and used the money for its own enrichment. *Hien Bla* (20/09/2003) also tells a rather typical story when he narrates that his mother was poor, concerned about her daily survival, and did not care about her son's activism; only she said to him: "Whatever you do, do it properly. Believe (*assume*) in what you do". If *Hien Bla* puts the Fesci 'values' of defiance and tenacity in the wise words of his poor mother, *Sanga Dogon* (24/05/2003) explains that 'Fesci meritocracy' was also a family virtue. He recalls that his father refused to accept the financial benefits which were granted to him as a founding member of the PDCI-RDA: "My father said that education was to be the basis of progress, and not preferential treatment".

Together with the reconstructions of the 'elders' like *Bilé Fay* and *Geubre San*, the family stories of the youngsters help to inscribe the student protest in narratives that span the entire history of Côte d'Ivoire since its first steps on the way to decolonisation. That this is not only a recent and an individual undertaking, becomes clear from a booklet which the Fesci publishes in 1995 and which is entirely dedicated to the history of the Ivorian student movement since the 1950s until the creation of the Fesci in 1990. In the preface secretary-general Soro Guillaume claims that:

"There is a certain continuity in the struggle of the student youth for about half a century: this continuity is that, apart from its corporatist claims, it continues to occupy an avant garde position in the global movement for the liberation of the Ivorian people." (Fesci 1995, p3)

The genealogy which the folder constructs is that between the Fesci and the UGECI which is created in 1956 and protests heavily against the mounting pro-colonial attitude of the Ivorian leaders. After 8 pages of detailed historical reconstruction, the author(s) conclude that:

"Today, the spirit of UGECI is revived in the spirit of the Fesci which cannot die because

it fits with the sense of history” (ibid., p11)

These excerpts enable us to estimate the full weight of the ‘national generation’ in its relation to the ‘Ivorian people’ and its history. The folder of 1995 can be seen as spelling out in detail the ‘historical role’ of the Fesci invoked in the 1993 document which I presented at the end of the previous section.⁴⁴ For once, this role is not solely stated in negative terms (of anti-Houphouëtism) like in many of the narratives of the elders and youngsters analysed above, but also in constructive terms. These positive terms match the Fesci ‘values’ of meritocracy and defiance situated by some interlocutors in their ‘old’ families, and highlight the constructive historical and ongoing project of the liberation of the Ivorian people. From this positive, or should we say counter-hegemonic discourse, the Côte d’Ivoire of Houphouët arises as a historical deviation from the main road (“the sense of history”) which leads to the formation of a really independent nation and which the student youth is persistently scouting. This, *Marc Dounga* (1/03/2003) aptly expresses when he recounts how he was pursued by the state as a mob leader and an agitator (*meneur de troupes*). “Yes, we the Fescists”, he says, “were considered to be *des éclaireurs de conscience* of Côte d’Ivoire”. Read as a military term in the context of his battle with the regime, ‘éclaireur’ signifies precursor or explorer engaged in reconnaissance. Taken in the more literary or academic sense induced by ‘conscience’, ‘éclaireurs’ refers to the ‘illuminati’, the intelligentsia who, like *Sanga Dogon* (24/05/2003) said before, take it on them to “reinvent the future of the nation”.

In conclusion, the positioning of the youngsters as (part of the) ‘national’ generation, brings with it a deep association with the ‘Ivorian people’. This is powerfully expressed in a poem published in the form of a pamphlet in May 1994 and signed “The voice of 25 Fescists detained at the National Police School and at the state security police (DST)” (fig. 8). In two stanzas the author associates the humiliation and the suffering of ‘country’, ‘people’, and ‘youth’.

My *parents*; I have experienced detention and I have been ashamed
Yes, I have been ashamed and what kind of shame?

44. The 1995 publication of the Fesci comes at a time when the student union is trying to rebuild itself when (a) many Fescists have already left and are leaving the country, (b) heavy repression has frightened many militants into hiding or led them to abandoning the struggle, and (c) internal disputes (see the Djué case) have been dividing the membership. The publication coincides with (a) the hope that democratic presidential elections (of 1995) may remove Bédié from office, and (b) the election by almost unanimous consent of Soro Guillaume as new secretary-general in February 1995.

The shame of a country
The shame of a people
The shame of a youth (fig. 8)

Towards the end, the poem qualifies the ‘shame’ as that which is “armed to the teeth with guns, truncheons, electric whips, and torture chairs”, but predicts that some day this shame will only be “a memory on the triumphant path to real liberty”. In dramatic statements such as these, the geographic, historical, and sociological contours of the student movement dissolve into that of an entire country and a whole people, their history and their future. Under critical conditions, the Fesci activists speak out in the name of a student population that sees its existence threatened and its reproduction under jeopardy by austerity measures and disqualification. In this poem, like in the entire historical ‘national’ discourse in which it is embedded, the Fesci puts the hope of its reproduction in the hands of the Ivorian society as a whole – ‘the people’ who throughout their history of subjugation and repression have continued to produce the kind of youth that guarantees its future liberation.

Where do we go from here? A recapitulation on youth and generation in present-day Côte d’Ivoire

This chapter began with the analysis of two quotes in which former Fesci members speak about their respective and opposed present movements. In these statements we detected instances of synchronicity which can be broadly characterised as ‘manipulations of majorities and histories’ in which a large group of the past is identified with a smaller fraction of that ‘same’ group in the present, in order to suggest the largeness of the present group. An analysis of some of the anthropological and social scientific literature on the matter, revealed that ‘generation’ and ‘youth’ may lend themselves particularly well to that kind of discursive operations because of their inherent ambiguities.

We saw how ‘generation’ may strongly suggest inclusiveness (of all age mates) and thus cover up certain exclusions (of political enemies). Also, the ambiguity of rupture and flow permits ‘generation’ to variably stress continuities (common ancestors) or discontinuities (revolutionary events). All this we have seen at play in the quotes of Damana Pickas and Soro Guillaume. To suggest, as Pickas does, that the new political generation is heir to the Fesci creates this exploitable confusion about who was, and above all, *is* included and excluded. Taking into account how during the 1990s the Fesci ‘social’ generation is constructed as a revolutionary cross-section of the Ivorian people, and how this image is briefly revived during the February

consensus of 2000, we begin to grasp that Damana Pickas can mobilise a lot of memories in order to make a deeply politicised suggestion of a seemingly unlimited group of age-mates that is meant to coincide with the Young Patriots. Ultimately, these ‘memories’ may endorse the fact that Damana Pickas, ‘the’ Fescists, and the Young Patriots find themselves at the side of Laurent Gbagbo who, to all accounts, can be considered as an ‘elder brother’ in the Fesci family.

Related to ‘generation’, ‘youth’ is construed on an ambiguous relationship with its ‘elders’ and with society at large, in which one can stress identity and autonomy, or accentuate transition and dependence. By taking his distance from the Fesci youngsters and identifying his movement with the ‘political’ generation of 1999, Soro Guillaume plays strongly on the idea of ‘transition’ in the sense of maturing and integration into the population at large. As also explained above, the relative ‘maturity’ of the rebels, like the ‘youthfulness’ of the Young Patriots, is overdetermined and their respective discourses of violence and their choice of ancestors bear witness to this. By rejecting the youthful street violence of the Fescists as well as of Gbagbo who is reminded of being imprisoned for it, Soro Guillaume ‘explains’ the necessity for the kind of ‘mature’ professional violence which was used in 1999 and 2002. With his consideration for the 1999 coup d’état, Soro Guillaume can articulate the gravity of his complaints against Gbagbo by presenting the latter as heir to the ethnonationalism (Ivoirité) and the despotism of Bédié. In contrast to Soro Guillaume who rather smoothly identifies his movement with ‘the people’, Damana Pickas rather distinguishes his active, independent ‘new generation’ from the relatively passive population at large, and thereby invokes the ‘social’ generation of the 1990s and the role it saw itself play in the re-emergence of the nation.

By using ‘generation’ and ‘youth’ as heuristic devices, the above analysis attempts to map out significant fragments of the ‘politicised memory’ of the currently divided group of former Fescists and, to paraphrase Hall (1990, p225), to show the way the latter construct their political identities ‘by being positioned and positioning themselves within the narratives of the past’. However, by opting for an ethnographic account and by adopting the ‘research programme’ of Durham (2000, p118) this chapter wants to go further into the ‘politics of history’ surrounding youth and perceive how “claims [...] about youth are centrally involved in the reinvention of political and social space”.

The ethnographic account, I think, first of all brings out why ‘youth’ in Côte d’Ivoire is worth claiming in the first place. We have seen how since 1990 at least, youth has carved out a space for itself in which it can plausibly claim to work for the advancement and enlightenment of ‘the people’. ‘Mobilisation’ is a key-metaphor in this positioning as it evokes a wide range of novel

physical movements (mass demonstrations, quick alert and response, expatriation) as well as the ideological choices of meritocracy and defiance against passivity, complicity, conservatism, and acquiescence. This ‘mobilisation’ is sustained by a *modus operandi* and an organisation in which militants accumulate different levels of expertise in populist manipulation and crowd management. Youth, in other words, becomes worth claiming not only because it signals (rapid, sudden) political change and societal alteration, but also because it can deliver the qualified personnel to try to make these changes happen in Ivorian mass democracy.

These two points, other scholars of the Ivorian student movement, particularly Proteau (2002) and Konate (2003), largely miss out on. By emphasising the aspired ‘autonomisation’ of the students (their syndical and anti-political stance) and their concern for the revaluation of their education-related cultural capital (diplomas, status), Proteau backgrounds how (former) students, have become mobilisable also in mass-political projects and how their (former) leaders have accumulated also other symbolic capital (populist techniques, crowd management) that is particularly valuable for running these projects. It is obviously the case that Konate (2003) deplores this course of events and his auto-positioning as a ‘gerontocrat’ serves the purpose of denouncing the infantilisation of the political domain.

Nonetheless, what both authors grasp very well is the fact that student movements are terribly effective in dramatising the gravity of the struggles in which they are engaged and giving shape to a kind of millenarian atmosphere in which it is almost impossible to remain unconcerned with. While trying to measure the extent to which the student movement is concerned about the reproduction of the intelligentsia, Proteau (2002, p158) observes how from 1993 onwards it puts physical reproduction at the centre of attention by introducing the technique of the hunger strike. This formerly unused instrument of pressure is embedded by the movement in a discourse of self-sacrifice for the good cause of the students and of society as a whole. Konate (2003, p68) sees this discourse reappearing in the Young Patriots movement that, with the slogan ‘just try to kill us, we are many’, also highlights its numerical strength. The interpretation of these dramatisations can be pushed a little further, I think, and provide an entry into the problematic of how youth in Côte d’Ivoire has become ‘centrally involved in the reinvention of political and social space’.

The analysis of the three layers of ‘new generation’ shows that Ivorian youth has deeply inscribed itself in the political history of the country by associating itself with most of its dramatic turns and ruptures: the start of the decolonisation process (1950), early independence (1960-1963), the democratic turn of 1990, the death of Houphouët-Boigny and the advent of

Bédié (1993-1994), the coup d'état of 1999, and the insurgency of 2002. Secondly, the students (at least since 1990) present these moments as threats to their lives and the life of the Ivorian people. In the current conflict, this discourse of 'terminality' reaches unseen heights. In one of their first official declarations, the New Forces (2003) demand "the removal from power of the dictatorial and genocidal regime of Laurent Gbagbo". During the first six months of the insurgency, the theme of Gbagbo's planned genocide against 'northerners' (*nordistes*) and everyone whom he considers as half-nationals or non-nationals is expanded upon, not in the least, on the rebels' website which sports analyses of the Rwanda genocide of 1994. The Young Patriots, on the other hand, assign to themselves the historical task of ending once and for all the imperialist and neo-colonialist subjugation of the Ivorian people. During one of the largest mass demonstrations Abidjan has ever witnessed, Blé Goudé (1/02/2003) declares that "Côte d'Ivoire is the beginning of the total liberation of Africa, because the French have failed in Côte d'Ivoire". Thus, like the rebels, the Young Patriots present their battle as some sort of *lutte finale* against the worst forms of evil and associate their struggle with the future existence of the country or its people. These dramatisations, I argue, are more than playful spin or youthful pathos, but contribute substantially to the articulation of the hegemonic struggle which we are witnessing in Côte d'Ivoire at the moment.

Youth, generations, and the historical side of autochthony

“The new generation, the new youth of Côte d’Ivoire wants, like that is the case in all countries, live freely, live autonomously, live independently in its country; *That* is ours, it is our country, our ancestors have given this to us.”

(Charles Groguhet, ‘La Sorbonne’, Abidjan, 2003)

“The Ivorian people have developed a habit. Before independence there was the resistance. [...] Also in 1951 with the break of the RDA with the communist party; later there was the Loi-cadre [1956] and then the referendum of 1958 to ask the Africans whether they wanted independence or remain as they were. In 1960 there has been also a bit of resistance and all the people of the resistance have been thrown into prison around 1963 by Félix Houphouët but the civil resistance has continued to organise itself around the intellectuals, around the universities. [...]

Then we arrive at the coup d’état of 1999. It’s the same actors who are there now. Look, Tuo Fozié [*one of the rebel leaders*] [...] The actors are the same only the scenery has changed. Now it is France that sponsors the new coup d’état [*of 2002*] by multiplying the resources. The means of 1999 are minimal in comparison to the means deployed at this moment. [...] That is why the civil resistance takes this new form different from 1999”

(Nyamien Messou, RTI, March 2003)

The above two quotes concern the Young Patriots in different ways. The first quote is by Charles Groguhet, a former Fesci leader and presently (September 2004) leader of a patriotic militia based in Abidjan but with divisions in other urban centres of the Ivorian South. The quote is taken from a speech for one of Abidjan’s most important ‘people’s parliaments’ called *La Sorbonne* in which he summarises what the struggle of the Young Patriots is about. The second quote is from Nyamien Messou, secretary-general of the teachers’ union SYNARES. During a ‘patriotic’ debating programme on national television, called ‘On est ensemble’ (We are together), Messou answers the question why the Young Patriots are so successful in mobilising ‘the Ivorian people’. Both quotes highlight one important aspect of the hegemonic struggle over autochthony (see chapter three). While Groguhet calls upon the new generation to re-appropriate what belongs to their ancestors, Messou historicises this struggle for re-appropriation in a tradition of resistance against neo-colonialism. Together, these quotes reveal how ‘youth’ features in a societal process in which ‘the Ivorian people’ are being redefined.

Groguhet's attempt to establish a 'synchronicity' between the 'new youth' and 'the ancestors' may seem a rather formidable undertaking, but it obtains plausibility from the fact that by then (September 2003) the Young Patriots have been identifying themselves with 'the Ivorian people'. Using the techniques of populism and crowd management for almost one year, the Young Patriots have turned 'the Ivorian people' into a visible and mobilisable group. The people's parliament where the speech is delivered is only part of a novel infrastructure where 'the people' are said to be given the occasion to present and express themselves. Other sites of massive demonstration and 'spontaneous' expression are, apart from the existing media, the streets of Abidjan, pamphlets and T-shirts. Together with the weapons of mass democracy, the Young Patriots have also lent their street-violence (slogans, sit-ins, sticks and stones) to 'the people' who thereby demonstrate their military weakness which can only be overcome by their numerical strength. It is in relation to that 'new Ivorian people' that other actors, such as president Gbagbo and 'the rebels' are positioning themselves. For president Gbagbo it shapes the background against which he can develop a discourse of the underdog who takes side with the empowered and vocal majority and who fights together with the 'young nation' while wielding the weapons of local democracy against international hegemonic forces such as the heavily armed rebels, imperialist France, and voracious multinationals. As we have seen, the rebels, or at least their political leader Soro Guillaume, entirely fit themselves in this configuration by developing a discourse of the strong and the mature, of military supremacy and of empowerment from outside the nation, such as from France as the country of free speech and human rights.

In the passage taken from the television debate, Messou calculates the historical consequences of the antagonism between 'the Ivorian people' and the rebels. Messou expands the generation-talk of the Young Patriots, by bringing in view the long history of 'resistance' of the previous generations during which resistance has become a second nature of 'the Ivorian people' since their 'birth' in the running-up to decolonisation. By excluding the coup d'état of 1999 from that tradition of resistance, Messou corroborates the underdog rhetoric of Gbagbo and of the Young Patriots and the image that 'the Ivorian people' do not attack the weak (discriminated Northerners) but resist the powerful. Messou thus appropriates the 'national generation' (presented above) not as a specific political tradition of opposition, but as the alternative historical trajectory of a newly emerging 'Ivorian people'. This has at least one important political effect: the old-time opponent Gbagbo finds himself in the centre of the Ivorian people's historical trajectory. This positioning, we can argue now, is largely made possible by the Fesci youngsters and their successors in the Young Patriot movement. After all, the latter's struggle was constructed as the continuation of the syndical struggle of Gbagbo prior to 1990 when the

socialist leader left the tradition of what Messou calls ‘civic resistance’ and went into party politics. The rebels from their side, by dissociating themselves from the 1990 Fesci generation, lose any convincing discursive ground to inscribe themselves in a ‘national’ project other than that of Houphouët-Boigny, which, for the ‘patriots’ is a history of autocracy (versus democracy), state violence (versus resistance), and imperialist exploitation (versus nationalism). Ultimately, by turning the political option to resist into a national tradition of resistance, Messou locates the ones who refuse to resist (the rebels and their accomplices) outside the history of the nation.

In all, the two quotes in the epigraph illustrate that the discourse of the re-generation of the nation articulates the historical side of autochthony. In chapter three, I characterise autochthony as the reinvention of indigeneity in a post-national reconfiguration of the nation-state. On the one hand, the claims of ‘generation’ and ‘youth’ sustain the reconfiguration of the nation as an exclusive historical political tradition. This rebirth of the nation engenders a new, ‘young’, group of ‘national’ natives whose roots are situated in the resistance against the old nation-state and whose future lies in the new Ivorian nation that ensures their political emancipation and their economic empowerment.

References

- Aguilar, Mario 1998 'Gerontocratic, aesthetic and political models of age'. In: M. Aguilar (ed.) *The politics of age and gerontocracy in Africa*, pp. 3-30. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Akindès, Francis 2001 *Dynamique de la politique sociale en Côte d'Ivoire*. Genève: Institut de recherche des Nations Unies.
- Akindès, Francis 2000 *A travers les origines et les incertitudes des mutations politiques récentes en Côte d'Ivoire: le sens de l'histoire*. [http://perso.wanadoo.fr/forum.de.delphes/Forum-_de_Delphes_56.html; 13/06/2002].
- Amnesty International 1994 *La liberté d'expression et d'association menacée*. [<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/FRAAFR310031994?open&of=FRA-CIV>; 10/10/2003]
- Amondji, Marcel 1984 *Félix Houphouët et la Côte d'Ivoire: l'envers d'une légende*. Paris: Karthala.
- Appadurai, Arjun 1996 *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Argenti, Nicolas 2002 'Youth in Africa: a major resource for change'. In: Alex de Waal & Nicolas Argenti (eds.) *Young Africa: realising the rights of children and youth*. London: Africa World Press.
- Arnaut, Karel 2003 *De strijd voor een nieuwe natie: 'jeugd' en geweld in Ivoorkust* (The struggle for a new nation: 'youth' and violence in Côte d'Ivoire). Working document, AVRUG [<http://www.avrug.be/>; 24/02/2003]
- Bacon, Elizabeth 1964 'Generation'. In: J. Gould & W. Kolb (eds.) *A dictionary of the social sciences*, pp. 284-285. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Bahi, P. & T. K. Biaya 1996 'Danse et espace idéologique de la marge: le Zouglou et la transformation socio-politique des jeunes d'Abidjan', *Sociétés africaines et diaspora*, 3, pp. 105-117.
- Bailly, Diégou 1995 *La réinstauration du multipartisme en Côte d'Ivoire ou la double mort d'Houphouët-Boigny*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Bakary, Tessilimi 1984 'Elite transformation and political succession'. W. Zartman & C. Delgado (eds.) *The political economy of Ivory Coast*, pp. 21-55. New York: Praeger.

- Bakary, Tessy 1991 'Le retour au pluralisme politique en l en Côte d'Ivoire', *Année africaine 1990-1991*, pp. 161-190.
- Banégas, Richard & Ruth Marshall-Fratani 2000 'Côte d'Ivoire, un conflit régional?', *Politique Africaine*, 78, pp. 5-11.
- Bathily, Abdoulaye; Diouf, Mamadou; Mbodj, Mohamed 1995 'The Senegalese student movement from its origins to 1989'. In: M. Mamdani & E. Wamba-dia-Wamba (eds.) *African studies in social movements and democracy*, pp. 369-408. Dakar: CODESRIA Books.
- Bayart, Jean-François 1983 'La revanche des sociétés africaines', *Politique africaine*, 11, pp. 95-127.
- Bayart, Jean-François 1989 *L'Etat en Afrique: l'espace du politique*. Paris: Fayard.
- Blaikie, Andrew 1999 'Can there be a cultural sociology of ageing?' *Education and Ageing*, 14/2, pp. 127-139.
- Bourdieu, Pierre 1985 'La "jeunesse" n'est qu'un mot'. In: P. Bourdieu *Questions de sociologie*, pp.143-154. Paris: Editions de Minuit.
- Bratton, Michael & Nicolas van de Walle 1992 'Popular protest and political reform in Africa', *Comparative Politics*, 24, pp. 419-442.
- Bucholtz, Mary 2002 'Youth and cultural practice', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, pp. 323-552.
- Bundy, Colin 1987 Street sociology and pavement politics: aspects of youth and student resistance in Cape Town, 1985, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13/3, pp. 303-329.
- Burgess, Thomas 2003 'Imagined generations: constructing youth in revolutionary Zanzibar'. Paper presented at the conference *Youth and the politics of generational conflict in Africa*, April 2003. Leiden: Africa Studies Centre.
- Chauveau, Jean-Pierre & Koffi Samuel Bobo 2003 'La situation de guerre dans l'arènes villageoise: un exemple dans le centre-ouest ivoirien', *Politique africaine*, 89, pp. 12-32.
- Chazan, Naomi 1976 'The manipulation of youth politics in Ghana and the Ivory Coast', *Genève-Afrique*, 15/2, pp. 38-63.
- Clignet, Remi & Philip Foster 1966 *The fortunate few: a study of secondary schools and students in the Ivory Coast*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

- Cohen, Michael 1973 'The myth of the expanding centre: politics in the Ivory Coast', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 11/2, pp. 227-246.
- Cohen, Michael 1974 *Urban policy and political conflict in Africa: a study of the Ivory Coast*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cohen, Robin 1995 'Rethinking "Babylon": iconoclastic conceptions of the diasporic experience', *New Community*, 21/1, pp. 5-18.
- Comaroff, Jean & John Comaroff 2000 'Reflexions sur la jeunesse: du passé à la postcolonie', *Politique Africaine*, 80, pp. 90-110.
- Contamin, Bernard & Harris Memel-Fotê (eds.) *Le modèle ivoirien en question: crises, ajustements et recompositions*. Paris: Karthala-ORSTOM.
- Crook, Richard 1989 'Patrimonialism, Administrative Effectiveness and economic development in Côte d'Ivoire', *African Affairs* 88/351, pp. 205-228.
- Daddieh, Cyril Kofie 1988 'The management of educational crises in Côte d'Ivoire', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 26/4, pp. 639-659.
- Denis-Constant, Martin 1989 'A la quête des OPNI, comment traiter l'invention du politique?', *Revue française de science politique*, 39/6, pp. 793-815.
- Denis-Constant, Martin 1998 *Nouveaux langages du politique en Afrique orientale*. Paris: Karthala.
- de Latour, Eliane 2001a 'Métaphores sociales dans les ghettos de Côte d'Ivoire', *Autrepart*, 18, pp. 151-167.
- de Latour, Eliane 2001b 'Du ghetto au voyage clandestin: la métaphore héroïque', *Autrepart*, 19, pp. 155-176.
- Diouf, Mamadou 1996 'Urban Youth and Senegalese Politics: Dakar 1988-1994'. In: J. Holston (ed.) *Cities and citizenship*, pp. 42-66. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Diouf, Mamadou 1999 'Introduction: Entre l'Afrique et l'Inde: sur les questions coloniales et nationales. Ecritures de l'histoire et recherches historiques'. In: M. Diouf (ed.) *L'historiographie indienne en débat: colonialisme, nationalisme et sociétés postcoloniales*, pp. 5-35. Paris: Karthala.
- Diouf, Mamadou & René Collignon 2001 'Les jeunes du Sud et le temps du monde: identités, conflits et adaptations', *Autrepart*, 18, pp. 5-15.

- Durham, Deborah 2000 'Youth and the social imagination in Africa: Introduction', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 73/3, pp. 113-120.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. 1995 (1962) 'Archetypal patterns of youth'. In: S. N. Eisenstadt *Power, trust, and meaning: essays in sociological theory and analysis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fabian, Johannes 1998 *Moments of freedom: anthropology and popular culture*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia.
- FAR 2000 *Projet de société du Front d'Action pour le Renouveau: La promotion d'un ivoirien nouveau et le véritable changement en Côte d'Ivoire*. Abidjan.
- Federici, Silvia 2000 'The new African student movement'. In: C.B. Mwaria et al. (eds.) *African visions: literary images, political change, and social struggle in contemporary Africa*, pp. 49-66. Westport: Praeger.
- FESCI s.d. *Règlement Interieur* [Bylaws]. Abidjan.
- FESCI 1993 *Statuts* [Charter]. Abidjan (26/09/1993).
- FESCI 1995 *Le mouvement étudiant ivoirien* (with an introduction by Guillaume Soro Kigbafori). Abidjan: Le Bois Sacré.
- Gable, Eric 2000 'The Culture Development Club: youth, neo-tradition, and the construction of society in Guinea-Bissau', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 73/4, pp. 195-203.
- Gbagbo, Laurent 1983 *Côte d'Ivoire, pour une alternative démocratique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Gilroy, Paul 1994 'Diaspora', *Paragraph*, 17/1, pp. 207-212.
- Gnahore, Faustin 1992 'Recherche sur une expression des jeunes: le rythme *aloucou*'. In: H. d'Almeida-Topor et al. (eds.) *Les jeunes en Afrique*, Vol. 2, pp. 488-520. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Hall, Stuart 1990 'Cultural identity and diaspora'. In: J. Rutherford (ed.) *Identity, community, culture, difference*, pp. 222-47. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Hobsbawm, Eric 1994 (1973) *Revolutionaries: contemporary essays*. London: Phoenix.
- Home Office 1995 *Control of immigration: statistics United Kingdom 1995*. London: Government Statistical Service.
- Hugh-Jones, Stephen & James Laidlaw (eds.) 2000 *The essential Edmund Leach. Vol 1: Anthropology and society*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Irwin, Sarah 1996 'Age related distributive justice and claims on resources', *British Journal of Sociology*, 47/1, pp. 68-92.
- Irwin, Sarah 1998 'Age, generation and inequality: a reply to a reply', *British Journal of Sociology*, 49/2, pp. 306-310.
- Jewsiewicki, Bogumil & Jocelyn Létourneau (eds.) *Les jeunes à l'ère de la mondialisation: quête identitaire et conscience historique*. Québec: Septentrion.
- Kaye, Harvey 1984 *The British Marxist historians: an introductory analysis*. London: Polity Press.
- Konaté, Yacouba 2002 'Génération zougou', *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 168, 42/4, pp. 777-796.
- Konaté, Yacouba 2003 'Les enfants de la balle. De la FESCI aux mouvements de patriotes'. *Politique Africaine*, 89, pp. 49-70.
- Koulibaly, Mamadou 2003 'Le gangsterisme international d'Etat'. In: M. Koulibaly *et al.* (eds.) *La guerre de la France contre la Côte d'Ivoire*, pp. 1-9. Abidjan: La Refondation.
- Le Pape, Marc 1986 'Les statuts d'une génération: les déscolarisés d'Abidjan entre 1967 et 1986'. *Politique Africaine*, 24, pp. 104-112.
- Le Pape, Marc & Claudine Vidal 1987 'L'école à tout prix: stratégies éducatives dans la petite bourgeoisie d'Abidjan', *Actes de recherches en sciences sociales*, 70, pp. 64-73.
- Vidal Claudine & Marc Le Pape (eds.) 2002 *Côte d'Ivoire: L'année terrible 1999-2000*. Paris: Karthala.
- Liebenow, Gus 1986 *African politics: crises and challenges*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ly, Oumar T. 1992 'La structuration du concept de "jeunesse" dans le discours de l'Union Soudanaise du RDA (1947-1962)'. In: H. d'Almeida Topor & C. Coquery-Vidrovitch (eds.) *Les jeunes en Afrique*, Vol 2. *La politique et la ville*. Pp. 85-99. Paris, L'Harmattan.
- Mariás, Julián 1968 'Generations'. In: D. Sillis (ed.) *International encyclopedia of the social sciences*, pp. 88-92. New York: Macmillan.
- Maxted, Julia 2003 'Children and armed conflict in Africa', *Social Identities*, 9/1, pp. 51-72.
- Mbembe, Achilles 1985 *Les jeunes et l'ordre politique en Afrique Noire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

- Médard, Jean-François 1981 'Jeunes et aînés en Côte d'Ivoire: le VII^e congrès du PDCI-RDA, *Politique Africaine*, 1, 102-110.
- Mouvements de Liberation de Côte d'Ivoire 2002 *Déclaration commune* MPC, MJP & MPIGO (23/12/2002). Bouaké (7 pages).
- MPC 2003. *Retour - Délégation: Meeting Géant* [Video footage of the MPC delegation presenting the Marcoussis peace settlement at Kohogo on 2/02/2003].
- Ndarishikanye, Barnabé 1998 'La conscience historique des jeunes Burundais', *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 149, 38/1, 135-171.
- Nsamenang, A. Bame 2002 'Adolescence in sub-Saharan Africa: an image constructed from Africa's triple inheritance'. In: B. Bradford Brown, Reed W. Larson & T. S. Saraswathi (eds.) *The world's youth: adolescence in eight regions of the globe*, pp. 61-104. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nyamnjoh, Francis & Ben Page 2002, 'Whiteman Kontri and the enduring allure of modernity among Cameroonian youth', *African Affairs*, 101, pp. 607-634.
- Ortner, Sherry 1984 'Theory in anthropology since the sixties', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26/1, pp. 126-166.
- Peters, Krijn & Paul Richards 1998 "'Why we fight": voices of youth combatants in Sierra Leone', *Africa*, 68/2, pp. 183-210.
- Proteau, Laurence 2002 *Passions scolaires en Côte d'Ivoire: école, Etat et société*. Paris: Karthala.
- Rintala, Marvin 1968 'Political generations'. In: D. Sillis (ed.) *International encyclopedia of the social sciences*, pp. 92-96. New York: Macmillan.
- Roseberry, William 1996 'Hegemony, power, and languages of contention'. In E. Wilmsen (ed.) *The politics of difference: ethnic premises in a world of power*, pp. 71-84. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ruel, Malcolm 2002 'The structural articulation of generations in Africa', *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 165, 42/1, pp. 51-81.
- Seekings, Jeremy 1993 *Heroes or villains? Youth politics in the 1980s*. Johannesburg: Raven Press.

- Spencer, Paul 1990 'The riddled course: theories of age and its transformations'. In: P. Spencer (ed.) *Anthropology and the riddle of the sphinx: paradoxes of change in the life course*, pp. 1-34. London: Routledge.
- Teya, Pascal Koffi 1985 *Côte d'Ivoire: le roi est nu*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Tice, Robert 1974 'Administrative structure, ethnicity, and nation-building in the Ivory Coast', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 12/2, pp. 211-229.
- Toulabor, Comi 1981 'Jeu de mots, jeu de vilains: lexique de la dérision politique au Togo', *Politique africaine*, 3, pp. 55-71.
- Toulabor, Comi 1985 'L'énonciation du pouvoir et de la richesse chez les jeunes 'conjoncturés' de Lomé (Togo)', *Revue française de science politique*, 35/3, pp. 446-458.
- Toungara, Jeanne Maddox 1995 'Generational tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire', *African Studies Review*, 38/2, pp. 11-28.
- Touré, Abdou 1981 *La civilisation quotidienne en Côte d'Ivoire: proces d'occidentalisation*. Paris: Karthala.
- Touré, Abdou 1985 'La jeunesse face à l'urbanisation accélérée en Côte d'Ivoire', *Cahiers ORSTOM, Série Sciences Humaines*, 21/2-3, pp. 275-293.
- Traoré, Lacine & Ezanne Raphaël Essienne 1994 'Images des jeunes de la rue dans la presse quotidienne en Côte d'Ivoire'. In: Y. Marguerat & D. Poitou (eds.) *A l'écoute des enfants de la rue en Afrique Noire*, pp. 73-90. Paris: Fayard.
- Trudell, Barbara *et al.* (eds.) *Africa's young majority*. Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies.
- Turner, Bryan 1998 'Ageing and generational conflicts: a reply to Sarah Irwin', *British Journal of Sociology*, 49/2, pp. 299-304.
- Van Dijk, Rijk 1998 'Pentecostalism, cultural memory and the state: contested representations of time in postcolonial Malawi'. In: R. Werbner (ed.) *Memory and the postcolony: African anthropology and the critique of power*, pp. 155-81. London: Zed Books.
- Werbner, Pnina 2000 'The materiality of diaspora: between aesthetic and 'real' politics', *Diaspora* 9/1, pp. 5-20.
- Werbner, Richard 1999 *Bringing back the dead in Botswana: patriarchy and elderhood revisited*. Paper presented to the African Studies Workshop of the University of Chicago (November 1999). [<http://cas.uchicago.edu/african/papers/werbner.htm>; 2/12/2003].

- West, Harry 2000 'Girls with guns: narrating the experience of war of FRELIMO's "Female Detachment"', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 73/4, pp. 180-194.
- Willis, Justin 2002 'Who put the 'Y' in the BYDA? Youth in Sudan's civil wars'. In: B. Trudell *et al.* (eds.) *Africa's young majority*, pp. 91-111. Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies.
- Wiseman, John 1986 'Urban riots in West Africa 1977-1985', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24/3, pp. 509-518.
- Woods, Dwayne 1988 'State action and class interests in the Ivory Coast', *African Studies Review*, 31/1, pp. 93-116.
- Woods, Dwayne 1996 The politicization of teachers' association in the Côte d'Ivoire', *African Studies Review*, 39/3, pp. 113-129.
- Zolberg, Aristide 1963 'Mass parties and national integration: the case of the Ivory Coast', *Journal of Politics*, 25/1, pp. 36-48.
- Zolberg, Aristide 1971 'Political development in the Ivory Coast since independence'. In: P. Foster & A. Zolberg (eds.) *Ghana and the Ivory Coast: perspectives on modernization*, pp. 9-31. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Zolberg, Aristide 1975 'Political generations in conflict: the Ivory Coast case. In: W. Hanna (ed.) *University students and African politics*, pp. 103-133. New York: Africana Publishing Company.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Fesci (national) leaders and some of their most important collaborators

1. Koné Alexis Laurent (1990)
2. Azowa Beugre Amos (1990)
3. Ahipeaud Martial (1990-1993)
First bureau (until February 1993): Eugène Kouadio Djué, Zagbo Groguhet Charles, Touré Moussa Zeguen, Made Gueu Emile, Cissé Fanny Moussa, Apollinaire Sery Lago.
Second bureau (February 1993 – September 1993) Eugène Kouadio Djué, Jean Blé Guirao, Berthé Yousef, Gbalou Angenore.
4. Eugène Kouadio Djué (1993-1994)
Bureau: Jean Blé Guirao, Apollos Dan Téhé, Berthé Yousef, Dan Téhé Apollos, Gbalou Angenore, Kouakou Firmin, Jean Dekpaï.
5. Jean Blé Guirao (1994-1995)
Bureau: Soro Guillaume, Apollos Dan Thé, Jean-Marie Dekpai
6. Soro Guillaume (1995-1998)
Bureau: Karamoko Yayoro, Damana Adia Pickas, Charles Blé Goudé, Kouame Kouakou, Koné Souleyman, Bossina Marius, Goré Sylvanus, Kohi Brou Sylvain.
7. Charles Blé Goudé (1998-2001)
Bureau: Kouame Kouakou, Drigoné Bi Faustin, Doumbia Soumaila Major
8. Jean-Yves Dibopieu (2001- 2003)
9. Kuyo Serge (2003 -)

Annex 2: List of Figures

Figure 1. Membership card of the FESCI student union

Figure 2. Figure 2. Regular *TD* (November 1993)

Figure 3. Fesci *TD* (s.d.)

Figure 4. Figure 4. Fesci *TD*: *Open lettre to the Rector of the University of Abidjan (18 May 1994)*

Figure 5. Fesci *TD* (ca 1993)

Figure 6. Fesci *TD* (s.d.)

Figure 7. *TD* against the Fesci (s.d.)

Figure 8. Fesci pamphlet featuring a poem (31 May 1994)



Figure 1. Membership card of the FESCI student union

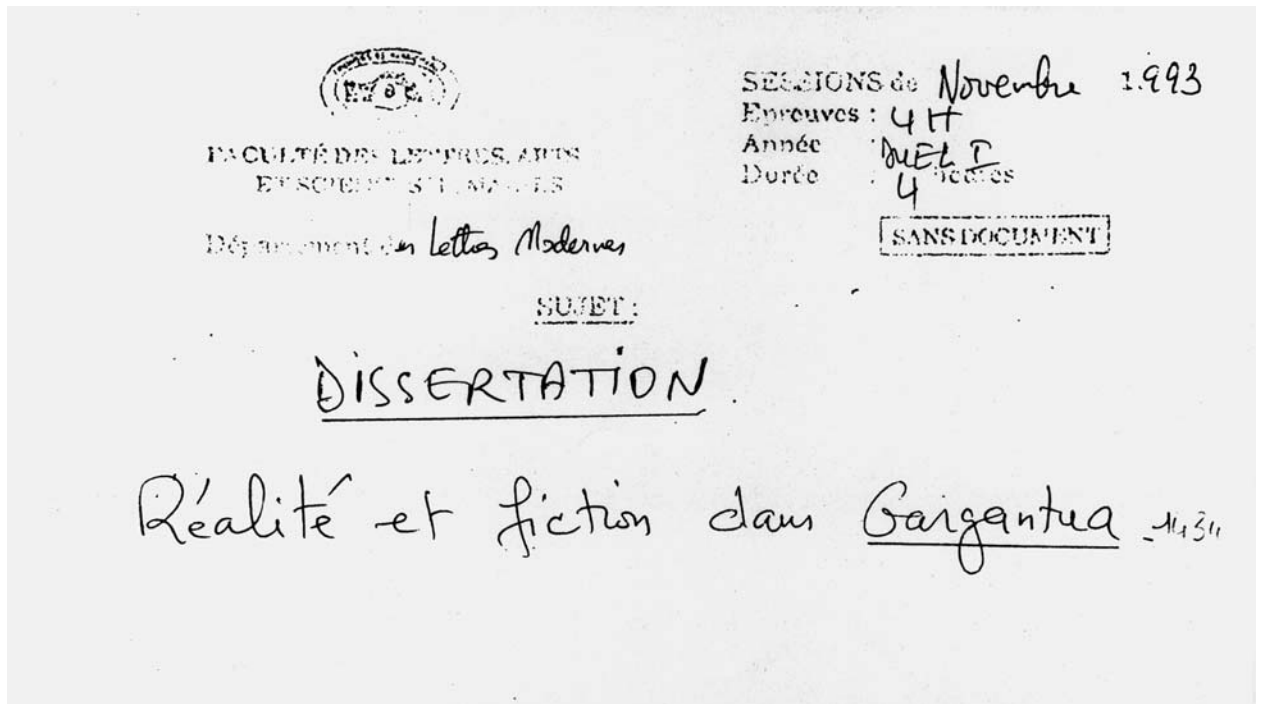


Figure 2. Regular TD (November 1993)

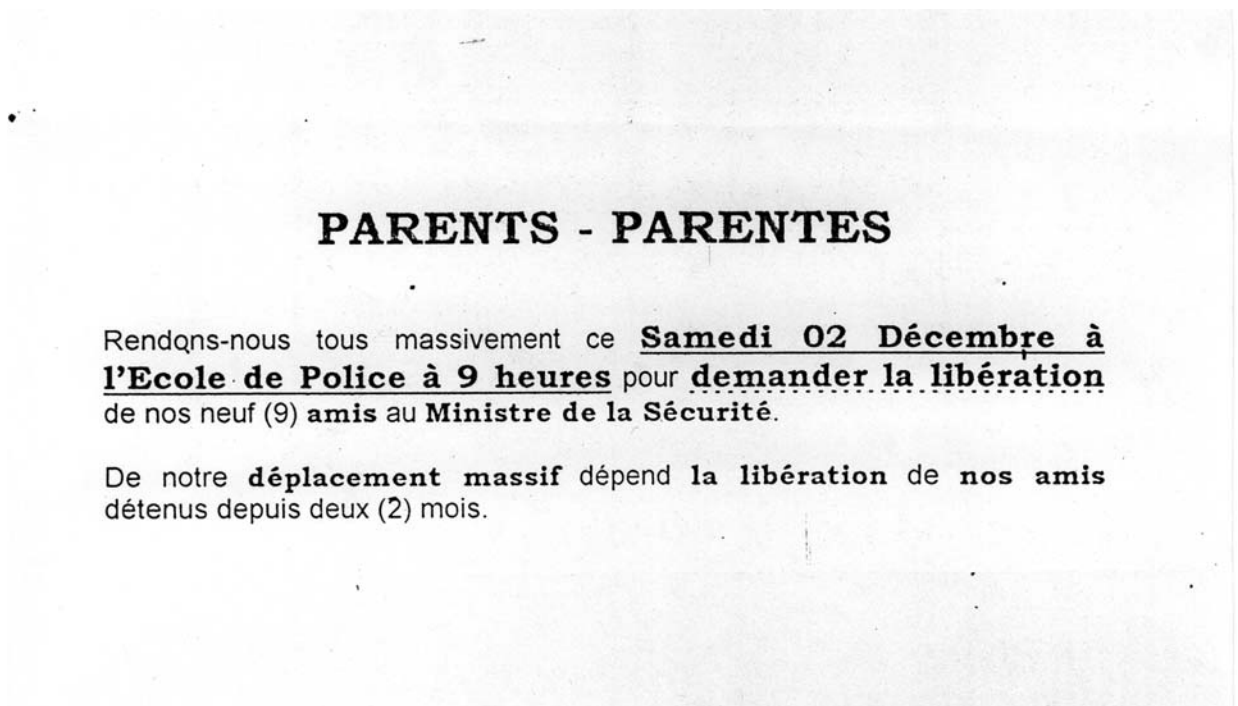


Figure 3. Fesci TD (s.d.)

LETTRE OUVERTE AU RECTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITE

A Monsieur SEMI BI ZAN
Recteur de l'Université Nationale
de Côte d'Ivoire

Monsieur le Recteur,

Je suis étonné mais pas du tout surpris par votre comportement.

Etonné, je le suis lorsque je constate qu'une éminence comme vous ne puissiez pas avoir le courage de vos opinions et soyez obligé de mentir et de vous rabaisser comme vous le faites depuis un certain temps. Vous dites que la FESCI est minoritaire et vous promettez la sécurité rapprochée à la très grande majorité qui ne voudrait pas suivre le mot d'ordre de grève lancé par ce syndicat. Ridicule !

Questions, Monsieur le Recteur. Combien de fois cela fait-il que vous lancez ce genre d'appels ? Quels résultats avez-vous obtenus à chaque fois ?

Permettez que je donne mon avis. Si vos appels sont répétés, c'est que vous n'êtes pas satisfaits des résultats. Pourquoi ne l'êtes-vous pas ? Soit vous ne criez pas assez (ce qui serait vraiment étonnant), soit la majorité silencieuse dont vous parlez n'existe que de votre esprit, soit le contenu de votre appel n'est pas celui qu'il faut.

Parlant de la majorité silencieuse, Monsieur le Recteur, elle existe effectivement. C'est la quasi totalité des étudiants qui ne peuvent pas passer au journal de 20 h comme votre protégé Doumbia Tiémoko et vous, pour exprimer sa souffrance. Vous savez, quand quelqu'un n'a pas la parole, on ne sait pas ce qu'il pense et donc on peut lui prêter beaucoup d'idées. C'est ce que vous faites. La preuve, à chaque fois qu'un étudiant a la chance de parler et de voir son interview diffusée en totalité, vous avez certainement dû constater qu'il est en parfaite harmonie avec la FESCI car il a de sérieux problèmes.

Par rapport au contenu de votre message, je vous suggère de dire ceci prochainement : "... Je demande aux autorités de faire preuve de hauteur d'esprit en libérant tous les étudiants détenus. Les jeunes gens ont de sérieux problèmes qui nécessitent solutions fiables. Il ne s'agit pas de dissoudre la FESCI, mais de résoudre des problèmes. Car tant qu'il y aura des problèmes, d'autres FESCI verront le jour. Quant aux étudiants, faites nous-confiance. Demain, j'appelle la FESCI à une rencontre, à l'issue de laquelle, je le souhaite, un accord sera trouvé sur le minimum afin que les cours puissent reprendre..."

Essayez cette formule, Monsieur le Recteur, vous ne serez pas déçu. Et puis, ne faites plus de fausses promesses, sinon, la formule ne sera pas efficace. Quand vous affichez le paiement de quatre (4) mois de bourses et que vous ne payez qu'un (1) seul mois, vous rompez le lien de confiance. Quand vous promettez ouvrir les restaurants le 15 Mai 1993 et qu'une année après, aujourd'hui le 18 Mai 94, ces restos demeurent hermétiquement clos ou même privatisés, comment voulez-vous qu'on suive vos appels ? Quand le Gouvernement vous dit de faire de fausses promesses et que vous acceptez, comment vous sentez-vous ? Pouvez-vous vous regarder dans une glace après avoir donné de faux espoirs à des jeunes dont vous avez la responsabilité ?

Franchement, Monsieur le Recteur, je ne suis pas surpris de votre comportement parce que certains intellectuels de notre pays, nonobstant le pouvoir qu'ils ont, car ils ont la connaissance et donc le pouvoir, ont choisi, ô honte, de faire l'âne pour avoir le foin.

D'ailleurs, toute la différence entre la FESCI et les autres "aujourd'hui" réside là.

DAN THE APPOLOS
Etudiant en Licence de Maths

Figure 4. Fesci TD: *Open lettre to the Rector of the University of Abidjan (18 May 1994)*

TRONC COMMUN OU TROU COMMUN ?

NOUS DISONS

NON AU CONCOURS

**QUI MET A LA RUE 2.000 ETUDIANTS
SUR UN EFFECTIF DE 2.400**

NOUS VOULONS

**UN EXAMEN NORMAL
A DEUX SESSIONS !**

**POUR LE BEN DE LA FESCI,
LE SECRETAIRE GENERAL ADJOINT**

EUGENE KOUADIO DJUE

Figure 5. Fesci TD (ca 1993)

Appel aux étudiants

**La FESCI a toujours lutté pour nous. Aujourd'hui on veut la dissoudre
sous de faux prétextes.**

**Tu dois refuser cela en te mobilisant pour le mot d'ordre en cours. Rejoins
nos rangs pour la véritable lutte.**

**KOUADIO A. Marius
étudiant en 1ère Année S. N.**

Figure 6. Fesci TD (s.d.)

IMPORTANT

FESCI... Toujours.

C'est malheureux! C'est inimaginable, et pourtant c'est vrai, la FESCI... **toujours**. Quelle triste réalité! Ce mouvement "qui se veut" l'avocat des élèves et étudiants de la Côte d'Ivoire a plus que raté sa vocation. La FESCI a flanché! Elle a grandement failli à la mission qu'elle s'est arrogée.

La FESCI poursuit crapuleusement, de manière odieuse, l'objectif de la déstabilisation du système éducatif ivoirien. A quoi une telle ignominie peut-elle avancer des étudiants si ce n'est à assouvir le vouloir mesquin de quelque piètre individu! **La FESCI... toujours le même scénario!**

A côté de quelques doléances réfléchies, menacent des revendications dont on sait l'issue incertaine, voire impossible. Il s'en suit des manifestations vicieuses et horribles telles que le *pillage*, "*le braisage*" de véhicules et d'édifices sociaux, jusqu'à la "*chasse à l'homme*".

On viole ceux qu'on prétend défendre! Ce n'est rien de moins que dégueulasse!

Cela a pour corollaires une arrestation abusive de pauvres innocents qui souffrent la bestialité des gardiens de l'ordre public et la paralysie de l'école ivoirienne.

Après ou à la suite de chaque grève, c'est la désolation dans notre camp. Loin de nous apporter la paix et la sérénité requises pour de bonnes études, nous faisons route avec l'insécurité et l'incertitude du lendemain.

Nous sommes plongés depuis lors dans une situation de formation au rabais qui perdure. L'Etat Ivoirien est pour quelque chose dans cette affaire.

C'est pourquoi nous devons bien nous conduire afin de le mettre devant ses responsabilités!

C'est aussi pourquoi je dis "**NON A LA FESCI**", "*ce groupuscule instinctif et impulsif qui nous fait perdre notre dignité*."

Sais-tu combien sont ceux qui se réclament de la FESCI ?

Ce dont nous avons besoin, c'est d'un vrai mouvement qui fasse parler sa **volonté, sa raison et non son animalité pure**.

C'est pourquoi nous devons, toi et moi, réagir énergiquement contre ceux-là même qui se disent vouloir notre bonheur malgré nous!

Je soutiens l'initiative d'association de nos camarades de Médecine. Une telle initiative devrait se rencontrer au sein de chaque Faculté, de sorte que la Fédération de ces associations aboutisse à un grand mouvement dûment reconnu et représentatif de l'ensemble des Etudiants. Lequel mouvement aura pour tâche essentielle la résolution de nos problèmes académiques, para-académiques et adjuvants.

Cher camarade, nous n'avons pas de délai à nous accorder. Il faut dès maintenant sortir de son mutisme et de son inactivisme. Je t'invite d'ailleurs à donner le ton en répondant négativement au mot d'ordre de grève lancé par la FESCI. Je sais que tu partages cet avis. Alors "**SOIS HOMME**", avec tout ce que cela comporte comme dignité. Il est grand temps de prendre en main notre propre destinée.

NE NOUS LAISSONS PLUS BERNER PAR DES NAÏFS!

VIVEMENT NOTRE DIGNITE!

Figure 7. TD against the Fesci (s.d.)

Fédération Estudiantine & Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire
F. E. S. C. I.

Poème

La honte

Mes parents ; j'ai vécu la détention et j'ai connu la honte
oui j'ai connu la honte et quelle honte ?

la honte d'un pays
la honte d'un peuple
la honte d'une jeunesse
la véritable honte incarnée

Mes amis ; mes camarades de lutte, j'ai vu la honte en personne et

j'ai mal à mon pays
j'ai mal à mon peuple
j'ai mal à ma jeunesse.

Car j'ai vu la honte de sa destinée,
la honte assassine de liberté

Oui j'ai vécu la honte, et quelle honte ?

Une honte indescriptible. La honte de lendemains incertains parce que obscurcis par
des personnes hélas peu honteuses.

Et j'ai vu la honte planer comme cherchant une proie et se poser sur mon
pays.

Assitôt, j'ai vu une jeunesse prompte et spontanée lutter contre la honte. La
lutte fut âpre. Mais la honte fut vaincue malgré elle.

Alors mes amis, j'ai vu la honte, une honte méconnaissable s'en aller la
queue entre les pattes, la tête basse, confuse et honteuse
Et une vive lueur d'espoir a pointé à l'horizon éclairant le visage des lutteurs.

Désormais la honte, oui la véritable honte, cette honte qui brutalise des jeunes gens,
traumatise les jeunes lutteurs pour leur arracher des aveux,
Cette honte que j'ai connue ne sera qu'un souvenir sur la voie triomphale de la liberté
véritable qui comme le bien triomphe du mal, triomphera de cette honte armée
jusqu'aux dents de fusils, de matraques, de fouets électriques, de chaises de torture.

Adieu honte honteuse.

Ecole de Police, le 31 Mai 1994.

La voix des 25 Fescistes détenus
à l'Ecole Nationale de Police et à la D. **S.T.**

Figure 8. Fesci pamphlet featuring a poem (31 May 1994)