Millenarian Movements in Africa and the Diaspora

in cooperation with

Belgian Association of Africanists

Belgische
Vereniging
van
Afrikanisten
B V

B A
Association
Belge
des
Africanistes

2001

ERRATUM

Mededelingen der Zittingen **52** (2006-3), **Lofrede F. Bontinck** (blz. 351-364).

Deze lofrede werd opgesteld door Jean-Luc VELLUT.

ERRATUM

Bulletin des Séances **52** (2006-3), **Eloge F. Bontinck** (pp. 351-364).

Cet éloge a été rédigé par Jean-Luc VELLUT.

PROCEEDINGS – ACTES – ACTA

International Conference
Conférence internationale – Internationale Conferentie

Millenarian Movements in Africa and the Diaspora
Mouvements millénaristes en Afrique et dans la diaspora
Millenaristische bewegingen in Afrika en de Diaspora

(Brussels, 30 November - 1 December 2000)

J.-L. Grootaers (red.)

2001

Foreword

The present publication is the concrete expression of an international conference on *Millenarian Movements in Africa and the Diaspora* which was held in Brussels (30 November - 1 December 2000). This activity was organized by the Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences in partnership with the Belgian Association of Africanists.

It is worth mentioning that this is not the first time our two institutions have collaborated on a project of mutual interest. In June 1989, a seminar entitled *La recherche en sciences humaines au Cameroun,* was conjointly organized.

Dr. Jan-Lodewijk Grootaers, President of the Belgian Association of Africanists at the time of the Conference, set up the organization of the Conference. We are indebted to the members of the editorial board (Dr D. de Lame, Prof. R. Devisch and Prof. J.-L. Vellut) for their constructive cooperation and advisory help.

We hope that our Academy will have further opportunities to collaborate with the Belgian Association of Africanists in the future.

The proceedings of the Conference deal with a large variety of papers. The first part consists of complete texts and the second includes summaries of a number of other lectures.

Our gratitude is extended to the various sponsors, *i.e* the "Commissariat Général aux Relations Internationales (CGRI)", "the Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS)" and the "Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek - Vlaanderen (FWO-Vl.)", for their invaluable financial support.

<div align="right">

Prof. Dr. Yola Verhasselt
Permanent Secretary
of the Royal Academy
of Overseas Sciences

</div>

Apocalypse How ?
An Inquiry into Forms of Millenarianism Today

by

Jan-Lodewijk GROOTAERS *

> *This is the way the world ends.*
> *This is the way the world ends.*
> *This is the way the world ends –*
> *Not with a bang*
> *but a whimper.*
> (T. S. ELIOT, *The Hollow Men*)

We may have forgotten it, but the year 1999 was filled with the buzzing of the 'Millennium Bug'. At the stroke of twelve on December 31, 1999, so it was fore-told, this little creature would bring to a standstill, if not to an end, the entire civilized world. Traffic lights and telephone systems would go berserk, heart defibrillators and other facilities in hospitals would desert their patients, aircrafts would become the winds' plaything, banks and companies would lose control over their assets, even sophisticated weapon systems would be running the risk of turning against their own masters [1] **. The consequences were expected to be of apocalyptic proportions, unless massive investments were being made to outwit the Bug. As it happened, nothing happened. According to persistent rumours afterwards, the entire hype had been orchestrated by the computer industry itself in order to make a quick buck — possibly an example of 'occult economy' of which more later.

In the present proceedings of the International Conference on Millenarian Movements in Africa and the African Diaspora, held in Brussels in 2000, this instance of western, hi-tech millenarian fear will not be considered in further detail. Four case-studies pertain to the African continent (RDCongo, Uganda and Kenya) ; they are preceded by a contribution dealing with the Pacific and the closing article focuses on African-American traditions.

Beliefs in the imminent end of the world and its replacement by a better one, and movements based on those beliefs, occur everywhere and at all times. Even so, it is useful to retrace the term's etymology. Though the word *millennium*, in

---

* Afrika Museum, Postweg 6, NL-6571 CS Berg en Dal (the Netherlands).

** The numbers in brachets [ ] refer to the notes pp. 11-12.

its simplest meaning, is nothing more than a measure of time, a span of one thousand years, it is usually meant to denote the 'thousand-year reign' of Christ as prophesied in the New Testament's Book of Revelation. During this time, the Devil will be bound 'a thousand years' and shut up in a bottomless pit, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" [2]. Derived from this biblical notion, the term 'millenarianism' is used in the social sciences for general cultural notions of a long-awaited and lengthy period of peace, harmony and perfection on earth. 'Millenarian movements' aim at the realization of such a paradisiacal world. Expectations for this world are usually based on a combination of concrete and mythical elements, and often have political consequences.

An intriguing comparison can be made with the etymology of the term 'secularism' [3]. Originally, the Latin word *saeculum* — which gave rise to the French 'siècle', century — meant a long unit of time, an aeon. In the early Christian period, this temporal term expanded in sense to denoting the present human condition in relation to God : our this-worldly *saeculum* as opposed to the divine next *saeculum*. The modern notion of 'secular' derives from the former. This shift in meaning was necessary for the distinction between the political ('secular') and the religious domains to emerge, a separation which allowed the Christians to carve out a space for their own existence in the syncretic milieu of late antiquity.

The Bible — and especially the visionary Book of Revelation, written by the apostle and evangelist John around 90 AD — is a complex and internally contradictory text which allows of no single reading. This has given rise, among Christian millenarianists, to fierce battles over the sequence of coming events [4]. Will the Apocalypse take place before the first (temporary) or the second (final) defeat of the Devil ? And, more importantly, will Christ return on earth before or after the thousand-year period of righteousness ? The answer to this latter question distinguishes post-millenarianists from pre-millenarianists. The former believe that Christ will return *after* the Millennium, which leaves humankind the opportunity to reform society and prepare the Millennium according to the norms of godliness. According to the latter, contrariwise, the world can only grow worse and worse until Christ comes to rescue the faithful and unleash judgement against their adversaries, *before* the Millennium. This theology of despair, with its emphasis on imminent cataclysmic destruction, fits the temper of *fin-de-siècle* apocalypticism. It should be noted, however, that the main doctrine of the Christian (Roman Catholic) church is a-millenarianist : in his *City of God* (ca. 426 AD), the church father St. Augustine repudiates a literal reading of the figures given in the Book of Revelation, prescribing instead an allegorical understanding of the Devil's thousand-year captivity and Christ's thousand-year reign.

Not all forms of millenarianism follow the biblical logic, to be sure. Examples of millenarian aspirations can be found in almost all religions, past or present,

and even in secular ideologies. One can think of the Jewish doctrine of the Chosen People, liberated by Yahweh Sabaoth ; of the beginnings of Christianity, when the revolutionary promise was made of a kingdom in which the first would be last and the last would be first ; of tarantism in the 14th century, a mass phenomenon of ecstatic dances that cropped up all over Europe in the wake of the bubonic plague, perceived as a divine judgement for men's sins ; of the 'god-men' among the Guaraní Indians (Brazil and Paraguay) who, in the 16th century, prophesied the end of Spanish authority and a return to the golden age ; to the Ghost Dance of certain First Nations in North America, between 1870 and 1890, a type of millenarianism usually called 'nativism' or 'revitalization' ; of the esoteric Order of the Solar Temple, whose members believed in the imminent, ecological destruction of the planet and their rescue through collective suicide (which took place in 1994, 1995 and 1997) ; even of communism and Nazi ideology, two sides of a same millenarian coin, according to whether the new world order is shared by an egalitarian brotherhood of people or ruled by a small elite of superior beings [5].

Millenarian movements — be they incarnated in a short-lived trend or an established denomination, a prophetic church or a healing cult, a localized practice or a transnational network — seem to share a number of characteristics. These may be laid out along four axes, according to their prophetic, emotional, moral and political content. Needless to say that this typology is meant to have heuristic value and does not entail rigid categorizations.

The prophetic axis : to what extent does the millenarian movement make predictions about the future, in particular in regard to the coming of heaven on earth ? What is the degree of imminence of these prophecies ? — which also poses the question of what happens if the predictions are belied, some would say falsified, by the facts [6]. This temporal dimension is prominent in movements with an apocalyptic message. And furthermore : in what ways does the prophet define the movement's situation, rather than being defined by it ?

The emotional axis : how important is the 'emotional release' for the followers ? All millenarian movements are group phenomena, but some have a stronger ecstatic dimension. This psychological aspect is usually relegated to a position of secondary importance, maybe due to an exaggerated focus on the cognitive dimension of religion. (Religion, together with magic and science, constitute in the intellectualist tradition of anthropology human endeavours to solve problems and control the world).

The moral axis : how does the millenarian movement contribute to creating a 'moral community', setting apart the saved ones from the rest ? The moral discourse can become a powerful marker of identity, projecting the validity of the community's boundaries into a more or less distant future, rather than tracing it to a real or imagined past. The issue of salvation through selection is paramount in messianic forms of millenarianism, but is it a general feature of all movements ?

The political axis : to what extent is the social order in place threatened to be overturned ? The utopian message it carried often made a millenarian movement suspect, if not subversive, in the eyes of the rulers. This was all the more true during colonialism, when these movements arose in many countries of the South. Yet the political value of millenarianism has received divergent appreciation. Karl Mannheim, for one, stated that : "The idea itself of the dawn of a millenarian reign on earth always contained a revolutionary tendency", while according to others, millenarianism constitutes "a desperate social struggle, partly put up in the imaginary", "proper to the 'emotions' of pre-capitalist times" [7].

These four axes can be of help in appreciating the points of similarity and of difference between the case-studies presented in the contributions, to which we now turn. To open proceedings dealing with African forms of millenarianism on both sides of the Atlantic with a study about millenarianism in the Pacific, may come as a surprise. Yet it is precisely in this part of the world that millenarianism was 'discovered' by the social sciences. The Melanesian cargocult, aiming at the acquisition of western goods and technology by means of ritual activities, was one of the first movements to draw the attention of researchers to the religious dimensions of social distress under colonial circumstances. Toon van Meijl's review of opposing sociological explanations of the cargocult, giving different weight to internal *vs.* external factors of change, is enriched by his own analysis in terms of a theory of practice, which paves the way for a better grasp of indigenous understandings of social change. From here it may be only a small step to view cargocults as a possible response to unequal exchange relations and as a model for properly constituted reciprocity.

The theoretical scope of Van Meijl's article is wide-ranging, providing interesting questions and tentative answers for the African case-studies [8]. Instead of considering millenarian beliefs as incompatible with, or even opposed to, programmes of economic development, it appears that participation in development ventures is often conceptualized in cargo terms — just as millenarian movements may use elements of the hegemonic and rational "developmental jargon" in their writings (Heike Behrend). One is reminded here of the close affinity, both poetical and political, between 'development' and 'develop-man' [9]. On the other hand, western capitalism itself is not *per se* as rational as taken for granted. Early political economy developed the notion of the 'Invisible Hand' — the underlying market principle supposed to assure the optimum level of economic welfare when each person acts in self-interest. No less mystical is the recent proliferation of 'occult economies' — supposed to generate material abundance without effort and, at the same time, offering a moral discourse about such preternatural accumulation [10]. Here too, cargo cults constitute a useful model.

The potentially dangerous, political implications of millenarian beliefs did not escape the Belgian colonial administration, when they imprisoned the Congolese preacher and healer, Simon Kimbangu, in 1921. In her contribution, Anne Mélice shows how the Christian-inspired kimbanguist movement draws upon and

transforms 'traditional' Kongo signs and practices, notably those connected with the Kongo Kingdom (ca. 1400-1700). From this perspective, the history of Congo becomes an eschatological history. While this study chiefly analyses the discourse of kimbanguism, it raises new questions about the millenarian drive of today's kimbanguist community. The movement's institutionalization as one of Congo's official churches at the time of Independence (1960) and, especially, the recent proliferation of independent healing churches in the country, can only have eroded and displaced this drive [11].

A much grimmer picture of RDCongo is drawn by Filip De Boeck. In his Kinshasa, there is hardly place for the hopeful, glorious side of the millenarian dream. The hardship experienced by most Congolese and the omnipresence of death and the dead, seem to indicate that current life takes place in the 'apoca-lyptic interlude', the nightmarish period between the first and the final victory over the Antichrist. Here, millenarian expectations appear to have come to a halt just before the Second Coming. And there seems to be very little promise of their actual fulfilment, particularly because of the inversion between the real and the imaginary world — notwithstanding the existence of hundreds of independent churches which proclaim the transformation and salvation of the human world. This article also makes tangible the intricate *con-fusion* of different time-scales, due to the internal contradictions in the Book of Revelation concerning the chronology of final events — as outlined above.

According to some sources, it was a series of wrong apocalyptic predictions about the end of the world that led to the dramatic events of March 2000, in Kanungu, Western Uganda. The international press covered extensively the death (self-sacrifice ?, suicide ?, murder ?) of hundreds of members of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God, often plugging into stereotypes about a supposedly dangerous and cruel country. In her exercise of *histoire immédiate*, Heike Behrend traces the history and ideology of this move-ment, providing elements for an explanation of how the 'Kanungu Inferno' could have taken place. Many questions remain unanswered. The existence of strong ties with neighbouring Rwanda is one of the many intriguing issues : female leaders of the Ugandan movement were in regular contact with Marian cults in Rwanda, a great proportion of the movement's members were Rwandan refugees who had escaped the 1994 genocide, and, allegedly, Rwandan *Interhamwe* mil-itiamen had been hired by the leaders to kill 'troublesome' followers early in 2000. It squarely poses the question of transnational ramifications of seemingly marginal movements.

With regard to ramifications in time, the existence of continuing 'traditions of renewal' is pertinent for most millenarian movements, as several authors have indicated in their case-study. So is the analysis of these movements in terms of an interplay between indigenous sources and exogenous forces, among which colonization and missionisation. In his exploration of contemporary forms of millenarianism in Kenya, Yvan Droz applies this analytic framework to a number

of Kikuyu religious-cum-political movements of the past century, including one of today's most prolific churches, pentecostalism. On the way, the author suggests considering millenarianism as a form of conversion, in terms of the dialectic between the return to one's roots and the hope for a better world. Does this point to a possible link between millenarianism and Mircea Eliade's ideas, as developed in his survey of human nostalgia for origins ? [12].

The last contribution crosses the Atlantic, where millenarian thought is deeply rooted in American culture [13]. Part of this is due to evangelicalism with its Biblical literalism, by far the most influential social and religious movement in the nation's history. Many of America's early revolutionary leaders shared the assumption that history amounted to the unfolding of a divine plan and that the struggle for independence was a harbinger of the Millennium. Less well-known is the importance of the millenarian heritage for African-Americans, in their resistance to slavery and their struggle for freedom. Leslie James' analysis of millenarian thought across the 'colour-line' redresses the balance. His eloquent style of writing reminds us of the ideological-utopian component inherent to all (post-)millenarianist discourse. It is no coincidence that the present collection of conference papers should conclude with this one.

Nor was the choice of the year 2000 for the organization of a conference on millenarianism fortuitous, of course. Scientific as well as popular writing about the millennium-change grew exponentially during the last decade of the 20th century. It seemed interesting, therefore, to gauge the success of millenarian thought and its translation into millenarian activities 'on the ground'. Somewhat unexpectedly to the organizers, maybe, only one of the case-studies presented at the Brussels Conference had a direct link to the year 2000, viz. the contribution on the Ugandan tragedy. In retrospect, the independence of many African countries around 1960 led to much more millenarian fever than the passage to the third millennium. It is not unlikely that the preoccupation with round figures is primarily a western obsession and, what is more, of fairly recent origin [14]. An additional source for possible Eurocentric proclivities manifest in the Conference is the much regretted absence of speakers from Africa and other regions of the South. In more than one instance, millenarianism appears to be an indigenous discourse about, and resistance against, economic, religious and political intrusions represented as Evil ; it may therefore seem paradoxical to approach this discourse and resistance solely from the dominant, exogenous 'epistemic centre' [15].

What the Conference clearly showed, notwithstanding its shortcomings, is the need for further theoretical analysis. Older explanations — like the theory of 'relative deprivation' (leaders and followers of millenarian movements come from displaced elites and use these movements as means of social emancipation) or the theory of 'acculturation' (millenarian movements are the result of culture contact and become means of civilizational emancipation) — are no longer considered useful. It is not yet clear, however, by what they have been or should be

replaced. Two candidates, the theory of practice and the theory of conversion, are being proposed in these pages (by Toon van Meijl and Yvan Droz, respectively), but they need further development. At the same time, the study of millenarianism may prove to require an essentially historical, not structural, approach : movements and their leaders must be located in time and space, and the transformations over time of these movements must be taken into account [16]. Moreover, terminology itself is at stake [17]. The concept of 'millenarianism', used too literally, only pertains to movements directly inspired by the biblical tradition ; used too broadly, in the sense of a general hope for a better future or a general feeling of despair over the current state of affairs, it loses all content.

So in the end : Apocalypse how ? The question, as such, may not be that relevant after all. Apocalypticism only constitutes a small part of the millenarian phenomenon [18] — even though it attracts disproportionate attention in the media. On another level, however, there are very real places where people are living their daily lives in a world in which normality has ceased to exist and where society has become 'zombified' (Filip De Boeck). Here, then, the apocalyptic no longer belongs to the realm of mental or symbolic representations — it constitutes reality itself. The horizon of expectations seems reduced to a struggle for history, memory and identity. Was it this, one wonders, that the poet of the epigraph had in mind...

NOTES

[1] Several alarmist books were devoted to the 'Millennium Bug' or 'Y2K [year 2000] Bomb', as was also called ; cf. especially YOURDON & YOURDON (1998).

[2] The Book of Revelation : 20, 2-3.

[3] Cf. STEWART (2001). I wish to thank Pierre Petit for drawing my attention to this reference, as well as for his valuable comments on an earlier version of this introduction.

[4] Cf. SCHWARTZ (1987), CAROZZI & TAVIANI-CAROZZI (1999, pp. 11-92).

[5] COHN (1957), KAUFMAN (1962), BOWIE & DEACY (1997), ROBBINS & PALMER (Eds.) (1997), WEBER (1999).

[6] Cf. DAWSON (1999).

[7] MANNHEIM (1929), quoted in BALANDIER (1985², p. 264) ; COQUERY-VIDROVITCH (1983, pp. 54, 59).

[8] The relevance of 'Melanesian models for African millenarianism' (to paraphrase BARNES 1962) has not been pursued systematically in these proceedings. To do so would require another conference altogether, especially if one wanted to avoid a possible 'Melanesian mirage in Africa' (ibid.)

[9] SAHLINS (1992). More generally, it has been shown that millenarian pentecostalism, for one, partakes in a Protestant ethic perfectly adapted to the spirit of late-capitalism (cf. MEYER 1999).

[10] COMAROFF & COMAROFF (1999).

[11] Cf. DEVISCH (1996), VELLUT (1996).

[12]   ELIADE (1971).

[13]   Cf. BLOCH (1985), BOYER (1992), WERTKIN & BALMER (1999).

[14]   The much publicized idea of a millenarian *Angst* supposed to have terrorized
       Europe around the year 1000, appears to be a modern invention. Cf. the work of
       medievalists DUBY (1999) and GOUGENHEIM (1999), as well as the discussions in
       CARRIERE, DELUMEAU, GOULD & ECO (1998).

[15]   It must be said in the organizers' defence that a more equilibrated representation
       among the speakers had actively, yet unsuccessfully, been striven for.

[16]   The question whether, by definition, a millenarian movement is short-lived, and
       either dies out as a religious cult or survives as a secular party, is only indirectly
       addressed in the present contributions.

[17]   Throughout the proceedings, the terms 'millenarian' and 'millenarianism' have
       been used. The alternative 'millennial' and 'millennialism' are especially popular in
       the US. According to some, a slight difference in meaning distinguishes these
       terms : the former would be more sociological, the latter more religious.

[18]   This does not alter the fact that a recent, three-volume encyclopedia devoted to the
       subject contains over 1,500 pages (COLLINS, MCGINN & STEIN, Eds. 1998).

REFERENCES

BALANDIER, G. 1985². Anthropo-logiques & Les anthropo-logiques dans la modernité. —
       Librairie Générale Française, Paris.

BARNES, J. 1962. African models in New Guinea Highlands. — *Man,* **62** : 5-9.

BLOCH, R. Visionary republic : Millennial themes in American thought, 1756-1800. —
       Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

BOWIE, F. & DEACY, C. 1997. The coming deliverer : Millennial themes in world religions.
       — University of Wales Press, Dardiff.

BOYER, P. 1992. When time shall be no more. Prophecy belief in modern American
       culture. — Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.).

CAROZZI, C. & TAVIANI-CAROZZI, H. 1999. La fin des temps. Terreurs et prophéties au
       Moyen Age. — Flammarion, Paris.

CARRIERE, J.-C., DELUMEAU, J., GOULD, S. & ECO, U. 1998. Entretiens sur la fin du monde.
       — Fayard, Paris.

COHN, N. 1957. The pursuit of the millennium. Revolutionary messianism in medieval and
       Reformation Europe and its bearing on modern totalitarian movements. —
       Essential Books, New York.

COLLINS, J., MCGINN, B. & STEIN, S. (Eds.) 1998. The encyclopedia of apocalypticism. —
       Continuum, New York (3 vol.).

COMAROFF, J. & COMAROFF, J. 1999. Occult economies and the violence of abstraction :
       Notes from the South African postcolony. — *American Ethnologist,* **26** (3) : 279-
       301.

COQUERY-VIDROVITCH, C. 1983. Révoltes et résistance en Afrique noire : Une tradition de
       résistance paysanne à la colonisation. — *Travail. Capital et Société,* **16** (1) : 34-63.

DAWSON, L. 1999. When prophecy fails and faith persists : A theoretical overview. —
       Nova Religio, **3** (1) : 60-82.

DEVISCH, R. 1996. 'Le pillage de Jésus' : les églises de guérison et la villagisation de
       Kinshasa. — *In* : DE VILLERS, G. (Ed.), Phénomènes informels et dynamiques

culturelles en Afrique. Institut Africain-CEDAF/L'Harmattan [*Cahiers Africains*, **19-20**], Bruxelles / Paris, pp. 91-138.

DUBY, G. 1999². An 1000 an 2000 : sur les traces de nos peurs. — Textuel, Paris.

ELIADE, M. 1971. La nostalgie des origines. — Gallimard, Paris.

GOUGENHEIM, S. 1999. Les fausses terreurs de l'An Mil. Attente de la fin des temps ou approfondissement de la foi ? — Fayard, Paris.

KAUFMAN, R. 1962. Le millénarisme. — *In* : ABEL, A. *et al.*, Religions du salut. Institut de Sociologie, Université Libre de Bruxelles [*Annales du Centre d'Etude des Religions*, 2], Bruxelles, pp. 81-98.

MANNHEIM, K. 1929. Ideologie und Utopie. — Cohen, Bonn.

MEYER, B. 1999. Commodities and the power of prayer : Pentecostalist attitudes towards consumption in contemporary Ghana. — *In* : MEYER, B. & GESCHIERE, P. (Eds.), Globalization and identity : Dialectics of flow and closure. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, pp. 151-176.

ROBBINS, T. & PALMER, S. (Eds.) 1997. Millennium, messiahs and mayhem : Contemporary apocalyptic movements. — Routledge, New York.

SAHLINS, M. 1992. The economics of develop-man in the Pacific. — *Res*, **21** : 12-25.

SCHWARTZ, H. 1987. Millenarianism : An overview. — *In* : ELIADE, M. (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of Religion. Macmillan, New York/London, vol. 9, pp. 521-532.

STEWART, C. 2001. Secularism as an impediment to anthropological research. — *Social Anthropology*, **9** (3) : 325-328.

VELLUT, J.-L. 1996. En quête d'interprétation des crises de la modernité. L'historiographie immédiate de la prédication de Simon Kimbangu (1921). — *In* : . DE VILLERS, G. (Ed.), Phénomènes informels et dynamiques culturelles en Afrique. Institut Africain-CEDAF/L'Harmattan [*Cahiers Africains*, **19-20**], Bruxelles / Paris, pp. 139-165.

WEBER, E. 1999. Apocalypses. Prophecies, cults and millennial beliefs through the ages. — Hutchinson, London.

WERTKIN, G. & BALMER, R. 1999. Millennial dreams. Vision and prophecy in American folk art. — Museum of American Folk Art, New York.

YOURDON, E. & YOURDON, J. 1998. Time bomb, 2000. — Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River.

Revisiting Millenarianism in the Pacific

by

Toon VAN MEIJL*

KEYWORDS. — Pacific ; Cargo Cults ; Millenarianism ; Culture Change ; Culture Critique.

SUMMARY. — This article provides an overview of the study of millenarian movements in Oceania, including the so-called 'cargocults' in Melanesia. In addition, it aims at resolving the dilemma between two different theoretical approaches that have dominated the analysis of millenarianism in the Pacific. On the one hand, the appearance of millenarian movements has been attributed to socio-economic and political circumstances, in particular to unequal relations resulting from colonization. In this perspective, millenarian movements are understood to be striving for indigenous emancipation. On the other hand, many scholars have focused on psychological factors by emphasizing the continuity of indigenous knowledge and meaning systems. This article compares and contrasts these two approaches of millenarianism and suggests a more comprehensive perspective on the development of millenarian movements in the Pacific, with specific attention for the role of culture change and culture critique.

TREFWOORDEN. — Pacific ; 'Cargo Cults' ; Millenarisme ; Cultuurverandering ; Cultuurkritiek.

SAMENVATTING. — *Millenarisme in de Pacific.* — Dit artikel geeft een overzicht van de studie van millenarische bewegingen in Oceanië, inclusief de zogenoemde 'cargo cults' in Melanesië. Daarnaast zal worden ingegaan op het dilemma tussen twee verschillende theoretische benaderingen die de analyse van het millenarisme in de Pacific hebben gedomineerd. Enerzijds is het ontstaan van millenarische bewegingen verklaard uit sociaal-economische en politieke omstandigheden, in het bijzonder de ongelijke verhoudingen die voortvloeien uit de kolonisering. Millenarische bewegingen worden in deze optiek gezien als bewegingen die inheemse emancipatie nastreven. Anderzijds hebben verschillende onderzoekers het belang van psychologische factoren centraal gesteld en de continuïteit van inheemse kennis- en betekenissystemen benadrukt. Deze bijdrage zal nu een onderzoek instellen naar de relatie en interactie tussen beide verklaringswijzen met als doel een meer omvattend theoretisch verklaringsmodel te ontwikkelen voor millenarische bewegingen in de Pacific en vooral de rol van cultuurverandering en cultuurkritiek daarin.

* Centre for Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Nijmegen, P.O. Box 9104, 6500 HE Nijmegen (the Netherlands).

RESUME. — *Le millénarisme du Pacifique revisité.* — L'objectif de cette contribution est de donner un aperçu de l'étude du mouvement millénariste en Océanie, y compris ce que l'on appelle les «cargo cults» de Mélanésie, ainsi que d'indiquer brièvement une issue aux divergences de modèles d'interprétation des mouvements millénaristes. Jusqu'à présent deux modes d'interprétation ont dominé la discussion sur les mouvements millénaristes dans le Pacifique. D'une part, la naissance de mouvements millénaristes s'explique par des conditions socio-économiques et politiques, en particulier les rapports inégaux résultant de la colonisation. Dans cette optique, les mouvements millénaristes sont considérés comme des mouvements poursuivant l'émancipation indigène. D'autre part, plusieurs chercheurs ont mis l'accent sur les facteurs psychologiques et sur la persistance des systèmes de connaissance et de signification indigènes. Cette contribution veut entamer une recherche sur le rapport et l'interaction entre les deux modes d'interprétation dans le but de développer un modèle théorique plus global sur les mouvements millénaristes et le rôle du changement et de la critique culturels.

Introduction

Millenarianism, in the strict sense of the term, is a theological concept derived from the eschatological prophecy of the establishment of a millenarian kingdom by Jesus Christ. In the biblical Book of Revelation (20, pp. 4-6) he was expected to return to earth to salvage mankind before the Day of Judgement and the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth. In the humanities and the social sciences, however, the literal exegesis of the meaning of the millennium in the bible has been broadened. The concept of the millennium is no longer strictly associated with the return of the Christian messiah, but has gradually come to connote any period of redemption or salvation. Millenarian movements, accordingly, are understood to be aspiring to the establishment of the millennium in the very near future. The movements pursuing a perfect land in a perfect age of a metaphoric millennium are generally inspired by strong beliefs in the imminent transformation of the supernatural into a terrestrial state of righteousness and total bliss.

Millenarianism is a phenomenon of all times and all places, although in western academic discourse it remains situated chiefly in the dark history of western societies (COHN 1970) or in historically obscure non-western societies (or pre-western societies ?), still consistently classified at the lower echelons of our own evolutionary past (FABIAN 1983). The question to what extent this focus on other times and other places in the study of millenarianism may be characteristic of western epistemology and ideology I shall address in the final section of this contribution. First, I will provide a brief overview of the study of millenarianism in the Pacific, and the different historical and theoretical approaches of millenarian movements in the region.

In the Pacific, millenarian movements have fascinated western observers for 150 years or more. The prototype of millenarian movements in the Pacific is undoubtedly to be modelled after the so-called 'cargo cults', the vast majority of which have taken place in Melanesia. Cargo cults are distinguished by magical and religious activities sparked off by the conviction that a new age of good fortune and blessing is looming ahead, to be initiated by the arrival of a special 'cargo' of goods from supernatural sources. These activities are generally triggered by a charismatic person, commonly known as a 'prophet', since he articulates the promise of an early realization of certain hopes and desires. These are usually phrased in terms of manufactured goods and prepared foodstuffs. Hence the name 'cargo', in Melanesian Tok Pisin language *kago*, goods to be off-loaded from the ships or aircrafts of industrialized countries. Symbolic wharves or landing strips and warehouses are sometimes built in preparation, whereas traditional material resources are frequently abandoned. Gardening may cease, while pigs and foodstocks may be destroyed completely. Former customs may be revived or current practices drastically changed. Cargo cults are also characterized by ecstatic singing, dancing, communal meals and spirit possession. Adherents may experience auditory and visual hallucinations. Tribal divinities, culture heroes or ancestors may be expected to return with the cargo. Alternatively, the goods may be expected to come through foreigners, who are sometimes accused of having intercepted material goods intended for the native peoples. As a corollary, cargo cults involve not only spiritual aspirations, but also genuine socio-political and economic yearnings for a radically new era. The new age is believed to be inaugurated by cataclysmic events that will destroy the old order and bring a paradisal plenty, together with freedom and justice that may involve the reversal of the positions of white foreigners and indigenous peoples. For that reason, too, the new forms of social organizations that may be initiated in the context of 'cargo cult' activities are, paradoxically, often imitative of the colonial police or armed forces.

The main objective of cargo cults is the enrichment of indigenous peoples versus colonial explorers, traders and settlers through the acquisition of western goods and technology by means of magic. Initially, colonial authorities regarded cargo cults as a weird yet temporary aberration, but in many ways they are manifestations of a deep sense of deprivation experienced in the face of the predominance of western material possessions. Cargo cults also reflect a fascination with the question how such possessions, or 'cargo', have been obtained and made. It is often concluded that local populations have been deprived of such possessions through either some original sin, an accident, a conspiracy by whites, or a combination of these three factors. Assuming that such gifts come from deities or ancestors, it has often been claimed that cargo would be forthcoming if one knew and performed the proper rituals.

The political implications of rituals in the context of cargo cults, and the economic losses connected with them, caused many colonial administrators to

repress them. Obviously, however, cargo cults should also be understood as expressions of traditional 'millenarian' ideas or utopian visions that in many cases have been revived by the eschatological teaching of Christian missions and further inspired by the material wealth of the whites, which was interpreted as emanating from supernatural sources overseas. Although there are some instances of similar kinds of activities outside areas of Christian influence, mainly within buddhism and Islam, the vast bulk of the recorded instances have occurred within ambiences of Christian activity (BURRIDGE 1993, p. 276). Indeed, cargo cults are characteristic of colonial conditions marked by rapid sociocultural change, although the manner in which Pacific societies have attempted to cope with change suggests an undeniable continuity with local knowledge strategies and systems. In fact, cargo cults may be understood as inherently ambivalent endeavours to reconcile the old and the new, as I will demonstrate in this article.

The ambivalent character of cargo cults is embedded in the meaning of the concept of *kago*. In semiological fashion, following Barthes' classic *Mythologies* (1957), it may be argued that the sign of *kago* has a double, ambivalent, if not contradictory semantic load in myth and ritual. The signifier *kago* means scarcity of foods and goods, limited access to power, social inequality and human indignity, whereas its signified means exactly the opposite : abundance, bless, shalom, social equality and human dignity. In other words, the sign *kago* denotes scarcity but connotes abundance, and the activities associated with 'cargo cults' may be interpreted as aiming to resolve this ambiguity. The connotative power of the sign of *kago* enables cult followers and believers to account for, overcome and/or mask the vagaries, anomalies and logical or social contradictions common to sudden or radical changes in their existence. For that reason, too, it is important not to strip down cargo rituals and the myths-dreams enacted in them to their sheer denotations, since it is probably their connotative power which accounts for their accommodating capacity.

In this context, it is also important to emphasize that cargo not simply refers to cargo, *i.e.* western goods for which Melanesians are believed to be longing. The misleading label 'cargo cult' has incorrectly foregrounded the material dimension as the distinctive feature of the millenarian movements in Melanesia. Anthropologists, however, have consistently argued that cargo did not simply express an indigenous craving for European goods, but that it symbolized Cargo, with a capital C, that simultaneously stands for 'equality, independence, salvation, identity, moral regeneration, and so on' (LINDSTROM 1993, p. 47). Thus, a cargo cult is not a materialistic cult, but a millenarian movement in the course of which both the material and the spiritual are believed to materialize so to speak. For that reason, too, the distinction between the Melanesian cargo cults as known in the literature and the broader millenarian movements elsewhere in the Pacific is not relevant for the analytical purposes of this article. In order to substantiate this point it might be useful to provide a more detailed account of two movements, one a Melanesian cargo cult led by a local leader named Yali along the

Rai coast in the southern Madang district of Papua New Guinea, the other a Polynesian movement widely known as millenarian : the Pai Marire religious movement initiated in the 1860s by the Maori prophet Te Ua Haumene in the Taranaki district of New Zealand.

Two Case-Studies

The cargo cult in Papua New Guinea centred around a man known as Yali, who, as member of the native police force in the 1930s, had taken part in efforts to repress cargo cults (LAWRENCE 1964, KNOTTNERUS 1983, p. 393 & ff). During World War II, he trained with Europeans in Australia and carried out several military missions in New Guinea. Because of this experience, Yali became convinced that the Australians, after the war was over, would help modernize Melanesian society. For this reason, he became active in administrative postwar plans to initiate rehabilitation policies. The colonial administrators, recognizing his leadership capabilities, sougth to use this to their advantage. Eventually, however, Yali recognized that he had little real influence within the political framework and concluded that '(h)e had been rated as a native, even if a very superior one, and would never be treated as a European' (LAWRENCE 1964, p. 171).

His disillusionment was further compounded when he learned the European concept of evolution, which undermined his belief in Christianity. In his frustration he decided that if Europeans, and especially missionaries, 'had hidden from them the truth about human origins..., it was hardly likely that they would ever reveal the really important secret they possessed — the ultimate source of the cargo' (*ibid.*, p. 176). Confirmed in his distrust of the colonial authorities, he rejected both Christianity and cargo movements and set out to revitalize the traditional religious system.

For several years Yali, who was already well known due to his military exploits, proselytized his beliefs (BURRIDGE 1960, p. 137). However, a meeting with a committed proponent of cargo cults, named Gurek, profoundly changed Yali's thinking. Gurek convinced Yali that his own traditional belief system was the source of the true cargo. The essence of the message was that

> Jesus-Manup, the indigenous New Guinea cargo deity, was held captive in Heaven (above Sydney) as a result of the crucifixion. As he could not himself return to his own country, he had to devise alternative means of sending goods to his people. He had discovered that other New Guinea deities were in Australia and had taught them the art of making cargo (LAWRENCE 1964, p. 191).

This new interpretation of the old religion was appealing to Yali because it allowed him to repudiate European and missionary presence, while redefining Christianity as an ambiguous, yet legitimate, second religion. In short, a way to find the cargo had reappeared, increasing the strength of the movement Yali was already promoting.

With the announcement of his new cargo belief he soon received a response from the local population resulting in a rapid expansion of the movement, from then on frequently referred to as the Madang cult. Within the 'cult', certain ceremonies and rituals were redefined and the goal, the cargo, was specified. Lawrence provides an excellent description of these practices, which were later mimicked in many other regions of New Guinea.

> Traditional rituals for agriculture, important artifacts, pig husbandry, and hunting, and the old taboos associated with them, were to be reintroduced... Small tables were to be set up in private houses and near deity sanctuaries... Offerings of food and tobacco were to be placed on them for both the deities and the spirits of the dead, who were to be invoked to send cargo... At such times, the natives would be told by the spirits during dreams where the goods had been left — in deity sanctuaries or other parts of the bush. The cargo would include rifles, ammunition, and other military equipment... Apart from cargo in its usual sense, the deities would send also European domesticated animals, especially horses and cows. Additional 'laws' were laid down : Yali was henceforth to be addressed as King ; and the days of the week were to be renamed (LAWRENCE 1964, p. 194).

With support and interest at a peak around 1948, Yali also began to develop a political system of his own. He established a police force reportedly comprised of about nine ex-soldiers and a few others, as a result of which he was able to completely bypass colonial authority. Central to the organization were weekly meetings held in some of the main villages. These were approved by authorities because Yali's position as leader permitted his encouragement of rehabilitation programmes. While speaking on improvement of village hygiene, encouragement of cash crops, and other work, he would then, with several of his 'policemen' drawn up at attention behind him, in imitation of a Patrol Officer, use these occasions to disseminate cargo cult propaganda (*ibid.*, p. 211). Of course, he would always caution the natives to never reveal these activities to any Europeans. The rituals, beliefs, and all aspects of their cargo movement had to remain secret if the theft of the deities by the Europeans was to be prevented. This was done and, while it was known that cults were occurring, for over a year it was not confirmed that Yali was actually promoting his movement. A history of secret societies in the Madang district undoubtedly contributed to a repeated ability to hide their activities when desired.

Finally, he was discovered by the authorities. Because of a fear that the movement represented a type of native autonomy that usurped the political control of colonial administrators, Yali was arrested, tried, and imprisoned for six years (LAWRENCE 1964 ; KNOTTNERUS 1983, p. 394). After this the movement collapsed...

The Maori millenarian movement in New Zealand I have chosen to discuss in this article, emerged in Taranaki in 1862, after the European ship *Lord Worsley* had foundered near Cape Egmont on the southwest coast of the peninsula, caus-

ing a good deal of argument among the locals over the fate of the passengers and the cargo of the ship (VAN MEIJL 1992). Amidst the strife, one of the locals, who had been educated by Wesleyan missionaries, propounded that the angel Gabriel had revealed a new religion to him. His name was Te Ua Haumene Horopapera, the latter part of which is a transliteration of Zerubbabel, the leader of the first group of Jews to return from the Babylonian Captivity (CLARK 1975, pp. 5, 78). Initially the local people thought he was mad and deluded, but after a miraculous cure of his injured son and some military success, he acquired a small following during 1863. As the priests of the new religion were believed to have supernatural powers, all followers thought to be under special protection of the angel Gabriel if, at least, they participated in the rites.

The central object in their rituals of worship was the mast from the ship *Lord Worsley*. The mast was set up on Te Ua's marae, a plaza or courtyard in a Maori village that is used for traditional ceremonies and community assembly. The rites themselves consisted of chanting hymns while circling around the mast with Te Ua or a leading disciple standing at the foot of it. The choruses of the hymns all ended with the word *hau*. The literal meaning of the word *hau* is 'wind', but the term was commonly used to denote the vital spark of life. In Te Ua's rhetoric *hau* was used in both senses in the central phrase *anahera hau* or 'wind angels', implying that angels were believed to descend and ascend by the ropes which were left dangling from the yardarms of the mast (BABBAGE 1937, p. 31).

Although concrete evidence for the belief in invulnerability is non-existent, it has often been alleged that Te Ua's followers thought that participation in the rites would make them invulnerable to bullets. Consequently, they have been said to march to battle chanting hymns and holding their right hand up a level with the face, while shouting *Hapa! Hapa! Pai Marire! Hau!* (COWAN 1923, II, p. 7). The *hapa* formula, meaning 'to pass over' or 'ward off', was apparently supposed to avert the bullets. *Pai Marire*, a central phrase in all the movements' ritual chants which meant 'be good and gentle' or 'peaceful', was the name Te Ua had given to the new religion, while *hau* indicated the end of the magic spell, a sort of substitute for 'Amen'. Interestingly, contemporary European observers picked up the word *hau* in a reduplicated form and named the 'cult' accordingly as Hauhau, but in that sense it is an imperative of the verb 'to strike' or 'to attack' (BURRIDGE 1969, p. 17). It is indicative of European interpretations of the movement as rebellious (VAN MEIJL 1985, p. 123). A series of violent events, such as an ambush of British soldiers and the murder of a missionary, set the tone for suspicion towards the movement, but all incidents had some rational explanation and were at right angles to Te Ua's peaceful intentions (CLARK 1975, pp. 12-16).

The most important document for the study of the Pai Marire movement is the *Ua Rongopai* or the 'Gospel of Ua' (CLARK 1975, pp. 113-131 ; HEAD 1992). In his 'Gospel', the prophet of Pai Marire enunciates his vision of what he called Canaan, the land of promise. In this Maori utopia, the material possessions of the Europeans would be transferred to the indigenous inhabitants of *Aoteaora*, the

— Maori — land of the 'long white cloud'. The Maori would also gain knowledge of European skills, including mastery of the English language. Plenty of space would remain available for European settlers, but the context of their actions and influences would henceforth be determined and dominated by Maori people.

Thus, it cannot be maintained that Te Ua was insurrecting against European society as such, let alone that he was simply trying to have all Europeans destroyed, as contemporary observers believed. At the same time, it cannot be maintained that he was attempting to adjust or to adapt to European society, as has been suggested more recently by CLARK (1975). Te Ua's goal was a new nation for Maori people and under complete Maori control. In that new nation, European settlers were still welcome, but only on Maori terms. To some extent, therefore, European fear was justified because Te Ua did want to obstruct the establishment of the kind of European society to which most settlers aspired. Nevertheless, European suspicion of Pai Marire was grossly exaggerated for Te Ua did not aim at evicting all Europeans, nor at accomplishing his Canaan by means of violence. Te Ua was primarily a pacifist, a prophet of the 'Lord of Peace' :

> Return and go home in peace, for the Lord has spoken to me twice and urged that his people, his forsaken, naked, separated and half-standing flock, return as did Abraham of Israel. It is the evil from without, which lives in the dark from time immemorial. It was time that begat the black and the white. Indeed this is the concern of the Lord of Peace. Taunting and jeering is an evil. Therefore the white must not bait the black nor the black the white (CLARK 1975, pp. 122-123).

Te Ua's Rongopai illustrates contemporary Maori conceptions of European domination, which were to be of great influence on the political ideology of the Maori King Movement that adopted the Pai Marire as its official religion after the New Zealand wars about land and power in the 1860s. They involve an interesting mixture of both traditional and western elements. On the one hand, Te Ua expressed a profound concern about the tempestuous advance of European settlement and its impact on the indigenous Maori, to which he refers as the *tuwareware*, the 'forsaken'. However, he evidently did not advocate a total rejection of European society, as has often been assumed, which is shown rather convincingly by his vision of a wealthy and prosperous Canaan, where Europeans and Maori would happily coexist, albeit on Maori terms. The main purpose of the movement thus appeared the appropriation of European power by welding its signs and symbols into a transcendent synthesis with Maori tradition.

Different Dimensions, Different Approaches

The two case-studies presented above reconfirm the similarities between cargo cults and millenarian movements. Cargo cults are invariably characterized

by millenarian dreams, while many millenarian movements are distinguished by a persistent longing for 'Cargo', which is principally a symbol of salvation. Nevertheless, in the literature cargo cults are primarily, if not exclusively, associated with Melanesia, while elsewhere in the Pacific the movements aspiring to redemption are described as messianic or millenarian. As mentioned above, however, I will not focus on the alleged differences between cargo cults and millenarian movements, but rather dwell on the similarities. For that reason, too, it is not incorrect to begin my reflections on the study of millenarian movement in the Pacific with the typology of cargo cults developed by JARVIE (1964), a pioneer of the study of millenarian movements in Melanesia. JARVIE (*ibid.*, pp. 64-66) listed eight distinctive features of millenarian movements :

— Millenarian movements are usually founded and led by a single prophet with a charismatic personality who had no special social standing in the society prior to the cult ;
— Most of the prophets are, like everyone else in their society, hardly educated and often seriously misinformed about the workings of western societies outside the Pacific ;
— All movements borrow European rituals of one sort or another, both secular and religious ;
— New beliefs are grafted on to older local beliefs ;
— All movements predict the coming of a millennium in material form in the very near future, which beliefs are usually accompanied by some sort of other belief in, *e.g.* the end of the world, and/or the ejection of the Europeans, or some sort of cataclysm followed by a colour exchange altering social and economic positions ;
— Millenarian movements are always characterized by some form of organized activity, while they are also associated with various kinds of collective hysteria ;
— Millenarian movements nearly always take place in colonized areas which are economically underdeveloped, highly isolated, politically acephalous and, on the whole, not given to violent resistance to European rule ;
— There have nearly always been attempts by missionaries to Christianize the natives.

On the basis of a structural analysis of an extensive study by Patrick — father — GESCH (1985), the Dutch anthropologist Jan POUWER (1988, p. 526) has added two features to Jarvie's checklist :

— In many cases there is a rapid growth cross-cutting traditional boundaries and the emergence of an interlocal and intertribal organization modelled after western examples ;
— A recurrence and differentiation of movements and sub-movements are found.

Furthermore, Pouwer has argued that the distinctive features of an original movement may take on different forms in other movements or sub-movements

derived from the root of its branches. A new genre or repertoire of millennial ideas among an offshoot of a reported movement may often be seen as a transformation of the original mission of the movement. The continuing transformation of original beliefs has been confusing for the interpretation and explanation of millenarian movements. A focus on a different dimension of the same movement at some other stage or in another region sometimes lost sight of the transformations of those dimensions.

This caused some debates to be rather misleading, which inspired Pouwer (*ibid.*) to distinguish no more that five dimensions around which the activities and aspirations of millenarian movements revolve from the outset :

— Traditional religious : millennialism, syncretistic cults of the dead, fertility ritual ;
— Political : civil disobedience, grass roots nationalism, national political participation, local administration, army patterns ;
— Economic : commercial enterprises, co-operative societies, fast money schemes, lucky chain letters ;
— Social development : schools, women's clubs ;
— Christian : bible usages and church practices.

In spite of the obvious overlap between these five dimensions in the social and ritual practice of millenarian movements, most influential studies of millenarianism tend to focus on one or two dimensions, to the detriment of other dimensions. Without wanting to simplify the sophisticated debate on millenarianism in the Pacific, it may even be argued that over the past thirty years the discussion has been dominated by two different, if not oppositional, theoretical approaches, each focusing on one or two dimensions, and each introduced by one or two influential studies (Otto & Borsboom 1997, pp. 105-106).

On the one hand, millenarian movements have been interpreted as resulting from specific socio-economic and political circumstances brought about by colonization and characterized by inequality. This approach has been expressed most vigorously by Peter Worsley in his influential book *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (1968), originally published in 1957. Worsley situated the study of millenarian movements in Melanesia in the wider historical context of colonialism, and he drew on Marxist theories to show that they could be analysed as increasingly complex phenomena evolving in response to European domination. Accordingly, he regarded millenarian movements as aspiring first and foremost to the emancipation of the indigenous population. On the other hand, millenarian movements have been explained as intrinsically indigenous answers to problems faced at moments of radical change. In this approach the presence of Europeans and their colonial influence was not considered necessary for the emergence of millenarian movements, although it was regarded as a catalyst. This approach has been advocated by Burridge in *Mambu* (1960) and most forcefully by Lawrence in his important book *Road Belong Cargo* (1964).

Both approaches share an interest in social change, but their explanations of change focus on different factors. Worsley emphasized the external, colonial forces of change, whereas Lawrence referred mainly to internal transformations that might only gather momentum with the arrival of Europeans. By the same token, Worsley focused on the discontinuity in indigenous societies caused by the arrival of Europeans, whereas Lawrence focused on the continuity of indigenous systems of knowledge and meaning which in his view generated millenarian beliefs and movements. In addition, it could be argued that one approach focuses on 'modern' elements of change, particularly in the dimensions of politics and economics, whereas the other approach is centred around 'traditional' elements of change, particularly situated within the domain of religion and culture. Neither approach is comprehensive to the extent that they overdetermine one or two dimensions over other aspects. Hence the first approach may be criticized for the reduction of millenarian movements to their economic and political aspects, while the second approach may be denounced for a form of cultural reductionism. Ultimately, the differences between the two dominant theoretical approaches in the study of millenarian movements in the Pacific parallel the great philosophical dilemmas between politics and economics versus religion, between power versus meaning, between matter versus mind (OTTO 1992, pp. 4-5). The mediation of these dilemmas I would consider as the most important issue in the study of millenarianism. In recent history of the social sciences, the arts and the humanities, these dilemmas have been tackled through the rise and development of what I shall label, for convenience sake, the theory of practice. In the next section, I will discuss the contribution that the theory of practice may be able to make to the resolution of the theoretical deadlock that has characterized the study of millenarian movements in the Pacific over the past thirty years.

Towards an Integral Approach : the Theory of Practice

In order to resolve the dichotomies in the study of millenarian movements in the Pacific, a complex model of change is required in which indigenous cultural continuity is compared and contrasted with the discontinuities resulting from established contacts with western explorers, traders, administrators and missionaries. In such a model, forms of transformation in indigenous culture should also be related to changing historical circumstances under the impact of colonialism. In my opinion, the foundations for such a model may have been developed in the context of the debate on social practice. Practice theory originated in the 1970s as an attempt to reconcile the theoretical perspectives of idealism and materialism by understanding the activities of human agents as embedded in and simultaneously (re)shaping cultural systems as well as political and economic circumstances. Well-known representatives of the practice approach are Pierre BOURDIEU (1977, 1989) and Marshall SAHLINS (1985, 1991) ; see also GIDDENS (1984) and ORTNER (1984).

A diagram may serve to visualize the components of the model of social action and change in the theory of practice, namely the human agents, the social and cultural structures within which and through which human action is realized, and the events which are the results of, as well as the stimuli for, human actions. Social processes might best be understood by analytically distinguishing three dimensions or aspects (the corners of the triangle) : structure, actor and event. Practice, then, may be defined as the simultaneous realization of these three dimensions in their interrelationship and mutual influence, graphically rendered as the centre of the triangle (at the intersection of the three bisectors of the angles).

Event

Structure ◄----- Practice -----► Actor

Pierre Bourdieu [1] * is widely considered as one of the most influential contemporary social theoreticians working in the field of anthropology and sociology. His concept of habitus is an important element in his theory of practice, which is predominantly concerned with the relationship between human strategic action and structural reproduction, in other words with the concepts at the base of the triangle. In spite of his use of concepts such as 'hysteresis'and 'transposition' Bourdieu's work is mainly oriented towards an explanation of cultural and social continuity and has contributed less to an understanding of change. Thus, in the context of the study of millenarian movements, his work might be valuable for explaining cultural continuity within the changing power structures engendered by colonial contact.

The anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, on the other hand, has more directly addressed the problem of cultural change. In terms of the theory of practice, his particular focus can be characterized as the relationship between structure and event, including the aspect of contingency. He investigates how cultural systems are revalued and transformed in their encounter with events which do not fit the system. Ultimately, however, Sahlins does not quite overcome the classical dichotomy between structure and change, since in his model for the explanation of structural change in the context of colonial contact structure and event remain on different sides of the colonial encounter. Internally generated events are apparently unable to bring about fundamental changes in the indigenous structure, while the external influences are merely conceptualized in terms of events rather than structure (THOMAS 1989, pp. 102-116). As a result, both internally and

---

* The number in brachets [ ] refers to the note p. 31.

externally generated changes can only be explained independently of structural analysis with Sahlins' model.

In addition, it may be argued that Sahlins might underexpose the role of individual actors who creatively adapt and transform cultural patterns in the strategic pursuit of their individual and historically contingent projects, which has particularly come to light in the study of millenarianism. The role of charismatic individuals or prophets so to speak is indeed crucial both for the generation and the indigenous orchestration of the changes associated with millenarian movements and cargo cults. Needless to say, therefore, that an integral approach of millenarianism should take into account the adaptive strategies of individual actors, informed by their cultural understanding and habitus, and constrained by the historical configurations of power within which they try to achieve their goals. Only then it may be possible to account more adequately for both change and continuity in local processes of reaction and adaptation to the continuing development of encompassing cultural, political, economic systems. Such an approach provides more comprehensive guidelines for the study and analysis of situations characterized by rapid change in colonial circumstances that may be conducive to the rise of millenarian movements.

The Future of Millenarianism

In my view, the above model of social practice may move the study of millenarianism into new directions. In this section, I shall identify a number of crucial issues in the study of millenarianism in the Pacific, which, I contend, may be clarified with reference to the model of social action and change which is part of the theory of social practice. First, I believe it is important to resolve the question regarding the categorization of the semantic or metaphorical domain in which the millenarian dream is cast (OTTO 1992a, p. 6). To what extent is this religious, political, economic, or is it simply millenarian, cargoistic, or idiosyncratic ? In addition, the question regarding the relationship between the different dimensions of the social practice of millenarian movements needs to be resolved. Furthermore, it is important to address the relationship between the semantics of the vision of the millennium and the institutions in the society to which the millenarians may be opposed. KEESING (n.d.) has argued that the structure of the dominating society is regularly reproduced in millenarian movements, whereas OTTO (1992b) and THOMAS (1991) have argued that a mechanism of oppositional transformation seems at work.

This discussion leads inevitably to a reflection on the second crucial issue in the study of millenarian movements in the Pacific, namely an examination of different cultural assumptions of change. Obviously, the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, between stability and change, plays an important role. In the Pacific, millenarian movements and cargo cults are invariably associated with

what once was called 'acculturation' of different societies (JAARSMA 1997) which, for a long time, were positioned at different levels of the evolutionary scale. Since millenarian movements are inherently associated with situations that are characterized by culture contact, anthropologists have frequently been blind for millenarian phenomena in societies that were classified as stable, for example in Aboriginal Australia (BORSBOOM 1992). This clearly shows that different conceptions of time and history are at stake, since there is probably no disagreement about the main objective of millenarian movements, which invariably aim at bringing about social and political change. Yet different conceptions of time are underlying different notions of change that may motivate indigenous attempts to modify their circumstances by means of millenarian activities. The question is how are these to be interpreted.

Nancy McDOWELL (1988) has addressed this question in an influential article on different cultural constructions of time and change. She argues that Melanesians conceptualize change in a manner that is fundamentally different from western conceptualizations of change. Melanesians have what she labels, following GELLNER (1964), an episodic view of time, change and history, as opposed to an evolutionary concept of history which characterizes western thought (McDOWELL 1985). Melanesians do not conceive of the past as a gradual series of interconnected events. For them, there is no cumulative change as there is in a western, evolutionary perspective. In Melanesian perceptions, instead, change is abrupt, dramatic, total and complete (McDOWELL 1988, p. 124). This episodic conception of history and change is not restricted to the past but provides a model for change in the future as well. At this point McDowell's ideas become relevant for the study of millenarianism, since in an episodic view of time imminent change must also be abrupt, total, drastic and radical, which sheds new light on the preparatory nature of many millenarian rituals. After all, millenarians often think about the arrival of the millennium as inevitable.

Interestingly, in an episodic view of time, change is interpreted in terms of an analogy between the past, the present and the future, which are routinely collapsed into a state of timelessness or changelessness. And timelessness is not infrequently a distinctive feature of millenarian dreams and visions, in which some aspects of the past are re-lived, while some aspects of the future are pre-lived. Historical events and structures are constantly regenerated to charge and recharge the present with signs and symbols that are considered important for the direction to be followed in the future. At the same time, the aspired state of the future is foreshadowed by the generation of new signs and symbols, which are often derived from the colonial encounter, but which are nevertheless considered pan-historic extensions of the indigenous system of signs (VAN MEIJL 1990, p. 268 ; 1992). Hence millenarian visions generally involve a fascinating bricolage of endogenous and exogenous elements.

The upshot of McDowell's argument is that millenarian movements should not be analysed as a separate category of indigenous, acculturative organizations

or as economic, political or religious institutions arising at the outset of colonial contact. Millenarian movements should rather be studied as examples of how people conceptualize and experience change in a different manner. In order to accomplish this western analytical categories are to be rethought to understand these different experiences of time and history, and the behaviour that is associated with millenarian movements. The study of millenarian movements on their own terms might also help to bridge the gap between the different approaches each focusing on one or two different dimensions. After all, the relationship between millenarianism and economics is more complicated than a simple association with the desire for material wealth. The relationship between millenarianism and politics is also more complicated than a simple association with the desire for indigenous emancipation. And, the relationship between millenarianism and Christianity is more complicated than the simple association with the desire to naturalize the supernatural. All these associations are not virtual but real since they originate from the same cultural assumptions about the nature of change (McDOWELL 1988, p. 131). Consequently, it might be argued that the compartmentalization of millenarian movements into different domains or dimensions might spring more from the imagination of western observers.

This leads me to discuss a third and final issue which I consider crucial in the study of millenarian movements in the Pacific and elsewhere. OTTO (1992a, p. 5) has argued that the history of western discourses on millenarian movements provides us 'with a mirror in which we have failed to recognize ourselves' (see also HERMANN 1999, LINDSTROM 2000). He reached this conclusion after a critical analysis of the conceptual dichotomies that have characterized the study of millenarianism, most prominently religion versus politics and religion versus economics. Yet these dichotomies in the study of millenarianism are simultaneously telling about western conceptual frameworks, and not only for that reason it may be worthwhile to mediate or reverse them. It may be argued, for example, that the focus on religion in the study of millenarian movements for a long time has caused their political aspects to be neglected (VAN MEIJL 1992). By the same token, the dichotomy between religion and politics may have diverted the attention from the fact that the inspiration and enthusiasm, if not fanaticism, of some political organizations and ideologies in the West, e.g. Nazism, take on religious, to some extent even millenarian, forms as well (WOLF 1999).

The duality between religion and economy is equally critical. Although WEBER (1976) postulated a relationship between these two dimensions in the development of western capitalism, the distinction between religion and economics is deeply embedded in western thinking since the Enlightenment (OTTO 1992a, p. 5). And this distinction has been confusing in the study of millenarian movements, which often cast their vision in an idiom in which both religious and economic aspects are merged. Millenarian movements may be defined, so to speak, as religious movements that are concerned with the acquisition of mater-

ial goods, economic control and political power, although in different gradations and variations, in different regions, and in different periods of time. This view of millenarianism, however, is relatively recent and may well have been impeded by the conceptual dichotomy between religion and economics. By the same token, Huizer (1992) has argued that western concerns with economic growth have impaired the recognition of the millenarian aspects of Judaeo-Christian and bourgeois capitalism. He developed the interesting argument that the preoccupation with economic growth in capitalist societies may be likened to millenarian interests in 'cargo', that banks and warehouses might be regarded as our temples, and that people in the west often seek redemption in 'a big deal'. Indeed, the study of millenarianism has enormous potential for a refreshing critique of western economic discourse (Gilliam 1997).

A similar argument has recently been made by McDowell (2000), who contended that the concept of 'cult', which is so prominent in the study of millenarian movements, 'reveals as much about anthropology as it does about cargo cultists : a near-obsession with difference and rationality' (ibid., p. 373). She argued that the study of millenarian movements is primarily motivated by allegedly rational concerns to understand the Other's irrationality, thus failing to recognize that the 'irrationality may stem from a mimetic parody of particularly irrational aspects of Western society' (ibid., p. 374). Consequently, she advocated to focus in the future more on similarities between the West and the Rest, and she proposed to view millenarian movements as expressions of a universal human proclivity, albeit in a particular cultural idiom and within a specific historical bracket.

A similar argument has been made by Otto (1992a, p. 5), who has suggested that the deadlock in the study of millenarianism is caused mainly by the conceptual dichotomy between religion versus politics and economics, which, in turn, may be reduced to the opposition between mind and matter. The problem in the study of millenarian movements, however, is that they are concerned with religion, politics and economics all at once at the same time, for which reason they constitute 'a conceptual anomaly' (Otto 1999, p. 96). Yet this conceptual aberration might at the same time be responsible for the intellectual fascination with millenarianism, because 'it reminds us that there may be something wrong with our received categories. We sense that cargo cults (and millenarian movements, TvM) concern also our image of ourselves and our, perhaps, awkward separation of religion and economy as distinct cultural domains, each with its own morality' (ibid.).

In the present era of global capitalism the economic dimension has become even more dominant, and the view that our concern with the so-called new economy, growth figures, stock markets and profits evokes religious, if not cultist, associations is in my opinion compelling. Although institutionalized religions are increasingly being marginalized and western society is ostensibly becoming more secularized, our ever intensifying commodity fetishism might, paradoxi-

cally, be contributing to bridging the gap between religion and economy. For that reason, too, cargo cults and millenarian movements remain fascinating objects of study. The aim of the study of millenarianism in the future, therefore, should be to enhance our insight in local and global mechanisms of cultural and social change and, at the same time, to formulate a more fundamental critique of the dominance of the economic dimension in western societies.

NOTE

[1] Unfortunately, Pierre Bourdieu died on January 24th, 2002.

REFERENCES

BABBAGE, S. B. 1937. Hauhauism : An Episode in the Maori Wars (1863-1866). — Reed, Wellington.

BARTHES, R. 1957. Mythologies. — Editions du Seuil, Paris.

BORSBOOM, A. 1992. Millenarianism, Australian Aborigines and the European Myth of Primitivism. — *Canberra Anthropology*, 15 (2) : 11-26.

BOURDIEU, P. 1977. Outline of a Theory of Practice. — Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

BOURDIEU, P. 1989. The Logic of Practice. — Polity Press, Cambridge.

BURRIDGE, K. 1960. Mambu : A Melanesian Millennium. — Methuen, London.

BURRIDGE, K. 1969. New Heaven, New Earth : A Study of Millenarian Activities. — Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

BURRIDGE, K. 1993. Melanesian Cargo Cults. — *In* : LOCKWOOD, V.S., HARDING, T.G. & WALLACE, B.J. (Eds.), Contemporary Pacific Societies : Studies in Development in Change, Englewood Cliffs. — Prentice Hall, New Jersey, pp. 275-288.

CLARK, P. 1975. 'Hauhau' : The Pai Marire Search of Maori Identity. — Auckland/Oxford University Press, Auckland/Oxford.

COHN, N. 1970. The Pursuit of the Millennium : Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages. — Maurice Temple Smith, London.

COWAN, J. 1922/23. The New Zealand Wars : A History of the Maori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period. — Government Printer Wellington, 2 Vols.

FABIAN, J. 1983. Time and the Other : How Anthropology Makes its Object. — Columbia University Press, New York.

GELLNER, E. 1964. Thought and Change. — Weidenfel and Nicolson, London.

GESCH, P.F.1985. Initiative and Initiation : A Cargo Cult-Type Movement in the Sepik against its Background in Traditional Village Religion. — Anthropos Institute, Studia Instituti Anthropos, n° 33, St. Augustin.

GIDDENS, A. 1984. The Constitution of Society : Outline of the Theory of Structuration. — University of California Press, Berkeley.

GILLIAM, A. 1997. Militarism and Accumulation as Cargo Cult. — *In* : HARRISON, F. V. (Ed.), Decolonizing Anthropology : Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation (orig. 1991). American Anthropological Association, Association of Black Anthropologists, Arlington, pp. 170-191.

HEAD, L. 1992. The Gospel of Te Ua Haumene. — *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, **101** (1) : 7-44.

HERMANN, E. 1999. Dissolving the Self-Other Dichotomy in Western 'Cargo Cult' Constructions. Revised version of a paper given at a workshop on "Cargo, Cult and Culture Critique" organized by Holger Jebens, Karl-Heinz Kohl and Ton Otto in Aarhus in November 1999.

HUIZER, G. 1992. Cargo and Charisma : Millenarian Movements in Today's Global Context. — *Canberra Anthropology*, **15** (2) : 106-130.

JAARSMA, S. R. 1997. Ethnographic Perceptions of Cargo : Fragments of an Intermittent Discourse. — *In* : OTTO, T. & BORSBOOM, A. (Eds.), Cultural Dynamics of Religious Change in Oceania, KITLV Press, Leiden, pp. 67-85.

JARVIE, I.C. 1964. The Revolution in Anthropology. — Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

KEESING, R. M. (n.d.) Racial and Ethnic Categories in Colonial and Postcolonial States : Sociological and Linguistic Perspectives on Ideology. — *In* : O'CALLAGHAN, M. (Ed.), Studies on the Adequacy of Theories, Paradigms and Assumptions in the Social and Human Sciences, Unesco (in press), Paris.

KNOTTNERUS, J. D. 1983.The Melanesian Cargo Cults : A Test of the Value-Added Theory of Collective Behavior. — *Sociological Inquiry*, **53** (4) : 389-403.

LAWRENCE, P. 1964. Road Belong Cargo : A Study of the Cargo Movement in the Southern Madang District, New Guinea. — Manchester University Press, Lindstrom, Manchester.

LINDSTROM, L. 1993. Cargo Cult : Strange Stories of Desire from Melanesia and Beyond. — University of Hawaii' Press, Honolulu.

LINDSTROM, L. 2000. Cargo Cult Horror. — *Oceania*, **70** (4) : 294-303.

MCDOWELL, N. 1985. Past and Future : The Nature of Episodic Time in Bun. — *In* : GEWERTZ, D. & SCHIEFFELIN, E. (Eds.), History and Ethnohistory in Papua - New Guinea, *Oceania Monograph*, **28**, Sydney, pp. 26-39.

MCDOWELL, N. 1988. A Note on Cargo Cults and Cultural Constructions of Change. — *Pacific Studies*, **11** (2) : 121-34.

MCDOWELL, N. 2000. A Brief Comment on Difference and Rationality. — *Oceania*, **70** (4) : 373-80.

ORTNER, S. B. 1984. Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties. — *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **26** : 126-166.

OTTO, T. 1992a. Introduction : Imagining Cargo Cults. — *Canberra Anthropology*, **15** (2) : 1-10.

OTTO, T. 1992b. The Paliau Movement in Manus and the Objectification of Tradition. — *History and Anthropology* (Special Issue 'Colonialism and Culture', edited by Nicholas Thomas), **5** (3-4) : 427-54.

OTTO, T. 1999. Cargo Cults Everywhere ? — *Anthropological Forum*, **9** (1) : 83-98.

OTTO, T. & BORSBOOM A. 1997. Epilogue : Cultural Dynamics of Religious Change. — *In* : OTTO, T. & BORSBOOM, A. (Eds.), Cultural Dynamics of Religious Change in Oceania. KITLV Press, Leiden, pp. 103-122.

POUWER, J. 1988. Cargo Cult as Countervailing Ideology. — *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde*, **144** (2) : 521-38.

SAHLINS, M. 1985. Islands of History. — Chicago University Press, Chicago

SAHLINS, M. 1991. The Return of the Event, Again : With Reflections on the Beginnings of the Great Fijian War of 1843 to 1855 between the Kingdoms of Bau and Rewa.

— *In* : BIERSACK, A. (Ed.), Clio in Oceania : Toward a Historical Anthropology, Smithsonian Institute Press, Washington, pp. 37-99.

THOMAS, N. 1989. Out of Time : Events, Evolution and Anthropological Discourse. — Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

THOMAS, N. 1991. Alejandro Mayta in Fiji ; Narratives about Millenarianism, Colonialism, Post-colonial Politics, and Custom. — *In* : BIERSACK, A. (Ed.), Clio in Oceania ; Toward a Historical Anthropology, Smithsonian Institute Press, Washington D.C., pp. 297-328.

VAN MEIJL, T. 1985. Mana Motuhake : Exploring Ideology, Structural Change and Ethnic Identity of Tainui Maori. — University of Nijmegen, Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, M.A. Thesis.

VAN MEIJL, T. 1990. Political Paradoxes and Timeless Traditions : Ideology and Development among the Tainui Maori, New Zealand. — Centre for Pacific Studies (orig. PhD dissertation, Australian National University), Nijmegen.

VAN MEIJL, T. 1992. Broadening Millenarianism : The Continuity of Maori Political Practices. — *Canberra Anthropology*, **15** (2) : 27 -48.

WEBER, M. 1976. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. — Allen & Unwin, London (Orig. German edition, 1904-1905).

WOLF, E. R. 1999. Envisioning Power : Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis. — University of California Press, Berkeley.

WORSLEY, P. 1968. The Trumpet Shall Sound : A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia. (1957), Schocken, New York (second augmented edition).

Le kimbanguisme : un millénarisme dynamique de la terre aux cieux

par

Anne MELICE *

RESUME. — Depuis 1960, l'Eglise kimbanguiste a élaboré, d'une part, une théologie officielle plus «orthodoxe» (du fait de son adhésion, sous conditions, au Conseil Œcuménique des Eglises en 1969) et, d'autre part, une théologie «populaire» confinée au sein de l'Eglise, dont l'expansion actuelle sera l'objet de notre propos. La Bible a été l'objet d'un remaniement exégétique situant la place de la race noire, de l'ethnie kongo et de la «dynastie» formée par Kimbangu et ses descendants dans l'histoire biblique. Ce remaniement exégétique s'accompagne de constructions utopiques permettant aux fidèles de s'ancrer par une vision future dans une société idéale : celle de l'instauration du Royaume de Dieu sur terre, dans laquelle l'Eglise kimbanguiste et l'ethnie kongo sont centrales. Dans le cadre de cette eschatologie kimbanguiste, la symbolique des constructions à Nkamba, ville sainte des Kimbanguistes, appelée «Nouvelle Jérusalem», se veut riche de sens. De même, l'Eglise a orchestré une série de cérémonies depuis les années 1960 en vue de permettre et de hâter l'avènement du Royaume. «Royaume fait Eglise» en 1960, l'Eglise kimbanguiste s'est donc tournée à nouveau vers une vision plus johannique des Choses Dernières, dont l'imminence est annoncée.

SAMENVATTING. — *Het Kimbangisme : een dynamisch millenarisme van de aarde tot de Hemel.* — Sinds 1960 heeft de Kerk van Kimbangu enerzijds een meer "orthodoxe" officiële theologie ontwikkeld (mede vanwege haar alsnog voorwaardelijke toetreding tot de Wereldraad van Kerken), en anderzijds een "populaire" theologie binnen de Kerk, waarvan de huidige uitbreiding het onderwerp van onze uiteenzetting vormt. De bijbel is het voorwerp geweest van een exegetische reconstructie, die het zwarte "ras", de Kongo als etnische groep en de "dynastie" van Kimbangu en zijn opvolgers binnen de bijbelse geschiedenis plaatst. Deze exegetische vernieuwing gaat gepaard met utopische constructies die de gelovigen toelaten zich te bevestigen door middel van een toekomstvisioen van de ideale maatschappij — waarin de oprichting van het Koninkrijk van God op aarde tot stand komt dankzij de Kerk van Kimbangu en de Kongo. In het kader van deze Kimbangistische eschatologie is de symboliek van de gebouwen in het "Nieuwe Jeruzalem" rijk aan betekenis (zoals Nkamba, de heilige stad van de Kerk van Kimbangu, wordt genoemd). Sinds de jaren 1960 heeft de Kerk een reeks nieuwe ceremoniën georganiseerd met de bedoeling de komst van het Rijk mogelijk te maken en te bespoedigen.

* Université de Liège, fac. Philosophie et Lettres, Anthropologie culturelle, place du 20 août, 7, A1, B-4000 Liège (Belgium).

Als "Royaume fait Eglise" heeft de Kerk van Kimbangu zich dus eens te meer gekeerd naar een visie op de Laatste Tijden, volgens Johannes, en waarvan de nabije komst wordt voorspeld.

SUMMARY. — *Kimbanguism : a Dynamic Earth-to-Heaven Millenarianism*. — Since 1960 the Kimbanguist Church has been in the process of developing a more "orthodox" official theology (due to its as yet conditional admission to the World Council of Churches in 1969), on the one hand, and on the other, a "popular" theology confined to the inner circles of the Church whose contemporary expansion will be the focus of our paper. The Bible has been the object of an exegetical reconstruction situating the black race, the Kongo as an ethnic group and the "dynasty" formed by Kimbangu and his descendants within Biblical history. This exegetical renovation is accompanied by utopian constructions that allow the faithful to anchor themselves by means of a vision of an ideal future society : that of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth in which the Kimbanguist Church and the Kongo are central. Within the framework of this Kimbanguist eschatology, the symbolism of the buildings at Nkamba, the Kimbanguist holy city called the "New Jerusalem", is rich in signification. Similarly, the Church has orchestrated since the 1960s a series of ceremonies whose aim is to make possible and even hasten the coming of the Kingdom. With the "Kingdom made Church" in 1960, the Kimbanguist Church has thus, once again, turned to a more Johannine vision of the Last Things whose imminence is announced.

Introduction

Nous nous proposons de cerner la dimension millénariste du kimbanguisme. Nous porterons essentiellement notre attention sur la période postérieure à 1959. C'est à cette date que le mouvement kimbanguiste, toléré depuis 1957, est officiellement reconnu par les autorités coloniales. C'est dire que nous n'évoquerons que brièvement les années de gestation et de constitution du mouvement.

Du mouvement à l'Eglise : un millénarisme avorté

Il nous suffit de rappeler ici que Simon Kimbangu est né en 1889 [1] * à Nkamba, dans le Bas-Congo, et qu'il fut élevé dans la confession baptiste. Il entama son ministère dans son village de Nkamba, en avril 1921, en accomplissant des guérisons jugées miraculeuses, opérées sous l'inspiration du *Mpeve* (l'esprit), qui le mettait en transe. Ses prophéties de renversement de l'ordre colonial, son interprétation de la Bible comme message de libération, le firent apparaître comme un prophète (*ngunza*), un envoyé de Dieu (*ntumwa*).

---

* Les chiffres entre crochets [ ] renvoient aux notes pp. 51-52.

Le mouvement engendré par l'afflux de pèlerins issus de tout le Bas-Congo fut rapidement réprimé et entra dans la clandestinité. En septembre 1921, Kimbangu fut arrêté et condamné à une peine de servitude pénale à perpétuité. Kimbangu demeura reclus à la prison d'Elisabethville jusqu'à sa mort survenue en 1951. En dépit de la répression, le mouvement clandestin dépassa très vite les frontières jusqu'à s'étendre chez les Kongo d'Afrique-Equatoriale française et du Congo portugais.

Sommairement, on peut dire que le kimbanguisme se présente initialement comme un millénarisme. D'emblée, le mécanisme des constructions utopiques se mit, en effet, en branle. Nkamba fut baptisée *Mbanza Jérusalem* dès les débuts du ministère de Kimbangu. Dans les faits, Kimbangu devint, très vite, le *Mvuluzi*, le Sauveur, le Christ noir. Selon BALANDIER (1982, pp. 473-474), l'assimilation par les Kongo de la notion chrétienne de Sauveur et donc de messianisme, aurait été effectuée, entre autres, à l'avantage d'une figure traditionnelle, celle de l'esprit *nkita*, qui jouait un rôle majeur au sein des sociétés initiatiques des *Bakhimba* ou du *Kimpasi*. Le destin des *bankita*, esprits d'«ancêtres du début (...) ayant subi une mort violente» (VAN WING 1959, p. 292), peut être associé à l'idée de martyre, de sacrifice efficace pour le peuple du sacrifié. En 1997, un Ancien (*mbuta*) de l'Eglise nous attesta que Kimbangu avait fait partie du Kimpasi, appartenance que l'Eglise réfute du reste catégoriquement. Les initiés du *Kimpasi* ont le pouvoir de se transformer en esprits-*bankita*, esprits protecteurs dotés de grands pouvoirs. Comme Kimbangu, cette société secrète avait une fonction thérapeutique de lutte contre la part néfaste de la sorcellerie (*kindoki*), laquelle connaissait alors un processus d'individualisation tendant davantage à nuire à la communauté qu'à l'équilibrer. Nous pensons que Kimbangu fut en quelque sorte, tout au moins dans l'imaginaire de l'époque, considéré comme un sorcier luttant contre la sorcellerie dérégulée des siens [2]. Comme l'a montré A. Mary, «la lutte symbolique engagée contre les fétiches et les sorciers (...) n'est nullement incompatible avec le fait de récupérer subtilement à son profit les formes traditionnelles du pouvoir magico-religieux» (MARY 2000, p. 120).

Aux yeux de ses fidèles, Kimbangu apparut comme le nouveau roi du Kongo, appelé à régner. On peut penser que la figure de Kimbangu a permis de revitaliser la sacralité du pouvoir, autrefois conférée au roi. Il représente une continuité socio-politique pour ses adeptes. Kimbangu s'affichait d'ailleurs avec un bâton (*mvuala*), tout à la fois insigne biblique des prophètes, et marque traditionnelle du pouvoir sacré du chef et du roi. Balandier souligne que l'intronisation du roi est liée à l'idée de renouvellement, de renaissance : «elle instaure un retour symbolique aux origines (...). Elle révèle le souverain comme le «forgeron» et le gardien de l'unité kongo (...). Elle donne au peuple (pour un temps) le sentiment d'un nouveau départ à «neuf»» (BALANDIER 1995, p. 134). Dans le cas du kimbanguisme, le Royaume attendu fut clairement associé au mythique royaume de Kongo.

Le kimbanguisme de la clandestinité est, remarquons-le, non violent et pré-millénariste [3]. L'éviction des Blancs et l'instauration du Royaume sont annoncées comme imminentes mais uniquement sous les auspices du retour de Kimbangu.

Plus précisément, on pourrait dire qu'il s'agit moins d'une éviction des Blancs que d'un renversement des rapports hiérarchiques. Ainsi, Kimbangu a déclaré : «les Noirs deviendront Blancs et les Blancs deviendront Noirs» [4]. Ce mythe du monde renversé portait également sur la possession, de source sacrée, des richesses matérielles du Blanc. En somme, Kimbangu fut non seulement le messie noir, mais aussi le héros civilisateur au sens traditionnel et au sens moderne du terme. Une double aspiration préside au kimbanguisme : le désir d'un retour à l'âge d'or des origines s'accompagne du projet de l'espoir d'une ère nouvelle.

Le retour de Kimbangu est indiscernable de celui des ancêtres-*bakulu* ressuscités. Pareil phénomène traduit, on en conviendra, l'aspiration à la résurgence d'un ordre mythique. A ce retour furent également associées les figures eschatologiques de l'Américain et de l'Allemand. Celles-ci coïncident avec l'affaiblissement du colonisateur résultant de la conquête allemande. Cependant, il faut noter que le processus d'idéalisation porta avant tout sur l'Afro-Américain, mythifié dans le cadre du mouvement panafricain de Marcus Garvey, infiltré au Congo dès la fin des années 1910. A ce propos, il est remarquable que, même si les Blancs et leurs «collaborateurs» paraissaient s'offrir comme de possibles figures démoniaques, le kimbanguisme ne fit pas de place à l'Antéchrist.

Par contre, l'annonce des cataclysmes préliminaires ou contemporains de la réapparition de Kimbangu et du Jugement Dernier fut fréquente. On évoqua des destructions par le feu et par l'eau, éléments traditionnellement porteurs d'une fonction palingénésique.

Le symbole de l'Arche n'est attesté que dans la seconde moitié des années 1950. Il marque, selon nous, une période de transition : le passage du mouvement vers l'Eglise. En effet, dès 1947, le fils cadet de Kimbangu, Joseph Diangienda, qui travaillait alors dans le cadre de l'Administration coloniale, reprit discrètement contact avec les kimbanguistes. Kimbangu mourut en prison en 1951. A partir de 1953, le mouvement se réorganisa sous l'appellation de *kintwadi*, ce qui signifie «association», «alliance» ou «travail en commun». Dès 1956, l'action ouverte fut entamée par une série de revendications écrites et d'actions pacifiques visant à obtenir la tolérance à l'égard du mouvement et la fin des persécutions et des relégations. 1956 est l'année au cours de laquelle le Congo belge vit fleurir les revendications à l'Indépendance avec la parution du plan Van Bilsen, du «Manifeste Conscience Africaine», et du «Contre-Manifeste» de l'ABAKO. Les kimbanguistes publièrent «Mise au point sur le kimbanguisme» [5], qui affirme son caractère strictement religieux et non xénophobe. La dépolitisation du kimbanguisme suivra de quelques années la politisation de l'ABAKO qui, jusqu'en 1954, constituait un mouvement culturel. En décembre 1957, une

circulaire de Pétillon accorde la tolérance à l'égard du mouvement. L'appellation «Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur terre par le prophète Simon Kimbangu» (E.J.C.S.K.) vit le jour en 1958. C'est le 24 décembre 1959 que l'interdiction du mouvement fut levée par un arrêté (n° 2211/846). Six mois avant l'accession du Congo à l'Indépendance, le mouvement se trouvait officiellement reconnu.

Revenue sur terre, l'Eglise tourne alors sa page millénariste, du moins momentanément. Elle épouse une forme dynastique. Diangienda en devient le Chef spirituel (*mfumu a nlongo*), et fait de ses deux frères ses conseillers directs. Dès 1960, Diangienda entreprend la construction d'infrastructures matérielles qui prendront beaucoup d'ampleur avec les années et s'étendront dans d'autres provinces du pays. En 1971, l'Eglise kimbanguiste, aux côtés de la catholique et de la protestante, devient l'une des trois Eglises officielles du Zaïre.

En 1969, l'Eglise est admise au Conseil Œcuménique des Eglises, moyennant certains ajustements. Elle doit notamment renoncer à assimiler Kimbangu à l'Esprit Saint. Le règne de Diangienda, jusqu'à sa mort en 1992, sera celui d'un alignement, du moins de façade, sur une orthodoxie chrétienne proche des protestants, comme en témoignent son livre vert *Histoire du kimbanguisme* (1984) et la nomination de M.-L. Martin, de l'Eglise morave, au décanat de la Faculté de théologie kimbanguiste de 1977 jusqu'à la disparition de celle-ci en 1992.

Le renouveau spirituel

Ce n'est pas notre propos d'analyser ici l'édification et le fonctionnement de l'Eglise de 1959 à 1992, date de la disparition de Diangienda. Nous nous limiterons à constater que l'Eglise connaîtra, dans les années 1970, un renouveau spirituel. A la faveur de l'introduction dans l'Eglise des retraites en 1972, vont se constituer progressivement des groupes de prière qui prendront la forme de veillées de prière appelées *Beko* dans les années 1980. Ndaywel atteste que, toutes confessions confondues, «vers la fin des années 70, on assista au retour en force de la prière chrétienne, à la faveur de la réduction des tensions entre les Eglises, leur organisation générale sur le modèle des sectes avec la primauté aux 'communautés de base' (...). Il devint courant pour tout citoyen d'appartenir à un groupe de prière perçu à la fois comme un espace de pratique religieuse et un lieu de partage entre 'frères et sœurs en Christ' (NDAYWEL E NZIEM 1993, p. 56). L'Eglise kimbanguiste, très centralisée depuis son institutionnalisation en 1959, se diversifie progressivement sur ses communautés de base formelles (paroisses) et informelles (groupes de prière et, plus récemment, groupes de réflexion), centres de la vie religieuse et sociale, et foyers de solidarité. Cette décentralisation dévoile une situation de crise dans l'Eglise, issue notamment de la crise du modèle missionnaire dont l'Eglise s'est inspirée lors de son édification. Notons que les infrastructures matérielles de l'Eglise, qui justifient les collectes d'argent (*nsinsani*), perdent manifestement de leur efficience, mettant à mal l'idée d'un

possible développement socio-économique endogène. En outre, le principe de la réciprocité s'en trouve affecté. Comme dans les Eglises de guérison, les adeptes attendent désormais des collectes qu'elles visent «à transformer leur pauvreté et manque en 'guérison divine'» (DEVISCH 1998, p. 145). C'est de la seule intervention divine, conditionnée par ce que les kimbanguistes appellent la «libération spirituelle» de l'homme noir, que paraît dépendre le développement, dans la perspective, cette fois, d'un «développement intégral», temporel et spirituel, matériel et intellectuel. L'exigence de «libération spirituelle» consiste, pour l'homme noir, à ne plus «se faire enchaîner au travers des œuvres sataniques. C'est seulement à ce moment-là qu'il recouvrira ces droits divins : pouvoir de création et de développer le monde, pouvoir d'entraînement de toute l'espèce humaine» (MATONDO MBIYEYI 1999, p. 56).

Les retraites et les *beko* offrent l'occasion du déploiement des dons charismatiques (révélations, visions, songes, cantiques captés, glossolalies, discernement), l'occasion aussi de confessions et de repentances nourries de l'espoir d'une guérison des maux individuels, sociaux et, comme nous le verrons avec la Cérémonie du Pardon, collectifs. Elles ont été instituées, dit-on aujourd'hui, en vue de hâter l'avènement du Royaume de Dieu. Ce renouveau spirituel est allé croissant dans les années 1980. Parallèlement, dans la société zaïroise, «au cours des années 80, le déclin de ce régime politique (MPR) et de son idéologie s'est accompagné du surgissement à travers le Zaïre de centaines d'Eglises charismatiques du Saint-Esprit» (DEVISCH 1996, p. 94). Précisément les *beko* sont aujourd'hui le lieu privilégié où s'exerce la pratique des *mbikudi* (devins, prophètes), pratique qui, pour n'être pas reconnue officiellement par l'Eglise jusqu'à ce jour, est très répandue en son sein. Certains dignitaires y voient un retour des faux prophètes comme à l'époque de la clandestinité du mouvement. Mais la plupart des kimbanguistes consultent les *mbikudi*. De sorte que l'on peut se demander si ces derniers ne sont pas des agents nécessaires à la survie de l'Eglise. Ils constituent les principaux agents de la lutte au centre de toutes les préoccupations : la lutte contre la sorcellerie ou le satanisme, qui représente, nous le verrons, un mal à la fois endogène et exogène. Les *mbikudi* sont aussi les agents de l'adaptation de l'Eglise à une nouvelle forme de religiosité que l'on retrouve dans la société zaïroise dès les années 1980, une religiosité qui se cherche et reste encore indéterminée. La figure de l'Esprit Saint gagne du terrain face au christocentrisme proclamé jusqu'ici par l'Eglise. On retrouve là, d'une manière, la prévalence de «la parole inspirée» sur «les discours programmés» (DEVISCH 1998, pp. 143-144). La mutation dont l'Eglise kimbanguiste semble être l'objet depuis une décennie traduit bien la faillite de son système, qui s'est constitué à partir du modèle importé de la mission.

Ce réveil spirituel au sein de l'Eglise s'est accompagné de l'éclosion d'une théologie populaire. Nous envisagerons l'état de cette théologie et du millénarisme dans les années 1990, décennie de grands bouleversements dans le pays comme dans l'Eglise. Les décombres de la deuxième République, l'échec de la

Conférence nationale souveraine et du multipartisme, les rébellions, les guerres d'agression, et le blocage du dialogue intercongolais, ont progressivement installé le pays dans une forme d'anarchie administrative, politique et économique dont les répercussions sur la population furent et restent désastreuses. Situation propice à susciter l'attente d'un ordre nouveau. Au sein de l'Eglise, les décès de Diangienda, Kisolokele et M.-L. Martin semblent avoir libéré la diffusion de la théologie populaire issue de révélations et de recherches effectuées par des intellectuels kimbanguistes. Le mutisme et l'absence de charisme du nouveau chef Dialungana ont sans doute contribué à favoriser les forces centrifuges comme la dispersion des pouvoirs charismatiques, l'hétérodoxie doctrinale et le retour de l'ethnicité.

L'ethnicité, jusqu'ici contenue par l'antitribalisme de Diangienda, resurgit non seulement au niveau des mythes, mais aussi au niveau de l'administration de l'Eglise dans l'attribution des postes stratégiques majoritairement aux Kongo. L'ethnicité kimbanguiste, de même que sa raciologie et son panafricanisme, se trouvent confrontés à l'universalisme proclamé par l'Eglise. Ces différentes tendances reflètent une certaine pluralité dans l'Eglise, ainsi qu'une disjonction entre les objectifs globaux du système et les aspirations particulières des individus ou des groupes sociaux. Le kimbanguisme officiel explique la résolution de la contradiction des tendances régionalistes et universalistes par la révélation et l'incarnation du Dieu trinitaire en terre kongo. En s'incarnant, Dieu, principe totalitaire et atemporel, dote, du même coup et comme par métonymie, l'Eglise kimbanguiste d'un rôle universel. C'est suivant une logique similaire que l'Afrique se voit chargée d'une mission civilisatrice qui semble faire écho aux prétentions universalisantes et à l'européocentrisme hérités des Lumières. Mais cette résolution nous apparaît fragile.

Selon Balandier, «toute société est une société se faisant, sollicitée contradictoirement par les forces de changement et les forces de conservation, mais nécessairement emportée par les premières» (BALANDIER 1986, p. 297). L'ethnicité, la dispersion des pouvoirs charismatiques et l'hétérodoxie doctrinale vont dans le sens d'une segmentarisation de l'Eglise. Il reste cependant qu'une reprise d'initiative à la tête de l'Eglise — en l'occurrence la restauration d'un chef porteur de la dimension charismatique fondamentale — pourrait permettre à l'Eglise de renforcer ses tendances centralisatrices, ses visées universalistes et ses velléités hégémoniques, sinon totalitaires. Balandier nous en a prévenus : «la transformation peut être manquée» (BALANDIER 1986, p. 298).

La théologie populaire et le retour en force du millénarisme kimbanguiste

La nature divine de Kimbangu est aujourd'hui proclamée par l'Eglise, allégation qui rencontre, du reste, des réticences de la part de certains kimbanguistes. En atteste le phénomène des «kimbanguphanies», dont la plus célèbre, dans le

camp de relégation de Lowa dans le Haut-Congo en 1952, est considérée comme la résurrection de Kimbangu. C'est alors qu'il aurait annoncé ceci : «J'ai triomphé de Satan, et les quatre coins du monde me sont donnés par le Christ» (KIDIA MBETIENNE 1990, p. 106). Kimbangu serait le Consolateur [6] promis [7] (Jean 14 : 12-18), l'Esprit Saint [8]. L'homonymie de prénoms de Simon Kimbangu avec Simon de Cyrène, l'Africain, renvoie aux incarnations de l'Esprit Saint. Le port de la croix par Simon au chemin de Golgotha constitue, selon l'expression kimbanguiste, la «reprise-remise» du royaume des Cieux confiée à l'Esprit Saint mais également à la «race noire», à l'Afrique, cette «autre nation qui en rendra les fruits» (MATTHIEU 21 : 43).

Par ailleurs, l'onomastique kimbanguiste tire «Kimbangu» du substantif kikongo *mbangudi*, «le révélateur, l'interprète» et du verbe *bangula* «révéler, dévoiler, découvrir», de même que le terme grec *apokalypsis* signifie «révélation», du verbe *apokalyptein*, «révéler, découvrir». Kimbangu est «le révélateur (du sens) des choses cachées et voilées», le *mbangudi ya fika ya suekama*. Selon Jean 16 : 13 : «Quand le Consolateur sera venu, l'Esprit de vérité, il vous conduira dans toute la vérité (...) et il vous annoncera les choses à venir». La révélation porte sur la vérité cachée, sur les secrets, sens d'apocalypse dans Daniel 2 : 28-30. La continuité de cette mission aurait été confiée par Kimbangu à son fils Diangienda, considéré comme sa réincarnation. Diangienda, en plus de sa mission de conscientisation, s'attellera à la réhabilitation de la «race» noire.

Diangienda aurait révélé qu'Adam était noir. La «race noire» serait la «race» même de Dieu, car Dieu ayant créé, selon la Genèse, l'homme à son image, Dieu lui-même ainsi que la Trinité seraient noirs. La raciologie kimbanguiste fait de la «race noire» la race originelle [9], divine et bénie. Cette bénédiction se transmua en malédiction suite au péché originel, assimilé à la sorcellerie [10]. La malédiction se réitéra à plusieurs reprises sur l'homme noir faisant de lui progressivement, selon l'expression kimbanguiste, le «rebut de l'humanité». Malédiction de Dieu sur les Noirs Adam, Caïn, Cham, Nimrod et Esaü, face aux Blancs Abel, Japhet, Jacob, bénis de Dieu. Les effets consécutifs furent la domination blanche en terre africaine, l'esclavage, l'oppression, la déculturation.

De 1961 à 1992, une série de cérémonies ont été orchestrées par l'Eglise, dont la finalité était de purifier l'homme noir, d'exorciser la malédiction, de réhabiliter ce «premier devenu dernier», et, partant, de hâter l'avènement du Royaume. Ainsi, en 1961, la cérémonie de «l'élévation des mains» (*Kotombola Maboko*) et, en 1963, celle du «passer par-dessus la croix» (*Koleka Likolo ya Ekuluzu*), toutes deux destinées à la repentance ; aussi, les retraites spirituelles introduites en 1972 ; ensuite, en 1981, l'inauguration du temple de Nkamba ; dans les années quatre-vingt, les *beko* ou veillées de prière ; enfin, à partir de 1990, les soirées spirituelles ; «séances de moralisation» dont l'axe exhortatif est la trilogie kimbanguiste *bolingo-mibeko-misala*, c'est-à-dire l'amour, le respect des commandements (lois divines) et les bonnes œuvres, exigence éthique pour la réalisation de la promesse. Elles se tiennent tous les jours à 16 heures, heure annoncée de

l'Apocalypse. L'étape fondamentale, en 1992, la cérémonie du «Pardon pour le péché d'Adam et Eve», avait pour objectif d'exorciser la malédiction. Par le pardon demandé à Dieu, le péché originel commis par l'homme noir est aboli. L'homme noir, réhabilité, recouvre sa condition privilégiée auprès de Dieu au Jardin d'Eden, condition *sine qua non* pour l'établissement du Royaume de Dieu sur terre, car l'homme noir est «le Commencement et la Fin». Cette cérémonie, en quatre phases successives distinctes, consista en un pardon des hommes, des femmes et des enfants les uns aux autres pour les fautes d'Adam, Eve et Caïn, ainsi qu'en la promesse de ne plus revenir à la sorcellerie. Lors de la dernière phase, la demande de pardon au Dieu trinitaire, les fidèles qui s'étaient saupoudré le corps de cendres, portèrent, pour tout vêtement, des sacs et demeurèrent assis à même le sol, en signe d'humiliation devant Dieu. Cela en référence à la repentance salutaire des gens de Ninive (Jonas), allégorie à laquelle Jésus aussi recourra selon Matthieu (12 : 41) et Luc (11 : 29-32). Il faut y voir aussi une allusion aux «deux témoins» à qui il fut donné de prophétiser «revêtus de sac» dans l'Apocalypse de Jean 11. Ces deux témoins sont Diangienda et Kisolokele, tous deux décédés quelques mois auparavant et qui, dans les termes de l'Apocalypse 11, auraient passé «(...) trois jours et demi à Kinshasa, ville appelée allégoriquement Sodome et Egypte à cause de la perversité de ses habitants» (ELEBE KAPALAY, s.d., p. 45). La finalité de l'ensemble apparaît, notamment, dans un passage de la synthèse finale de la cérémonie : «Oh ! Eternel, par ton amour, Tu nous as confié Ton Royaume, afin que nous en produisions les fruits, pour que l'homme noir puisse récupérer sa première place» (Demande du pardon ..., s.d.). En mars 1993, on procéda à la cérémonie de l'incinération des sacs à l'occasion de laquelle Dialungana, chef depuis le décès de Diangienda, dira : «nous allons mettre fin au règne de Lucifer et nous établirons le royaume de Dieu sur terre.» (ELEBE KAPALAY, s.d., p. 49.)

L'Eglise s'érige en rempart, et même en ultime rempart, contre le règne de Satan qui est aussi exogène. Babylone, c'est l'Occident et, pour preuve, sont cités la libéralisation des mœurs, les idéologies et gouvernements athées, les sociétés dites secrètes (Rose-Croix, franc-maçonnerie). La Bête, c'est l'homme blanc car «il a, au fil du temps, retourné son intelligence contre Dieu» (entretien, Bruxelles, 1996) ; en effet, «Dieu a béni le Blanc, lui a tout donné, l'intelligence, la création, la technologie, mais il s'est éloigné de la vérité, s'est attaché à Satan, c'est-à-dire la sorcellerie» (entretien, Anvers, 1996). La démocratie est désignée comme l'ordre du démon car «le pouvoir vient de Dieu. Le projet politique de Dieu n'est pas la démocratie, c'est un roi souverain éternel» (entretien, Kinshasa, 1997). Ainsi, l'Eglise fait de la Conférence nationale souveraine une entreprise maléfique.

L'attitude des kimbanguistes à l'égard de la sorcellerie pénètre le discours eschatologique; attitude multivalente qui, d'une part, les mène à condamner tout ce qui dans l'ordre du monde est manifestation de Satan et, d'autre part, à lutter contre leur propre héritage sorcellaire subséquent au péché originel dont ils tien-

nent la «race noire» pour responsable. La hantise du démon légitime les discours salutaires de l'Eglise à travers les figures «exorcistes» de Kimbangu et ses trois fils. Le Royaume attendu entend renverser et expulser Satan et ses hypostases. «La communauté 'fixe' son mal en désignant son agresseur, le sorcier ou l'opposant radical, et elle prétend se rétablir en le neutralisant» (BALANDIER 1995, p. 131). Sur un plan plus individuel, l'exorcisme se pratique dans l'Eglise par la force de l'Esprit Saint et à l'aide de la prière, de l'eau et de la terre bénites de Nkamba. L'Eglise n'exclut pas ses fidèles sorciers mais vise à les réintégrer.

Certains signes avant-coureurs sont mis en avant comme autant de preuves de l'imminence du Royaume. Entre autres, nous pouvons citer l'accroissement des guerres civiles, les famines, les catastrophes naturelles, et, plus localement, au Congo, les pillages des années quatre-vingt-dix, le conflit à l'est, et à la veille de l'an 2000, la crue du fleuve Congo. On relève aussi le décès de Diangienda après trente-trois ans de règne.

La manifestation finale, désignée comme la «Grande Pentecôte» ou la «descente de l'Esprit», serait marquée par trois jours d'«inertie mondiale», sous l'action du bâton de Kimbangu, ainsi que par un déploiement de miracles : «toute activité sera arrêtée et tout le monde sera hypnotisé pendant trois jours. A dater de ce jour, l'Esprit de Dieu éclairera le monde entier de sa lumière et Jérusalem sera visible, telle qu'elle est descendue. En ce même jour-là, l'Esprit de Dieu sera sur tout le monde ; les morts seront ressuscités, les paralytiques marcheront (...). Les hommes se déplaceront des quatre coins du monde pour venir recevoir la vie éternelle à Jérusalem (Nkamba)» (LUKAU-LUA-NZAMBI, s.d., p. 64). Dans le même temps, une destruction par le feu [11] est annoncée, comme à Sodome et Gomorrhe (Genèse 18-20). Diangienda aurait révélé, parlant de lui et ses deux frères : «c'est nous qui avons brûlé Sodome et Gomorrhe». Un kimbanguiste explicite : «lorsqu'on est venu détruire Sodome et Gomorrhe, il y a eu trois visiteurs chez Abraham... Il les reçoit et, après, ils vont dire : «Dieu veut détruire cette ville». Finalement deux (des visiteurs) s'en vont, l'un est resté. Celui qui est resté, c'est celui qui a réalisé la chose. Parmi les trois frères (fils de Kimbangu), deux sont partis (sont décédés), un seul est resté» (entretien, Kinshasa, 1997). Les deux «anges» qui partirent avec Lot sont Kisolokele et Diangienda, décédés en 1992. Celui qui va détruire, c'est Dialungana, Chef de l'Eglise depuis 1992, considéré comme l'incarnation du Christ.

Cela nous amène à la ville sainte de Nkamba-Jérusalem dont Dialungana est, depuis 1959, le gardien. Nkamba, la Nouvelle Jérusalem, est conçue comme le lieu d'où le Royaume céleste, descendu sur terre, est appelé à rayonner sur le monde. Le choix de ce lieu remonterait aux origines : Adam aurait été Kongo, car formé du limon de Nkamba. *Eeva*, en kikongo, signifie «ici». Dieu, pointant la côte d'Adam, lui aurait signifié d'Eve : *eeva katukidi*, «cela sort d'ici». Le Jardin d'Eden serait, donc, le lieu géographique de l'instauration du Royaume de Dieu sur terre. Nkamba serait la Jérusalem de la Nouvelle Alliance conclue avec le peuple kongo au détriment d'Israël. Dans un livre écrit dans les années soi-

xante par Dialungana, le chef de l'Eglise, intitulé «La ville bien aimée» et traduit du kikongo en anglais par l'anthropologue MAC GAFFEY (1969, p. 139), on peut lire : «With the work of the Lord God revealed by the hand of the Prophet (Simon Kimbangu) (...), the hills of Satan also were revealed, their eyes fired with jealousy and envy. What kind of hills were these ? The prophets of Satan, missionaries, the Belgian government (...). Why were these hills so jealous ? They knew that Jesus had given his power to the people of Africa, and that the city the Lord God had hidden, Jérusalem, had descended here in Africa».

La symbolique de lieux ou de constructions effectuées à Nkamba-Nouvelle Jérusalem est éclairante. Nkamba constitue à la fois une réplique de la Jérusalem d'Israël et une anticipation de la Jérusalem céleste de l'Apocalypse. Nkamba, comme la Jérusalem d'Israël, est un lieu de pèlerinage, de bénédiction et de guérison. Pareillement, elle est juchée sur une colline et possède un étang sacré, comparé à l'étang de Béthesda, à Jérusalem (Jean 5 : 2-4), où des guérisons s'opèrent. Ensuite vient le temple qui renvoie au temple de Jérusalem détruit à plusieurs reprises et reconstruit. Inclus dans l'enceinte du temple, le mausolée de Kimbangu est perçu comme central. Ensemble avec le temple il est un *kinlongo*, c'est-à-dire un lieu sacré. Il est aussi appelé *Nkela luwawanu*, en kikongo (LAMAN 1936), l'Arche de l'Alliance. C'est à Salomon que Dieu confia la tâche de construire le sanctuaire pour y placer l'Arche de l'Alliance (1 Rois 6). De même, c'est Salomon Dialungana qui fit construire le temple de Nkamba. La symbolique du mausolée comme Arche de l'Alliance a pour objectif de sacraliser le temps et l'espace présents. D'après Mac Gaffey (1969, p. 144) : «It links the bones of Jacob with the Arch which God commended Moses to make after the children of Israel had been redeemed out their suffering in Egypt».

La conviction s'impose d'un proche accomplissement, à Nkamba, au détriment d'Israël, des promesses divines à l'endroit de Jérusalem, comme l'établissement de la Jérusalem céleste et la visite par toutes les nations.

Dans cette perspective, le grand escalier, dont le pied est l'emplacement où Kimbangu fut arrêté et dont le sommet est Nkamba avec son temple, est le symbole de l'Echelle que Jacob vit en songe dont la Genèse (28 : 12) nous dit qu'elle « (...) était appuyée sur la terre et (que) son sommet touchait au ciel». Nkamba, et plus particulièrement le temple construit au sommet de l'escalier, symbolise le Royaume de Dieu. Ce qui paraît s'inscrire dans le processus d'une «eschatologie réalisée». Le temple de Nkamba est le temple de la Nouvelle Alliance. Dans cette optique, lors de l'inauguration du temple, en 1981, le temple de Dieu serait descendu sur terre.

Ensuite, la colline, souvent comparée à Sion, sur laquelle est sise Nkamba, réfère à la Jérusalem d'Israël mais également à la Jérusalem Céleste. Dans ce sens, un kimbanguiste écrit : «la bible nous dit que c'est à Sion que se rassembleront toutes les nations de la terre (Esaïe 2 : 1-5, 62) et que l'on appellera Jérusalem d'un nouveau nom, nom que la bouche de Yahweh déterminera. Sion, la cité sainte, se trouve au Zaïre» (ELEBE KAPALAY, s.d., p. 30). Les nations ne

seraient plus qu'une comme avant la chute de Babel, avec une seule langue, le kikongo.

L'Eglise exploite aussi le thème de l'éclatement des tribus d'Israël. Un texte explique la raison du déplacement de Jérusalem, et prétend que la venue de l'homme blanc en Afrique fut motivée par la volonté d'étouffer la vérité sur le véritable peuple de Dieu : «Jérusalem doit (*ipso facto*) s'implanter sur le lieu que le Père Esprit Saint avait préparé lorsqu'il créa l'homme à son image. Ce lieu, c'est le Paradis Terrestre. Si Jérusalem était déplacée, c'est parce que le lieu sur lequel elle se trouvait n'était pas sanctifié. C'est ainsi que les douze tribus qui y demeuraient s'étaient aussi déplacées pour la Nouvelle Jérusalem. Diego Cão s'était rendu en Israël pour les chercher mais ne les trouva pas. Voilà pourquoi il était descendu jusqu'en Afrique. Il les trouva dans le Royaume du Congo qui avait douze tribus (...). La Nouvelle Jérusalem était descendue chez nous, mais à l'état spirituel. Quitte à nous de la rendre matérielle» (LUKAU-LUA-NZAMBI, s.d., pp. 73-74).

Les douze tribus d'Israël, scindées en deux royaumes après David et Salomon, puis dispersées, auraient immigré secrètement en pays kongo. Tout se passe comme si la Nouvelle Alliance conclue par le Christ concernait les vrais enfants d'Israël, à savoir les Africains et, plus spécifiquement, les Kongo. Nouvelle Alliance fondamentalement eschatologique. L'ensemble des douze tribus d'Israël serait les douze tribus kongo, les «vrais sémites». Ce texte nous dit : «Les véritables élus de Dieu (...) sont et ont toujours été de race noire» (...). Sachant qu'ils seraient pourchassés jusqu'à l'extermination (...), les Bena Kongo avaient, pour des raisons de secret, déguisé les noms de leurs douze tribus et abandonné le nom d'Israël pour celui de *Kongo dia Ntotila* qui signifie «Royaume de tout l'Univers» (...). Si bien que *Kongo dia Ntotila* symbolise tout simplement le Royaume de la totalité, Royaume de toute la terre, Royaume qui aura à sa tête le roi des rois, le Christ» (Les 12 véritables ..., s.d., pp. 9-12). Le thème des tribus d'Israël à rassembler, que l'on trouve dans l'Apocalypse de Jean (7), est largement exploité par une catégorie de kimbanguistes, dont des dignitaires de l'Eglise. Par contre, il est, on peut le concevoir, mal perçu par les kimbanguistes extérieurs à l'aire kongo.

C'est du déplacement des tribus d'Israël, mais aussi de la restauration de la dynastie davidique qu'il est question. Kimbangu, déjà, allégoriquement, se voyait tel David face à Goliath. Mais, bien plus aujourd'hui, «il est question de la postérité de David, de ses descendants (...). Il faut (par conséquent) voir dans sa postérité une lignée, une dynastie royale, (...) que l'Eglise kimbanguiste ensemble avec le monde occidental ont découvert à travers la lignée de Simon Kimbangu (...). Jérémie savait que le trône de David était déplacé vers une nouvelle Jérusalem. Laquelle ? C'est celle-là que son Eminence Dialungana (Salomon) est venu préparer» (LEMBI DILULU 1994, p. 7). Salomon est également le nom chrétien de Dialungana, seul survivant des trois fils de Kimbangu ; homonymie qui ne laisse pas sans attente. Nous verrons son rôle eschatologique. La

lignée de la royauté davidique est établie jusqu'aux fils de Kimbangu et restaurée par ceux-ci. Ils sont les *Zimvuala*, c'est-à-dire les détenteurs du *mvuala*, le bâton sacré autrefois arboré par Kimbangu, insigne traditionnel du pouvoir royal ; bâton dont nous avons donné le rôle eschatologique. On raconte que Kimbangu aurait oint ses fils de l'huile de la royauté. L'Eglise épouse une forme dynastique, une forme de royauté sacrée perçue comme une anticipation de la royauté de Royaume attendu. Il nous faut ajouter que le système de parenté kongo étant matrilinéaire, les trois fils appartiennent, par filiation utérine, au clan *Nzinga*, clan royal chez les Kongo. On en revient ici au mythe eschatologique du renouvellement : le clan *Nzinga*, fondateur du Royaume kongo, serait inéluctablement le clan fondateur du Royaume de Dieu appelé à s'instaurer.

Mais ce thème de la royauté sacrée ne doit pas faire perdre de vue que les trois fils de Kimbangu sont, aussi, pour les kimbanguistes, la Trinité incarnée ; Trinité incarnée, comme nous l'avons vu précédemment, avant la chute de Sodome et Gomorrhe. Celui qui est resté, d'entre ses frères, est Salomon Dialungana. L'onomastique kimbanguiste traduit *Dialungana* par «accomplissement» (du substantif kikongo *kulungana* : «accomplir») ; ici, l'accomplissement de la Promesse, le Royaume. Rappelons que les kimbanguistes voient en Dialungana le Christ réincarné. Un kimbanguiste écrit : «Le Christ est venu sous un nom nouveau et s'est sagement mis en veilleuse à Nkamba en attendant que le Saint-Esprit ait terminé son travail. Notons aussi qu'à la fin des temps, selon les Ecritures, c'est Christ lui-même sous son nom nouveau qui accomplira son œuvre et Satan sera arrêté pour 1000 ans» (BANDZOUZI 1992, p. 44). Dialungana, en avril 2000, a tenu les propos suivants : «Si l'on vous demande qui est le Christ que le monde entier cherche depuis longtemps, dites que c'est moi. Je suis revenu. Vous pouvez l'annoncer maintenant au monde entier» (http ://www.kimbanguisme. com/option6.htm).

L'Eglise kimbanguiste pense l'Histoire sainte selon un plan divin qui aurait été volontairement occulté, car finalisé par le salut du peuple maudit aux origines. L'Eglise plonge les siens dans une Histoire dont elle entend dévoiler les étapes et le sens. Ces étapes en appellent à une périodicité en termes de trois âges et de quatre générations. Au terme de ces étapes, sont attendues la fin du monde, et donc de l'Histoire, ainsi qu'une re-création, un retour aux origines.

Les kimbanguistes ont longtemps exploité la symbolique des trois Républiques, les trois régimes du Congo-Zaïre. La troisième République marquerait une étape progressive vers la parousie. Elle serait celle de l'Esprit Saint, attestant ainsi d'un rythme trinitaire. Aujourd'hui, il est question du troisième millénaire, dit «le millénaire du Saint-Esprit».

Par ailleurs, le rythme trinitaire est également présent dans une conception kimbanguiste relative à quatre générations. L'allusion à quatre générations fut recueillie par Mac Gaffey dans un document kimbanguiste qui circulait en 1966 : «8. It (kimbanguisme) has its faults but is nevertheless a force in the midst of this fourth generation» (MAC GAFFEY 1983, p. 189). Il ne put recueillir plus de préci-

sions. Il nous apprend que : «The idea of fourth generation comes from a family of european eschatologies popular among Protestant missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century, and since. One of them, H. Grattan Guinness, founder of the East London Institute (...), wrote a book, *The Approaching End of the Age* (1884) (...). The intention of the work was to prove by astronomy and the Bible, especially the Book of Daniel, that the world would come to an end in 1900 ; hence the need to send missionaries to convert as much of the world as possible before it was too late (...). According to Guinness, Scripture proved that God had divided history into three stages, each closing with a judgement and introducing a better order of things on the way from Paradise lost to Paradise regained. They believed that they lived in a time like that of Noah ; though the approaching deluge would be a deluge of fire instead of water. The last age comprised four successive kingdoms» (MAC GAFFEY 1983, p. 190). Guinness connaissait le kikongo, et son épouse, qui avait écrit un ouvrage sur les succès des missions, fit un voyage au Congo en 1890. Ces conceptions de Guinness furent peut-être introduites dès la fin du 19ᵉ siècle au Congo par le biais des missions protestantes fraîchement établies. Rappelons que Kimbangu fut catéchiste baptiste de la *Baptist Missionary Society* de Londres. Par ailleurs, n'ayant pu recueillir de réponse, Mac Gaffey tente des hypothèses. Les quatre générations lui semblent attestées par l'insistance que porte Dialungana, dans son livre «Ville bien aimée», aux quatre noms de Jérusalem. Il remarque que Jérusalem fut construite et reconstruite par quatre personnes ou peuples : Salomon, Néhémie, les Juifs et les Kongo. Il note, par ailleurs, que les kimbanguistes parlent de quatre rois ou, plus fréquemment, de quatre hérauts : Moïse, David, Jésus et Kimbangu. Il conclut à l'inexistence d'une unique orthodoxie résidant derrière les différentes versions suggérées. Mais il pense, par contre, que toutes ces versions dévoilent une structure commune : «In each generation God is represented in human form, the succession of representative (*mvwala* or *ngunza*) being the order of Melchizedek (...). Melchizedek, standing alone in the midst, was the «Kingpost of the whole earth» (*kunzi dya nza yayo*) ; this expression is also applied to the three sons of Kimbangu» (MAC GAFFEY 1969, p. 14).

Nous avons recueilli des témoignages verbaux et deux publications récentes qui traitent de ces quatre générations. Nous nous posons la question de l'existence ou non d'une version officielle tant les versions recueillies divergent.

Dans les récits, âges et générations se confondent dans des cycles purement trinitaires : quatre règnes, ceux de l'Esprit Saint, de Dieu, de Jésus-Christ, pour clore avec le règne définitif de l'Esprit Saint. Les deux publications sont discordantes. Elles relatent toutes deux l'histoire sainte d'Adam au retour attendu du Christ et de l'Esprit, mais elles organisent leurs séquences différemment. Dans sa publication, ELEBE KAPALAY (s.d.) précise que les quatre générations sont la conséquence de la désobéissance d'Adam et Eve ; générations stigmatisées par le péché, l'incrédulité, l'immoralité, etc. Le plan de Rédemption élaboré par Dieu remonte au temps des prophètes auquel succédera la venue du Christ et,

ensuite, la venue du Saint-Esprit. Dans un souci d'économie, nous en viendrons directement à la quatrième génération. Pour l'une des versions (LUKAU-LUA-NZAMBI, s.d.), la quatrième génération aurait débuté en date du centenaire de la naissance de Kimbangu en 1987. C'est cette génération en cours qui verra le deuxième monde, qui avait démarré après le déluge, être à nouveau détruit par une pluie de feu, et le troisième monde s'instaurer, celui de la réalisation des promesses dans la «race» noire. La seconde version écrite (ELEBE KAPALAY, s.d.) affirme que la quatrième génération aurait pris fin en 1987, et que, depuis lors, «nous vivons une transition», transition vers le Royaume. C'est à Dialungana de mener à la victoire finale. A la transition succéderait la troisième République, celle du Saint-Esprit. Cette transition n'est pas sans évoquer l'instauration du Millénium. Ainsi, si LUKAU-LUA-NZAMBI (s.d.) a une conception en trois âges suivant les quatre générations, ELEBE KAPALAY (s.d.) a une conception en quatre générations qui aboutissent à la troisième République, sorte de troisième âge, âge du Saint-Esprit. Par ailleurs, chez l'un et l'autre, à l'endroit du Jardin d'Eden se place la Nouvelle Jérusalem, c'est-à-dire Nkamba, qui devient le centre du monde. Cela constitue un retour aux origines d'avant l'instauration du péché. Les quatre générations semblent aussi en appeler aux quatre bêtes et aux quatre royaumes du chapitre 7 de Daniel (7: 23-28) qui précèdent le jugement et le règne du peuple des Saints. Quatre royaumes au terme desquels Daniel interprète que «Dieu suscitera un royaume (…) qui «subsistera éternellement» (2 : 44).

Une subdivision, clairement ethnique, associe trois âges aux trois nations de l'ancien Royaume de Kongo. Une version, relatée par un proche de feu Diangienda, nous dit : «Le Congo-Brazzaville, l'Angola et le Zaïre. Ces trois Congo sont en fait un seul. C'est à travers ce Congo-là que les choses vont se dérouler. Et ce sera à partir de la culture Kongo (...). Au moment où Adam et Eve avaient péché, Dieu a voulu former un Royaume de quelque part (...). Il a voulu l'installer dans le *Kongo dia Tuku* ou Kongo du commencement, c'est Boma, dans le Bas-Congo. Mais dans cette capitale qu'il a instaurée, les gens se sont mis à pécher. Dieu les a dispersés et ils sont allés en Egypte (...). C'est de là qu'il y a la tentative de faire la guerre contre Dieu. C'est ça que Dieu les a dispersés. Pendant que les gens se sont dispersés, il y a une partie qui était orthodoxe que Dieu se réservait. Et ces personnes ont suivi tout un tour et sont rentrées ici. Elles ont fondé *Kongo dia Nzole* (*nzole* signifie deuxième), c'est Mbanza Kongo (actuel Angola) (...). Ils se sont confrontés malheureusement de nouveau au polythéisme (...). Maintenant nous attendons *Kongo dia Ntatu* (*ntatu* signifie troisième), le troisième Kongo, qui n'est pas encore là (...).. Les trois Kongo vont se réunir et vont faire une ligue (...). Cette ligue sera une espèce de confédération. Et c'est à partir de ce moment-là qu'ils vont élire un roi qui va régner... même sur l'Afrique, et qui sera installé à Nkamba... Le roi qui sera Dieu lui-même. Ce sera le Royaume des Enfants de Dieu (...). La ligue aura pour siège Nkamba (...). Cette montagne prophétisée par Dieu, c'est Nkamba (...). De Nkamba, il partira des routes jusque vers l'Orient, l'Asie, l'Europe... le monde entier. Ce sera le

centre du monde (...). Alors tout le monde reconnaîtra que la seule Eglise où Dieu est vivant, c'est celle-là» (Entretien, Kinshasa, janvier 1997).

Apparaît ici une dimension ethnique claire avec une conception en trois âges, marqués par les migrations du peuple kongo. C'est à ce peuple kongo, sous forme de ligue, qu'il incombe aujourd'hui de mener l'humanité vers le Royaume des cieux, via la religion initiée par le Kongo Simon Kimbangu. Un texte kimbanguiste réfère explicitement à la ligue : «Le Congo, l'Angola et le Zaïre peuvent se constituer en Communauté des Etats Congolais (C.E.C.) dès cette année 1992, pour raviver l'idéal kôngo (...) maintenant transfiguré par l'Evangile du Christ (...). Le siège symbolique sera placé à Nkamba (qui) deviendra le support de la Ligue des Etats négro-africains (LENA) avant l'an 2000. Alors la prophétie (Jé. 29 : 10-14) s'accomplira en faveur de l'humanité en général (...). Papa Kimbangu a dit : «Il n'y aura qu'un seul Roi et une seule Eglise sur toute la terre, je la conduirai».» (Rebâtissons avec Dieu, 1992, p. 1). Ainsi le Royaume des cieux est de nouveau associé au rétablissement du Royaume Kongo. Kimbangu redevient, ici, un 'messie ethnique'.

Pour étayer cette thèse des trois pays comme point d'équilibre mondial, on recourt à la symbolique du *Makukwa matatu malambilu'e kôngo*, «les trois pieds d'un foyer où l'on cuit la marmite kongo», c'est-à-dire selon la traduction littéraire de l'idéologue mukongo BATSIKAMA (1971, p. 177) : «Les trois foyers, les trois murs de base, les trois parties, la «trinité» qui forment le Royaume Kongo». Un kimbanguiste précise : «Cet instrument est appelé *ntangi* en kikongo. Il remonte à l'antiquité (...). Donc le 3 est symbole de plénitude (...). L'univers tenait sur trois pieds dans la cosmologie kongo» (Entretien, Kinshasa, 1997). Un kimbanguiste (THUMU MABIALA 1992, pp. 14-16), se référant à l'idéologue Batsîkama, associe les trois pieds du foyer aux trois clans ou lignages fondamentaux des Kongo : Nzinga, Nsaku, Mpanzu. Ces trois piliers ou pieds de la marmite traditionnelle kongo représentent les trois départements qui formèrent le Royaume Kongo, ou encore la «trinité» ou «trilogie» kongo. Il s'agit ici de l'extension et du partage du territoire Kongo. Le premier foyer congolais, ou Kôngo-Dya-Mpângala, fut placé sous la responsabilité de la famille ou lignage Nzinga. L'aïeule ancêtre, Nzinga, fille de Nkuvu, fut mariée à Nimi et eut trois enfants : le fils aîné, Vita Nimi, qui fut aussi appelé Nsaku ; un fils, Mpanzu a Nimi ; et une fille, Lukeni Lua Nimi. Ces trois enfants sont la base de la société congolaise. Car leurs noms, ainsi que celui de Nzinga, deviendront des appellations de lignages (*tuvila*), ou familles congolaises.

Une expression kongo traduit l'unité indissoluble de ce royaume, que les trois piliers de la marmite symbolisent : *Mbâmbi yasumikwa, ka yisumunwa ko. Vo yisumunwa, nsi ye zulu yifwidi*, «les limites de l'Etat ainsi que ses divisions administratives sont sacrées. Qui y touche, provoque ainsi une guerre qui peut être considérée comme celle de la fin du monde» (THUMU MABIALA 1992, p. 17). Le Royaume de Kongo est donc véritablement perçu comme le point d'équilibre du monde, équilibre qui doit être maintenu ou plutôt recouvré par le rétablisse-

ment de l'unité du royaume. Les trois piliers symbolisent, dans le même temps et confusément, les trois lignages ou clans fondamentaux, la Trinité, et les trois nations de l'aire kongo.

Conclusion

En conclusion, nous dirons qu'au Royaume attendu avant 1960 a succédé l'Eglise. Dans ses infrastructures du moins, celle-ci s'est inspirée d'un modèle importé : le modèle de la mission. Dans une large mesure, sa théologie a puisé à des sources chrétiennes, et plus particulièrement, protestantes. En perdant son statut de mouvement pour gagner celui d'Eglise, le kimbanguisme s'est éloigné de la dimension salutaire qui l'habitait initialement. A cet éloignement semble, cependant, succéder, dans les années soixante-dix et quatre-vingt, ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler un renouveau spirituel, avec l'apparition des groupes de prière. Nous y avons insisté : c'est dans les années quatre-vingt-dix que se déploie dans toute son ampleur la dimension millénariste du kimbanguisme, inséparable de l'éclosion d'une théologie populaire kimbangucentrique et afrocentrique. De plus, nous avons décelé, en dépit des ambitions déclarées d'universalisme, des résurgences de l'ethnicité. Il n'est pas interdit de soulever, sans prétendre y répondre, la question de savoir si pareille résurgence ne s'accompagnera pas d'un éclatement ou d'une différenciation accrue des particularismes. Quoi qu'il en soit, un projet manifeste anime aujourd'hui le kimbanguisme : l'instauration d'une dynastie théocratique appelée à régner de manière imminente. Dans l'état d'anomie du Congo contemporain, le millénarisme se fait plus que jamais actif.

NOTES

[1] 1887 selon l'Eglise.
[2] Nous nous réservons le droit d'approfondir cet aspect dans une publication ultérieure.
[3] D'après la définition de Desroche (1973, p.125).
[4] Et cela notamment dans le journal qu'il rédigea ou dicta dans la prison d'Elisabethville en 1929 et 1930, recueilli par Léon Guebels (Procureur à Elisabethville, ensuite Procureur général de Léopoldville), et transmis, après l'Indépendance, à Pol-Pierre Gossiaux (Professeur à l'Université de Liège).
[5] Pour le texte, cf. C.R.I.S.P., 8 janvier 1960, pp.18-20.
[6] nsadisi, en kikongo.
[7] Le catéchisme du Kintwadi, nom du mouvement kimbanguiste dans les années cinquante, considère déjà Kimbangu comme le Consolateur : 1. «Qui est Tata Kimbangu ? Tata Kimbangu Simon est l'envoyé de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ ; 2. Comment le savons-nous que Tata Simon Kimbangu est l'envoyé de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ ? Jésus-Christ lui-même nous a promis de demander à son père de nous envoyer un autre Consolateur pour réaliser plus que lui. Lisez Jean 14 :

12 à 18 ; 20. «A quel moment Tata Simon Kimbangu a-t-il commencé ? Il demeurait avec Dieu dès le commencement (Jean I : I ...).» (Sinda, 1972, pp.145-146).

[8] On affirme aujourd'hui que Kimbangu aurait prétendu au seul titre de *ntumwa*, c'est-à-dire d' «envoyé» ou de «témoin». Un kimbanguiste précise : «Dans la tradition kongo, ce mot «envoyé» peut être traduit par *ntumwa*, mais aussi par *mvuala*. Il signifie un homme qui est accrédité dans un lieu donné au nom de son chef, et qui jouit de toute l'autorité, l'honneur et la gloire de celui qui l'a envoyé. Il est par sa nature le représentant plénipotentiaire de son Envoyeur et son message est reçu comme celui qui vient de son Envoyeur» (Matumona Seke, 1989, p. 97). Un kimbanguiste souligne que «l'envoyé du chef est aussi le chef». *Ntumwa*, ajoute-t-il, c'est un envoyé mais il est au-dessus du *mvuala*. C'est lui qui incarne celui qui l'a envoyé, ici c'est Jésus qui l'a envoyé. D'où l'appellation de l'Eglise, modifiée en 1990 : «L'Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur terre par son *envoyé spécial* Simon Kimbangu».

[9] Ce que les kimbanguistes estiment attesté par les recherches paléoanthropologiques.

[10] Un texte kimbanguiste rapporte : «le 'fruit' mangé par Adam et Eve, et qui leur valut la peine de mort, n'était pas un fruit au sens physique du terme. En obéissant à Satan plutôt qu'à Dieu, Adam et Eve recoururent à d'autres sources de connaissance, et furent initiés diaboliquement. Cette initiation satanique, révéla leurs facultés latentes, leurs capacités somnolentes, qu'ils utilisèrent à leur propre guise, et, au détriment de toute l'humanité. Ainsi le fameux fruit n'est rien d'autre que la sorcellerie, mieux encore, une ouverture spirituelle négative qui dédoubla leur vision» (KIFF & MUKOLO SUMBULA 1995, p. 29). Cette connaissance, inspirée de Satan, fut donc celle de la sorcellerie, selon une révélation de Diangienda. En effet, le fruit qu'Adam et Eve mangèrent est, en fait, de la chair humaine, cet acte étant associé étroitement à la sorcellerie.

[11] La symbolique est bien entendu biblique. Ainsi, l'Esprit Saint se manifestera par le feu, telles les langues de feu le jour de la Pentecôte (Actes des Apôtres 2 : 1-4). D'un point de vue eschatologique, le feu est l'un des sept fléaux (Apocalypse 16 : 8-9), et, lors du Jugement dernier, l'étang de feu et de soufre est la seconde mort (Apocalypse : 20 : 14 ; 21 : 8).

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

BALANDIER, G. 1982 (3e éd.). Sociologie actuelle de l'Afrique noire. Dynamique sociale en Afrique centrale. — Quadrige/PUF, Paris, 529 pp.

BALANDIER, G. 1986 (3e éd.) Sens et puissance. — Quadrige/PUF, Paris.

BALANDIER, G. 1995 (3e éd.). Anthropologie politique. — Quadrige/PUF, Paris, 240 pp.

BANDZOUZI, A. 1992. (3e trim). Activités de son Eminence Diangienda. — Le kimbanguisme, **27**, pp. 47-49.

BATSIKAMA BA MAMPUYA MA NDWALA, R. 1971. Voici les Jagas de l'Histoire d'un peuple parricide bien malgré lui. — Office National de la Recherche et du Développement, Kinshasa.

BATSIKAMA BA MAMPUYA MA NDWALA, R. 1999. L'Ancien Royaume du Congo et les Bakongo (Ndona Béatrice & Voici les Jagas). — L'Harmattan, 320 pp.

C.R.I.S.P. 1960. Le Kimbanguisme. — C.R.I.S.P (8 janvier), 21 pp.

Demande du pardon du péché de nos ancêtres Adam et Eve : Synthèse finale, s.l.n.d.

DESROCHE, H. 1973. Sociologie de l'Espérance. — Archives des Sciences sociales. Calmann-Levy, Paris, 253 pp.

DEVISCH, R. 1996. «Le pillage de Jésus» : les églises de guérison et la villagisation de Kinshasa. — In : DE VILLERS, G. (Ed.), Phénomènes informels et dynamiques culturelles en Afrique. Cahiers africains, Institut africain-CEDAF, L'Harmattan, pp. 91-138.

DEVISCH, R. 1998. La parodie dans les églises de guérison à Kinshasa. Itinéraires et contacts de cultures. — L'Harmattan, vol. 25, pp.141-174.

ELEBE KAPALAY, E. s.d. Synthèse d'études bibliques de la 1re à la 4e génération. — Groupe des Jeunes kimbanguistes, Kinshasa, 70 pp.

http : // www.kimbanguisme.com/option6.htm.

Les 12 véritables tribus d'Israël enfin identifiées. — Zaïre actualités, s.l.n.d.

KIDIA MBETIENNE 1990. Kimbangu : inhabitation ou réincarnation du Saint-Esprit. — Faculté de théologie kimbanguiste, Lutendele (Kinshasa).

KIFF & MUKOLO SUMBULA 1995. A propos de la question : 'd'où vient l'homme noir'. — Tuku, 2.

LAMAN, K.E. 1936. Dictionnaire kikongo-français avec une étude phonétique décrivant les dialectes les plus importants de langue dite kikongo. — Mém. Institut royal colonial belge, Librairie Falk Fils-Georges Van Campenhout.

LEMBI DILULU, P. 1994. L'Eglise kimbanguiste à l'heure du roi Salomon. — Nsemo, 36, 8 pp.

LUKAU-LUA-NZAMBI s.d. L'alliance du Père Esprit Saint — AJACS-K (Association des jeunes de l'agglomération de la Cité Sainte, Nkamba – Nouvelle Jérusalem), Nkamba, Nouvelle Jérusalem, République du Zaïre, 78 pp.

MAC GAFFEY, W. 1969. The Beloved City. Commentary on a kimbanguist text. — Journal of religion in Africa, 2 (2) : 129-147.

MAC GAFFEY, W. 1983. Modern Kongo Prophets. — Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 252 pp.

MARY, A. 2000. Le bricolage africain des héros chrétiens. — Editions du Cerf, Paris, 217 pp.

MATONDO MBIYEYI, J. 1999. La prédestinée de l'homme noir à travers l'Eglise kimbanguiste, religion d'inspiration mixte chrétienne et négro-africaine : la religion à la recherche du développement intégral de l'homme selon la doctrine kimbanguiste. — Recherches africaines. L'Harmattan, 2 : 45-60.

MATUMONA SEKE 1989. Le concept de la Trinité dans la Bible et dans l'Eglise kimbanguiste. — Faculté de théologie kimbanguiste, Lutendele.

MUHLMANN, W.E. 1968. Messianismes révolutionnaires du Tiers Monde (trad. de l'allemand par J. Beaudrillard). — Gallimard, Paris, 385 pp.

NDAYWEL E NZIEM, I. 1992. Un nouveau champ heuristique à Kinshasa au Zaïre : le groupe de prière. — In : THOVERON, G. & LEGROS, H. (Eds), Mélanges Pierre Salmon. Civilisations, 40 (2) : 50-63.

NDAYWEL E NZIEM, I. 1993. La société zaïroise dans le miroir de son discours religieux (1990-1993). — Cahiers africains, Institut africain-CEDAF, L'Harmattan, 6, 102 pp.

NDAYWEL E NZIEM, I. 1998. Histoire générale du Congo. De l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique. — De Boeck & Larcier, Département Duculot, Paris-Bruxelles, 955 pp.

Rebâtissons avec Dieu – document kimbanguiste, s.l., 1992, 1 p.

SEGOND, L. 1963. Traduction de la Sainte Bible. — La Maison de la Bible, Genève.

SINDA, M. 1972. Le messianisme congolais et ses incidences politiques : kimbanguisme, matsouanisme, autres mouvements. — Payot, Paris.

THUMU MABIALA 1992. L'Afrique noire face aux idéologies modernes. Approche d'une éthique politique et sociale chrétienne. Cas de l'Angola, du Congo-Brazzaville et du Congo-Kinshasa. — Faculté de théologie kimbanguiste, Lutendele, 118 pp.

USTORF, W. 1975. Africanische Initiative. Das active Leiden des Propheten Simon Kimbangu. — Herbert Lang Bern, Frankfurt.

VAN WING, S.J. 1959 (2e éd.). Etudes bakongo. Sociologie - Religion et magie. — Desclée de Brouwer, Bruxelles, 512 pp.

Dancing the Apocalypse in Congo : Time, Death and Double in the Realm of the Apocalyptic Interlude

by

Filip DE BOECK*

Quand l'un mourait, il ressuscitait en double.
Il ne servait à rien de les tuer.
Morts, ils se relevaient et se multipliaient
(Amadou KONE, *Les coupeurs de têtes*).

KEYWORDS. — Congo-Kinshasa ; Apocalyse ; Millenarianism ; Death.

SUMMARY. — Temporality in contemporary Kinshasa is of a very specific, eschatological kind and takes its point of departure in the Bible, and more particularly in the Book of Revelation, which has become an omnipresent point of reference in Kinshasa's collective imagination. The lived-in time of everyday life in Kinshasa is projected against the canvas of the completion of everything, a completion which will be brought about by God. As such, the Book of Revelation is not only about doom and destruction, but it is essentially also a book of hope, a symbol of possible *recommencement*. Yet, the popular understanding of the Apocalypse very much centers on the crack of doom and the omnipotent presence of Evil, thereby contributing to the rapid demonization of everyday life in Congo. This article focuses on the impact of millennialism on the Congolese experience, in which the realities of the 'in-between' and the interstitial, which are so much celebrated by postcolonial theorists today, are constantly translated into mythical and prophetic terms as *apocalyptic interlude*.

MOTS-CLES. — Congo-Kinshasa ; Apocalypse ; Millénarisme ; Mort.

RESUME. — *Danser l'apocalypse au Congo : Temps, mort et double dans l'interlude apocalyptique.* — L'expérience du temps à Kinshasa est d'un ordre particulier, eschatologique, et prend comme point de départ l'Apocalypse de Jean qui est devenu, dans l'imaginaire collectif de cette ville, un point de référence essentiel. La vie quotidienne est continuellement interprétée en termes de fin des temps. Certes, l'Apocalypse ne traite pas uniquement de mort et de destruction ; c'est également un livre d'espérance et de «recommencement». Toutefois, la lecture qui en est faite est celle d'une chronique annonçant la mort d'une société dans laquelle le Mal est omniprésent. Cette contribution expose l'impact du millénarisme et examine comment les qualités de la réalité postcoloniale se laissent traduire en termes mythiques et prophétiques comme interlude apocalyptique.

* Member of the Academy ; Africa Research Centre, KU-Leuven, Tiensestraat 102, B-3000 Leuven (Belgium).

TREFWOORDEN. — Congo-Kinshasa ; Apocalyps ; Millenarisme ; Dood.

SAMENVATTING. — *De dans van de apocalyps in Congo : Tijd, Dood en Dubbel in het apocalyptisch interludium*. — De tijdsbeleving in Kinshasa is van een bijzondere, eschatologische, orde, met als vertrekpunt het boek van de Openbaring van Johannes, dat een cruciaal referentiepunt is geworden in de collectieve verbeeldingswereld van deze stad. Het dagelijkse leven wordt voortdurend geïnterpreteerd tegen de achtergrond van het einde der tijden. Uiteraard handelt het boek van de Apocalyps niet alleen over dood en vernietiging, maar is het ook een boek van hoop en 'recommencement'. Toch wordt de Apocalyps veeleer gelezen als kroniek van een aangekondigde dood van een samenleving waarin het Kwaad omnipresent is. Deze bijdrage behandelt de impact van millenarisme, en gaat na hoe de kwaliteiten van de postkoloniale realiteit zich voortdurend laten vertalen in mythische en profetische termen als apocalyptisch interludium.

Dancing the Apocalypse

A Saturday night in Kinshasa, May 2000 : in the *Mbuji-Mayi-Kananga*, one of the bars of the moment, beyond a sign that puts the place out of bounds for armed soldiers, a concrete stairways leads to a rooftop terrace. *Bana OK*, the heirs to one of the oldest Kinshasa-based orchestras, Franco's *Ok Jazz*, are getting ready for a late-night concert. Bathing in a glow of yellow, red and blue lights, the *Mbuji-Mayi-Kananga* occupies the three levels of a storey building along the avenue Lumumba in Masina, one of Kinshasa's most densely populated neighbourhoods, also known as *Chine populaire*. Around midnight, after a couple of tunes to warm up the audience, everyone starts dancing, hesitantly at first, but soon with more fervour, in between tables and white plastic garden chairs, to the phrenic rumba rhythms. From the terrace, and much to the delight of the street children below, the sounds of the music drift out into the night over the endless corrugated iron roofs of this vast *cité*.

Downstairs, on the ground level, in the light of passing traffic and small kerosene lamps, women and girls hope to sell some groundnuts, cigarettes, firewood, and sometimes even themselves, to a never-ending caravan of passers-by still trying to make their way home at this late hour. For lack of public transport and fuel, many will have to get onto *ligne 11*, *i.e.* to catch the 'foot-bus' and walk, often for hours, to reach home, while some of the more fortunate ones might get onto one of the open army trucks that L.D. Kabila put at the city's disposal to help solve the transportation problem. On these trucks, transport is for free (*ya ofele*), but due to the reckless driving of the conductors and the unsafe conditions in which the passengers have to make the ride, people have started commenting that only death is really for free (*okufi ya ofele*, 'you die for free' on these trucks).

Upstairs, in the meantime, as in other nights, *Bana Ok*'s playlist consists of the songs that have come to form part of Kin's rich collective musical memory. The band's songs propel the dancing crowd back into the sixties and seventies

(STEWART 2000), a period which is now looked upon with growing nostalgia as a time when the future still looked bright, modernity's promises were still within reach, and *Kin-la-Belle* was still *Kin kiesse,* the city of joy, or *Kin makambo*, the turbulent city.

While listening to the music in that warm night in Kinshasa, my attention was caught by the orchestra's *atalaku,* the 'shouting deejay' who incites the dancing crowd with his slogans during the rumba-soukous' fast dancing part *(seben)*. In his 'shouts' I could discern a repeated reference to the number 666. In the context of contemporary Kinois urbanity, the city's typical rumba-soukous has always generated and represented an oneiric space of pleasure and enjoyment. In these arenas of popular culture dancing, drinking and ludic sexuality defined and firmly rooted the city's inhabitants into the excess of an eternal 'now', a euphoric post-independence space "ivre de l'espoir des chairs et du sang" (YOKA 1999, p. 164), from which death was firmly excluded. Today, however, this very same site of pleasure, in which death was totally crushed and obliterated, has become one of the main sites, along with the 'enchanting' spaces of Christian fundamentalism, in which temporality and mortality are reintroduced. As such, Kinshasa reveals a fundamental part of itself in the bar and the church. These form the city's two main public spaces of appearance (and there now exists a considerable overlap between these two spaces, for many churches have their own orchestras which transform the sites of the religious gathering into a frenzied dance-hall, using the rhythms of popular tunes but replacing the secular lyrics by more religious ones). It is in both these spaces, also, that *fête* and *folie*, pleasure and psychosis, become interlocked and open up into the dimension which underlies all of Kinshasa's reality : the dimension of death, long denied but now undeniable. Death has become omnipresent throughout the city : in the visible form of funeral wakes *(matanga)* that transform houses and streets into public sites of mourning and mercy, or in its more invisible form, that of the 'second world', a shadow city which is constantly present as a parallel world of nocturnal and evil forces in the minds and lives of most Kinois.

The reintroduction of temporality, and thus of death, in contemporary Kinshasa is of a very specific, eschatological kind and takes its point of departure in the Bible, and more particularly in the Book of Revelation, which has become an omnipresent point of reference in Kinshasa's collective imagination. The number 666 which was being shouted over the rooftops of Masina by the *atalaku* of *Bana OK* refers, of course, to the Beast mentioned in the Book of Revelation [1] *. Not unsurprisingly, in the fundamentalist Christian traditions of the countless churches that have sprung up in the African urban locale and that bear witness to the luxuriant growth of millenarianism throughout Africa (CORTEN & MARSHALL-FRATANI 2001, WEBER 2000, and from a comparative perspective HALL *et al.* 2000, ROBBINS & PALMER 1997, STONE 2000), the Beast —

---

* The numbers in brachets [ ] refer to the notes p. 71.

the Antichrist — is commonly taken to be the *vicarius filii Dei* or the *rex sacerdotulus*, the Pope and the Church of Rome. More generally, the Beast refers to Satan and his demons. It is especially in chapters 8 to 19 of the Book of Revelation that Satan occupies an important place. The opening of the seventh seal ushers in angels and trumpet blasts that, together with vivid descriptions of terror, plagues, torment and great woes, symbolize hard-hitting judgement messages, directed against Satan's system of things. Before the seventh and last trumpet calls forth great voices that proclaim the thousand-year Kingdom of God and of his Christ, there is a whole interlude describing the war between diabolic swarms and the hosts of heaven. In this interval judgements are executed against false religion (Babylon and its great whore) and against ungodly political systems and doomed unbelievers, symbolized by dreadful wild beasts, prototypes of Antichrist. Satan, bound only to rise again after a thousand years in order to submit mankind to a final test, will be finally disposed of and destroyed in a lake of fire, along with death, hell, his demons and any rebels on earth who follow him.

By referring to the number 666, the musicians of *Bana OK*, from within the hedonistic site of dance and enjoyment, were thus producing the linkage between dance, death, doom and judgement, opening up an eschatological space, plunging the audience into the abyss of the end of times and linking the apocalyptic description in the Book of Revelation to the realities of everyday life as experienced by the inhabitants of Kinshasa today. In this collective experience of the Kinois, in which stress is predominantly put on the 'death of the world' (*mokili ekokufa na l'an 2000*, 'the world is going to die in 2000'), the current and very real hardships of life in the Congolese capital (war, violence, starvation, looting, social breakdown) are interpreted in light of this end (fig. 1). In it the lived-in time of everyday life in the city is projected against the canvas of the completion of everything, a completion which will be brought about by God and which, so far hidden, is already present with Him. As such the Book of Revelation is not only about doom and destruction, but it is essentially also a book of hope, a symbol of possible *recommencement*. As one Kinois put it : "the apocalyptic vision is a way to wash your heart and to start a new phase of life". This message of resurrection and entrance in the Glorious Millennial Reign is also a message that is strongly stressed by many of the churches. A Watchtower pamphlet (December 1, 1999, p. 9), which was widely circulated in Kinshasa under the title 'Should you Fear the Apocalypse ?' (fig. 2), thus stated : "True, Revelation does contain judgement messages against the wicked. But in their public witnessing, God's servants focus mainly on the wonderful hope set out in the Bible, including that in the Apocalypse, or Revelation. Thus they do not add to or take anything away from the prophetic words found therein. — Revelation 22 : 18, 19."

And yet, the lived experience of most in the Congolese postcolony constantly contradicts these glad tidings which are expressed in the churches' creation of such geographies of hope. In the Book of Revelation the judgement to come is announced by the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud with great power and

glory. His coming, though, is preceded by terrors, and by a magic interlude between his preliminary and his final victory of Satan. Life for most in Congo situates itself in this interlude in which Satan fully reigns. For some others, the world has arrived at the end of the thousand-year 'day' of judgement and thus at the moment in which Satan is briefly released again. Thus, the popular understanding of the Apocalypse very much centres on the crack of doom and the omnipotent presence of Evil, thereby contributing to the rapid demonization of everyday life in Congo.

As such, the Congolese experience is one in which the realities of the 'in-between' and the interstitial, which are so much celebrated by postcolonial theorists today, are constantly translated into mythical and prophetic terms as *apocalyptic interlude*. Most Congolese seem to experience their existence as lived in an intermediate, in-between space in which salvation and doom, the revivalist moment and the presence of the Anti-Christ, or Saving and Condemnation, occur simultaneously. The temporal scope in which the post-colonial dynamics of the apocalyptic interlude unfolds is not that of 'real time'. In this specific time-space the complex chronology between the various phases announced in the Book of Revelation (the first and second Coming of Christ, the presence and second release of Satan) has collapsed into a confusing present in which all of these moments somehow come together in what is often a swirling conceptual and existential imbroglio, arising out of the explosion of the linear, though complex, narrative chronology which is outlined in the Book of Revelation. In this constant transfiguration of daily reality, with its juxtapositions and contradictions generated in the 'telescoped' experience of the passage of time and of events as laid out in the Apocalypse, there is a constant and often astonishing switch from the social to the semiotic, leading to what could be described as an over-production, or an 'over-heating' of meaning. In the remainder of this article, I will analyse how the experience of the apocalyptic interlude impacts on the city's daily life, and above all, upon its capacity to symbolize and produce leading sense. I will argue that common structures of meaning themselves have changed in the process. In particular I will focus upon the newly emerging place of death in the urban Congolese context, and the relationships between this growing presence of death and the notion of the double in the articulation between the imaginary and the symbolic level.

Time : The End of the World and the Globalization of Satan

When we will enter the year 2000 the heavens will open their gates. Then, God will descend. He will come down and seat Himself on the royal throne. Jesus will sit down to His right and the prophets to His left (for example Moses and Eliah with the angels). The judgement will commence. After the judgement the good people without sins will rise to heaven. The sinners will stay on earth. Behind Jesus, heaven will close itself, and here on earth Hell will be established. There will be much

suffering. Fire will burn everything. People will throw themselves into the fire. They will wage war. Those who are in heaven will experience delicious joys. No more suffering, plenty of food and singing, joy upon joy. After the first judgement Satan will establish himself in the world, and will start his reign. The world will transform into a Hell, and the Bible talks about the end of the world. The Bible tells us that when we arrive towards the end of the world wars start, the end enters, children no longer respect their parents. That is what we live today, that is why we see looting, wars, breakdown of authority. Then, afterwards, when we will have entered Hell here on earth, Satan will introduce a system with a stamp. The stamp will have the number 666. It is Satan's number. The stamp is like a *laissez-passer.* Satan will put a stamp with the number 666 on our arm. Without the number 666 you won't receive food. Without 666 you won't be able to buy things. Everybody with the 666 mark will be able to circulate freely and accumulate goods at will. Those who are saved by Satan with the number 666 will receive food for free. But without the number 666 in your body you will continue to suffer. Famine will be everywhere, things to eat will have disappeared. Suffering will be tremendous. Because of this suffering you will want to kill yourself. However, death will no longer be as before. It will no longer be the end of the world. The suffering of those who are not on Satan's side will be eternal. But those who accept to suffer and refuse to wear the 666 sign will be saved when Jesus will come down into this world for the second time, for at that moment he will proceed with the final judgement : 'You, who were you ?' 'I was a preacher, preaching the word to my neighbors.' 'And I was a musician, I made people dance.' 'And I was rich, I helped the poor.' At that moment, everyone wearing Satan's mark, the number 666, will be condemned forever. And then the world will be destroyed and Satan will be drowned in the water, under the earth. It will be like in Noah's time : God will destroy the world and create another one. And that is why we witness all these new things : the churches of spiritual awakening, the Kimbanguist churches, the church of the Africans and their God Nzambi a Mpungu. At the start of the year 2000, God will come down and destroy the world at midnight (Conversation with Vero, adept of the *Eglise Evangélique Libre d'Afrique*, EELDA, September 1999, Kinshasa).

Vero's account fully illustrates the contradictions and oscillations between the geographies and chronologies of hope and hell that I pointed out above. For those who refuse Satan's stamp, suffering will be eternal and yet they will be saved in the end. Although this account thus gives meaning to the current crisis in which most Kinois find themselves — those who suffer refused to sign a contract with Satan —, it also squarely situates Kinshasa within the Devil's reign. As such, Kinshasa's collective social imaginary echoes the message of the fundamentalist Christian churches. A 1992 pamphlet of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, which widely circulated in a French translation in Kinshasa in the late 1990s, further develops this theme : 'Who Really Dominates the World ?'. Above this text the pamphlet shows a hand which holds the globe (fig. 3). On page three of the pamphlet the answer to the question is revealed : "The leader of the world is identified. The Bible says : 'and the whole world is in the power of the evil one'. Moreover the Bible identifies evil in these terms :

'that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world', 1 John 5 :19 ; Revelation 12 : 9." This message of the globalization of Evil (and jointly of God) which is propagated by Christian fundamentalism (and which, ironically, is the only form of globalization in which the Congolese, both as a target of and in praying against Evil, really take part and can claim a leading role) has become a popular theme which is further developed in the city's social imaginary. A recent work of art by a young Kinshasa-based artist by the name of Pume Bylex, for example, forms a further elaboration of this theme [2]. His art work, a Boschian assemblage set in a small showcase, is entitled 'Humanity taken hostage' (*L'humanité prise en otage*) and was described in detail by Bylex himself during an interview I conducted at his modest home in Masina, Kinshasa, April 2001. Afterwards he also elaborated in writing upon the meaning he tried to convey with this work (see French original in Annex 1) :

Perspectives and visions of the artwork
- From left to right the vision of the devil's special envoy : established as the commander of the planet's unsettling. This commander with his special braid is endowed with a redoubtable power.
- On the far right ; the devil, prince of darkness and in love with chaos, holds on to the planet with his grinding beak ; to exercise all his power on earth. His grinding jaws also prevent him from losing his grip on the globe. With his vividly red tongue, he licks the planet to make it smooth and light ; so that it can be transported easily by his commander.
- In the globe's center, man is represented as the 'master of the earthly realm'. That is why he has a moustache, which denotes his authority. But now he is totally binded by the Devil, not capable of distinguishing the truth, nor reality.
- Actually, the commander has been given a special grade ; to underscore that he is fully licensed by his master. Secondly, his legs are arrow-shaped to illustrate that he moves fast towards total disaster ; that is to say, he wants to lead the world towards a total annihilation. His master is seated on his arms, which are shaped like wings and carry the globe. The master holds on to them tightly. The commander's eyes are wide open as a result of the muscular effort of his uninterrupted howling. His teeth like daggers show that he wants, incessantly, to destroy all the barriers blocking his way. Moreover, the environment in which the devil and his special envoy find themselves is marked by : radar fields which the devil has invented to enter into contact with all of the planet's satellite networks.

The known perspectives of the commander
Notes : the commander, alias the master's disciple, is represented in three different guises :
1. The form of the panther with teeth-daggers. A panther with an antenna-horn (yellowish-gold) which allows him to enter in immediate contact with his master (the Devil).
2. The form of the migrating locust which bespeaks his calling as a die-hard looter (meaning :) ; that he terrorizes the entire world with his systematic looting.

3. The form of the <u>winged giraffe</u>. Here, the mighty and long neck of this giraffe enables him to snatch his meals (his victims) from a great distance. His sapphire-blue, sacred wings reveal to us the ways he strolls through the emptiness. And this chosen colour which is 'blue' proves beyond doubt his fidelity to the interdictions that are imposed by the master (Devil).

Different visions
a) the metallic points that form part of the globe represent the world's different satellite systems.
b) the image of weakened continents which fall from the planet.

Again, the message of hope which lies embedded in the Book of Revelation is present in the artist's vision : in the very last line of his account he describes how the 'weak' or poor continents (in his view Africa, Latin America and Australia) drop from the globe. As such they are saved from the 'Commander's' clutches, whereas the rich continents face total annihilation by the forces of Evil, the Commander and the Master. Nevertheless, this message of hope is but a small footnote to the meticulous and almost obsessive detail with which Bylex imagines, represents and describes the Forces of Evil. As such, for Pume Bylex, as for many others in Kinshasa, the contemporary life-world is continuously viewed as an Armaggedon, a place where the demons gather in their war against God (see Book of Revelation, 16 :16 : "And they assembled them at the place which is called in Hebrew Ar-mà-ged'don." This Armaggedon is currently described in Kinshasa as a 'second world' (*deuxième monde*), 'second city' (*deuxième cité*), 'pandemonium world' (*monde pandémonium*), or 'fourth dimension' (*quatrième dimension, i.e.* one of the multiple 'invisible' worlds of what is referred to as *kindokinisme*) [3].

Death : The Place of Death between 'New World' and 'Second World'

Depending on one's interpretation of the apocalyptic timescale, the Day of Judgement is either about to happen (*e.g.* on January 1st, 2000, or in 2050, according to some today) or lies already behind one, meaning that the world now lives in the grip of Satan. In the first case, salvation is near for those without sins. Says Bibiche, a 20 year-old student, during a conversation we had :

There will be a flood. Water will be plenty, everywhere. And then we'll all die. There will be an eternal night. Those with a clean heart will resuscitate. Those with sins will go down in the water forever. Heaven will fall down upon us, and we won't recognize each other any more. This will be the century of our death. Sinners will die, those who committed adultery, those with AIDS, those who drink, those who dance to worldly music ('the tunes of the country', *banzembo ya mokili*). More than 500,000 men will die, and 3 million women. All those who won't obey the Word will die. Before Christ's Second Coming, wars will be fought everywhere, we will live hunger and famine, the churches of false prophets will multiply and the witches will encroach upon us. All of these things can already be seen in Congo today.

In the second case, one already lives in this drowned world, in the grip of the forces of Evil (and indeed, Bibiche's description of war, famine, religious fanaticism and witchcraft sounds true enough in the Congolese context). Here, however, hope is not entirely absent either, because one can still be saved in a distant future, when Christ will descend for the second time and rescue those without Satan's stamp : the 666 sign. For many Kinois, who seem to be caught between a vision of a (nearby or distant) New World (*mokili ya sika*) and the constant intrusion of a 'second world' of demons and devils, both timescales seem to coexist simultaneously.

Typical of the diffuse timescale of the apocalyptic interlude is the changed place that death occupies in the lived world of many Congolese. As Vero expressed in the statement I quoted above, not only is death, in the apocalyptic interlude, no longer as before, it is no longer the end of the world either.

For quite some time now, death, as metaphor and as reality, seems to have become omnipresent in Congo. Real, tangible death has flooded the country to such an extent that people say that "there aren't enough tears left to mourn all the dead" (DE BOECK 1998, p. 164). At the same time, death has become a model for social and political action. For example, on March 9, 2000, in eastern Congo, the women of the occupied Kivu province declared a four-day 'mourning' period to protest against the daily realities of violence and poverty in which they had to live. On the first day the women stayed at home, weeping, lamenting, and refusing to eat. The next three days they dressed in black, covering their head, a sign of sorrow. On the 6th of April, 2000, thousands of kilometres to the west, in Kinshasa, Etienne Tshisekedi's UDPS (*L'Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social*) announced, for the n-th time, a 'dead city day' (*journée ville morte*) to protest against the continuing warfare in Congo. In this country where, for many years now, political action has been translated in the creation of a 'dead city', and where funerals and mourning ceremonies (*matanga*) have become the motor of social and political criticism (VANGU 1997), Kinshasa has sometimes been described in the local press as a necropolis, a *cité cimetière* (NZEY n.d.), the capital of a 'thanatocracy' (YAMB 1997), the inhabitants of which are more dead than alive, while cemeteries are overcrowded and corpses are simply abandoned anonymously at the entrance of mortuaries (GROOTAERS 1998). In Congo, not only has death become a metaphor to speak of certain areas of daily life (BIAYA 1998), the 'postcolony' in its totality has become a *postmortem* (DE BOECK 1998), "a place and a time of *half-death*, or, if one prefers, *half-life*" (MBEMBE 2001, p. 197), where the living and the dead have become interchangeable, in a movement of generalized and quite literal zombification that permeates society as a whole. That is why RDC (*République Démocratique du Congo*) has become, in popular speech, *Rdécès*, the 'deceased' or 'dead' Republic of Congo, the 'country that has died' (*mboka ekufi*) and where, people say, *on répare même les cadavres* (even corpses are being repaired). In a sense, one could argue that, just like the *Verteufelung* of Congolese society is the most tangible form in which the

country partakes in 'globalization', death is the only tangible kind of 'democracy' that has been installed in Congo so far. Papa Nova, a shopkeeper in the town of Kikwit, 500 kilometres to the east of Kinshasa, has painted onto the wall of his small pharmacy-shop : 'Rich and Poor Equality in Death - Cemetery' (*Riche et pauvre égalité à la mort - cimetière*). It is, however, symptomatic of the deep social, economic and political crisis which Congo is passing through that death in itself can no longer be *posited* and given an unproblematic place in this societal context. The intrinsic quality of death has changed. The dead increasingly interfere in the lives of the living. The streets of Congo's cities resonate with stories and rumours of returning dead, of 'nocturnal husbands' and 'spouses' (*époux/épouses de nuit*) who return at night to have sex with the widowed partner they left behind, or of dead people who were spotted digging for diamonds in Angola. Dead people foretell coming political events through the mouth of mediums in sects such as that of Ebale Mbonge. They resuscitate and multiply themselves into doubles.

Death has also become embedded in altered structures of solidarity, of kinship and relations of gerontocracy, as is attested by the changing position of the *noko*, the maternal uncle, whose authority constantly diminishes, most notably in matters related to death. Said one informant, during a mourning ceremony in Camp Luka, a popular neighbourhood of Kinshasa :

> Today, in the white man's village [the urban *cité*], things have changed. In the village where we come from, the maternal uncle was a chief. If a problem arose in the family, people called on him for advice and guidance. Today, the uncle has lost that status. In the city, the uncle has become a useless thing, considered by many as a sorcerer, especially by all who pray and for whom things traditional are satanic. Before, when we buried a dead body, it was the uncle who addressed the family, and when we returned from the burial place, it was the uncle who 'lifted the palm branch' [formally ended the mourning period]. The uncle was the 'owner of the dead person', he was the first responsible. Today, the uncles have multiplied. They are now three. The actual uncle is considered a nuisance. People flee him for fear he will ask a contribution to the funeral. He no longer addresses the family. Instead the preacher has become the uncle who speaks and directs the mourning ceremony. And the third uncle is *Cataphar* [from *catafalque*, funeral chapel]. Before, the uncle received funerary gifts from the attendants during the funeral. Now these gifts mainly go to the preacher and to *Cataphar*, for the payment of the location of the draped chapel. The preacher and the funeral chapel have become the new uncles, whereas the real uncle now hides during funerals for fear of being accused of the deceased person's death [Fieldnotes, September 2000].

The 'multiplication of the uncle' in this mortuary context also points to the changed place accorded to death itself. At the same time, in the diffuse timescale of the apocalyptic interlude, the broader sociopolitical crisis has created a general atmosphere of connivance, familiarity and interchangeableness between the living and the dead : it zombifies and turns the living into 'living dead', while the dead, with disembodiment, increasingly seem to expand their presence into the

realm of the living. The living, in short, have become near-dead, whereas the dead have become near-living.

This theme of the 'living dead' is very much alive in the minds and experience of most Kinois. In April 2001, I visited a friend in his homestead near Lemba Terminus, a crowded and seething market square where people try to get into one of the small VW *fulafula* taxi buses and where young *cambistes*, illicit money changers, await their clients. On one of the garden walls in my friend's *parcelle* somebody had painted a black square which served as a blackboard for the children. One of the little nieces of the household, fourteen-year old Mimi, had just written down a draft of the essay she had to prepare for school. The topic she had chosen for her essay was the following (original French text in Annex 2) :

> *Topic : 'the dead are not dead'*
> In the history of this world, ever since its creation until today, the life of Man ends with death. Man is alive when he lives, but dead when he no longer lives. However, in analysing today's topic we will comment upon this fact : the dead are not dead, they are active in the 'second world'. According to the Bible they are not dead until the Last Judgement. In the next few lines we will elaborate upon this thought. The dead are not dead due to their preceding actions that have made them immortal, as we have illustrated above, a person's acts which will never be forgotten. And by connecting this logic to the Bible, we will see that the dead will be judged according to the acts that posed before their death. These acts never die, in a way. This also illustrates that the dead are not really dead. They are somewhere while waiting for a judgement of their previous acts (Mimi in person).

One of the Bible passages that Mimi was referring to is no doubt John 5 : 28-29 : "Do not marvel at this ; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgement." [4] Just as the new churches and prayer movements impact heavily on long-standing structures of kinship and authority, they also contribute to the growing interchangeableness of living and dead by constantly focusing on these messages of resurrection as framed with the specific religious time frame of the postcolony. This religious zombification can be witnessed in all the *réveil* churches, where accounts of returnees from death abound. The following are excerpts from an interview with Mama Nsasa, a schoolteacher and member of the church CADC (*Communauté de l'Assemblée de Dieu au Congo*), who recounts how she died and returned to the living :

> In the compound in which I live there are many tenants. One day, everybody had gone off to a prayer campaign. I was home alone. Children were playing outside. Towards the evening I put my chair outside, near the door. The doors and windows of the other tenants' rooms were closed. Nobody was there but me. Then I heard a voice who called me three times : 'Don't be afraid. It is me, God, who is calling you. Go inside the house, lock the door, kneel and pray.' I did so and prayed for a long time. Then I heard God's voice again : 'Don't be afraid. It is me, God. I want

to put you to sleep to make you see things. I will take your breath [your life]. Afterwards your body will remain. The living will sing and pray for you. Tell them before not to mourn you, not to bury you, you will return to life. Tell your landlord and the director of your school. Tell them not to search for you if you go missing for two or three days.' When I heard His voice who told me about this coming event, my spirit was no longer of this world. My spirit was gone, my voice muted. The next day I went and told the people what had happened to me. Everybody said this was the work of God.

[...]

Days later, I was anxiously waiting for the event to happen. I gave my watch and my shoes to a woman who leads the prayer group, for these things no longer belonged to me. Then I saw a light. It guided me to the church. It was packed with people and everybody was praying. I saw them pray but I could only hear their voices very vaguely. In which world am I ? In which world are they living ? I fell asleep on my chair while contemplating this light. Then prayer halted and at that very moment I heard some call me three times. I replied three times : Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. I fell onto the ground immediately. At that moment I was dead, but my breath was still there, as if I didn't yet have a visa to leave. The preacher and the deacons rushed towards me. They massaged my feet, my arms, my head. They tried to move my body but it had become rigid. I couldn't answer them because my voice had left me. When they asked whether they should pray for me I nodded my head. They prayed, and when they uttered a final 'Amen', my breath was interrupted and I was dead.

After a lengthy account of her passage in heaven, where "all the 'images' [*bilili*, s. *elili* : shadow, but also image, photograph, portrait, symbol, reflection] of all the people of the world" are stored, she returns to the world :

From heaven I saw the whole world beneath me. Two days had passed since they had taken me, and my body had become cold, as if somebody had put me in a refrigerator. The people standing around my body touched me and only felt the cold, and the women started to cry and beg God to let me return in the world. They were ready to close the lid of my coffin. Then a preacher who lived in Ngaba [a neighbourhood of Kinshasa] arrived on the spot. He was guided by the Spirit. He ordered people to start praying to bring me back to life so that I could bear witness of what I had been shown in heaven. In the evening of the second day, God liberated me and put me back in the world. On my way back I crossed groups of dead people with chains around their arms, their neck and their ankles. They were dressed in black, as in mourning, while they descended to Satan. I was still dead but my voice was freed, I could speak. I started to speak about my voyage and the preacher wrote everything down what I told him. When I finished I was dead again, and the preacher started to pray to God to return me for good to the world. And finally, on the third day, God worked a miracle and resuscitated me. I moved an arm first and then a leg. The preacher said : 'let us pray, for she is returning.' When they ended a prayer with 'Amen !' my ears were unplugged. And with the second 'Amen !' my eyes opened. On the third 'Amen !' I stood up. A disgusting odour came out of my body. Everybody fled away and watched me from a distance, but

the preacher ordered the women to lead me into a nearby house and wash and clothe me. They gave me some water to drink and blessed some food which they gave me also, and which I swallowed with great difficulty. While I was dead the blood and the water in my body hadn't circulated, my intestines had become hard, but slowly I returned to life and started to give witness of God's miracle [Fieldnotes, notebooks 78/78bis].

In contemporary Kinshasa, children are considered to cross the borderlines into the 'second world' of evil with as much ease as Mama Nsasa's passage between life and death, on her way up to heaven and back (DE BOECK 2000a). Increasingly, children between age 4 and 18 are being accused of causing misfortunes and mishaps, as well as the illness or death of other children and adults in their family and neighbourhood environment. The following is an account given by a 30 year-old AIDS patient, a mother of three children. At the time of my interview with her, she was being treated in a healing church together with her 4 year-old daughter, Nuclette, accused of witchcraft :

I have suffered a lot in my life. I sold vegetables at the market. The father of Nuclette was deeply in love with me but now he has left me. I was responsible for this separation : all of a sudden I could not return his love any more.

One day, I noticed that my market money had disappeared. People told me that Nuclette had stolen it, but I wouldn't believe them. But then, Nuclette began to be suspected as a witch by our neighbors. Apparently, Nuclette had tried to bewitch a woman who lives in our neighbourhood. Nuclette had changed herself and appeared like an adult woman when she went to harm this neighbor. One day, when I was out, that neighbor came over to our house and started complaining to my mother : 'How can you accept to live together in one house with the same witch-child that has tried to bewitch and kill us in our home ? We are no family of yours, we didn't know that this child is a witch. Why does she try to harm us ?'

My mother and I decided to take the child to a prayer session at *pasteur* Norbert's. That evening I washed my two other kids, and we all went together to the 'prayer control'. The preacher started to prophesy and it was affirmed that Nuclette was a witch but that the two other children were not touched by this evil. Then the *pasteur* asked me where my husband was. I told him that he had left our neighbourhood and was now living in a different area in the city. I didn't tell him my husband's name, but he cited it and said : it was Nuclette who caused your marriage to break up. She made your husband leave. And when you were sleeping in your bed at night she came with other witch-children and injected you by means of a diabolical needle with contaminated blood. This is how I started developing AIDS. I became very, very thin. People started saying that I had AIDS. Thanks to the preacher of this church we now know that the AIDS is diabolical. I have been here in the church for over a month, and the preacher has purified me. I was dying when I arrived here but now I am cured of AIDS [Interview, Selembo, September 1999].

In other cases little girls are suspected of transforming themselves into stunningly beautiful women to lure their own fathers and uncles into their bed, to snatch away their testicles or penis, and to cause their impotence or even death ;

illustrating the fact that Congo's current societal crisis is, to an important degree, also an etiological crisis, children are also believed to be at the origin of madness, cancer, or heart attacks amongst their relatives and parents ; other kids appear to be three or four years old in the 'first world', but in the nocturnal, second world they have themselves already given birth to many children. These in turn become witch-children roaming through the streets of Kin. Others still transform themselves into 'mystic' serpents, crocodiles or *mami wata* sirens.

Double : Ontologizing *elili* or the Changing Nature of the Imaginary

The transformations of the qualities and realities of what constitutes life and death in the examples given above are characteristic of some deeper alterations that Congolese society as a whole is undergoing. Without going into the historical roots of these changes, this evolution may, on one important level, I would argue, be summarized as a generalized crisis of leading sense, or of representation. There is a continuous rupturing and/or multiplication of the links between signifier and signified (De Boeck 1996, p. 92), an interchangeableness of the factual and the fictional, a constant reminder of the arbitrariness of the signs in the lived world. There is, in short, the widespread feeling that what you see is not what you see, what is there is not what is 'really' there or, more importantly, is not what matters most. In urban Congo, in other words, the 'crisis' situates itself in the changing function and qualities of junction and disjunction (such as the disjunction between life and death), and hence in the changing role of the imaginary, which operates that disjunction or *dédoublement*. Put in a different way, the societal crisis in postcolonial Congo, as it is also, and most poignantly, expressed in the space of prayer, essentially evolves around the increasingly problematic positing or 'siting' of the double (for example, death as the double of the living, or the double as the living and familiar figure of death). Something seems to have changed in the slippage between visible and invisible, between reality and its double, its *elili*, to use Mama Nsasa's word, *i.e.* its shadow, spectre, reflection or image.

First, something has altered the significance of that *elili*, the quality of the symbol, in that it has become unmediated reality rather than representation of a reality. The symbol, in a way, has ceased to symbolize, but has become ontological instead, through a severing of the ties that operate the mechanisms of junction and disjunction, or doubling and dedoubling. Simultaneously, this constant (de)doubling, as in the multiplication of the uncle, or the doubling of dead people themselves, also leads to an overproduction, a multiplication of sense, through which the image becomes blurred. In Nsasa's account, many of the *bilili*, the images of the people of the world which she witnessed in heaven were overgrown with weeds. This is indicative of the changed nature and role of the imaginary as such. The unmediated imaginary doesn't underpin, institutionalize or legitimate other levels any more.

What may be observed here is, in a way, the *liquidation* of the double. In Congo, as elsewhere in Africa, there has always lurked, in a rather unproblematic way, another reality underneath the surface of visible reality, and the crossing from one world into the other has always been easy to effectuate, even though it could sometimes prove to be dangerous. Today, however, within the specific time-space of the apocalyptic interlude, this other, 'second world' increasingly seems to push aside and take over the 'first world' of daily 'reality'. The invasion of the space of the living by the dead is symptomatic of this more general change as is, for example, the invasion of the first world by the second in the form of 'witch-children' and zombies. A term which is currently used in Lingala to describe this change, this quality of mounting *Unheimlichkeit* and elusiveness of the world, is *mystique*. In the postcolonial *Afrique fantôme* that Congo seems to have become, it is increasingly frequent to designate people and situations as *mystique*, difficult to place, interpret and attribute meaning to.

In his insightful article on the 'thing' and its double in Cameroonian cartoons, MBEMBE (1997) remarks upon exactly "the new experience of speech and things" which I have indicated above, but nevertheless assumes that "despite the scale of the transformations and the discontinuities, an imaginary world has remained" (MBEMBE 1997, p. 153). More generally, the 'imaginary', a notion with a complex genealogical tree which includes Lacan, Sartre and Castoriadis, has become the social scientist's catchword to capture the ways in which a general subconsciousness, with its 'autochthonous networks of meaning', is related to the ruptures and constant alterations of a hybridized postcolonial urban (and increasingly also rural) landscape. Appadurai, for example, developed the concept of the imaginary, or more broadly, imagination, as an organized field of social practices in new global cultural processes (APPADURAI 1996). In the same vein BAYART (1996, p. 143), while discussing the cultural dimensions of political action, describes the imaginary as the dimension out of which emerges a continuous dialogue between tradition and innovation. Understood as such, the imaginary is primarily, he adds, interaction : interaction between the past, the present and the projection of a future, but also interaction between social actors, or between societies, the relations of which are selectively shaped by their respective 'imagining consciousnesses'. The mediating qualities of the imaginary turn it into an institutionalizing social force through which a society confronts and absorbs changes and mutations, and thereby defines and authors itself anew (DE BOECK 2000b). With the dissolution of more traditional anthropological locations for research (GUPTA & FERGUSON 1997a/b, OLWIG & HASTRUP 1997), the imaginary, as alternative 'field site', therefore presents novel opportunities for more detailed analytic scrutiny of the multiple transformations that African society is currently undergoing.

One of the leading questions throughout this contribution, though, has pointed in a different direction : what happens if the very nature of the imaginary as flexible but organized field of social practices has become disorganized and has

lost, at least to some extent, its localizing force and its capacity at creating continuity, at producing sociality ? The imaginary is the dimension of the invisible, but what if the invisible becomes visible ? What if the imaginary is no longer the socially productive phantasmagoric but constantly crosses the boundaries and invades the real in an unmediated, non-symbolic way ? What if the imaginary is no longer the 'irréel' but the *indiscernibleness* between 'réel' and 'irréel' (DELEUZE 1990, quoted by BAYART 1996, p. 138) ? What, in other words, when the dual and therefore non-alienated relationship with the double which until recently has certainly existed in local Congolese experience, most notably in relation to the ancestor and the witch, is becoming problematic and leads to alienation instead ? If death, as the double of the living, belongs to the realm of the imaginary, and if the imaginary thus operates the disjunction between life and death, what then does it mean for a societal constellation when that distinction ceases to exist ?

Lévi-Strauss and Lacan postulated the supremacy of the symbolic in relation to the imaginary. In this respect the signified is, to some extent, subordinated to the signifier : symbols are imbued with a larger reality value than that which they symbolize, *i.e.* the levels of the imaginary and of what Lacan calls 'the real' (that which is neither imaginary nor symbolic). Godelier, however, has offered a critique on these classic interpretations in which he turns around their primacy (GODELIER 1996). For Godelier the levels of the symbolic and the real are materializations of the imaginary, which (re)creates and institutionalizes society. Here the symbolic is not a mental structure but encompasses an internalized social structure, constructed by a social logic that is unconscious but that constantly externalizes itself, as social essence, in the domains of sexuality, power and politics. It is the concentration of the three orders of the imaginary, the symbolic and the *réel* which makes social reality, the social life of people, but it is the register of the imaginary that offers the fixed points from which a society invents itself.

What this contribution has intended to illustrate, through a focus on the Apocalypse, is the changing nature — should we call it crisis ? — of that imaginary, or better : of the qualities of junction and disjunction between the imaginary and the symbolic, and of the epistemological breach that accompanies these alterations in Congo today. This breach is basically appearing in what is a growing indiscernibleness between the 'first' and the 'second world', or between reality and its double. To return to the Congolese context : the 'first world' of social reality is only formed in relation to a 'second world', a mirror image which is rooted in a collective imaginary. And yet the qualities of reality in Congo are no longer those of Lacan's *réel* (hence the importance of 'appearance' in the Congolese context, I would add). Instead the 'second world' has become the first, just as the informal 'second' economy has become the first economic reality. No matter which reading one prefers (the one offered by Lacan or by Godelier), it is clear that the processes of dedoubling and mirroring do no longer

find an unproblematic place in the current Congolese context. The qualities of symbolization, in other words, no longer takes place as before. As such the linkages between the three orders of imaginary, symbolic and real, have changed, disappeared or weakened, and can no longer be trusted or taken for granted. The relation with the double has somehow ceased to be one of exchange and negotiation, and has turned from familiar to *mystique* instead. What needs to be understood much better to grasp the realities of such postcolonial transformations, however, is the precise nature of the changing, and thus historical, character of processes of symbolization — its stability, collective power, its relation to 'realism', its imagic form, its capacity to fixing ontology.

NOTES

[1] *Cf.* The Book of Revelation, 13 :18 : "This calls for wisdom : let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six."

[2] For a brief introduction to Pume Bylex's œuvre, see the *Revue Noire,* special issue on 'Kinshasa Zaïre', volume 21.

[3] *Kindokinisme* is derived from the Lingala term *kindoki,* 'witchcraft'. The use of the neologism is significant in that it illustrates how the unpredictable transformations of reality constantly seem to require new conceptual frameworks.

[4] See in this respect also John 11 : 11-14, on the resurrection of Lazarus, where Jesus compares death to a deep sleep, and Acts 24 : 15 : "[...] having a hope in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust."

REFERENCES

APPADURAI, A. 1996. Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. — Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, pp. 27-47.

BAYART, J.-F. 1996. L'illusion identitaire. — Fayard, Paris.

BIAYA, T.K. 1998. La mort et ses métaphores au Congo-Zaïre, 1990-1995. — *In* : GROOTAERS, J.-L. (Ed.), Mort et maladie au Zaïre. Institut Africain-CEDAF / L'Harmattan [*Cahiers Africains,* Tervuren / Paris, **31/32**], pp. 89-127.

CORTEN, A. & MARSHALL-FRATANI, R. (Eds.) 2001. Between Babel and Pentecost. Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America. — Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis.

DE BOECK, F. 1996. Postcolonialism, Power and Identity : Local and Global Perspectives from Zaïre. — *In* : WERBNER, R. & RANGER, T. (Eds.), Postcolonial Identities in Africa. Zed Books, London, pp. 75-106.

DE BOECK , F. 1998. Au-delà du tombeau : histoire, mémoire et mort dans le Congo/Zaïre postcolonial. — *In* : GROOTAERS, J.-L.S (Ed.), Mort et maladie au Zaïre. Institut

Africain-CEDAF / L'Harmattan [*Cahiers Africains,* Tervuren / Paris, **31/32**], pp. 129-72.

DE BOECK, F. 2000a. Le 'deuxième monde' et les 'enfants-sorciers' en République Démocratique du Congo. — *Politique Africaine,* **80** : 32-57.

DE BOECK, F. 2000b. Borderland Breccia : The Mutant Hero and the Historical Imagination of a Central-African Diamond Frontier. — *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History,* **1** *(2)* : [electronic journal].

DELEUZE, G. 1990. Pourparlers. 1972-1990. — Minuit, Paris.

GODELIER, M. 1996. L'énigme du don. — Fayard, Paris.

GROOTAERS, J.-L. 1998. 'Reposer en désordre' : enterrements et cimetières à Kinshasa à la lumière de la presse zaïroise (1993-1996). — *In :* GROOTAERS, J.-L.s (Ed.), Mort et maladie au Zaïre. Institut Africain-CEDAF / L'Harmattan [*Cahiers Africains,* Tervuren / Paris, **31/32**], pp. 11-61.

GUPTA, A. & FERGUSON, J. (Eds.) 1997a. Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology. — Duke University Press, Durham.

GUPTA, A. & FERGUSON, J. (Eds.) 1997b. Anthropological Locations. Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science. — University of California Press, Berkeley.

HALL, J. R., SCHIULER, P.D. & TRINH, S. 2000. Apocalypse Observed. Religious Movements and Violence in North America. — Routledge, London.

KONE, A. 1997. Les coupeurs de têtes (Roman). — CEDA / Editions Sépia, Abidjan / Saint-Namur.

MBEMBE, A. 1997. The 'Thing' and its Double in Cameroonian Cartoons. — *In* : BARBER, K. (Ed.), Readings in African Popular Culture. Indiana University Press / James Currey, Bloomington & Indianapolis / Oxford.

MBEMBE, A. 2001. On the Postcolony. — University of California Press, Berkeley.

NZEY VAN MUSALA (s.d.) Cité cimetière. Kinshasa (unpublished theatre play).

OLWIG, K.F. & HASTRUP, K. (Eds.) 1997. Siting Culture. The Shifting Anthropological Object. — Routledge, London.

ROBBINS, T. & PALMER, S. J. (Eds.) 1997. Millennium, Messiahs and Mayhem. Contemporary Apocalyptic Movements. — Routledge, London.

STEWART, G. 2000. Rumba on the River. A History of Popular Music of the Two Congos. — Verso, London/New York.

STONE, J.R. 2000. Expecting Armaggedon. Essential Readings in Failed prophecy. — Routledge, London.

VANGU NGIMBI, I. 1997. Jeunesse, funérailles et contestation socio-politique en Afrique. — L'Harmattan, Paris.

WEBER, E. 2000. Apocalypses. Prophecies, Cults and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages. — Pimlico, London.

YAMB, G. 1997. Thanatocratie, servitude ou démocratie ? : essai sur le sens du jeu de la mort sur la scène politique africaine. — *Zaïre*-Afrique, **37** (311) : 29-47.

YOKA, L.M. 1999. Kinshasa, signes de vie. — Institut Africain-CEDAF / L'Harmattan [*Cahiers africains,* **42**], Tervuren / Paris.

ANNEX 1 : PUME BYLEX' TEXT ON 'HUMANITY TAKEN HOSTAGE'

Perspectives et visions de l'œuvre
- De gauche à droite la vision de l'envoyé spécial du diable : ici établit comme le commandant du dérèglement de la planète. Ce commandant au galon spécial est doté d'une puissance redoutable.
- A l'extrême droite ; le diable, prince du ténèbre et amoureux du désordre, s'accroche sur la planète par son bec engrainé [sic] ; pour exercer de toute son influence sur terre. Son bec engrainé lui évite également de se faire décroché du globe. Par sa langue rouge-vive, il lèche la planète pour la rendre lisse et légère ; afin d'être très facile à transporter pour son commandant.
- Au centre du globe, l'homme est représenté comme «maître de l'environnement terrestre», pourvu des moustaches pour jouer son autorité. Mais ici, il est complètement aveuglé par le Diable : ne distinguant ni la vérité, ni la réalité.
- Par ailleurs, le commandant est premièrement galonné d'un grade spécial ; soulignant qu'il est complètement agréé par son maître. Et deuxièmement, ses jambes sont en flèche pour traduire sa grande vitesse vers le désastre : c'est-à-dire, qu'il veut précipiter la planète vers la destruction radicale. Ses bras en aile (transportant le globe) au dessus duquel son maître se repose tout en s'y accrochant séverement. Les yeux du commandant sont grandement ouverts pour traduire ses cris ininterrompus en raison de stimulis musculaire.
  Ses dents en poignards d'attaque, témoignent qu'il cherche sans cesse à se débarasser de son passage toute barrière génante. Outre que ça, l'environnement qui cadre le diable et son envoyé spécial, est doté de part et d'autres ; des champs de radars que le diable a imaginé pour entrer en communication avec tous les réseaux satellitaire que possède la terre.

Les perspectives notoires du commandant
  Notes : Le commandant ou disciple du maître, présente en lui seul un aspect à triple formes :
1. La forme de «la panthère» pourvue de dents-poignards. Panthère dotée d'une antenne-corne (jaune dorée) lui permettant d'entrer en contact direct avec son maître (le Diable).
2. La forme de «sauterelle-migrateur» pour témoigner son insignation de pillard à vie (c'est-à-dire) ; qu'il terrorise la terre entière par son pillage qu'il se veut systématique.
3. La forme de «la girafe-ailée» ici, le grand et long cou de cette girafe lui permet de prendre son fourrage (ses victimes) à distance. Ses ailes sacrées et bleu-saphir nous révèlent sa promenade dans le néant. Et cette couleur choisie qu'est «le bleu» prouve à suffisance, sa fidelité aux interdits soumis du maître (le Diable).

Visions diverses :
a) Les points métalliques incorporés dans le globe représentent les différents satellites de la terre.
b) L'image des continents affaiblis, se détachants du globe.

ANNEX 2 : ORIGINAL VERSION OF MIMI'S ESSAY

Sujet : «Les morts ne sont pas morts»

Dans l'histoire de ce monde depuis sa création jusqu'aujourd'hui, la vie de l'homme se termine par la mort. Il est vivant quand il vit, mais mort quand il ne vit plus. Or en étudiant notre sujet d'aujourd'hui nous allons faire sur ça un commentaire : les morts ne sont pas morts à travers leur œuvre dans le deuxième [monde]. Ils ne sont pas morts jusqu'à ce que vient le dernier jugement selon la bible.

A travers les lignes qui suivent nous allons bien développer notre sujet. Les morts ne sont pas oubliés à travers leur œuvres antérieures qui leur rendent immortels, comme nous venons de le démontrer en haut que les faits d'une personne ne s'oublient jamais. Et en liant cette logique à la bible nous verrons que les morts seront jugés selon leurs actes posés avant leurs morts. Donc les actes ne meurent pas. Cela démontre aussi que les morts ne sont pas morts. Ils sont quelque part dans l'attente d'un jugement dernier de leurs actes antérieur (Mimi en question).
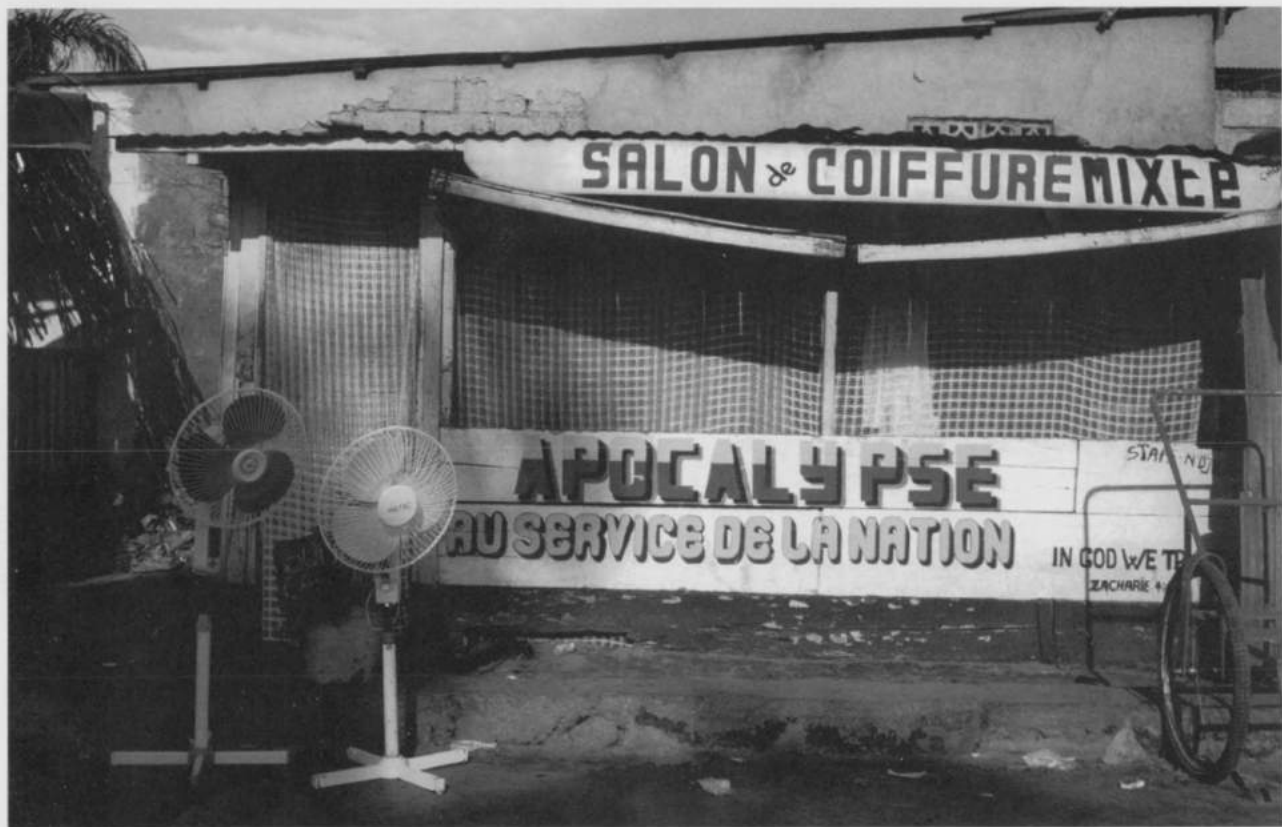
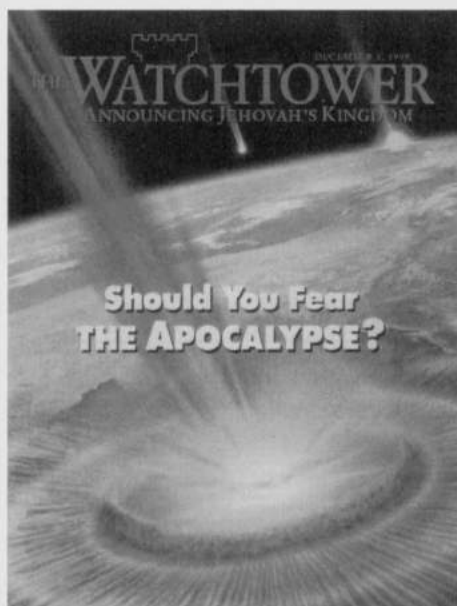Fig. 1. — 'Apocalypse au service de la nation'. Barbershop in Lemba, Kinshasa, April 2001.

Fig. 2. — Watchtower Pamphlet, December 1, 1999.

Fig. 3. — A 1992 pamphlet of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania develops the theme 'Who really dominates the world ?'.

Salvation and Terror in Western Uganda.
The Movement for the Restoration of
the Ten Commandments of God

by

Heike BEHREND*

What does the Fifth Commandment forbid us to do ?
The Fifth Commandment states :
'Do not commit murder'.
It forbids us to kill people for nothing and commit suicide.
(A Timely Message [1] ** 1996, p. 24.)

KEYWORDS. — Religious Movement ; Salvation ; Terror ; Apocalyptic Church ; Uganda.

SUMMARY. — This contribution attempts to give a rather preliminary view of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God (MRTCG) in Western Uganda, which achieved a dubious fame in the international mass media, when on 17 March, 2000, about five hundred members, most of them women and children, perished in their main church in Kanungu. When more and more graves with followers were found, what had at first seemed to be a mass suicide was suspected of being a mass murder as well. The paper attempts to position the MRTCG as a continuation of pre-colonial and colonial "traditions of renewal", as part of a global network of apocalyptic movements and in the context of a present situation of "internal terror". In addition, it describes the MRTCG's regime of dominance and disciplinary technology, since these furthered a process of distancing between leaders and followers that may have been a precondition for the mass murder.

MOTS-CLES. — Mouvement religieux ; Salut ; Terreur ; Eglise de l'Apocalypse ; Ouganda.

RESUME. — *Salut et terreur en Ouganda occidental. Le* Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God. — Dans sa contribution, l'auteur esquisse une image encore provisoire du *Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God* (MRTCG) en Ouganda occidental. Ce mouvement obtint une notoriété douteuse dans les mass media lorsque, le 17 mars 2000, environ cinq cents de ses membres (principalement des femmes et des enfants) périrent dans l'église principale à Kanungu. La découverte de davantage de tombes d'adhérents éveilla le soupçon qu'il ne s'agissait pas uniquement

* Institut für Afrikanistik, Universität zu Köln, D-50923 Köln (Germany).

** The numbers in brackets [ ] refer to the notes pp. 92-95.

d'un suicide collectif, ainsi qu'on avait pu croire initialement, mais également d'un massacre. L'article situe le MRTCG dans la continuation des «traditions d'innovation» précoloniales et coloniales, en tant que maillon d'un réseau global de mouvements apocalyptiques et dans le contexte de la situation actuelle de «terreur interne». De plus, le régime de dominance et de technologie disciplinaire du MRTCG y est décrit, dans la mesure où celles-ci contribuèrent à la distanciation entre leaders et adhérents. Cette distanciation fut sans doute une des conditions nécessaires pour que le massacre puisse avoir lieu.

TREFWOORDEN. — Religieuze beweging ; Verlossing ; Terreur ; Apocalyptische kerk ; Uganda.

SAMENVATTING. — *Genezing en terreur in West-Uganda. De* Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God. — Deze bijdrage poogt een nog voorlopig beeld te schetsen van de *Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God* (MRTCG) in West-Uganda. De beweging verwierf een dubieuze bekendheid in de internationale massamedia toen op 17 maart 2000 ongeveer vijfhonderd leden, voornamelijk vrouwen en kinderen, in de hoofdkerk in Kanungu omkwamen. Naarmate meer en meer graven van aanhangers werden gevonden, groeide het vermoeden dat wat oorspronkelijk als een massale zelfmoord was aanzien, ook een massamoord was geweest. Het artikel zal de MRTCG situeren als een voortzetting van prekoloniale en koloniale „tradities van vernieuwing", als deel van een globaal netwerk van apocalyptische bewegingen en in de context van de huidige toestand van „interne terreur". Daarnaast wordt het regime van dominantie en disciplinaire technologie van de MRTCG beschreven, aangezien deze bijdroegen tot het proces van distantiëring tussen leiders en aanhangers, waarschijnlijk een van de voorwaarden voor de massamoord.

Introduction

On 17 March, 2000, about five hundred members of *The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God* (MRTCG), most of them women and children, perished in *Noah's Ark*, their main church, in Kanungu, Rukungiri District, Western Uganda. When in the following weeks more and more graves with followers were found in Kanungu and other areas of Uganda, what had at first seemed to be a mass suicide, turned out to be a mass killing as well.

It is difficult to find out what led to this act of murder, suicide, or apocalyptic fulfillment, since the government and especially the established Churches, the (Anglican) Church of Uganda and the Catholic Church, used the Kanungu incident for a rather repressive campaign to regain power, to fight and persecute independent churches and religious movements to which they had lost members. An atmosphere of threat and anxiety was created, so that many people tried to hide their membership of the MRTCG ; numerous villagers did not even have the courage to claim burned or missing relatives at the police stations. Besides the reluctance of many people to talk about the movement, there were nearly no followers in Kanungu who survived to tell what had happened. Furthermore, the

secretive character of the MRTCG prevented people from knowing much about its history, discourse and practices (KABAZZI *et al.* 2000, p. 14).

Yet, informants agree that at the end of 1999, the apocalyptic sense of urgency in the MRTCG escalated and followers who had delayed now started to sell off their property and to pay debts and even taxes. They began to live the (then) present as actual apocalyptic time, preparing for the last judgement and intensifying fasting, praying and repenting.

The MRTCG's leaders had prophesied that "after the end of the year 2000, the year 2001 was not to come but the following year would be year one, the beginning of a new era" (TM). This day, however, would be preceded by a series of the most horrible catastrophes, the first of them a terrible famine, the worst in the history of mankind. Food would no longer be nutritious, eaters would not be satisfied, locusts would attack, and famine would force people to eat their own children and weak relatives. The world would dry up and have no green plant or water. Herds of animals would be destroyed by thunder, hailstorm and lightning ... Domestic animals would turn against their owners ; strange animals would come from the sea, mountains, and underground and kill everybody who was not keeping the ten commandments. Snakes ten times bigger than a truck's tire would also emerge. Rivers and seas would also turn red and those who drank their water would die. Clouds and hills would fall down and destroy man. Devils of both sexes would emerge from underneath and rape women and men and drive cars. Chaos would follow, characterized by religious and political conflicts, hatred, betrayals, fires, hailstorms, road accidents, plane and train crashes, and falling electric cables that electrocute people. At the eleventh hour, a strange monstrous creature would stand in the skies to be seen by everybody in the whole world, and a bugle would be blown, followed by silence. The leaders of the MRTCG would then declare the end of this generation, the destruction of sinners. They would also direct believers, the "Redeemed", to enter the equivalent of Noah's Ark for three days, during which the world would be engulfed in total darkness. Three days later, only a quarter of the original world population would be living in the new world, the remaining three quarters who had not had a chance to enter Noah's Ark having been destroyed. The new world would be flat like a football pitch. The Devil would be no more and the "Redeemed" would never be tricked into sin again : they would live in everlasting harmony (TM, p. 46ff).

In fact, the leaders twice dared to give the exact date of the doomsday. According to the police, at the beginning of January 2000, after the second false prediction, they hired two *Interhamwe* [2] men from Rwanda, sent invitations for a special feast to their followers, and asked them to come to one of their religious centres, where they were then secretly killed with poison, strangled, clubbed, or macheteed to death and buried in mass graves [3]. However, it is not clear whether this was done because some followers had turned into apostates, asking for the return of their property, and thus, from leader's perspective, had to be punished, or if the MRTCG's seers had decided to do what God seemed hesitant

to do : to bring the end to people who no longer wanted to live their lives and who urgently waited for redemption [4].

For 17 and 18 March, a big feast, a sort of thanksgiving celebration, was announced in Kanungu. Letters of invitation were sent to the different religious centres. As I was told in Kabarole, where one of the MRTCG's houses had been established, followers were promised that the Holy Virgin would come to the church and bring them to heaven. Hired vehicles ferried them to Kanungu. Around five hundred women, men and children gathered, drank sodas and ate food that, according to the police, was laced with poison — dithane chemical, normally used for spraying tomatoes. At 10:30 a.m., they entered the church, *Noah's Ark*, the doors and windows nailed shut from outside [5] not only to exclude "sinners" from running to them and thus blocking their way to heaven, but also to prevent escape from within. When they were asked to light the candles for the Virgin Mary, a tremendous explosion took place. The forty litres of sulphuric acid that one of the leaders had bought some days before turned *Noah's Ark* into an inferno.

It is still not clear whether the leaders were among the victims. The police suspects that, after the "inferno" of 17 March, at least two of them, Kibwetere and Mwerinde, disappeared either into the Congo or to Rwanda. The FBI is still searching for them. For Kibwetere, the founder of the movement, the government promised a blood money of two million USH.

Field Research and Mass Media

I would like to give some preliminary and rather tentative insights into the history of the movement and its internal dynamics, which precipitated the tragic end. I have to admit that I did not originally plan to do research on the MRTCG. Yet, at the time of the "Kanungu Inferno", I was working in the neighbouring Kabarole district on a lay organization of the Catholic Church [6], the *Uganda Martyrs Guild*. Because two well-known families from Kabarole were among the victims, the MRTCG became one of the main topics of conversation and even debate. Thus, it was impossible to stay uninterested. Since, in addition, all the MRTCG's leaders were (ex)-Catholics, for reasons of comparison, I began by getting to know more about the movement's organization, discourse and practices. However, it was extremely difficult to do research on the MRTCG because of the aforementioned atmosphere of anxiety and repression created by the government and the established Churches. In this situation, I was not able to find out much more about the background of the MRTCG (yet I managed to talk to a few people) and therefore had to rely mainly on the MRTCG's central publication, their bible, a book entitled "A Timely Message from Heaven : The End of the Present Times", first published in 1991, and the information given by the mass media.

The "Kanungu Inferno", as the event was called, was taken up and construed by national and international mass media. They massively produced the images and stereotypes that shaped the discourse on the MRTCG [7]. Through the mass media, Kanungu was turned into a morbid tourist attraction with "disaster chic" (*Monitor*, April 25, 2000, p. 24). In the media's discourse, the MRTCG was positioned in a strange continuity of rather diverse disasters that were related to Uganda and had been massively covered by mass media : the dictatorship of Idi Amin and his atrocities as well as Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement and its war in Northern Uganda. The way the mass media dealt with these events produced an image of Uganda as one of the most dangerous and "crazy" spots in the world. Ironically, officials decided to stop counting the corpses of the MRTCG's members found in various graves after they had surpassed the records in the *Guiness Book of Records*, exceeding the number of deaths of *The Peoples Temple* in Guyana where, in 1978, (only) nine hundred and fourteen persons were killed or committed suicide. It was reported that as a consequence of the "Kanungu Inferno", the government employed a public relations firm to improve Uganda's image abroad (*Monitor*, 16 April, 2000, p. 12).

Although in the following I attempt to detach myself from the media's sensational discourse, we have to take its power into account, since some of the images and stereotypes it created remain powerful even in the opposing texts.

Global Dimensions

The MRTCG formed part of a global network of apocalyptic Churches and movements. Its apocalyptic and millenarian discourse was by no means unique, but, instead, widespread and shared by many people of all social classes in various parts of the world, especially in North America and Australia. Indeed, the main characteristics of Catholic apocalypticism in the United States are also found in the MRTCG : the Virgin Mary as one of the primary sources of inspiration ; the expectation of an approaching chastisement ; a "holy" elite warning the world about the catastrophes to come and preaching the necessity of conversion ; political passivity and almost complete worldly withdrawal ; and a rather critical view on the Catholic Church whose moral teaching, priesthood and ritual life are seen as deeply corrupted (CUNEO 1997, p. 176ff).

The MRTCG not only shared the global apocalyptic discourse but also had direct contacts with Californian as well as Australian apocalyptic movements. The MRTCG's leading priest Kataribaabo studied theology in California at the *Loyola Mary Mount University* where he met Stefano Gobbi, the founder of the Marian Movement of Priests. Gobbi, an Italian priest, had received messages from Mary since the 1970s and, during a pilgrimage on 8 May, 1972, had his first apparition of the Holy Virgin in the chapel of Fatima. His movement is acknowledged by the Catholic Church and spread worldwide. It combines apocalyptic

ideas with an extreme devotion to the Holy Mary, who becomes the main actor to save the world (KAMPHAUSEN 2000, p. 9).

In addition, the MRTCG had links to a movement called the *Marian Workers of Atonement* or likewise *Our Lady of the Ark* or the *Order of St. Charbel* in Australia. This movement was founded by William Kamm, originating from Cologne, who in the early 1980s in Australia changed his name to Little Pebble, perhaps in reference to the biblical St. Peter, the Rock. He claimed direct contact with the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, receiving their messages via a voice box [8]. On his website, he not only asserted that he had met the Pope, but also promised to be the next Holy Father. The Catholic Church reacted and stated that, although Mr. Kamm had met the Pope, he had not received approval of his alleged visions of the Holy Father. Kamm came to Uganda between 6 and 10 October, 1989 and held four meetings in Kampala, which were attended by Kibwetere, one of the leaders of the MRTCG, and his wife. Kibwetere's son Rugambwa said in an interview after 17 March that the visit made a strong impression on his father. "I remember them going and when my father came back he said that Little Pebble had filled him with new hope" (*New Vision*, 22 April, 2000, p. 24).

Thus, although the MRTCG was a local movement with its centre very much on the margins of Uganda, it formed part of a global network of movements in which millenarian and apocalyptic ideas were not only shared and exchanged, but also mutually confirmed and strengthened.

Internal Terror

As in North America, in recent years in Western Uganda, an actualization of apocalyptic and millenarian ideas took place in the context of which a range of catastrophic events were read as signs announcing the coming end : the Gulf War, the genocide in Rwanda, the war in the Congo, the AIDS epidemic as well as the floods destroying large parts of South Africa and Mozambique, were all interpreted as events announcing the world's end, refuelling apocalyptic prophecies. Thus, besides the MRTCG, there emerged a whole range of movements and independent Churches preaching the end of the world, among them, for example, the *Last Warning Church* [9] of a prophet called Bushara.

In addition, in Uganda as well as other parts of Africa, apocalyptic and millenarian ideas have strongly entered popular culture. On the one hand, signboards advertising "End Time Disco", "Millennium Housing Estates", "Last Day Communication Center" or "Thy Kingdom Comes Business" played with the thrill of the coming end while, on the other hand, they routinized it and thereby took the edge off it.

In Western Uganda, the readiness of many people to believe in the imminent end of the world and their eagerness to follow various religious movements that

produced millenarian, apocalyptic, and eschatological discourses has to be seen in the context of a variety of entangled factors and forces that contribute to and, at the same time, provoke a strong feeling of crisis : the general economic decline and impoverishment ; mass joblessness and hunger juxtaposed with the accumulation, by a few, of great amounts of wealth ; the retreat of the state (politics of decentralization) ; the decay of the public sphere and, related to this, a strong mistrust into the established Churches and government institutions, especially the police, because of corruption ; and crime as routinized redistribution (COMAROFF & COMAROFF 1999, p. 292).

Above all, the increase in the death rate due to the AIDS epidemic [10] has led to a desperate feeling of crisis (BEHREND 1997). In the MRTCG's "bible", AIDS is an important subject. In this text, this disease is identified as "a disaster that has befallen the world. AIDS is a punishment that has been released to the world due to its disobedience. The sole cure is repenting our disobedience, and the restoration of the Ten Commandments of God." (TM, p. 62) "Unless you, people, repent, you will all be wiped out by AIDS." (*Ibid.*, p. 69) In addition, the increasing death rate due to AIDS has also led to a dramatic rise in witchcraft accusations (BEHREND 1999, p. 28ff). Thus, envy, discord and hatred among local people escalated and led to a situation which, following LONSDALE (1992), I would like to call *internal terror*. Indeed, internal terror is also acknowledged in the MRTCG's "bible". Besides a chapter on witch-doctors and sorcery, this text quotes the blessed Virgin Mary and Jesus as having said that "envy is the root-cause of the moral decay among the people and of the chaotic condition of the world" (TM, p. 3).

Many people to whom I spoke declared that the world had turned upside-down and that Satan, the force of evil, and his helpers, witches, demons, and satanic spirits were lurking everywhere. Thus, not only certain outstanding events (as mentioned above) were seen as signs of the approaching end, but for many people everyday life had also become a nightmare that carried the marks of the apocalyptic.

Traditions of Renewal

Because of the local government's failure to restore the moral order, it was and is, above all, religious movements inside and outside the established Christian Churches that attempt to cope with the situation of internal terror. Often they follow the pattern of pre-colonial and anti-colonial witch-cleansing movements by identifying internal enemies, purifying, and healing them — yet also sometimes killing notorious witches — and thereby creating a situation that WILLIS (1970) called an "instant millennium", a world free of evil — at least, for some time. It is important to note that the Rukungiri District (where Kanungu is located) formed part of an area in which the famous Nyabingi movements took

place. Although these movements have been interpreted, above all, as anti-colo-
nial (RUTANGA 1991), they also were witch-cleansing movements, attempts to
fight evil and to create an instant millennium. The widespread *emandwa* or
bacwesi cults can also be interpreted as part of this "tradition of renewal"
(BERGER 1995, p. 81). Thus, the area in which the MRTCG emerged and ended
in a disaster has to be seen as already having a certain "millenarian" tradition (in
Willis's sense). On the one hand, the MRTCG was a continuation of this trad-
ition. On the other hand, while these preceeding movements fought evil in this
world, the MRTCG, at least in its later stage, was obviously more directed
towards withdrawal [11] from the world and saw salvation — more like the
movements in Melanesia and medieval Europe — only after this world had come
to an end.

Fragments of a History of the MRTCG

The MRTCG was founded [12] in 1990 by the former Catholic Joseph
Kibwetere after he broke away from the main Church. Kibwetere was born in
1932 in a village named Ruguma, in Kajara County of Ntungamo District. A
well-known and respected gentleman, he worked in the *Teachers Training
College* in Ibanda and in 1959, was promoted to become the *Assistant Supervisor*
for Catholic schools. The central government appointed him member of the *Land
Commission* in 1971, and in 1973 he was made head of the *Public Service
Commission*. Thereafter he retired into private life, but got involved in politics as
a mobilizer of the *Democratic Party* (DP). When the DP lost the general elec-
tions in 1980, he took a low profile (*New Vision*, 22 March, 2000, p. 19). He mar-
ried around 1960 and had sixteen children with his wife Teresa. In an interview,
she described him as a good and caring man who changed in a radical way when
"he started to believe in the cult leaders more than anybody else..." (*New Vision*,
28 March, 2000, p. 18).

In 1984, he revealed that the Virgin Mary had appeared to him and anointed
him leader in the quest for the restoration of the Ten Commandments of God.
From the beginning, Kibwetere combined the Marian tradition [13] with a strong
apocalyptic view, declaring that his assignment was urgent because the world
was about to come to an end. When he launched his movement in 1990, he was
strongly criticized by the Catholic Church. However, Kibwetere rejected the
authority of the bishop as well as of the Pope and claimed to be communicating
with God directly. He was excommunicated, and three priests who had mean-
while joined him were suspended.

One of these priests was Dominic Kataribaabo, born in 1936 in Kigabiro,
Bugaya parish in Bushenyi District who, together with Kibwetere, became a seer
of the MRTCG. He not only was ordained a priest but also attained a Masters
Degree in theology at Makerere University in 1976. In addition, in 1986, as

already mentioned, he studied at the University of California in the USA and received a doctorate in theology in 1989. Despite his high education and brilliant intellectual career, he only served in modest capacities ; he never rose to the rank of vicar general or even treasurer. I was told that he was greatly frustrated by the Catholic Church, which obviously blocked his career. In 1989, after coming back from the USA, he was transferred to his home area to work as a parish priest. Together with other priests (among them Paul Ikazire), he started criticizing the Catholic Church and accused its leadership of corruption, immorality, and opportunism. Paul Ikazire stated in an interview : "Kataribaabo, some other collegues, and I felt that things were going the wrong way. Our church was backsliding. We felt we desperately needed to change the way some of its business was being transacted" (*New Vision,* 3 April, 2000, p. 29).

In the same year (1989), Kibwetere and two women, Caledonia Mwerinde and Ursula Komuhangi, came to Rugazi to talk to Kataribaabo and Ikazire. They felt united in their criticism of the Catholic Church, and Kataribaabo as well as Ikazire decided to join the MRTCG to work for a revival of the Catholic Church. In 1991, Kataribaabo was suspended from priestly service by the bishop Kakubi, a former friend of his. Although collegues and family members attempted to lure him out of the MRTCG, they failed. In the mass media, with his doctorate in theology, he was seen as the brain behind the movement's discourse and practices. However, at the same time, he and Kibwetere were cast as the victims of the two women mentioned above. Especially Caledonia Mwerinde, born in 1952 on a small hill in Kanungu, was seen in the media as the "sweet-talking devil that destroyed Kataribaabo" (*New Vision*, 3 April, 2000, p. 29) and as "the mastermind behind the MRTCG" *(New Vision,* 7 April, 2000, p. 34). Thus, we find here the well-known stereotype of women as evil, seducing more or less innocent men [14].

Mwerinde had a vision of Holy Mary in 1987 after her second marriage when she stayed in Kabale and became the friend of a woman originally from Rwanda who lived in a refugee camp near the town. Although it has not yet been possible to identify this woman, according to KAMPHAUSEN (2000), she originally came from the aforementioned town Kibeho in Rwanda, where in 1981/1982 Holy Mary had made her apparition [15]. She had survived the Rwandan genocide and her devotion to Holy Mary had a strong impact on Mwerinde, who appropriated the Marian tradition through her.

In 1989, Kibwetere and his wife Teresa, the aforementioned priests, Mwerinde, and a few others started living together as a religious community in Kibwetere's compound. They succeeded in attracting a large following, most of them Catholics, but also members from other denominations, from various areas of Uganda as well as Rwanda.

A fairly large proportion of the members were Rwandan refugees who had escaped the genocide.

In 1993, the movement was registered as an NGO and, in addition, owned various official certificates that it was allowed to preach the gospel. The leaders

took great care to establish good and even friendly relationships with the local government. They tried by all means to create an impression of a movement that had gained the acknowledgement of even the highest government and religious officials [16]. After the "Kanungu Inferno", this offensive policy of public relations raised a number of questions about the relationship between the movement and the government. Many people asked if, by bribing officials, the leaders had succeeded in silencing those who knew about the ongoing killings.

In 1994, the movement suffered a setback when two of its pioneer disciples, among them the aforementioned Paul Ikazire, along with some followers, returned to the Catholic Church.

In 1995, Kibwetere shifted the headquarters of his movement to Kanungu [17], where Mwerinde and her father had originally started their Marian cult. At this time, but also before, more and more members began to leave their homes and live together as a community. In addition, they began to establish religious centres in other parts of the country, also in Kabarole district and Kampala.

In Kanungu, the MRTCG started building up an economy based on various projects : members ran a farm with ten Friesian cows, they had a pineapple and sugarcane plantation as well as a vegetable garden ; they also planted a big irrigated field with sweet potatoes. In addition, they started a chicken farming project and a bakery. Furthermore, they built a primary school, which, however, was closed by the government because of the poor health of the children following an outbreak of measles in 1999. Besides horticulture, farming, trading and handicrafts, their sources of income also substantially included the contributions of members, who were asked to sell their property, since the end of the world was near.

Leadership and Disciplinary Technology

The above clearly shows that the MRTCG emerged in a situation of existential crisis and, at the same time, tried to give an answer to this crisis by reviving the moribund moral order through strict observance of the ten commandments. Yet, we still have to find out how this movement could radicalize the apocalyptic to such an extent that it ended in final mass suicide or killings. If it is true that some of the leaders survived, and thus sacrificed their followers, then we have to ask about the movement's regime of dominance and its disciplinary technology that distanced the leaders from their followers to such an extent that they dared to appropriate sovereign power, the power over life and death. Not claiming more than tentative answers, in the following paragraphs, I would like to concentrate first on the movement's leadership and then on its disciplinary technology.

LEADERSHIP

After the shift to Kanungu, a more pronounced hierarchy emerged, with Kibwetere, the official leader, now calling himself bishop, wearing a cassock and a bishop's ring (KAMPHAUSEN 2000, p. 12). Beside him, following the example of Jesus and his twelve apostles, Kataribaabo and four other men as well as Mwerinde and five women formed the movement's twelve *entumwa* or apostles. Angelina Migisha, one of the six female apostles, had received a message from Jesus telling her that he wanted six male apostles while his virgin mother would also choose six women. And the voice explained that, while in the old days he had only chosen men, he now cooperated with his mother, who also had the right to choose her female apostles (KAMPHAUSEN 2000, p. 10). Obviously, in the MRTCG, Jesus tended towards feminism, introducing among the apostles the principle of gender equality.

Following the example of Holy Mary, the healer of all sicknesses, the female apostles were above all responsible for healing and for exorcizing evil spirits (KAMPHAUSEN 2000, p. 11). Thus, a gendered division of labour characterized the movement. Yet all apostles served as media, as "heavenly voice-boxes", receiving messages from God, Jesus, Mary, and sometimes also from St. Joseph, other saints, and angels. Mwerinde was called the "programme" because of her ability to communicate to God and pass on the message to others. As Kibwetere's wife told in an interview, "We would be in the middle of our sleep when one (of the two women) would make a loud noise, she would shake and fall down, her voice would change and she would say that the blessed Mary was the one talking through her." (*New Vision,* 28 March, 2000, p. 17.)

The divine messages were endowed with otherwordly power and assumed the status of laws to be followed without questioning [18]. Thus, visions and auditions as techniques of communication, formed an important privilege of the twelve apostles, a technique of power that allowed the leaders to control and manipulate their followers. As a source of power, it was also contested, at least at times. Kamphausen mentions the case of Francis Byaruhanga, who left the movement after his visions failed to gain acceptance and instead were seen as messages from the devil (KAMPHAUSEN 2000, p. 38). The instructions received from the divine powers were not only communicated and followed, they were also written down and formed the core of the aforementioned "bible" [19].

INITIATION

Aside from the twelve apostles, the followers were divided into "learners" or "students" and "disciples" or *abatendekwa*. The process of initiation and conversion was induced by a "course-programme" [20], through which instructions "about heavenly realities" were given (TM, p. 101). Before a person was allowed to attend the course-programme, he or she had to pass a test. The "course-programme" centred on the Ten Commandments. "The ticket that takes one to

heaven is the observance of the Ten Commandments." (TM, p. 103) The students had to follow the instructions twenty times, then one of the apostles would pray for them, after which they entered a higher stage and became disciples.

ORA ET LABORA

In the movement, a rigid ascetic regime of *ora et labora* was to be followed. All members were subjected to hard labour with no pay. A former member who left the movement in 1998 explained the daily routine : "Monday and Friday were strictly for fasting. Only children below ten years were allowed a cup of porridge. The rest of the days, we used to get up at four in the morning to pray until around eight. We then went to work in the gardens until two in the afternoon when we would have a one-hour lunch break of a cup of diluted porridge. We would then go back to the fields up to six in the evening. Then we went directly to the church to pray even without bathing up to midnight before retiring to bed to have a three- to four- hours' sleep ... On other days, believers had only one meal a day of mainly maize and millet bread. The food was donated by believers' families or sometimes was brought by the leaders from the neighbouring trading centers..."(*Monitor*, 25 March, 2000, p. 14).

INTERDICTION OF SEX

Believers slept on locally-made mats in dormitories. Men were kept away from women and neither were allowed to have sex. They lived together as brothers and sisters and not as wives and husbands [21].

I could not find out if the prohibition of sex was, above all, an expansion of the interdiction Mwerinde had received from the Virgin Mary, or if, facing the end of the world, sex and physical procreation just did not make sense anymore — as was also the case in early European Christian movements (BROWN 1994). In the MRTCG's bible, the interdiction of sex was related not only to a general demand to control "the desires of the body" (TM, p. 138), but also to the prevention of AIDS. Thus, it may be that the prohibition was also an appropriation and likewise a radicalization of the "safer sex" discourse of the official AIDS prevention programme. In any case, once a woman who became pregnant was allegedly battered by some leaders until she aborted [22]. She later had to abandon the camp (*Monitor*, 25 March, 2000, p. 14).

THE REGIME OF SILENCE

Besides the aforementioned rigid ascetic regime of labour, fasting, prayer and no sex, the followers were asked to keep silent. They were not allowed to talk among themselves and with their leaders. Instead, they used a language of signs for communication or they wrote letters. Thus, the possibilities to talk to others, to exchange comments or even criticize were greatly reduced. The regime of silence furthered individual isolation.

Joseph Kibwetere, for example, as his wife explained in an interview, would keep silent for some weeks. He would then use signs to ask for a paper and a pen, then writing down his message. After that he would call all the believers, read the message, and tell them a prayer that said "May the Lord keep my big mouth shut until I am able to speak out his will." The prayer was then pinned on the wall in his sitting room. (*New Vision,* 28 March, 2000, p. 18.)

CONFESSION AND SELF-EXAMINATION

People who wanted to join the MRTCG had to undergo a confession in which they were supposed to tell all the sins they had committed since childhood. These sins were written down, and the sinner had to pay USH 200 for each one. A lady who gave an interview to a newspaper explained that she was asked to pay USH 260,000, a substantial sum, if she was to be purified and enrolled as a full member of the movement (*New Vision,* 29 April, 2000). Thus, a practice comparable to letters of indulgence was established, generating money and, at the same time, excluding people who were too poor to pay for their sins.

After confession and payment as part of the initiation into the movement, the followers were seen as pure and holy. However, as members they had to follow the aforementioned strict interdictions of sex, speech, food, etc. The almost unavoidable infraction of the prohibitions promoted a sense of guilt that has perhaps always bolstered the exercise of power. In addition, a rigid self-examination was demanded for. A certain way of confessing by "overlooking of the sins" was severely criticized (TM, p. 87). The MRTCG's bible gave examples to not only confess but achieve a deeper awareness of one's sinful desires. In contrast to the dominant witchcaft-discourse, in which the Other is always made responsible, the MRTCG attempted to create a Christian persona that took responsibility for its own deeds. Evil was positioned not only outside the individual. Instead, in the MRTCG's bible it was explained that the sinful person is constituted of three parts : body, soul, and a third part, which is brought in by Satan. "In this way the devil managed to bring into a person only evil, because the third part had such an impact on the blood, on the intelligence and will, and on all his limbs that they all become one whole. In this way, you the people of this generation are composed of the three parts" (TM, p. 9). "The Lord further says : 'My Mother and I have come on earth to take the third component out of the human being and bring him back to retain the two parts which have been given by God. We shall take away this third component using other people ... the third part is not acceptable ... and the person who keeps it shall go to hell'" (TM, p. 10).

The confession of sins, self-reflexivity, introspection, and the keeping of the Ten Commandments were tied to a powerful system of external and internal control. Confessions subjectified the movement's followers and, at the same time, subjected them to the leader's authoritarian regime (FOUCAULT 1993).

As some of the people I talked to stated, all the movement's members were seen as keeping high moral standards ; they were described as polite, helpful and friendly ; they did not lie and they paid back their debts.

MAKING STRANGERS

The leaders asked their members to live a life of isolation, to cut off their relations to non-members. When living in religious communities, they clearly separated from their relatives at home. In addition, they marked their adherence to the movement by dressing in a special way. Members wore green and black robes. Women had long gowns covering their legs. They also covered their heads like Catholic nuns. Every follower had a locally-made green rosary and crosses hanging on a nylon thread. They carried green identity cards signed by the highest leader, Joseph Kibwetere.

The movement's centres were normally out of bounds for non-members. There were always gatekeepers, and no visitor was allowed beyond the main entrance, where a special room was reserved for their entertainment. Because the members were seen as holy, they were not allowed to mingle freely with "the heathen." (*New Vision*, 28 March, 2000, pp. 17/18.)

Furthermore, when they recruited followers, the leaders took great care to take them to different houses away from their families and homes, so that they became strangers in their new surroundings (*Monitor*, 25 March, 2000. p. 18). This strategy also increased individual isolation and sole dependence on the movement's members.

Since many of the members were refugees from Rwanda, who were strangers anyway with a highly ambivalent status, this strategy of producing strangers made followers even more vulnerable and thus more receptive to promises of protection and offers of a home.

In conclusion of this section, I would claim that the MRTCG's regime of dominance and the disciplinary technology the seers installed put distance between leaders and followers, maybe even creating a radical devaluation of persons not only outside but also inside the movement, which finally may have led to their mass murder. As already mentioned, the direct communication with God, Mary, or Jesus in privacy — not controlled in a public arena — greatly empowered the "voice-boxes" or seers and may have turned them into amoral supermen (COHN 1970). If it is true, as was claimed in the press, that Mwerinde was instructed by God, Jesus, or Mary to sacrifice children every Friday, and drink their blood to keep off evil spirits and the government (*New Vision*, 28 March, 2000), the killing of members who were seen as apostates could be interpreted as a continuation of this practice of sacrifice.

Violence escalating from actions against individual apostates has also played a key role in other apocalyptic movements ending in disasters such as the *Peoples Temples*, the aforementioned *Branch Davidians, Aum Shinrikyo,* and the

Order of the Solar Temple (ROBBINS & PALMER 1997, p. 17). Each act of violence may have made the next one easier and necessary to cover up the past (MULLINS 1997, p. 321). Indeed, the MRTCG's killings [23] followed this pattern, beginning in January in various religious centres, escalating and ending in the "Kanungu Inferno".

The Criminal Messiah

As already mentioned, it is suspected that, after the "inferno" of 17 March, at least two of the leaders, Kibwetere and Mwerinde, disappeared either into the Congo or to Rwanda. If indeed the two leaders organized the murder of their followers and then escaped, they would fit the already long-established pattern of the *Criminal Messiah* or *Prophet*, a scandalous figure that instead of bringing salvation ends up betraying his original ideals (BIEZAIS 1977, COHN 1970, SCHOLEM 1992). A certain circular logic concerning the problem of evil seems to be inherent in millenarian and apocalyptic movements. It is not only that their leaders, whether they call themselves bishops, prophets or messiahs, because they criticize and even deny the established and dominant norms, are often called criminals by their opponents. There is more to it. It seems that in its original meaning of "revealing" and "disclosing" the apocalyptic also offers a space in which a certain trajectory starting with a specific goal may end up as its own opposite. Thus, a rather innocent enterprise of critique and enlightenment — in the MRTCG's case it was the attempt to reform the Catholic Church and restore the corrupted moral order by keeping to the Ten Commandmends — can become the epitome of catastrophe (DERRIDA 1985).

People in Western Uganda and elsewhere in the world have learned to deal with catastrophes that transcend our understanding. In everyday life and popular culture, the horrible and the traumatic are often shifted and transformed so that they split off from historical consciousness ; in the long run, the origin may be forgotten (KRAMER 2000, p. 7). In a report of the *Monitor* (25 April, 2000, p. 24) titled "Life back to normal in Kanungu", the journalist writes that many people in Kanungu believe that the MRTCG's leaders, however deranged or mentally sick, were sincere in their beliefs and that many who burned in the fire died willingly. Thus, the horrible suspicion that the leaders were cold-blooded murderers who killed thousands of innocent people for profit is here turned into a more acceptable and comforting version [24].

In addition, Kibwetere, the man probably responsible for a thousand dead, has become a joke. In bars and downtown Kampala, speaking a western language leads one to be labelled a "Kibwetere" (*Monitor*, 16 April, 2000, p. 12).

NOTES

[1] The book titled "A Timely Message" was the MRTCG's "bible". In the following, when quoting from this text, I refer to it as TM.

[2] *Interhamwe* was the name given to the militias in 1994 that were responsible for killing government opponents and Tutsi in Rwanda.

[3] The government used prisoners to exhume the decomposing bodies of the victims. More than fifty of these prisoners became "mad", or, as the Minister of Internal Affairs Rugomayo explained, they showed signs of a post traumatic stress syndrome. Local people interpreted the madness as spirit possession, as an attack by the victim's spirits (*New Vision*, 27 April, 2000, p. 1).

[4] Police confirmed that the bodies in the graves did not show signs of a flight ; thus it seems that the followers either agreed to their death or had been poisoned earlier, so that they were not able to resist their murder.

[5] It is not clear whether the doors and windows were nailed shut from outside or inside (KAMPHAUSEN 2000, p. 1).

[6] I would like to thank the VW Foundation for generously funding the research.

[7] However, there are a few recent publications that try to detach themselves from the sensational media discourse, among them (KAMPHAUSEN 2000). I would like to thank Erhard Kamphausen and Jean-François Mayer for their kindness and generosity in giving me access to their manuscripts. In addition, I am grateful to E. Kamphausen for sending me a copy of the MRTCG's "bible". Kamphausen's paper drew my attention to the fact that it is, above all, the internet that offers a space, a forum, for various millenarian and apocalyptic Christian movements and Churches to present and discuss their ideas. In addition, see MAYER (2000) and KABAZZI *et al.* (2000).

[8] The apostles in Kanungu also received their messages via a voice box.

[9] This church was dispersed by the police, not because it was an apocalyptic cult, but because the police got information that the cult's leaders were sexually abusing some female followers (*New Vision*, 22 March, 2000, p. 22).

[10] In contrast to Jean and John COMMAROFF (1999), I would not relate the dramatic rise of occult economies so much to the contradictory effects of millenarian capitalism as to the rise of death rates due to AIDS and war (BEHREND 1999, p. 27ff).

[11] It is possible, however, that the movement started as a "survivalist" group, whose members were convinced that they would survive the end and then would begin with a new social order (MAYER 2000, p. 15).

[12] However, the situation seems to be more complicated. While Kamphausen sees Mwerinde as the founder and leader, Mayer brings in the father of Mwerinde, Paulo Kashuko, who, in 1960, had an apparition of his late daughter, who told him that his house would receive some special visitors from heaven. Paulo Kashuku died in 1991; his body was buried — like the bodies of saints — below the altar of the new church in Kanungu. Thus, in the MRTCG, he, as one of the movement's ancestors, received acknowledgement (MAYER 2000, p. 5).

[13] In 1984, he and his wife went on a pilgrimage to Kibeho in Rwanda, where already in 1981/1982 the first apparitions of the Holy Mary had taken place. Again at the end of the 1980s, he and his wife visited another Marian centre in Mbuye in

Masaka, where the Holy Mary had been seen and venerated since 1987. One of the visionaries in Mbuye was a young woman from Rwanda, Preciosa Mukantabana, who claimed to be one of the seers of Kibeho (MAYER 2000, p. 6). Thus, the MRTCG developed from and formed part of a transnational network of various emerging Marian movements in eastern Africa.

[14] In an interview, Eric Mazima, who claimed to be the husband of Mwerinde and to have stayed with her for ten years, said that he met her in 1979 ; at that time, she earned money in the "alcohol business" ; "he wanted to learn more, and beautiful Mwerinde agreed to teach him" ; he gathered enough capital and "injected" it into the famous *Independence Bar* at Kanungu which was owned by Mwerinde ; he supplied her with *warangi* (local schnaps) to sell on condition that she took the profits after paying him, but before long, her beauty, charm and convincing tongue added another element to the deal : "I made her my malaya", he said before explaining that he was the sixth known man alive to take her up. "Others had died", he concluded while laughing. When she started to live with Mazima, she already had two children, but, according to him, she wanted another child "with her new man very badly". However, although they visited several witch doctors, she never conceived. In addition, she started drinking too much, he said. "She wasted all the capital boozing" ; then she started stealing money from the business, he said. In August 1987, she disappeared for twenty-four hours and "came back with a surprise". She told her husband that she had seen and talked to the Virgin Mary in Nyabugoto Rocks while she was visiting her sister. The Virgin Mary had instructed her that she should not have sex anymore. He insisted that she should take him to the caves where she had seen the Holy Virgin so that he could also see her. Yet he did not see Mary but only bats flying about. Mwerinde took him a second time to the rocks and said : "Now, man, if you do not see 'the mother', we wille separate". When he again failed to see Holy Mary, she packed her bags and left. Later he heard that she had joined a man called Kibwetere and that they were attracting followers (*New Vision,* 7 April, 2000, p. 34). Like Alice Lakwena (and Jeanne d'Arc), Celedonia Mwerinde appeared in the mass media as a prostitute turned holy respectively a witch. However, it seems that Mwerinde actively created an image of herself as a prostitute turned into a saint, following the example of Mary Magdalene (KAMPHAUSEN, 2000, p. 5).

[15] According to Kamphausen, this apparition of Holy Mary was the second in subsaharan Africa. The first in Ngome near Nongoma in Kwa Zulu in South Africa came to a German nun between 1955 and 1971 (KAMPHAUSEN 2000, p. 6). The apparition of Holy Mary in Kibeho, Rwanda, formed the beginning of a movement that in many aspects resembles the MRTCG (*ibid.*). It was apocalyptic and, in a way, prefigured the genocide in Rwanda. The Catholic Church acknowledged the apparitions as authentic (*ibid.*, p. 7).

[16] In a report to the NGO Board, they stated that all the civil servants from Kanungu subdistrict as well as RDC's and assistant RDC's had visited their place, where Mwerinde experienced her first apparition of Holy Mary. Other visitors came from the Security Department (!), the office of IGG, some were religious leaders, education officers, or health inspectors. All their names were written in the MRTCG's visitor's book. In addition, the leaders stated that on 2 February, 1993, they presented a copy of their message and mission to the Pope, who was pleased about it

"and supports that people restore the Ten Commandments of God" (*Monitor*, 25 March, 2000, p. 19) ; and they also claimed to have had the privilege of visiting His Excellency Yoweri Museveni, the President of Uganda, on 20 September, 1994, a visit Musenevi would not remember.

[17]   According to another version, this shifting already took place in 1992 (KAMPHASUEN 2000, p. 11). In an interview, Kibwetere's wife Teresa told about the conflict of rivalry between her and Mwerinde. It seems that this conflict and, as a consequence, Teresa's decision to leave the movement with her children, made Kibwetere change to Kanungu. In addition, the number of followers had increased to such an extent that his compound was becoming too small (*New Vision,* 28 March, 2000).

[18]   In a statement, Mwerinde is said to have been instructed by God, Jesus, or Mary to sacrifice children. In the NV, 28 March, 2000, a senior special branch Police officer reported that "the cult leaders had started consulting witches in Karoza (Bushenyi), Masaka and Mityana. The witches advised them to kill the opposition leaders and drink the blood of a young slain child to keep off the spirits and the government." There were rumours that, every Friday, the apostles would sacrifice a child and drink its blood. This would explain the extremely high number of children's corpses in the mass graves (KAMHAUSEN 2000, p. 37).

[19]   On the cover of the English version is the picture of Jesus Christ on the cross, with a caption "It is through this sign that you will win." The introduction states that the message therein is targeted at the entire human race and that it comes through prophets who had rare visions, such as Kibwetere who received his vision of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ on 25 April, 1984 ; these divine figures asked him to spread the message of the observance of the ten commandments, while the other leaders received their visions in the following years. The book was first written in Runyankole/Rukiga and English and later translated into Rukonjo, Rwandese, Swahili, and Luganda. Then the ten commandments are listed ; they are supposed to guide the members and to establish harmony in society. Breaking just one of the commandments will take the sinner to hell. The book is divided into 16 chapters ; each chapter consists of a message one of the leaders received as a vision or audition from the Virgin Mary, her Son, the Holy Spirit, angels, or saints. Sometimes the exact date of the vision or audition is stated. The sequence of the chapters may correspond to the inner hierarchy of the apostles, placing Mwerinde's message in the first chapter, Kibwetere's in the second, Ursula Komuhangi's in the third, etc. To give an example : "Chapter 1 : Credonia Mwerinde (14 June, 1989) : A message for all the people to restore the ten commandments of the lord, and to repent, and to inform you of the worldwide mission for which Jesus and the blessed Virgin Mary have come to earth." "Chapter 2 : Joseph Kibwetere (14 June, 1989) (the same day as Mwerinde ! !) : A message on the ten commandments of God." Chapter 3 : Ursula Kamugani (24 June, 1989) : A message for the youth to reform. Chapter 4 consists of a collection of visions and auditions of various apostles." "Chapter 5 : Henry Seempa : About AIDS, medicinal shrubs and the shrines for Satan. A message about the calamity that has befallen the world, Aids is a punishment." "Chapter 6 : Henry Byarugaba (5 May, 1945) : About alcoholic drinks and houses which desecrate," etc.

[20] It would be highly interesting to do a study on the use of the "developmental jargon" in the MRTCG's bible. The highly bureaucratic and often absurd discourse conducted by NGOs has become hegemonic, even in religious contexts, in many parts of Africa.

[21] This, of course, has also consequences for gender relations. While living as husband and wife very often entails the husband's dominance, living as brother and sister at least bears the chance of radical gender equality.

[22] This information from a newspaper is surprising because the MRTCG strongly opposed abortion and birth control. The followers viewed abortion as a violation of the fifth commandment (TM, p. 25).

[23] To come back to the continuity of the aforementioned traditions of renewal in western Uganda, whose pursuit of the instant millennium followed the pattern of witchcraft-cleansing movements, perhaps the killings before 17 March attempted to cleanse the apostates and/or followers by "removing the evil third part" from their bodies. This suggestion would at least partly explain the obvious fact that many followers agreed to whatever was done to them (since, as already mentioned by the police, the corpses showed no signs of a struggle or of resistance).

[24] There is another religious group in Masaka called the Daughters of Mary, who consider the killed followers of the MRTCG to be the new Ugandan Martyrs (MAYER 2000, p. 16).

REFERENCES

BEHREND, H. 1997. Das Wunder von Sembabule. Die kurze Geschichte eines Anti-AIDS-Kultes in Uganda. — *Anthropos*, **92** : 175-183.

BEHREND, H. 1999. Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits. War in Northern Uganda. — James Currey, Oxford,.

BERGER, I. 1995. Fertility as Power. — *In :* ANDERSON, D. M. & JOHNSON, D. (Eds.), Revealing Prophets, London.

BIEZAIS, H. 1977. Der Kriminelle Messias. — *Acta Academiae Aboensis*, **55** (1), pp. 7-34.

BROWN, P. 1994. Die Keuschheit der Engel. Sexuelle Entsagung, Askese und Körperlichkeit im frühen Cristentum. — DTV-Wissenschaft, München.

COHN, N. 1998 [1970]. Die Sehnsucht nach dem Millennium. — Herder, Freiburg.

COMAROFF, J. & COMAROFF, J. 1999. Occult economies and the violence of abstraction : notes from the South African postcolony. — *American Ethnologist*, **26** (2).

CUNEO, M. W. 1997. The Vengeful Virgin. Case Studies in Contemporary American Catholic Apocalypticism. — *In* : ROBBINS, T. & PALMER, J. (Eds.), Millennium, Messiahs and Mayhem. Contemporary Apocalyptic Movements. Routledge, New York and London, pp. 175-194.

DERRIDA, J. 1985. Apokalypse. — Böhlau, Graz and Vienna.

FOUCAULT, M. 1993. Technologien des Selbst. — S. Fischer, Frankfurt.

KABAZZI-KISIRINYA, S., NKURUNZIZA, R. K. D. & BANURA, G. (Eds.) 2000. The Kanungu Cult-Saga : Suicide, Murder or Salvation. — Makerere University, Kampala.

KAMPHAUSEN, E. 2000. The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God. — *Evangelische Theologie*, **6**.

KRAMER, F. 2000. Bikini. Atomares Testgebiet im Pazifik. — Wagenbach, Berlin.

LONSDALE, J. M. 1992. The moral economy of Mau-Mau. — *In* : BERMAN, B. & LONDALE, M. (Eds.), Unhappy Valley. James Currey, London.

MAYER, J.-F. 2000. The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God. Between Fact and Fiction (unpublished manuscript).

MULLINS, M. 1997. Aum Shinrikyo as an Apocalyptic Movement. — *In* : ROBBINS, T. & PALMER, J. (eds.), Millennium, Messiahs and Mayhem. Contemporary Apocalyptic Movements. Routledge, New York and London, pp. 313-324.

ROBBINS, T. & PALMER, S. J. 1997. Patterns of Contemporary Apocalypticism in North America. — *In* : ROBBINS, T. & PALMER, J. (Eds.), Millennium, Messiahs and Mayhem. Contemporary Apocalyptic Movements. Routledge, New York and London, pp. 1-27.

SCHOLEM, G. 1992. Sabbatai Zwi. Der Mystische Messias. — Suhrkamp, Frankfurt.

The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God (Eds.) 1996. A Timely Message from Heaven : The End of the Present Times, Rukungiri. — Uganda.

RUTANGA, M. 1991. Nyabingi Movements. People's Anti-colonial Struggles in Kigeszi 1910-1930. — Kampala (Centre for Basic Research).

WILLIS, R. G. 1970. Instant Millennium. The Sociology of African Witch-cleansing Cults. — *In* : DOUGLAS, M. (Ed.),Witchcraft, Confessions and Accusations, London.

Les formes du millénarisme en pays kikuyu

par

Yvan DROZ*

*Le messianisme ne serait-il pas une des authentiques
catégories universelles de l'espérance susceptible même
d'être réactualisée pour peu que les circonstances s'y
prêtent, au cœur même de nos sociétés*
(LAPLANTINE 1974, p. 112).

MOTS-CLES. — Millénarisme ; Prophétisme ; Kikuyu ; Mau-Mau ; Succession générationnelle.

RESUME. — L'attente millénariste de la Seconde Venue du Christ renforce l'intérêt que suscite aujourd'hui le pentecôtisme au Kenya central et explique partiellement la vague de conversion qu'il induit [1]**. Pourtant, les attentes millénaristes ne se limitent pas aux mouvements pentecôtistes, puisque nous les retrouvons dans l'ensemble de la population toutes affiliations religieuses confondues. Ceci suggère que l'attente millénariste n'est pas un élément propre au christianisme, mais qu'il s'agit d'un schème de perception et d'explication d'un monde paraissant incertain et offrant peu de perspectives d'avenir. En outre, la conversion n'est pas un phénomène inédit, car elle est enchâssée dans la reproduction sociale des sociétés précoloniales continuant ainsi à proposer un mode d'action contre le malheur en général et les maladies en particulier [2]. Ainsi, ce schème millénariste, ou cette «voie de l'imaginaire», traverse les différentes affiliations religieuses et nous nous proposons d'en préciser ses diverses expressions au cours du 20ᵉ siècle en pays kikuyu. Pour cela, nous évoquerons les prophètes précoloniaux et certains aspects de l'organisation sociale, les Eglises indépendantes de la première moitié du siècle, le mouvement Mau-Mau, ainsi que le pentecôtisme aujourd'hui.

TREFWOORDEN. — Millenarisme ; Profetisme ; Kikuyu ; Mau-Mau ; Generationele opvolging.

SAMENVATTING. — *De vormen van het millenarisme in kikuyuland.* — De millenaristische verwachting van de Tweede Komst van Christus versterkt de interesse die de pinksterbeweging tegenwoordig in Centraal-Kenya wekt en verklaart gedeeltelijk de bekeringsgolf die ze op gang brengt [1]**. Nochtans beperken de millenaristische verwachtingen zich niet tot de pinksterbeweging, aangezien ze in de gehele bevolking worden aangetroffen, onafhankelijk van kerk of godsdienst. Dit suggereert dat de mil-

* Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement (IUED), rue Rothschild 24, CH-1211 Genève 21 (Suisse).

** Les chiffres entre crochets [ ] renvoient aux notes pp. 109-110.

lenaristische verwachting niet uniek is voor het christendom, maar dat het een waarne-
mings- en verklaringsschema betreft van een wereld die onzeker is en weinig toekomst-
perspectieven biedt. Bovendien is de bekering geen nieuw fenomeen, maar maakt ze deel
uit van de sociale reproductie van prekoloniale maatschappijen en is ze nog altijd een
manier om te reageren tegen ongeluk, in het bijzonder tegen ziekte [2]. Aldus dringt het
millenaristische thema, of de „weg van het imaginaire", in de verschillende kerken door ;
we nemen ons voor de diverse uitdrukkingen ervan bij de Kikuyu in de loop van de
twintigste eeuw uit te werken. Zullen aan bod komen : de prekoloniale profeten en
bepaalde aspecten van de sociale organisatie, de onafhankelijke kerken uit de eerste helft
van de eeuw, de Mau-Mau-beweging, alsook de pinksterbeweging van vandaag.

KEYWORDS. — Millenarianism ; Prophetism ; Kikuyu ; Mau-Mau ; Generational
Succession.

SUMMARY. — *The Forms of Millenarianism among the Kikuyu.* — The millenarian
expectation of the Second Coming of Christ reinforces the interest that pentecostalism
arouses today in Central Kenya and explains in part the wave of conversion it provokes
[1]**. Nevertheless, the millenarian expectations are not limited to pentecostal move-
ments, as they can be found throughout the entire population, independent of church or
creed. This suggests that the millenarian expectation is not unique to Christianity, but that
it concerns a scheme of perception and explanation of a world which seems uncertain and
which offers few perspectives. Conversion, moreover, is not a new phenomenon : it is
embedded in the social reproduction of precolonial societies and it constitutes a way of
coping with misfortune, in particular with illness [2]. And so the millenarian theme, this
"way of the imagination", pervades the various churches. This contribution proposes to
explore its different expressions among the Kikuyu in the course of the 20th century.
These include : the precolonial prophets and forms of social organization, the independent
churches of the beginning of the century, the Mau-Mau movement, as well as today's
pentecostal movements.

Précisions préliminaires

Le millénarisme présente deux formes principales : le nativisme, soutenant
que le retour aux origines est la condition de la réalisation du millénium ; et
l'utopie cherchant à construire un monde nouveau et merveilleux dans l'avenir.
Il paraît intéressant de noter que ces deux formes renvoient également aux origi-
nes du terme «conversion» qui englobait, en Grèce antique, *l'epistrophê* en tant
que retour à l'origine ou à soi impliquant un changement d'orientation, et
metanoïa comme transformation de soi, renaissance d'un être nouveau. Il sem-
ble que l'alternance entre l'espoir d'un monde nouveau ou merveilleux et le désir
de retourner aux origines fondatrices soient ainsi au cœur du religieux.

Messianisme et millénarisme sont des synonymes que ne distingue que l'em-
phase posée soit sur la personne du fils de Dieu ou des dieux, soit sur la période
de plénitude qui doit suivre — ou précéder — sa venue. Dans le christianisme,
le millénium est cette période de mille ans que les Justes connaîtront après leur

résurrection et qu'ils vivront avec le Messie dans la paix et dans la prospérité tant matérielle que spirituelle. Soulignons encore que le messianisme se distingue des nombreux prophétismes que connaît l'Afrique subsaharienne par la prétention du messie d'être né de la divinité, alors que le prophète n'aspire qu'à — si l'on peut dire — être élu par la divinité : ce dernier a donc un rapport plus distant et se considère comme le porte-parole et non pas l'incarnation de Dieu. Toutefois, la frontière reste floue, puisque de nombreux prophètes se sont découvert les stigmates du messie au cours de leur existence...

Selon l'interprétation classique, le messianisme se développe sur le terrain fertile de la désarticulation sociale et éclot à la suite d'une période de purgatoire, ce qui correspond bien à la situation que croient vivre de nombreux Kényans. Un messie surgit alors pour annoncer l'avènement de l'Age d'or ou du Jugement dernier : la communauté des frères dans la foi sera alors accomplie et chacun verra ses attentes paradisiaques se réaliser sur cette terre (LAPLANTINE 1974, pp. 133-148). Cet auteur continue en soulignant les relations intimes qui unissent messianisme et possession — une forme particulière de prophétisme —, car «Les deux phénomènes s'originent dans une même matrice de l'imaginaire qui renvoie à la mémoire collective, aux divinités ancestrales et aux esprits oubliés qui, profitant d'un cataclysme social, descendent sur terre et viennent hanter des populations entières» (LAPLANTINE 1974, p. 151).

Le millénarisme que nous avons rencontré au Kenya central associe une espérance sotériologique à des attentes très matérialistes : des terres fertiles, une ascension sociale, des succès économiques ou conjugaux, etc. Il y a dans l'alliance entre le salut spirituel et la vie matérielle comblée une des caractéristiques fondamentales du millénarisme : il ne s'agit donc pas d'une fuite dans l'imaginaire, mais bien d'une espérance totale et très pragmatique. Bref, c'est une manière d'affronter l'adversité : face aux événements extraordinaires ou aux perspectives d'un avenir obstrué, le rapport au monde se jouerait dans l'urgence de la quête d'un sens qui présente également des débouchés instrumentaux.

Origines vernaculaires du millénarisme

En prenant l'exemple des Kikuyus pour présenter une réflexion sur le millénarisme en Afrique, nous sommes face à un très riche tableau qu'il s'agit de brosser rapidement. Deux perspectives principales s'imposent d'emblée : l'une, historique, permet de présenter les formes précoloniales du millénarisme et ses expressions au cours du 20ᵉ siècle ; l'autre, morale, plonge au cœur de l'ethos kikuyu et en souligne les aspects millénaristes.

PROPHETES ET SUCCESSION GENERATIONNELLE

Il est toujours difficile de prêter aux prophètes est-africains des caractéristiques millénaristes sans risquer de leur imputer des attentes ou des espoirs qu'ils

n'avaient peut-être pas. Toutefois, si nous adoptons une définition large du millénarisme, c'est-à-dire l'attente d'une période de bien-être complet, d'un état de paix et de prospérité qui réalise l'ensemble des souhaits et des désirs d'un groupe, nous pouvons retrouver chez les prophètes kikuyus des aspects millénaristes, ou tout au moins apocalyptiques.

Avant la Colonisation, les prophètes étaient nombreux et fort divers [3] ; cependant, ils ne recevaient pas toujours un respect particulier chez les Kikuyus : «pour devenir prophète, [...] il n'est guère nécessaire d'avoir atteint le statut d'ancien. Il n'est même pas indispensable d'appartenir au genre masculin. La vocation prophétique dépend entièrement de l'élection divine dont l'authenticité se prouve par la vérification des prédictions. Pour le reste, en tant que tel, le prophète n'a pas de statut particulier ou n'appartient pas à une catégorie, une classe ou un corps spéciaux» (NECKEBROUCK 1983, p. 359). A la fin du 19e siècle, le prophète Mûgo wa Kibiru annonce l'arrivée des Britanniques et les malheurs qui affecteront les Kikuyus. La première partie de sa prédiction, telle qu'elle nous est parvenue, n'est pas à proprement parler millénariste, puisqu'elle n'annonce que l'épreuve de la Colonisation et laisse entendre que les Kikuyus y survivront s'ils apprennent des Colons le savoir qui leur a permis de vaincre. Il s'agirait donc d'une prédiction apocalyptique, sans que les lendemains qui chantent ne soient explicitement annoncés. Toutefois, on peut également discerner des traces millénaristes dans les nombreuses rumeurs qui courraient au début de la Colonisation et qui pourraient avoir une origine précoloniale (LONSDALE 1995, p. 267 ; NECKEBROUCK 1978, p. 106). Il s'agit de la seconde partie de la prophétie prêtée à Mûgo wa Kibiru qui prédisait le départ des Blancs et un âge paradisiaque pour les Kikuyus.

Certes, il est bon de garder à l'esprit le constat dressé par Johnson et Anderson : «The attribution of millenarian concerns to some prophet may, of course, be accurate. But we must not confine our study of prophets and prophecy to times of crisis, social disadvantage, radical action and millenarian expectations, nor strain the evidence to provide recognized prophets each with their own crisis» (JOHNSON & ANDERSON 1995, p. 13). Pourtant, les prophètes précoloniaux semblent bien surgir en temps de crise (cataclysme naturel ou social) et annoncent l'imminence du grand rituel cyclique de purification : l'itwîka [4]. Cette cérémonie présente certaines caractéristiques millénaristes. En effet, il s'agissait de purifier le territoire de toutes ses souillures, d'effacer les dettes et de retrouver un monde «propre et pur» où les Kikuyus pouvaient s'étendre sur de nouvelles terres «vierges» et voir croître leur famille et leurs troupeaux. C'est là que nous croyons découvrir des aspects millénaristes préchrétiens propres à la société kikuyu.

Certes, l'itwîka proposait une conception du temps cyclique [5] et se reproduisait après quelques dizaines d'années. Elle ne prétendait pas offrir une conception linéaire du temps qui aboutissait à une «fin des temps», mais la structure de ce rituel de purification nous semble comporter plusieurs aspects propres au

millénarisme. En premier lieu, l'itwîka est précédée par des temps cataclysmiques comportant des épidémies, des épizooties, des sécheresses et des événements inexpliqués. Ensuite, elle comporte un changement du pouvoir rituel entre les générations sociales [6] (Maina et Mwangi). La génération régnante cède le pouvoir rituel à la nouvelle génération en purifiant le territoire, en exigeant le paiement des dettes, donc leur annulation, et en éliminant les traces de sorcellerie. Bref, au moyen de ce rituel, les Kikuyus régénéraient le monde, effaçaient le passé et s'offraient un monde meilleur.

L'itwîka, même si elle ne correspond pas exactement à l'attente du millénium, nous semble fournir un terrain fertile aux penchants millénaristes du christianisme. Ainsi, les Eglises indépendantes fondées par certains Kikuyus insisteront sur l'approche de la fin des temps en s'inspirant des premières traductions du Nouveau Testament. En effet, le millénarisme était bien présent chez les akûrinû (MURRAY 1974, p. 220) du début du siècle [7], lesquels partageaient de nombreuses caractéristiques propres au Réveil est-africain fortement empreint de millénarisme.

En résumé, si des tendances millénaristes n'étaient pas expressément présentes dans les anciennes pratiques religieuses kikuyus, certains éléments de l'organisation sociale (l'ethos de l'homme accompli, la succession générationnelle et les nombreux prophètes) étaient prêts à être interprétés dans une telle perspective. Ajoutons à cela les attentes millénaristes qui animaient les missionnaires protestants dès les débuts de l'évangélisation du Kenya, car elles ont fortement teinté l'introduction du christianisme au Kenya central : «Faith Missions such as the Africa Inland Mission had a feeling that 'the time was short' before the coming of the Lord [...]» [8]. Associés à l'arrivée du Réveil est-africain, ces espoirs ont informé les pratiques religieuses tout au long de l'évangélisation du Kenya central.

MILLENARISME POLITICO-MILITAIRE : LES MAU-MAU ET L'INDEPENDENCE

Parler des Kikuyus, c'est évoquer le souvenir de la guerre civile des Mau-Mau et les interprétations millénaristes que cette période tragique a pu recevoir. Mais, comme le rappelle Robert Buijthenhuijs, il est prudent de ne pas ramener ces années à une : «[...] interprétation exclusivement millénariste, [mais] nous pouvons néanmoins constater que la révolte mau-mau se caractérise aussi, parmi beaucoup d'autres aspects, par certains comportements que l'on peut qualifier de millénaristes. Ceci est particulièrement évident pour la dernière année de la révolte, mais la tendance existait déjà auparavant. Ce qui frappe, en effet, dans les prières mau-mau rapportées par Karari Njama, c'est le cri du cœur fréquent : "Oh God ! Be our arms" comme par exemple dans la prière suivante prononcée par Dedan Kimathi le 31 décembre 1953 : "Our Heavenly Father, we have no arms and we have no helpers ; we believe that your mighty right hand will deliver us from our enemies ; lead us, keep us, guard us against the enemy day and night ; let our enemies destroy themselves with their own arms» (BUIJTENHUIJS

1971, p. 310). L'importance des prophéties chez certains groupes mau-mau, en particulier les «armées» dirigées par Stanley Manthenge, renvoie aux prophètes précoloniaux tout en y associant la promesse d'un monde meilleur.

En outre, les tentatives rituelles de «retourner les temps» en sacrifiant un Colon et en l'inhumant tête en bas pour effacer la malédiction de Waiyaki [9] ou en enterrant, face contre terre, des milliers de pièces de monnaie frappées à l'effigie de la reine d'Angleterre afin d'affaiblir son pouvoir (LONSDALE 1995, p. 279), nous paraissent préfigurer les pratiques performatives actuelles de certains pentecôtistes cherchant à hâter la Seconde Venue du Christ en réalisant les signes bibliques censés précéder la fin des temps. Les espoirs des guerriers mau-mau correspondent donc à une forme de millénarisme partiellement inspirée par le christianisme chiliastique de nombreux missionnaires protestants. En outre, il faut rappeler que les prédicateurs «réveillistes» figuraient parmi l'arsenal des techniques contre-insurrectionnelles britanniques. Ceux-ci retournaient les anciens Mau-Mau pour en faire les fervents propagateurs du Réveil chrétien [10]. Nous sommes donc face à une constellation d'éléments — prophéties millénaristes, retournement des temps, rites de purification, prédications réveillistes — qui constituent progressivement un complexe, au sens étymologique du terme, millénariste.

Il est également possible d'associer au penchant millénariste qui se dessine au cours de ce siècle d'autres traits des pratiques sociales précoloniales. Ainsi, si l'on en croit Robert BUIJTENHUIJS (1971, p. 47), les Kikuyus précoloniaux participeraient de la *guilt-culture* chère à l'ethnologie personnaliste américaine : «A notre avis la culture kikuyu était à un très haut degré une 'culture à thème de culpabilité' [...] où l'homme vit dans la crainte perpétuelle de transgresser des interdictions fondamentales intériorisées [...]. Ce thème de culpabilité s'exprimait notamment dans la notion de thahu [11] [...] qui était 'l'idée dominante et obsédante des Kikuyu' (CAYZAC 1910)». Aujourd'hui, la notion de souillure rituelle a quasiment disparu — sauf dans certains groupes religieux comme les akûrinû — et nous pourrions penser que cette «culture à thème de culpabilité» s'est évanouie. Néanmoins, cette inquiétude inhérente à la «personnalité kikuyu» pourrait s'être déplacée vers «les voies obscures du Seigneur» qui s'exprime dans le sentiment, très commun, de vivre une période «maudite» dans laquelle Dieu s'est détourné de ses ouailles en raison de leur manque de ferveur.

Autre élément millénariste à rappeler, le thème du Président messie. Celui-ci apparaît dès les années trente avec le départ de Jomo Kenyatta en Grande-Bretagne. Une attente diffuse se répand parmi les Kikuyus qui voient dans son retour la fin prochaine de leurs tourments. Ils espèrent que le futur président du Kenya, alors secrétaire du KCA, reviendra et offrira des terres aux jeunes hommes qui pourront entamer leur «carrière» en réalisant ainsi la première condition pour accomplir l'idéal du mûramati [12] au cœur de l'ethos kikuyu. Ce leitmotiv réapparaîtra tout au long du siècle. Les rumeurs associant Kenyatta au Messie sont nombreuses et se développent grâce aux chants anticoloniaux qui

accompagnaient les réunions du KCA. Le thème a été repris lors de l'épisode des serments, dans les années soixante-dix, lorsqu'il était question de maintenir la présidence entre les mains du successeur des ancêtres éponymes Gîkûyû et Mûûmbi, «réincarné» dans la personne de Jomo Kenyatta. La tentative de modifier la constitution à la mort du premier président du Kenya afin d'éviter que le pouvoir ne tombe entre les mains de Daniel arap Moi réactualisera ce thème : maintenir le pouvoir dans la «maison kikuyu» sous peine de retomber dans un état de souillure fatal. L'échec de cette tentative conduit de nombreux Kikuyus à penser qu'ils vivent une forme de purgatoire, une période de Tribulations qui annoncent le millénium. D'aucuns affirment que le messie, futur président du Kenya, est déjà parmi nous et se fera connaître pour vaincre les forces du Mal qui dominent le pays depuis de nombreuses années (DROZ 1997).

Au cours de ce siècle, on voit donc un complexe millénariste se développer sur le terrain fertile du prophétisme kikuyu, de l'itwîka et de la thématique de la souillure rituelle. Les luttes anticoloniales associées aux camps de rééducation des guerriers mau-mau ont inscrit le millénarisme dans l'«air du temps». Certains politiciens ont profité de cette thématique pour mobiliser les réseaux clientélistes kikuyus afin de préserver le pouvoir ou tenter de détourner la constitution à leur propre profit.

ESPOIR DU PENTECÔTISME

La vague pentecôtiste qui touche le Kenya depuis une vingtaine d'années renforce le sentiment millénariste qui se cristallise dans l'attente — proprement millénariste cette fois — de la Seconde Venue du messie [13]. Il s'agit là de la thématique chrétienne classique. Nombreux sont les prédicateurs pentecôtistes qui souhaitent hâter la venue du messie en réalisant *hic et nunc* les signes précédant l'affrontement final. Ainsi, ils tentent de prêcher l'évangile à toutes les nations, en particulier en Inde ou en Chine, afin d'accomplir le dernier signe, puisque les autres sont déjà monnaie courante : famines, tremblements de terre, débauche, guerre, etc.

L'attente de la Seconde Venue du Christ renforce l'attrait de la conversion au pentecôtisme puisqu'elle promet aux Justes mille ans de plénitude en compagnie du Sauveur. Non seulement le pentecôtisme prétend réaliser des miracles au quotidien sous la forme de guérisons thaumaturgiques, de protections antisorcellaires, d'ascensions sociales, de succès économiques, etc., mais ce mouvement affirme que «les temps sont proches» et que le «vrai» converti vivra le millénium sur cette terre.

Les prêcheurs pentecôtistes cherchent ainsi à réaliser l'ensemble des signes annoncés dans la Bible pour forcer la main de Dieu et hâter la Seconde Venue du messie. La certitude de voir le millénium se réaliser très prochainement entraîne donc des pratiques sociales performatives, puisqu'elles s'apparentent à des prophéties autoréalisantes. Le millénium prend alors une forme très matérielle :

les fidèles espèrent voir les mécréants châtiés et jouir des fruits fort concrets promis aux disciples de cette foi exigeante. Bref, les pentecôtistes vivent dans un monde réenchanté où la main de Dieu — tout comme celle de Satan — est omniprésente et où les miracles et les tentations malignes se côtoient au quotidien. Les temps qu'ils croient vivre correspondent termes à termes à ceux décrits dans la Bible, ces premiers temps qui ont suivi la naissance du Christ où l'effusion de l'Esprit Saint embrassait les apôtres.

Mais ces prêcheurs ne dédaignent pas la mission intérieure et font surtout du prosélytisme sur les marchés à l'aide de leur seule voix, parfois soutenue par un porte-voix ou un microphone. Ils annoncent soit la fin du monde, soit l'imminence du règne de Dieu, parfois du millénium. Ils témoignent de la puissance immanente de Dieu en évoquant des guérisons ou des succès économiques et incitent l'assistance à se confesser publiquement pour être sauvée (*saved*) en recevant le baptême du Saint Esprit. A l'instar des prophètes, certains prédisent les événements à venir ou «expliquent», armés de passages de la Bible, les accidents extraordinaires ou les cataclysmes naturels. Ces modestes prédicateurs se transforment parfois en fondateurs de nouveaux mouvements religieux et rassemblent quelques dizaines ou quelques centaines de fidèles derrière eux, embryons de nouvelles Eglises, ou fondation de nouveaux lignages plus spirituels que fonciers [14].

Paradoxalement, les prêches pentecôtistes ne portent que rarement sur le millénium, car il s'agit là d'un enseignement réservé aux fidèles d'entre les fidèles. En effet, il n'est pas possible d'annoncer la Seconde Venue du Christ, car la Bible dénonce les faux prophètes [15] et souligne que ces Temps bénis ne sont connus que de Dieu. Il est donc interdit aux prêcheurs millénaristes d'annoncer la fin des temps sans risquer de se voir accuser — par leurs pairs — d'être l'un de ces faux prophètes. Toutefois, ils ont bien l'intime conviction que le Messie est déjà parmi nous et vit caché.

Cette situation — certitude de vivre la fin des temps et impossibilité de l'annoncer — représente une forme de double contrainte pour les prédicateurs pentecôtistes qu'ils résolvent en réservant cette connaissance cachée à un groupe restreint de fidèles «initiés». Ce partage du secret entre pairs était un mode classique de gestion du pouvoir chez les Kikuyus : le Kîrîra. Il s'agissait alors de réserver certains types de connaissances aux membres des divers conseils qui réglaient les différends et procédaient aux rituels de purification.

TRANSFORMATION DU SCHEME MIGRATOIRE ET PERSISTANCE DE L'ETHOS

Le schème migratoire, dans ses différentes expressions, se trouve au centre des pratiques sociales et de l'ethos kikuyu. A l'époque précoloniale, il s'est manifesté dans son univers paradigmatique : le défrichement de nouveaux territoires et la réalisation de soi en tant que *big man*. Inscrit au cœur de la «société kikuyu» et associé aux trois régimes qui informaient la reproduction sociale

(parenté, classes d'âge et générations sociales), le schème migratoire était un principe de hiérarchisation sociale fondée sur la vertu individuelle. Le lien intime entre schème migratoire et ethos souligne les motifs sous-jacents aux pratiques sociales kikuyus : le désir d'une réalisation personnelle, gage d'une survie *post-mortem* garantie par la remémoration du nom.

Lorsque les conditions socio-économiques ou écologiques ont mis un terme au défrichement de terres vierges et arrêté le processus de création de nouvelles sociétés pionnières, la conversion au christianisme, l'instruction et l'emploi sont devenus les moyens privilégiés de l'accomplissement personnel. La réalisation de soi s'est ainsi transformée en un processus de différenciation sociale et le schème migratoire conduit à l'obtention de richesses matérielles ou sociales et non plus seulement à la mise en valeur de domaines fonciers. Aujourd'hui, l'accomplissement de soi prend souvent la forme des attentes millénaristes (Droz 2001). Celles-ci sont accompagnées de rumeurs sorcellaires, intimement associées à la richesse et au pouvoir temporel rappelant la vigueur du lien moral entre accomplissement personnel, terre et survie dans le souvenir.

Par exemple, l'ambiance d'attente exaltée de la parousie s'exprime par les très nombreuses publications pentecôtistes vendues dans la rue, aux abords des services religieux des multiples Eglises pentecôtistes aux noms évocateurs : *Maximum Miracle Centre, Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, Jesus is alive Ministries, Jesus exploits Ministry, Glory of Christ Ministry*, etc. Ces publications annoncent les «croisades» à venir et colportent les rumeurs qui sont autant de signes de la prochaine fin des temps. L'Antéchrist vit parmi nous et tente les fidèles au moyen de faux prophètes ; le défunt bogue « Y2K » des ordinateurs montre que le pouvoir de Dieu reste supérieur aux miracles techniques de l'Homme ; les codes-barres dissimulent le chiffre de la Bête, car si l'on y regarde de plus près et si l'on procède à quelque calcul numérologique, on obtient le fameux 666 ; des enfants morts revivent après avoir reçu l'imposition des mains de prédicateurs valeureux ; l'attentat de 1998 contre l'ambassade américaine de Nairobi est une tentative des suppôts de Satan d'affaiblir les soldats du Christ ; l'inauguration d'un temple hindou est un signe de la puissance des idolâtres. Bref, nombreux sont les Kényans qui vivent dans un monde réenchanté par les prédications apocalyptiques des mouvements pentecôtistes.

Les fidèles des mouvements pentecôtistes ne sont pas insensibles au déploiement ostentatoire de la fortune de leurs Eglises. Cette attirance pour la richesse s'inscrit dans la droite ligne de la «théologie de la prospérité» propre au courant nord-américain du pentecôtisme (la richesse est un signe de Dieu, tout comme la pauvreté est un signe du péché) ou à certains courants du pentecôtisme camerounais, nigérian ou ghanéen [16]. Pourtant, la relation entre l'opulence et la foi religieuse nous semble également plonger ses racines dans l'ethos kikuyu de l'homme accompli comme le révèlent les aspects redistributifs du *big man*. C'est d'ailleurs ce que John Lonsdale décrit lorsqu'il parle de l'ethos qui présidait à l'acquisition de richesses [17]. Etre riche récompensait les hommes de bien, ceux

qui faisaient preuve de compassion (*tha*) et redistribuaient leurs biens pour séduire de nombreux dépendants. Le contre-exemple de la richesse égoïste attirait les accusations de sorcellerie, car elle était immorale et ne pouvait provenir que de sources occultes. Dans le cas des Eglises pentecôtistes, le déploiement de richesse nous semble donc exprimer les liens intimes qui enchaînaient richesses matérielles et probité morale au sein de l'ethos kikuyu [18].

Le déplacement d'un schème conceptuel des pratiques sociales vers l'imaginaire religieux s'accompagne d'une diminution de l'étendue des relations sociales et la vie éternelle individuelle se substitue à une forme d'immortalité sociale. Alors qu'auparavant, pour obtenir le statut de mûramati, la collaboration de l'ensemble du groupe familial était nécessaire (MACKENZIE 1998, pp. 32, 37-49 ; DROZ 2000), aujourd'hui, l'attente millénariste du Jugement Dernier dépend essentiellement de la foi individuelle. Cette évolution s'est accompagnée d'un basculement irréversible : avant la Colonisation, la richesse sociale et économique ne s'héritait que dans une faible mesure ; or, les richesses matérielles sont progressivement devenues indépendantes du contrôle moral auquel elles étaient soumises. La redistribution suscitée par la compassion fut dès lors incertaine (LONSDALE 1992), à l'instar des pratiques anti-sorcellaires, impuissantes à modérer cette dérive marchande.

L'ethos kikuyu de l'homme accompli — expression morale du schème migratoire — aboutit aujourd'hui à des espoirs chimériques qui s'expriment par l'attente millénariste. Les pratiques migratoires qui permettaient aux Kikuyus de se réaliser en tant qu'homme accompli sont aujourd'hui dans une impasse, tant du point du vue sociologique qu'écologique ou politique (DROZ & SOTTAS 1997). Ces tentatives de réalisation personnelle — et de plus en plus souvent, de simple survie — aboutissent à l'établissement d'unités domestiques condamnées à la famine ou menacées d'expulsion, en raison des troubles «ethniques». Les migrants kikuyus gèrent cette situation en projetant dans l'imaginaire religieux et sorcellaire — seul lieu où ils conservent une possibilité concrète d'action — l'espoir d'une solution aux difficultés vécues aujourd'hui et leur donne ainsi un sens. Ils attendent une intervention divine qui modifie le régime des précipitations atmosphériques ou un sauveur politique — ou messianique — qui leur «rende» le pouvoir national qui leur est «dû». Ces migrants expliquent la situation socio-politique défavorable en attribuant l'origine de leurs déboires politiques, économiques et écologiques à Satan dont le pouvoir politique kalenjin serait l'émanation (DROZ 1997).

L'analyse des rumeurs incessantes, consacrées à l'existence de sectes sataniques liées au pouvoir temporel, souligne le désarroi face aux «injustices» de l'écologie et de la politique. Celles-ci sont le signe, aux yeux de nombreux croyants, de l'approche de la fin des temps, du millénium. Elles semblent exprimer les impasses où s'est égarée la morale kikuyu : le mûramati devient peu à peu un idéal inaccessible à la grande majorité des Kikuyus. Le migrant n'a plus alors comme but la seule acquisition de terres concrètes, mais il reporte ses

espoirs vers les espaces imaginaires que représentent l'obtention du Salut éternel ou la Seconde Venue du Messie. Ainsi s'expliquent, d'une part, l'attente millénariste de la pluie dans les régions semi-arides ou l'abandon de l'avenir entre les mains de Dieu, et, d'autre part, la conversion à quelque nouvelle Eglise annonciatrice du Jugement dernier. Pour certains, l'accomplissement de soi passe maintenant par l'excellence religieuse. Ils croient que seuls les élus seront sauvés lorsque le Messie se fera incessamment connaître, car il vivrait déjà caché parmi nous selon certains mouvements religieux. Alors, les Justes vivront, sur cette terre ou au paradis, une vie pleine qui contraste totalement avec les sombres conditions qui prévalent actuellement.

La vogue des Eglises pentecôtistes, dans sa composante millénariste — elles annoncent une prochaine fin du monde, la venue de l'apocalypse ou du Jugement dernier — confirme cette interprétation. Outre leur prétention à protéger leurs fidèles de la sorcellerie sous toutes ses formes, ces mouvements religieux proposent un ultime recours face à une situation apparemment sans issue et permettent aux migrants de survivre dans des conditions sociales, politiques et écologiques autrement inacceptables. Parallèlement à l'éclosion de nouveaux mouvements religieux, la vitalité des groupes charismatiques catholiques ou anglicans trouve également là son explication. De même, le succès des divers prédicateurs qui haranguent les foules dans la rue — ou offrent leurs services, voire organisent des séminaires, par voie d'annonces dans la presse — s'explique par les incertitudes afférentes au futur écologique ou politique immédiat. Tous luttent contre le complexe sorcellaire qui lie richesse et politique, descendance et pouvoir, longévité physique ou politique et pouvoir occulte. Tous expriment le désarroi actuel de nombreux Kikuyus et tentent de leur fournir une échappatoire dans l'imaginaire. Les incertitudes quotidiennes [19], amplifiées par les conditions écologiques, mais surtout par l'atmosphère politique, trouvent une explication dans les rumeurs sorcellaires et le futur s'entrouvre grâce à la perspective millénariste qui propose une réalisation de soi accessible «aux hommes de bonne volonté».

Au cours de ce siècle, l'accent est passé, au sein des pratiques induites par le schème migratoire, d'un accomplissement personnel centré sur le domaine foncier, à une perspective principalement économique et sociale. L'accent se porte maintenant sur les aspects religieux : la réalisation de soi s'effectue par un investissement de capital économique et symbolique dans le champ du religieux, plus précisément du millénarisme. Il s'agit de gérer pragmatiquement la dynamique angoissante en suscitant l'espérance d'une vie meilleure qui autorise une réalisation de soi. Cet espoir est le résultat de l'articulation du schème migratoire aux conditions socio-économiques, écologiques, politiques et religieuses. Le migrant n'a plus alors comme seul but — encore réalisable dans les années soixante et soixante-dix — l'acquisition de terres ou de positions administratives, mais il reporte ses espoirs vers l'obtention du salut éternel.

En résumé, à défaut de pouvoir s'inscrire dans le territoire foncier, ou s'effectuer au moyen d'une réalisation professionnelle ou politique, l'accomplissement de soi passe aujourd'hui fréquemment par l'adhésion à un nouveau mouvement religieux, dans l'espoir d'être récompensé lors du millénium, ou, pour les plus audacieux, par la fondation d'une nouvelle Eglise. La réalisation personnelle se transpose dans les territoires de l'imaginaire, les seules étendues où l'ethos kikuyu peut encore s'exprimer aujourd'hui. Le succès du millénarisme en pays kikuyu trouve donc un élément d'explication dans l'ethos de l'homme accompli.

Les formes du millenarisme au Kenya central

Le millénarisme en pays kikuyu s'est donc développé sur un terrain fertile. L'ethos du mûramati pousse chaque Kikuyu à chercher une forme d'accomplissement personnel qui trouve dans le pentecôtisme et ses tendances millénaristes une échappatoire. Ce premier élément est renforcé par les rites de purification qu'impliquait la succession générationnelle : ceux-ci promettaient un monde meilleur — nettoyé de ses impuretés — qui devait succéder à une période de trouble qui rappelle les Tribulations. On comprend donc l'intérêt suscité par le christianisme et le développement de nombreuses Eglises indépendantes interprétant la Bible à partir des schèmes de pensée kikuyus. La vague actuelle du pentecôtisme ne fait donc que renforcer des éléments bien ancrés dans l'imaginaire kikuyu en leur donnant une interprétation proprement millénariste. Les prédicateurs pentecôtistes reproduisent, sans le reconnaître, les pratiques sociales des prophètes précoloniaux et jouent sur le secret de l'imminence de la fin des temps comme les anciens aramati [20] employaient le kîrîra pour asseoir leur pouvoir sur la génération montante. L'exemple kikuyu offre un terrain fertile pour les interprétations millénaristes. Puisque l'on y voit l'éclosion d'attentes millénaristes se fondant sur des traits précoloniaux renforcés par des courants forts divers : Réveil protestant et est-africain, pentecôtisme nord-américain, usages politiques des rumeurs sorcellaires et sataniques.

Pourtant, il paraît bon de s'interroger sur la pertinence du concept de millénarisme tel que nous l'avons employé pour tempérer quelque peu ce «millénarisme à tout crin» : tout processus de dénégation du malheur ne tend-il pas au millénarisme pris dans un sens large ? Lorsque l'homme se heurte aux incertitudes et au malheur, n'imagine-t-il pas que ces événements trouveront une fin dans un avenir proche qui récompensera les Justes ? Nous serions donc bien en présence d'une des matrices universelles de l'espérance — pour reprendre les termes de Laplantine — qui permet à l'homme de persévérer envers et contre tout face aux éléments contraires. Le millénarisme ne serait donc qu'un élément d'une catégorie plus vaste : celle de l'espérance.

Si cette hypothèse se confirmait, le concept de millénarisme deviendrait dès lors trop général pour avoir une capacité explicative. En effet, si toute perception de l'avenir est interprétée en termes millénaristes, le concept perd son potentiel

d'analyse et se limite à la tautologie. L'alternative qui en limiterait l'usage à ses formes chrétiennes paraît trop limitative pour être de quelque utilité à l'ethnologue, car elle rendrait la comparaison entre les expressions millénaristes impossible. La question de la définition du terme et de sa pertinence reste donc entière.

NOTES

[1] Nous remercions vivement Hervé Maupeu et Gilles Séraphin pour leurs commentaires sur une première version de ce texte. En outre, nous exprimons notre reconnaissance à l'Institut Français de Recherches en Afrique (IFRA), qui nous a permis de compléter cette recherche entre 1999 et 2001.

[2] Droz 2002.

[3] Les articles de Lonsdale (1995) et de Ambler (1995), ainsi que les autres textes du recueil de Anderson & Johnson (1995), présentent un éventail d'analyses et de descriptions du rôle des prophètes et de leur insertion sociale en Afrique orientale.

[4] Peatrik 1993, Peatrik 1994, Lonsdale 1992.

[5] Lonsdale 1995, pp. 264-266.

[6] Il est important de distinguer les générations *sociales* des générations *biologiques* (Peatrik 1994), puisque la confusion induite par le terme de génération peut conduire à des interprétations erronées comme le montre le travail de Peterson (2000). Nous ne pouvons développer ici l'analyse controversée de l'itwîka. Il suffit de dire qu'elle ne se limitait pas à une mécanique sociologique d'alternance entre deux moitiés, mais qu'il s'agissait également (surtout) d'un rituel de purification territorial majeur censé effacer toutes traces de souillure rituelle.

[7] Il semble s'estomper aujourd'hui, tout au moins dans certains courants akûrinû (Morovich 2000).

[8] Anderson 1977, p. 82.

[9] Premier «chef» des Kikuyus désigné par les Britanniques. Il mourut en détention dans des conditions obscures.

[10] Maloba 1993, pp. 139-140.

[11] Souillure rituelle.

[12] Homme accompli, le *mûramati* exigeait comme condition à sa réalisation au moins deux éléments fondamentaux : la terre et les enfants. Certes, ils ne constituaient pas, à eux seuls, des conditions suffisantes, car il fallait encore y ajouter le succès des entreprises personnelles du futur homme accompli — et de son épouse —, donc une implication totale et un travail sans repos de l'ensemble de l'unité domestique. Pourtant, travail et engagement personnel se révélaient vains sans la possession d'un domaine foncier et la mise au monde de nombreux enfants qui seuls ouvraient la perspective d'un enterrement en tant que *mûhomori*, achèvement suprême auquel aspirait tout Kikuyu. Pour plus de détails sur le concept d'ethos et de *mûramati*, voir Droz 1999, 2000.

[13] Pour une description du pentecôtisme au Kenya et une analyse de ce phénomène, voir Droz 2001b.

[14] L'analyse de Neckebrouck (1983) au sujet de *l'Apostolic Faith of Africa* (AFA) présente quelques exemples de ces prédicateurs, tels le fondateur du mouvement ou les différents membres expulsés ou qui ont fait sécession. Il souligne par ailleurs les

nombreuses similitudes entre les fissions religieuses et la constitution de nouveaux lignages (1983, pp. 368-372).

[15] Mathieu 24 : 24.
[16] MARSHALL 1993, MEYER 1999, SÉRAPHIN 1999.
[17] LONSDALE 1992.
[18] Voir l'analyse minutieuse de la réappropriation du christianisme par les Kikuyus lors de la période coloniale et des liens entre conversion et «ethnicité morale» : LONSDALE 1999.
[19] Pour les questions concernant la gestion du risque et des incertitudes, voir DROZ 2001a.
[20] Pluriel de *mûramati*.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

AMBLER, C. 1995. "What is the World Going to Come to ?" Prophecy and Colonialism in Central Kenya, Revealing Prophets ; Prophecy in Eastern African History. — *In* : ANDERSON, D. & JOHNSON, D. H. (dir.), James Currey, EAEP, Fountain Publisher & Ohio University Press, London, Nairobi, Kampala & Athens (USA), pp. 221-239.

ANDERSON, W. B. 1977. The Church in East Africa 1840-1974. — Uzima, Central Tanganyika Press & Centenary Publishers, Nairobi, Dodoma, Kampala, 197 pp.

BUIJTENHUIJS, R. 1971. Le Mouvement Mau Mau : une révolte paysanne et anti-coloniale en Afrique noire. — Mouton, La Haye et Paris, 426 pp.

DROZ, Y. 1997. Si Dieu veut... ou Suppôts de Satan ; incertitudes, millénarisme et sorcellerie parmi des migrants kikuyus. — *Cahiers d'études Africaines*, **145** : 85-117.

DROZ, Y. 1999. Migrations kikuyus. des pratiques sociales à l'imaginaire. Ethos, réalisation de soi et millénarisme. — *Recherches et Travaux*, Institut d'ethnologie et Maison des sciences de l'Homme, Neuchâtel et Paris, **14**, 462 pp.

DROZ, Y. 2000. L'ethos du mûramati kikuyu. Schème migratoire, différenciation sociale et individualisation au Kenya. — *Anthropos*, **95** (1) : 87-98.

DROZ, Y. 2001a. Cultiver le champ du possible. Circulation familiale, transhumance personnelle et archipel vertical en pays kikuyu. — *In* : GIORDANO, C., ROSLHOVEN, J. & BOSCONOINIK, A. (dir.), Ordres, risques et menaces, Editions universitaires de Fribourg, Fribourg.

DROZ, Y. 2001b. Les origines vernaculaires du Réveil pentecôtiste kenyan : mobilité sociale et politique. — *In* : CORTEN, A. & MARY, A. (dir.), Imaginaires politiques et pentecôtisme ; Afrique/Amérique latine, Karthala, Paris.

DROZ, Y. 2002. Esquisse d'une anthropologie de la conversion ; pratiques religieuses et organisation sociale en pays kikuyu. — *In* : BENOIST, J. & MASSE, R. (dir.), Convocations thérapeutiques du sacré, Karthala, Paris.

DROZ, Y. & SOTTAS, B. 1997. Partir ou rester ? Partir et rester ; migrations des Kikuyus au Kenya. — *L'Homme*, **142** : 69-88.

JOHNSON, D. & ANDERSON, D. H. (dir.) 1995. «Revealing Prophets », Revealing Prophets. Prophecy in Eastern African History. — James Currey, EAEP, Fountain Publisher & Ohio University Press, London, Nairobi, Kampala & Athens (USA), pp. 1-26.

LAPLANTINE, F. 1974. Les trois voix de l'imaginaire : le messianisme, la possession et l'utopie. — Editions Universitaires, Paris, 256 pp.

Lonsdale, J. 1992. The Moral Economy of Mau Mau : Wealth, Poverty, and Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought. — In : Berman, B. & Lonsdale, J. (dir.), Unhappy Valley, Conflict in Kenya and Africa ; Violence and Ethnicity, James Currey, Heinemann, Kenya & Ohio University, London, Nairobi, Kampala & Athens (USA), pp. 315-504.

Lonsdale, J. 1995. The Prayers of Waiyaki. Political Uses of the Kikuyu Past. — In : Anderson, D. & Johnson, D. H. (dir.), Revealing Prophets. Prophecy in Eastern African History, James Currey, EAEP, Fountain Publisher & Ohio University Press, London, Nairobi, Kampala & Athens (USA), pp. 240-291.

Lonsdale, J. 1999. Kikuyu Christianities. — Journal of Religion in Africa, 29 (2) : 206-229.

Mackenzie, F. 1998. Land, Ecology and Resistance in Kenya, 1880-1952. — Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 286 pp.

Maloba, W. O. 1993. Mau Mau and Kenya. An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt. — Indiana University Press & James Currey, Bloomington, Indianapolis & London, 228 pp.

Marshall, R. 1993. 'Power in the Name of Jesus' : Social Transformation and Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria 'Revisited', Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa. Essays in Honour of A. H. M. Kirk-Greene. — In : Ranger, T. & Vaughan, O. (dir.), Macmillan Press & St. Anthony's College, London & Oxford, pp. 213-246.

Meyer, B. 1999. Translating the Devil. Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana. — International African library, no. 21, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 265 pp.

Morovich, B. 2000. Akorino Student Fellowship (ASF) : une association religieuse des jeunes ascètes. — Les cahiers de l'IFRA, 18 : 63-100.

Murray, J. 1974. The Kikuyu Spirit Churches. — Journal of Religion in Africa, 5 : 198-234.

Neckebrouck, V. 1978. Le onzième commandement. Etiologie d'une église indépendante au pied du mont Kenya. — Nouvelle revue de science missionnaire, Immensee, 17 : 634 pp.

Neckebrouck, V. 1983. Le peuple affligé : les déterminants de la fissiparité dans un mouvement religieux au Kenya central. — Nouvelle revue de science missionnaire, Immensee, 501 pp.

Peatrik, A.-M. 1993. Age, génération et temps chez les Meru Tigania-Igembe du Kenya. — Africa, 63 (2) : 241-261.

Peatrik, A.-M. 1994. Un système composite : l'organisation d'âge et de génération des Kikuyu pré-coloniaux. — Journal des Africanistes, 64 (1) : 3-36.

Peterson, D. 2000. Writing Gikuyu. Christian Literacy and Ethnic Debate in Northern Central Kenya, 1908-1952. — Ph.D. Thesis, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 508 pp.

Seraphin, G. 1999. Quand Dieu façonne le monde à son image. Evolutions religieuses et recompositions anthropologiques et sociales dans une ville africaine (Douala, Cameroun). — In : Charlier, J.-E. & Moens, F. (dir.), Modernités et recomposition locale du sens, Faculté Universitaire Catholique de Mons (FUCaM), Mons, pp. 91-119.

Millenarianism and the African-American Diaspora : Pedagogies of Resistance and African Redemption

by

Leslie JAMES *

SUMMARY. — Millenarianism, an important factor in Atlantic civilization, has generally been overlooked in scholarship on the region. This omission is partly attributable to the fact that the role of African slaves and their descendants in the struggle for freedom in America is yet to receive serious sustained scholarly treatment. This study uses, though not exclusively, theoretical insights from the study on revitalization and millenarian movements, to correct the omission. It focuses on millenarianism in various African-American religious worldviews and philosophies such as African-American Christianity, African-American Islam, RastafarI, and the Jordanite Movement. Focus on African-American millenarianisms, religious or secular, shows that they served as : (1) pedagogies of resistance to social death and cultural distortion which resulted from the Black/African experience in the Americas ; (2) pedagogies of self-reconstruction in which the memory and desire to re-connect with Africa was critical ; (3) pedagogies of hope for the creation of a democratic, egalitarian, plural, and sustaining culture in which the vision of African redemption is explicit.

RESUME. — *Le millénarisme et la diaspora afro-américaine : pédagogies de résistance et rédemption africaine.* — Le millénarisme, facteur important de la civilisation atlantique, a généralement été négligé dans les études consacrées à cette région. Cette omission est partiellement due au fait que le rôle des esclaves africains et de leurs descendants dans la lutte pour la liberté en Amérique n'a pas encore été traité de manière approfondie. La présente étude recourt, bien que non exclusivement, à des aperçus théoriques provenant d'analyses sur le «revitalisme» et les mouvements millénaristes, en vue de corriger cette omission. Elle se concentre sur le millénarisme présent dans diverses visions du monde religieuses et philosophies afro-américaines, telles que le christianisme afro-américain, l'Islam afro-américain, le RastafarI et le mouvement jordanite. L'accent mis sur les millénarismes afro-américain, religieux ou séculiers, permet de montrer qu'ils ont servi : (1) de pédagogies de résistance face à la mort sociale et au déchirement culturel résultant de l'expérience noire/africaine dans les Amériques ; (2) de pédagogies d'auto-reconstruction dans lesquelles la mémoire et le désir de se reconnecter avec l'Afrique ont joué un rôle crucial ; (3) de pédagogies pour l'espérance en la création d'une culture démocratique, égalitaire, plurale et vivace, nourrie de la vision d'une rédemption africaine.

* De Pauw University, 602 S. College Ave., 465135 Greencastle, IN (USA).

SAMENVATTING. — *Millenarisme en de Afro-Amerikaanse diaspora : pedagogieën voor verzet en Afrikaanse verlossing.* — Het millenarisme, nochtans een belangrijke factor in de Atlantische beschaving, wordt in de studies m.b.t. deze regio doorgaans over het hoofd gezien. Dit "vergeten" is deels te wijten aan het feit dat er tot nu nog nooit een ernstige wetenschappelijke studie is gewijd aan de rol van de Afrikaanse slaven en hun nakomelingen in de strijd voor vrijheid in Amerika. Om deze lacune op te vullen gebruik ik in de huidige studie, hoewel niet exclusief, de theoretische inzichten van het onderzoek naar het "revitalisme" en de millenaristische bewegingen. De aandacht wordt toegespitst op diverse Afro-Amerikaanse religieuze wereldbeelden en filosofieën, zoals het Afro-Amerikaanse christendom, de Afro-Amerikaanse islam, het RastafarI en de jordanitische beweging. De Afro-Amerikaanse vormen van millenarisme, religieus of seculier, blijken gefungeerd te hebben als : (1) verzetspedagogieën, gericht tegen de maatschappelijke uitsluiting van de zwart-Afrikanen in Amerika en tegen de culturele ontwrichting die daaruit voortvloeide, (2) pedagogieën ter reconstructie van de identiteit, waarbij het geheugen en het verlangen weer aansluiting bij Afrika te vinden een cruciale rol speelden, (3) pedagogieën van de hoop op de creatie van een democratische, egalitaire, pluralistische en levendige cultuur, waarbij het vooruitzicht op de verlossing van de Afrikanen prominent aanwezig is.

1. Introduction

Atlantic civilization began with the encounter between Europe and the First Nations' people of the Caribbean and the Americas with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in San Salvador (Watling Island) in 1492. Atlantic civilization subsequently developed as a slave society. This required the African slave trade in which millions of Africans were involuntarily uprooted, transported and dispersed to the Caribbean, the United States and Latin America. African identity and presence thus became a dominant, if not fundamental, issue in New World culture. The master-slave relationship became the basic paradigm for structuring relationships in American slave society. Orlando Patterson would argue that slavery rendered the slaves socially dead (PATTERSON 1982, pp. 38, 39-45, 46). Patterson's position, however, tends to downplay the slaves's role in the struggle for their emancipation. James Millette's position contests Patterson's. He argues that there has to be a drastic revision of the understanding of the part the slaves played in their own emancipation (MILLETTE 1995, p. 4). According to Millette, "throughout the process of slave emancipation, the one constant element was the slave" (MILLETTE 1995, p. 15). The slaves' commitment to the reversal of their oppressive situation was their fundamental existential project. This emancipatory project is the foundation of African-American millenarianisms. African-American millenarianism can only be understood in dialectic with African slaves and their descendants historical struggle for freedom and the recovery of their humanity. In the face of a system that rendered them inhuman, the slaves committed themselves to their humanization. This commitment, which juxtaposed ideology and praxis, was a virtual pedagogy of the oppressed. The

study of African-American millenarianism is therefore critical to understand the contribution of African slaves and their descendants in the Atlantic world toward their emancipation. Throughout the African Diaspora in the Americas it is therefore possible to identify a variety of millenarian ideas and movements. In religious terms various expressions of African-American millenarianism envisaged "alternative" spaces in which subjugated and enslaved Blacks cultivated a sense of individual and collective identity in opposition to the subaltern station imposed upon them by the dominant society. Since an alternative sense of time is a basic feature of millenarianism and millenarian movements, various African-American religious traditions displayed their millenarian character in their consciousness of an alternative sense of time and space. This notion is in keeping with Yonina Talmon's definition of millenarian movements as those which "expect imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly collective salvation" (TALMON 1966, p. 159ff). This paper highlights the millenarian rhetoric in several African-American religious and secular traditions : African-American Christianity, Pan-Africanism, African-American Islam, Jamaican Rastafarl and Guyanese Jordanites. They can be understood as popular movements with an interpretation of history from the perspective of Blacks who found themselves on the underside of history. In this sense, millenarianism and history are in tandem with each other. In this paper the terms *milllennialism* and *millenarian movements* are used interchangeably because they are conceived to refer to the same social phenomenon.

According to Clarence Taylor, "millenarian visions are attractive to poor people because it empowers them. The future belongs to those who have been victims of oppression" (TAYLOR 1997, p. 224). In this regard millenarian movements are closely related to religions of the oppressed and serve as pedagogies or guides toward liberation. As anti-slavery movements they expressed the struggles of the oppressed to achieve liberated consciousness, identity and existence (FREIRE 1993, pp. 18-22). It should therefore not be surprising that African-American millenarian movements were so closely aligned with religious traditions which looked toward a radical reorientation in the African American condition. Religion was the matrix from which the slaves envisioned an alternative utopian society and culture, enhanced the survival of the African presence and identity in the Americas. Millenarian religious worldviews organized a core of symbols which empowered African-descended peoples to combat slavery, hope for deliverance, dream of a future world in which they enjoyed a culture that was satisfying and nurturing. They radically reinterpreted history in favour of marginalized and subjugated African Americans. Biblical categories such as the Israelite Exodus from Egypt, Babylonian captivity, or the Book of Revelation, played major roles in the construction of African-American millenarian religious consciousness. Remembrance of Africa, an essential component of this liberative pedagogy, redefined the slaves' epistemology in dialectic with the slave system. Continuity between Africa and the Diaspora, in varying degrees of intensity, was

maintained during and after slavery. In terms of cultural identity and continuity it reconnected them to their Motherland, Africa, from which they had been forcibly exiled. Eschatologically, it signified the slaves' anticipation of a restored humanity and the redemption of Africa. In the final analysis, Africa signified home and the remembrance of home became the foundation upon which the millenarian dimension is embedded in African Nationalism and movements such as Pan-Africanism. At the core of African-American millenarian thought, therefore, is the struggle for total African reconstruction, for a radical re-ordering of the status quo of slavery and colonialism.

The Nadir period of African-American millenarianism converged with the historical period of Millette's essay : the Age of Revolution to the end of the nineteenth century. This period followed the end of New World slavery and the beginning of the Reconstruction era in the United States of America. The imminent destruction of slavery was always announced in African-American millenarianism. The day of slavery's death was also the birthday of their millenarian kingdom. For some it was a New Day, others called it "Massa Day Done", others declared "Babylon Throne Fall Down". The Judaeo-Christian-Islamic axis provided significantly impacted African-American millenarianism and millenarian traditions. Timothy E. Fulop rightly argues that "many black Christians found great strength in the Christian millenarian tradition because of its divinely inspired criticism and rebellion against the present social order "(FULOP 1997, p. 247). This implies that African-American slaves understood Christianity as a millenarian religious tradition. This understanding paved the way for them to critique and distance themselves from the Christianity and culture of their so-called Christian masters (FULOP 1997, p. 247) [1]*. It was also the basis on which their religious thought, Christian, Islamic or secular, radically critiqued white Christianity as racist and therefore doomed. Fulop is apposite when he writes :

> The belief in the millennium and the special destiny of the black race was part of a theodicy African-Americans sought in order to make sense of their past in slavery, reaffirm meaning in their lives, and strengthen their trust in God. In the midst of the deteriorating conditions of the Nadir, black Americans may have differed in how they understood their destiny in different types of millenarianism, but they were united in the strong belief that God was in control of history and the future (FULOP 1997, p. 248).

In this sense their millenarian expectations were a radical critique of modern secular culture with its centre in individual autonomy. However, the tendency on the part of scholars like Fulop and Raboteau to limit their focus on African-American millenarianism to the continental United States and African-American Christianity does not flesh out the totality of African-American millenarianism

---

* The numbers in brackets [ ] refer to the notes pp. 134-135.

in the New World. This paper widens the scope of African-American millennialism in the New World to include African-American New World religious traditions such as the Nation of Islam (NOI), and Afro-Caribbean millenarian expressions such as RastafarI and Guyanese Jordanites. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s extended the scope of African-American millenarianism beyond what Fulop calls "the Nadir period", the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century (FULOP 1997, p. 230). It was the expression of African-American religious and secular forms of millenarianisms which had joined together that made it clear that the Reconstruction Era in America had not granted African Americans a new day. America was still a segregated society and global Africa was still in a virtual state of slavery from which it had to be liberated, whether in the Americas, Caribbean or South Africa. A major goal of African-American millenarianism was to destroy the segregated/apartheid system that placed Blacks in a marginalized, liminal situation. The central argument of this paper is that African-American millenarianism was fundamentally shaped by New World Africans' response to their subaltern status in the Americas. There was a correlation between African-American millenarianism and the struggle for justice in America. Africans in the New World, therefore, using primarily religious resources, articulated a millenarian age in which their subaltern position in America was radically reversed. In this respect their millenarian visions served as pedagogies, or guides, of resistance and African redemption in which they were empowered to struggle toward a new standing for themselves and Africa in the world (HARDING 1997, pp. 107-130). In African-American millenarian thought and millenarian movements the vocation of the oppressed to be free and the dead to be resurrected is manifest. Freedom therefore lies at the core of African-American millenarianism.

From the perspective of New Religious Movements, millenarian movements are expressions of radical critique by oppressed minority groups, religious and secular. In general, African-American millenarianisms express a revolt against Western domination of African existence (BASTIDE 1967, pp. 312-327). This paper focuses primarily on African-American millenarian thought and millenarian movements in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. It intends to give a fuller picture of African millenarianisms in America and the New World. Whereas it pays little attention to millenarian thought and millenarianism in antebellum slave revolts and Black Pentecostalism [2], it affirms the continuity of purpose between African-American millenarianisms in the antebellum and post-bellum America. The social construction of reality in which African Americans were placed in a subaltern position was radically called into question and the vision of alternative society was advanced. Beyond the Nadir period and the end of New World slavery, African millenarian thoughts and millenarian movements became more universal and pan-African in nature. Thus by the time the First Pan-African Conference was held in London in 1900 representatives were gathered from global Africa ; a process has continued to the present. Thus

in the modern world, alongside imperial interpretations of history, we find African interpretations of history which are intrinsically millenarian. The rest of this paper explores various expressions of this historical perspective. It tries to assess the significance of African-American millenarian ideas in relationship to the African-American experience, modern history, and the human condition. In the final analysis it argues that African-American millenarianism has made significant contribution to the maintenance of human life and asks for greater study of this contribution.

2. African-American Christian Millenarianism

W.E.B. DuBois and the First Pan-African Conference (London 1900) defined the problem of the twentieth century as that of the "colour-line". African-American millenarianisms are responses to that "problem" which was also a crisis for those who failed to correct it. Toward the end of what Fulop called the "Nadir" period of African-American millenarianism, the great divide between the White and Darker races of the world, W.E.B. DuBois and the First Pan-African Conference declared :

> In the metropolis of the modern world, in this the closing year of the Nineteenth Century, there has been assembled a Congress of men and women of African blood, to deliberate solemnly upon the present situation and outlook of the darker races of mankind. The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line, the question as to how far differences of race, which show themselves chiefly in the color of the skin and the texture of the hair, are going to be made, hereafter, the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization (DuBois 1900, pp. 319-321).

The Conference occurred after the partition of Africa by the European powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884. In retrospect, the Conference was prophetic in anticipating the military catastrophes of the twentieth century. The struggle between White and Black races was the major fault line of the modern era. The problem of the "colour line" was definable in apocalyptic and millenarian categories. In the mind of the First Pan-African Conference, if the coloured peoples of the world were not given "the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization", the result was going to be catastrophic, the end of Western civilization. African-American millenarianisms articulated this position, or judgement on the Euro-American construction of history, in various ways. This depended on the time in which they were constructed and their interpretation of the signs of the times as revealed in events in European history such as World War I. Reference has been made to the First Pan-African Conference, held in London in 1900. The above quotation was part of

the Conference's *Address to the Nations*. Henry Sylvestre Williams of Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean was the main organizer of the Conference, held around the time of the Paris World Fair. James Theodore Holly, the nineteenth-century African-American theologian, whose millenarian thought is soon dealt with, was associated, though he did not attend, in the First Pan-African Conference. The Conference warned the world concerning the creation of the apartheid "colour line" in South Africa. The Conference sent its *Address* to the leading nations of the world, including Belgium. The *Address* fell on deaf ears and as European countries carved up Africa so did they fight among themselves, at home and abroad, during the twentieth century. African-American millenarian thinkers saw all this as omens of historical reversals to African subaltern status in history. In millenarian terms, history was being purged or exorcized of its greatest scandal, the thralldom of African peoples.

Whereas the First Pan-African Conference, and its successor congresses, hoped for a collective African renaissance, James T. Holly and Theophilus Gould Steward saw African Americans occupying a high moral ground in leavening or purifying White Christianity of its compromises with racism. This stems from their Africanization of Christianity in light of the African-American experience. According to Albert Raboteau, Black Americans condemned American Christianity as hypocritical and false (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 51). Slavery and race hatred blatantly violated the Christian law of love. The indictment of John Edward Bruce, a newspaper columnist, written in 1891, summarizes most of the charges elaborated over the century :

> [The] white church of America... preaches and perverts the Gospel, ... by indirection and evasion denies the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, ... makes the Black man who loves Jesus feel his inferiority and that he is a degree or two lower than the white Christian and a wad rather than an equal before God... Judgement is coming ! The noisome pestilence that walketh in darkness will have no terrors for the Godly, but they will as surely overtake the great majority of Negro-hating white Christians as that God is just. And He is just, for He intended that his holy religion should enfold its broad mantle, in the perfect equality of Democracy, every human being on earth, for He is no respecter of persons. The white American Christian is. Therefore, his religion is a religion of lies and hypocrisy. Is this plain enough ? (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 51.)

Bruce clearly saw, in apocalyptic terms, the crisis of the "colour line". "Two points", comments Raboteau, "in Bruce's brief against white Christians merit elaboration : first, his prediction of divine retribution, and second, his implicit critique of civil religion" (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 51). In millenarian terms Bruce's way of thinking renders African-American Christian millenarianism prophetic and the goad of a White Christianity that is a regulator of the status quo. A similar critique is made in other African-American millenarian traditions such as the Nation of Islam and RastafarI. Raboteau is therefore correct in saying that "a great deal of the criticism levelled against American Christianity by African

Americans took the form of an apocalyptic warning" (RABOTEAU 1995, pp. 51-52). The best articulation of this African-American Apocalypse is David Walker's "Appeal to the Coloured Citizens", written in 1830. "Unless America repents, and soon, God will tear up the very face of the earth" (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 52). In Walker's "Appeal to the Coloured Citizens", and in other African-American Jeremiads, God appears as the Lord of History, the Ruler of Nations, who reveals his will in events of the day. In effect, argues Raboteau, the Jeremiad did more than enable Blacks to vent their righteous indignation : it placed black Christians in a stance of judgement over white Christians ; it consolidated a position of moral superiority for the descendants of the African race (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 52). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, two black theologians, Theophilus Gould Steward and James Theodore Holly, globalized this doctrine of black moral superiority. They insisted, in keeping with notions of African redemption, that the Psalmist had predicted a special role for the darker races in the millenarian eschatological phase of history (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 54).

Holly globalized the interpretation of Psalm 68:31(Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God) (RABOTEAU 1995, pp. 37-56 ; HOLLY 1884, pp. 79-85). Steward, a minister of the African-American Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, concluded in 1888 that the evidence of Scripture and the signs of the times indicated the end of the present age was near (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 54). [3] Western Christianity had nothing more to offer believers ; it had lost credibility. Indeed, an end to the militaristic and racist corruption of Christianity by the West had to come if the pagan nations were ever to have the true gospel preached to them. Fratricidal warfare among the "Christian nations" would end the present age and a new and final age of a raceless and peaceful Christianity would begin, in which the darker, non-Christian peoples of the world (Africans, Indians, Chinese) would hear and accept the pure gospel of Christ, undefiled by Anglo-Saxon prejudice (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 54). In other words, the contemporary historical events pointed to the immediate transformation of the African-American condition. It pointed to a time of healing and salvation for the darker peoples.

This new religious age, Steward speculated, might well be led by the Church of Abyssinia, the "hidden church in the wilderness", which "God has maintained for himself as a witness", down through the centuries (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 54). Steward's millenarian vision, written in 1888, a year after the Ethiopians, led by Emperor Menelik I, defeated the Italians at the Battle of Adwa, gave the entire African world the hope of eminent African redemption. The Battle of Adwa was interpreted in apocalyptic terms as a Holy War in which Ethiopia/Africa, led by God, defeated Italy and European imperialism. Ethiopia's defeat of Italy sent waves of euphoria throughout the African and African-Diasporic world : the millenarian age of African liberation was at hand. One outcome of Ethiopia's defeat of Italy was the liberation of Ethiopia from cultural and political isolation from the rest of Africa and the African Diaspora. This process of de-isolation led to Ethiopia's connection with the Pan-African movement and the birth of Jamaican

RastafarI. In effect, various strands of African-American millenarianism were coming together in an historical process geared toward African renaissance and redemption. African-American millenarianism should therefore be construed as an historical process of African redemption, an historical struggle in which African peoples throughout the Diaspora have struggled to survive, to re-invent themselves, and to construct their own notions of freedom. Through millenarian thought they express an incredible interpretation of history, despite its problems as being ultimately in their favour. As contemporary orders wither away, they see the approach of a more lasting and just order. African-American millenarian thinking is therefore very critical for understanding the future course of human history and for articulating meaning for coming generations. This millenarian sense that history is not as absurd as it seems might well have preserved African-Americans from going insane in the midst of the horrors of slavery and the sense of alienation that it has tried to impose on African-descended peoples. African-American millenarianism therefore is an innovative and creative expression of African religious genius in the face of profound adversity.

James Theodore Holly also defined a revised universal eschatological status for the darker races. In 1884, Holly argued that the "divine plan for human redemption" unfolds in three historic periods or dispensations. The first dispensation belonged to the Semitic race, whose task was to formulate, write down, and preserve the Holy Scriptures. The second, or Japhetic, phase, coincided with the apostolic or evangelistic period, the age of the Europeans, who were commissioned to spread the gospel. The Hebrew dispensation ended with the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. The Japhetic phase would end in warfare, after which the millennium would commence. During this thousand-year reign of peace and justice, the Hamitic race would bring to completion the divine plan of human redemption only imperfectly realized by the Semitic and Japhetic races. To the sons of Ham, "the elect among the nations", "the crowning work of the will of God is reserved for the millenarian phase of Christianity when Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands directly unto God". According to Holly :

> The African race has been the servant of servants to their brethren of other races during all the long and dreary ages of the Hebrew and Christian dispensations. And it is this service that they have so patiently rendered through blood and tears that they shall finally obtain for them the noblest places of service in the Coming Kingdom. Thus, what has been a curse to them under Gentile tyranny will become a blessing to them under the mild and beneficent reign of Christ, and thus will be realized the double but adverse significations of the Hebrew word *barak*... which signifies "to bless", and also "To curse",.... The curse of Canaan, dooming him to be a servant of servants unto his brethren, which lowered him to a place of dishonor under the earthly governments of men, will turn to a blessing unto him and exalt him to the posts of honor under the heavenly government of God (HOLLY 1884, pp. 83-84).

Holly's line of argument anticipated an eschatological reversal of African-American status in the world. In millenarian terms the present was not absolute. It served as a pedagogy, guide, toward African-American self-reconstruction. In the Coming Millenarian Kingdom, Africans, the descendants of Ham, were to be exalted to the post of honour under the heavenly Divine Government. The quest for African restoration and communal wholeness were implicit in Holly's millenarian vision. African-American millenarianism has never been isolated from Pan-Africanism, the common struggle for African sovereignty in the face of Atlantic slavery and European colonialism. Steward and Holly therefore fashioned a millenarian theology of historical liberation in dialectic with the African-American experience of humiliation and deprivation. Whilst Steward envisioned a reversal in African status, Holly, in the language of historic dispensationalism, also envisaged a radical reversal of African fortunes. They saw the dawn of a new millenarian age in which a new order and status was at hand for the erstwhile dishonored children of Ham. Contemporary events in European history were a harbinger, the birth pangs, of the newly emerging order. Raboteau is apposite when he writes :

> Those who oppress and enslave others, those who make war, those who spread "civilization" by conquest, those who degrade other races, those who corrupt Christianity by making it a clan religion, are destined to destroy one another. Their age will shortly end. A new age will shortly begin. In this new age, it will be the destiny of those who were oppressed but did not oppress, those who were enslaved but did not enslave, those who were hated but did not hate, to realize the gospel on earth (RABOTEAU 1995, p. 56).

The age in which the gospel was realized on earth was nothing less than the millenarian Golden Age in which African Americans would be liberated from their liminal status. As pedagogies of resistance, African-American millenarianism mobilized African Americans to combat the oppression that was imposed on them. It gave them hope and a profound historical consciousness of their redemption that subverted the slavocratic colonial construction of time and space. It empowered them to overcome their feelings of alienation through the remembrance of Africa and the creation of a pan-African sense of community and solidarity. It empowered them to dream, and where possible, to work toward a new heaven and a new earth in which their humanity was fully restored. In Holly's words the millenarian age was to be characterized by "the honored elevation of the Hamitic race" (HOLLY 1884, pp. 84-85).

Beyond Fulop's " Nadir" period, the most significant development in the history of African-American Christian millenarianism occurred in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. The movement illustrates Millette's contention that Diasporic Africans have been active agents in the creation of their freedom (MILLETTE 1995, p. 4). Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream Speech", is a classic expression of African-American Christian millenarianism (WASHINGTON 1992 ;

KING 1963) [4]. The impact of King's speech throughout the African world lies in its access to African religious consciousness in which dreams are critical. Dreams render revelation open, continuous, and in dialectic with history. King's speech is revelatory and millenarian. It announced a new dispensation for all Americans, including African-Americans. It was the implosion into American history of the radical reconstruction of race relationships and the millenarian vision of all flesh, irrespective of ethnicity, being glorified together. King declared :

> I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream... I have a dream that one day "every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together". ... And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sin in the words of that old Negro spiritual, " Free at last ! Free at last ! Thank God almighty, we are free at last !"(WASHINGTON 1992, p. 102 ; KING 1963, pp. 104-106)[5].

King's Dream Speech was a summons to an inclusive human community. It effectively led America to the threshold of the Promised Land as it connected it with its millenarian roots. If freedom be at the core of the American Constitution, then freedom denied anywhere was freedom denied everywhere. America could never be true to its noblest ideal if its "colour line" problem was not annihilated. For this to happen it was essential that Americans be reconnected with their historical roots. The problem of segregation was that it had tried to effectively cut off African-descended peoples in America from their African roots. At the core of African-American millennnialism is the struggle to reconnect African people to their roots ; for a tree cut off from its roots naturally withers and dies. Herein African-American millenarian thought and millenarian movements advance a formidable critique of modernity and modern theories of freedom that pay little or no attention to culture. We do not have the space to go into such notions here. However, when King delivered his Dream Speech it seemed for a moment that the "colour line" was closed and America saw the Promised Land toward which it had been moving. Other voices within the African-American community did not share King's utopian perception. The Nation of Islam (NOI), a group within the wider African-American Islamic fold, was one of these. King's Dream was their Nightmare. According to the Nation, African Americans had to separate themselves from White dominated American society to guarantee their future. For the African-American Christian King the future was only guaranteed through the creation of a community. The NOI was critical of American Christianity, of whatever genre. Salvation premised on the construction of a Eurocentric Christ

was fundamentally enslaving to Africans and served the interest of the American status quo. Such a Christianity could not offer African-American integrity and authenticity. The NOI thus levelled a radical critique of Christianity and the social construction of reality organized around it which fundamentally denied Africanness. The NOI recognized the dehumanizing nihilism that was responsible for the absence of community and its effect in terms of the eminent destruction of society. On this radical apocalyptic note, the NOI summoned African Americans to separate themselves from the dying white world. Like Holly and Steward before them, the death of this world was the sign of an imminent Exodus of African Americans to depart and go back to their homeland in peace (GOODMAN 1971, p. 148). The following section discusses the NOI's type of African-American millenarianism. The NOI was radically Black Nationalist in orientation and its millenarian pedagogy was destined to be a guide to reconstruct Black identity on its own terms.

3. African-American Islam

African-American Islam also has to be seen within the wider context of the struggle for racial equality and justice in America. Here again African-American millenarianism is linked to the African-American subaltern status in America. C. Eric Lincoln, who did so much to bring African-American Islam within the mainstream of American academic scholarship, argued that the main appeal of Black Nationalist movements is to the Negro lower class (LINCOLN 1962, p. 184). Here the Negro's resentment is crystallized and open. He has long despaired of the white man's justice and of the trustworthiness of the "acceptable" Negro leaders who court the white man's favour (LINCOLN 1962, p. 184). According to Lincoln :

> The lower-class Negro is ripe for the lure of black nationalism. He is proud to rediscover himself as a Black Man, linked to the great and venerable civilizations of the "single black continent" of Afro-Asia. He is grateful for a mystique, especially one dignified as religion, that rationalizes his resentment and hatred as spiritual virtues in a cosmic war of good against evil. And he is jubilant at his new vision of the future — a future not of racial equality, for which he believes the white man has shown himself unfit, but of black supremacy. For "black" to be black nationalist, is a quality and symbol of all that is glorious, triumphant and divine (LINCOLN 1967, p. 185).

The apocalyptic crisis of the "colour line" resonates in Lincoln's statement. Elijah Muhammad, the NOI's leader from the early 1930s until his death in 1975, consistently predicted the imminent annihilation of the world as it was known. African-American Muslims saw Elijah Muhammad as a Divine Prophet. He was seen as more than ethnic messenger or warner. He was seen to be salvaging African Americans. The Black Muslim Movement gave African Americans a

new functional identity. If it could not transform American society, as Martin Luther King Jr. and others envisioned, it could transfigure African Americans from being Nobodies into being Somebodies. To do so it had to radically exorcize African Americans of their pollution by white racism and negate the germ of racial inferiority with which they were affected through a sense of Black supremacy. The NOI was thus strident in its apocalyptic denunciation of the White world. In his book "Message to the Black Man", Elijah Muhammad declared : "Today, we live at the end of the World of People" (MUHAMMAD 1992 ; TAYLOR 1997, p. 223]. "Message to the Black Man" is an exposition on the millenarian nature of the NOI. The fundamental apocalyptic struggle is between the Black race and the White race. Borrowing from Noble Drew Ali and his Moorish Temple, founded earlier in the century, Muhammad declared that Blacks were really "Asiatic" and that their natural religion was Islam. They were from the lost tribe of Shabazz and were God's chosen people. Whites were devils by nature, created six thousand years ago by Allah's enemy, Yacub. Whites were debased by nature and caused black suffering. Allah, proclaimed Muhammad, will soon destroy the devil race and restore the "Asiatic Blackman" to his place as the ruler of the earth.

The periodization of history was an important concept in the NOI. The NOI argued that the first period began trillions of years ago before the earth existed and that the "original man" lived on the moon. An explosion caused by a black scientist led to part of the moon's splitting off in space. This splinter, the earth, was inhabited by people of the moon, or "the original man", who resided not in Africa but in Mecca. During this period, Whites did not exist and these first inhabitants of the earth lived in harmony.

The second major period, beginning six thousand years ago, was the age of white rule. God allowed black earthly rule to end and allowed Whites to take command. Because of the evil nature of whites, this second period was a time of great suffering of all people of colour.

The third period was the fall of the white race and the restoration of black rule. The evil nature of Whites is not limited to a specific locality ; it is global. Everywhere you find the white race, you will find evil. In terms of time, the NOI asserted that the destruction of the world began in 1914, the start of World War I (MUHAMMAD 1992, p. 142 ; TAYLOR 1997, p. 223) [6]. World War I, Muhammad claimed, was the beginning of the Antichrist. It was a war against the righteous. However, a sixty-year reprieve was granted by Allah in order to bring Islam to the "lost tribe of Shabazz". After the end of the reprieve, God was to continue destroying the world of the "white devil". The destruction was to be completed before the year 2000 (TAYLOR 1997, p. 224). As the original man was black, the eschatological man will also be black. In "Message to the Black Man" Elijah Muhammad wrote :

... when this man is born, he will change civilization (the world), and produce a new race of people, who would rule the original black nation for 6,000 years. After that

time, the original black nation would give birth to one, whose wisdom, Knowledge and power would be infinite. One, whom the world would recognize as being the greatest and mightiest God, since the creation of the universe... He would destroy Yakub's world and restore the original nation, or ancient nation, into power to rule forever. This mighty One is known under many names... The Holy Qur-an refers to Him as Allah, the One God ; beside Him, there is no God and there is none like Him ; the Supreme Being ; the mighty, the wise ; the best knower ; the light ; the giver of life ; the Madhi (this is He, Whom I have met and am missioned by). He, also, is referred to as the Christ, the second Jesus... He knows how to reproduce the universe, and the people of His choice. He will remove and destroy the present, old warring wicked world of Yakub (the Caucasian world) and set up a world of peace and righteousness, out of the present so-called Negroes, who are rejected and despised by this world (MUHAMMAD 1992, p. 111).

Elijah Muhammad clearly saw himself as Allah's Messenger : an African-American eschatological prophet announcing the Black millenarian era (MUHAMMAD 1992, pp. 141-142) [7]. When the new eschatological man, the Black man, is born, the world as it is known will be converted and a new race of people will be produced which will rule the original Black nation for 6,000 years. At the end of this period the original Black nation will ultimately produce a divine person who will destroy the Caucasian world and establish a world of peace and righteousness, made up the rejected and despised of Negroes of this world. This person, Elijah Muhammad (like Paul of Tarsus), claimed to have met and received his apostolate from. In one swoop the NOI reversed the Hamitic curse theory used to legitimate African-American slavery and African subaltern in history through the construction of an alternative cultural mythology that makes Black original and eschatological. Between those two poles, history is flawed and African peoples should not tolerate their present status in history. On the contrary, the mission of the NOI is to give Africans the true knowledge of their dignity and destiny. NOI African-American Islam millenarianism thus radically calls into question Western Eurocentric cultural hegemony, based on the theory of superiority.

It is impossible to speak of the Black Muslims without speaking of Malcolm X. Whereas Martin Luther King Jr. was the most visible representation of African-American Christianity in the 1960s Civil Rights struggle, Malcolm X was representative of African-American Islam. [8] Malcolm X began his Islamic journey as a disciple of Elijah Muhammad and rose to prominence as a minister-spokesperson of the Nation. According to Malcolm X :

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad's mission as Messenger is to remind America that God has not forgotten America's crimes against his Long-Lost people, who have spent four hundred miserable years in this Land of Bondage. His mission is to warn America of the divine destruction that will soon rain down upon her from the very skies above her. His mission is to warn America to repent, and to atone for her sins against God's people... or face complete destruction and permanent refusal

from the face of this earth... and removal not only as a nation but *removal even as a race* ! (GOODMAN 1971, p. 129.)

Symbolically applying the biblical Exodus in parallel to African-American history, Malcolm argued that Elijah Muhammad was trying, like Moses, to restore to his people their lost culture, identity, and racial dignity (GOODMAN 1971, p. 127). History was repeating itself in contemporary America. America was facing the same fate of biblical Pharaonic Egypt at the hands of Almighty God ; that same divine handwriting was then on the walls of the modern American House of Bondage (MALCOLM 1971, p. 127). Malcolm understood the mission and work of Elijah Muhammad in terms of eschatological fulfilment. He declared :

> We, the Muslims who follow The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, believe that the symbolic stories in these ancient Scriptures paint a prophetic picture of today, of America, and of the twenty-two million "Negroes" here in America.... We believe that our present generation is witnessing the fulfilment of these divine prophecies, through the work being done among our people here in America today by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad (GOODMAN 1971, p. 127).

In a very relevant summary of *The Nation of Islam*, Martha F. Lee contends that the original doctrine of the Nation provided a cosmology that fit the experience of many Black Americans during the early twentieth century (LEE 1996, p. 2). Millenarianism, the belief in an imminent, ultimate, collective, this-worldly, and total salvation, was intrinsic to the Nation's experience of reality and projected an alternative universe in which the contradictions of such existence were removed. The White world and its oppressive political institutions would fall and from their ashes the Black millennium will rise. This combination of political and religious symbols served the Muslims well. Individuals were attracted by a doctrine that both promised a new world and in many ways seemed to be initiating it. In preparation for the future age, *The Nation of Islam* rejuvenated the Black family unit, developed an educational system, organized a police force and acquired vast building holdings. Such enterprises lifted the Nation's membership out of the lower class and established the organization as a permanent institution. In addition to the foregoing testimony, Lee concludes that "perhaps most importantly, their prophecy of the Fall of America, as the focus of their religious beliefs, fostered a sense of identity and the development of a political community among Black Americans" (LEE 1996, p. 2).

Consequent on his pilgrimage, *hajj*, to Mecca, Malcolm X articulated a more ecumenical, rather than separatist, philosophy of race relations. His experience of *umma*, Islamic community, confronted him with the question that if community, in the face of diversity, was possible in Mecca, then it was also possible in America. A united human community was the eschatological goal. This reorientation in Malcolm X's consciousness was of tremendous significance : an intellectual and spiritual fusion occurred between Malcolm X and Martin Luther

King Jr. The way was now open for both men, and their respective movements, to pool their energies toward solving the problem of the "colour line". Tragically, within a short span of time the two charismatic leaders were assassinated. Nevertheless, their charisma lives on. The causes to which they committed their lives must be sustained if America and the world are to enter the Promised Land of freedom for all. [9] Afro-Caribbean voices have never lagged behind in their millenarian hopes and visions. In reality, Afro-Caribbean millenarian traditions are an integral part of African-American millennialism. The Caribbean is the most intense zone in terms of the survival of African culture in the Americas. Individuals like W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm X and others engaged in the struggle to redefine African-American status in the world had Caribbean roots. Rastafarī and the Jordanites are two Caribbean expressions of African-American millenarianism. They are discussed in the ensuing sections.

4. Rastafarī

Edward K. Brathwaite argues that the potential for explosion and ramification that has made blackness such a radical if subterranean feature of plantation political culture because the African "phenomenon" is continuously present, like a bomb, in the New World since the abduction of the first slaves — a phenomenon that deeply subsists within the Zion/Ethiopian churches of the United States and the *hounforts* (Haitian Vodun temples or shrines) of the Caribbean and South America. This potential triggers into visibility at each moment of crisis in the hemisphere : 1790 in Haiti, 1860 in Jamaica, 1930 in the West Indies, and 1960 in the New World generally (BRATHWAITE 1974, p. 78). African-American millenarianism is a radical expression of this subterranean feature of plantation culture. Pedagogically, it serves as a popular front to mobilize African Americans to rise up and struggle for the liberation. Rastafarī is a classic example of what Brathwaite calls a Zion/Ethiopian church.

Since its emergence in Jamaica in the 1930s, Rastafarī has gone global. It is one of the fastest growing religious traditions in the world due to widespread impact of colonialism and imperialism. Rastafarī, like other forms of African-American millenarianism, envisions a millenarian age in which the African race is exalted to a place of honour. Marcus Garvey, the major prophet of the Harlem Renaissance in the United States, is the John the Baptist of the Rastafarī movement. Hence Rastafarī is seen as an authentic development of the movement started by Marcus Garvey, the *United Negro Improvement Association* (UNIA). Garveyism was the precursor to many of the decolonizing and independence movements in the Americas, the Caribbean and Africa. In his travels throughout the African Diaspora, Garvey saw the common sufferings of Diaspora Africans. He became convinced that there was no future for Diasporic Africans outside Africa. An African Diasporic Exodus back to Africa, an essential tenet of

RastafarI doctrine, was essential to African-American redemption. Garvey's UNIA mobilized thousands of displaced African Americans and instilled in them a sense of racial pride and vision of African redemption. The UNIA remains the largest mobilization of Diaspora Blacks. "Africa for Africans at home and abroad", the rallying cry of Garvey's movement, mobilized Diaspora Blacks for the coming millenarian dispensation of African renaissance and sovereignty. It was a virtual call for African unity. Like other African-American prophet-preachers, including Steward and Holly, Garvey used Psalm 68:31, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God", to prophesy that Africans should look to Ethiopia for a deliverer of oppressed Africans (RABOTEAU 1995, pp. 37-56). Early RastafarI leaders such as Leonard Howell, Nathaniel Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley, were members of Garvey's UNIA, or had been exposed to his African nationalist ideas. Garvey therefore indirectly influenced the millenarian expectations of RastafarI for a Black/African Messiah and repatriation to Ethiopia/Africa.

Marginalized Jamaicans interpreted the crowning of Ras Tafari Makonnen as Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930, with great pomp, ceremony, and international publicity event, as the fulfilment of Garvey's prophecy. At last, an African Messiah had emerged onto the world historical stage. The African millenarian age had arrived. As foretold by Garvey, the advent of Selassie's reign was the sign that for all "downpressed" people of colour that their deliverance had come. The deliverer was going to emancipate and repatriate the exiled sons and daughters of Africa in Jamaica to Africa/Ethiopia. Jamaican sectarians appropriated the name RastafarI, after the name of the former Prince Regent, who now assumed the title of Haile Selassie, Might of the Trinity. Their assumption of the name *RastafarI* was consonant with their true identity and the path they had taken for liberation from the oppressive Babylonian situation under which they were living in Jamaica. They were now on their millenarian march to Zion in Ethiopia/Africa.

To the RastafarI Haile Selassie, Jah Rastafari, the Living God, had become man to release them from Babylonian captivity. Undoubtedly, the RastafarI construction of Haile Selassie's charisma had much to do with their rejection of their social status in Jamaica. When Jah became man in Haile Selassie, marginalized Afro-Jamaicans were elevated to a place of honour and respect denied them under the Babylonian system. The enthronement of Haile Selassie was virtually their enthronement. His ascension was theirs. In the God-man they became God-men. The millenarian age had arrived for RastafarI. They were now exalted to a place of honour as expected by Holly, Steward, Pan-Africanism, and the Nation of Islam. As a pedagogy of resistance and vision of African redemption RastafarI was the expression of the African soul in Jamaican culture which, despite marginalization and relegation to the lowest echelons of colonial Jamaican society, remained unconquerable, resisted all attempts to destroy and when the time came it burst onto the Jamaican scene aided by the enthronement and visit to Jamaica

of Haile Selassie. This millenarian spirit or source is everpresent for it is testament to the unconquered spirit of Jamaican and other Diaspora Blacks who have not bowed the knee to slavery and colonialism.

Reggae, the musical expression of RastafarI, "chants out" RastafarI millenarian doctrines. The popular appeal of Reggae lies in its radical social critique (of Babylonian systemic oppression), democratic thrust and millenarian vision of peace. Bob Marley is the most famous of Reggae artists. As a RastafarI, Bob Marley saw the world through lens of the "downpressing" Babylonian system. The call to resist and take a revolutionary stance against Babylon pervades several of Marley's songs. Babylon is parasitic ; it must create alienation or false consciousness in its host's consciousness to drain its life away :

> Babylon system is the vampire
> Sucking the children day by day.
> Babylon system is the vampire
> Sucking the blood of the sufferers.
> Building church and university
> Deceiving the people continually [10].

Marley connects with the whole spectrum of African-American millenarian traditions in which the racism that has undermined African existence is "finally and permanently discredited and abandoned". Marley setting to music of Haile Selassie's speech delivered to the League of Nations is classic in identifying the RastafarI worldview and exposing the philosophical premises which support global conflict and war :

> Until the philosophy which holds one race
> Superior and another inferior
> Is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned
> Everywhere is war, we say war
>
> That until the basic human rights are equally
> Guaranteed to all, without regard to race
> Dis a war
>
> That until that day
> The dream of lasting peace, world citizenship
> Rule of international morality
> Will remain but a fleeting illusion
> To be pursued, but never attained
> Now everywhere is war, war
>
> And until that day, the African continent
> Will not know peace, we Africans will fight
> We find it necessary and we know we shall win
> As we are confident in the victory
>
> Of good over evil, good over evil, good over evil
> Good over evil, good over evil, good over evil [11].

According to the song's lyrics, the racist "philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior", is fundamental in the conflict between good and evil, peace and war. For the millenarian era to arrive for Africa and the world, that philosophy must be "finally and permanently discredited and abandoned". For the millennium of peace to occur, the world must be purged of the scourge of racism. Marley spent his brief life, at times even facing attempts on his life, using Reggae music to combat racism and "chant down Babylon".

Reggae has contributed much to the globalization of RastafarI millenarianism. It has been a force in uniting dispersed, fragmented African consciousness in Africa and its Diaspora as well as oppressed and marginal peoples worldwide. The millenarian stance of RastafarI enables it to "chant" in history as if it had already occupied a trans-historical space in which conflicts are viewed from the hindsight of their preordained resolution. RastafarI millenarianism is very much in keeping with the African-American millenarian tradition which, as we have shown, draws on symbols from the biblical or qur'anic texts, especially the Book of Revelation. According to Richard Lischer the cruelties of slavery made it imperative that African Americans not step *back* but step *into* the Book and its storied world of God's personal relations with those in trouble. Enslaved Africans listened to the Bible and adopted a new history. Their only hope was to recognize their own suffering and captivity in Bible stories (LISCHER 1995, p. 200). RastafarI stepped into the Book to fulfil it, to revitalize themselves and envision African redemption. As an art form, Reggae, the musical expression of RastafarI, exorcizes the evil Babylonian system, frees up oppressed consciousness, keeps the oppressed sane and open to the millenarian future. The next section concludes this exploration of African-American millenarianism with the Jordanites of Guyana, South America.

5. The Jordanites or White Robed Army

The Jordanites or White Robed Army is a millenarian religious group peculiar to Guyana, South America. It traces its beginnings to Joseph MacLaren, an Anglican Grenadian, who from 1895 preached 'pure Protestantism' from the Bible in Guyana. This led to the establishment of the *West Evangelical Millenarian Pilgrim Church* (WEMP), whose main founder was E. Nathaniel Jordan who was 'called' through visions to join the WEMP in 1917. Jordan significantly impacted the movement so that, when he died in 1928, his name identified the movement. Though illiterate in the English language, Jordan, argues Dale Bisnauth, was undoubtedly a gifted and charismatic leader. In addition to revelation which he received in dreams, Jordan also sometimes heard 'voices'. One of his most remarkable predictions was that of the day, date and time of his death — an event which took place on April 7, 1928 (BISNAUTH 1996, p. 182).

After Jordan's death, the leadership of the movement passed on to Elder James Klein. Under Jordan, Klein was commissioned a 'captain' and sent out to preach. Also designated 'Defender of the Faith', he functioned as an apologist of the beliefs and practices of the movement. Before Klein joined Jordan's movement, he had been a member of the Guyana chapter of Marcus Garvey's *Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association* (UNIA). Hence Garvey's ideas influenced the thinking of the Jordanites through Klein and those ex-Garveyites who joined the movement. According to Bisnauth, the UNIA's importance in Guyana declined with the rise in popularity of the White Robed Army. Because many former UNIA members joined the Army, one is led to think that the Jordanite movement superseded the UNIA among lower class Afro-Guyanese because it was more likely to promote racial pride and love among Blacks and, simultaneously, offer them spiritual strength and inspiration to cope with their socio-economic and political deprivation (BISNAUTH 1996, p. 182).

By the 1970s the Jordanites claimed 4,500 members. Mainly Afro-Guyanese, they stressed their African heritage and regarded God as black. Reflecting plural Guyanese society, Jordanite beliefs combined Hindu (reincarnation), Jewish, Christian, African and occult elements. Jordanite worship, which takes place on Saturday, follows a Jewish pattern. There are festivals of Tabernacles, New Moon, and Passover, and circumcision is practiced. Jordanites can thus be described as Sabbatarian. Christmas is not observed and adult baptism by immersion is important. The end of the present age is expected. A strict ethic includes various food taboos, vegetarianism, no alcohol, tobacco, or cola, and the banning of dances, the cinema, and radio music (BOWKER 1997, p. 509). According to Bisnauth as its earlier name, the Church of the *West Evangelical Millennium Pilgrims* suggests, the Jordanite movement is strongly millenarian. Since taking root in Guyana, the Jordanites have been looking for the Last Day on which the "law-keepers", the Jordanites, "will be abundantly rewarded while the wicked of this earth will be punished" (BISNAUTH 1996, p. 183).

6. Conclusion

This exploration has shown the prevalence of millenarianism in African-American religious and secular traditions. Such millenarian rhetoric and expectations have been expressed within the context of African-descended peoples in the Atlantic Diaspora reformulating various major and non-major religious traditions in keeping the history of slavery, colonialism against which they have had to struggle to recover their sovereignty, personal integrity and dignity. In so doing, they reinterpreted in symbolic fashion stories and millenarian ideas from the Jewish-Christian-Islamic scriptural axis. We have therefore seen how Christian (Holly and Steward), Islamic (Nation of Islam), Judaeo-Christian-Ethiopian (RastafarI), and Jewish (The Jordanites) expressions of African-

American millenarian discourse. African traditional religions have also been reformulated in the construction of African-American millenarian traditions (Jordanites). These different expressions of African-American millenarianism have certain common features directly related to their subaltern historical status in the Atlantic world and their determination to question that status and to articulate an alternative history of their own making. The underlying truth is that, when Africans were dispersed into the Americas, their world as they knew it in Africa collapsed and the fundamental foundations of their being were radically threatened. In the American Diaspora Africans-in-exile recalled and reformulated the foundations of their being to rebuild and reconstruct themselves in a harsh and foreign environment on pilgrimage toward the eventual restoration of themselves and their home, Africa. As pedagogies (guides), African-American millenarian traditions express this movement in history.

In general, the appeal of millenarianism and millenarian movements to Diasporic Africans is identified by Clarence Taylor, C. Eric Lincoln (with respect to the Nation of Islam) and Dale Bisnauth (with respect to the Jordanites). It offers them racial pride, communal love and solidarity, spiritual strength and inspiration to cope with their socio-economic and political deprivation. African-American millenarian movements are thus popular fronts with revolutionary potential for social change and transformation in their host societies. From their peripheral positions, these movements critique the systems of domination which oppress them. They critique Eurocentrism and replace it with various forms of Afro-centrism. They interpret historical events such as European genocidal wars as symptoms of the decline of European Western civilization and see them as harbingers of their becoming subjects of their own history. They see the present or the immediate future as a time in which their fortunes will be reversed and they will be elevated to places of honour (Holly, Steward, NOI, RastafarI, Jordanites). Pedagogically they empower their adherents to resist all attempts to crucify their humanity, to produce and identify charismatic messianic type leaders with the capacity to lead them into freedom (Garvey, Haile Selassie, Martin Luther King Jr., Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, Jordan). In the process they resist and negate the crippling effects of racism, expose the bareness of history as constructed by the dominant and give their adherents their own redemptive worldview and song. In this regard African-American millenarianisms are humanistic. They speak of a radically new person, humanity, and community (Martin Luther King Jr., Elijah Muhammad and the NOI, RastafarI, the Jordanites). This new person is the one who was placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy since the birth of the modern world but whose historical fortunes are radically reversed in a post-modern world.

On the one hand African-American millenarianisms speak of the Sisyphus-like condition of African people. On the other they witness to testify to the fact that the African Sisyphus and his children just keep on struggling along confident that they will overcome some day. This exploration of African-American

millenarian thought has much to tell us about the soul of African Diasporic peoples. It presents us with the insight that, ironically, those who have gone through the wine-press of oppression have the tremendous responsibility to share with the rest of the world knowledge as to how humankind could regenerate itself in the face of the catastrophes into which the love of power has propelled it. Consequently, the slave and her descendants must witness to the truth of freedom. African-American millenarian thought has contributed significantly to understanding freedom in the modern world. In this regard it can be said that it has made its contribution in the creation of the coming millennium. Millenarian movements therefore serve history and humanity by keeping the cause of freedom real in the world. And that is why in Talmon's idiom they are definable as movements which "expect imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly collective salvation". Civilization needs such movements to live and not atrophy. African-American millenarian thought and movements have made outstanding contributions to humanity in this regard. Hopefully, this paper will challenge all to study the entire African-American experience and interpret its meaning and significance in world history and to the creation of a better world.

NOTES

[1] See Timothy E. Fulop, *'The Future Golden Day of the Race' : Millenarianism and Black Americans in the Nadir, 1877-1901,* in Timothy E. Fulop & Albert J. Raboteau, *African-American Religion : Interpretative Essays in History and Culture* (New York & London : Routledge, 1997), p. 247. Fulop argues that "regardless of the form or type, millenarianism sets a future perfect state over against the present and sows seeds of social and religious criticism. Inherent in black millenarianism is criticism against the unjust and unequal treatment of African Americans as well as criticism against white Christianity which did little if anything to solve the 'race problem' ".

[2] The subject of slave revolts must also include the Caribbean and Latin America. See, for example, Vincent Harding, *Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Slaves, 1800-1860,* in Timothy E. Fulop, *'The Future Golden Day of the Race' : Millenarianism and Black Americans in the Nadir,* 1877-1901, in Timothy E. Fulop & Albert J. Raboteau, *African-American Religion : Interpretative Essays in History and Culture,* ibid., pp. 107-130.

[3] The expression *signs of the times* is eschatological in nature.

[4] Martin Luther King's preaching, in keeping with the African-American experience, and the place of the Bible in the African-American experience, is heavily millenarian. For discussion on this matter, see, for example, Richard Lischer, *The Preacher King : Martin Luther King, Jr and The Word That Moved America* (Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1995), chap. 8, pp. 197-220.

[5] According to James M. Washington, " Mrs. Coretta King once commented, 'At that moment it seemed as if the Kingdom of God appeared. But it only lasted for a moment". See Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream", in Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream : Writings and Speeches That Changed The World,* ed. James

M. Washington (New York : HarperSanFrancisco/Division of HarperCollins, 1992), pp. 102, 105-106.

[6] See Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America* (Newport News, Virginia : U.B. & U.S. Communications Systems, 1992), p. 142. See also Clarence Taylor, *The Millenarian Concept and the Evolution of Leadership in Black Pentecostalism and the Nation of Islam*, in Charles B. Strozier & Michael Flynn (Eds.), The Year 2000 : Essays on the End (New York University Press, New York & London, 1997), p. 223.

[7] See Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America*, ibid., pp. 141-142. Elijah Muhammad declared, "We are now living in the early morning of that seventh thousand years. The world of evil was given 6,000 years to reign over the righteous. Now, since their time expired in 1914, as all the religious scientists agree, we are in the seven-thousandth year since the creation of Adam, or the Caucasian race".

[8] James Cone has rendered African-American scholarship a lasting service in doing a corporate study of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. In so doing he has exposed the "divide-and-rule" strategy of placing the two men at odds with each other. See James H. Cone, Martin & Malcolm & America : *A Dream or A Nightmare* (Orbis Press, Maryknoll, New York, 1998). For Malcolm X's millenarian thought, see Benjamin Goodman, *The End of White World Supremacy : Four Speeches by Malcolm X* (Merlin House, New York Inc., 1971). See especially, "God's Judgement on White America (The Chickens Are Coming Home to Roost)", pp. 121-148.

[9] Those who have despaired of the possibility of community have perhaps remained within the constraints of local boundaries that Martin and Malcolm suffered under and struggled to liberate themselves and America from. Community is fragile but possible. It requires commitment to humanity to maintain it.

[10] See http://www.bobmarley.com/songs/songs.cgi?babylon.

[11] Bob Marley, *War*, http://www.bobmarley.com/songs/songs.cgi?war. Marley sets to music the speech given to the United Nations by H.I.M. Haile Selassie. The song, perhaps one of Marley's most famous, is a powerful social and religious criticism of racism and an appeal for inclusiveness and community. It has therefore been a powerful instrument in the struggle against racial discrimination, for human rights and peace.

REFERENCES

BASTIDE, R. 1967. Color, Racism, and Christianity. — *Daedalus*, **96** (2) : 312-327.

BISNAUTH, D. 1996. History of Religions in the Caribbean. — Africa World Press, New Jersey, 225 pp.

BOWKER, J. 1997. Jordanites or White Robed Army. — *In* : BOWKER, J. (Ed.), The Oxford Dictionay of World Religions. Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York, p. 509.

BRATHWAITE, E.K. 1974. The African Presence in Caribbean Literature. — *Daedalus*, **103** (2) : 73-109.

DUBOIS, W.E.B., BROWN, H.B. & WALTERS, A. 1900. Address to the Nations of the World by the Pan-African Conference in London 1900. — *In* : THOMPSON, V.B. (1969),

Africa and Unity : the Evolution of Pan-Africanism, Longman Group Ltd., London, pp. 319-321.

FREIRE, P. 1993. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. — Continuum, New York, 164 pp.

FULOP, T. E. 1997. The Future Golden Day of the Race. — *In* : FULOP, T. E. & RABOTEAU, A. J., African-American Religion : Interpretative Essays in History and Culture. Routledge, New York & London, pp. 227-254.

GOODMAN, B. 1971. The End of White World Supremacy : Four Speeches by Malcolm X. — Merlin House, Inc., New York.

HARDING, V. 1997. Religion and Resistance Among Antebellum Slaves, 1800-1860. — *In* : FULOP, T. & RABOTEAU, A. (Eds.), African-American Religion. Routledge, New York & London, pp. 107-130.

HOLLY, J. T. 1884. The Divine Plan of Human Redemption in Its Ethnological Development. — *The A.M.E. Church Review*, **1** : 79-85.

KING, M. L. 1992. I Have a Dream. — *In* : WASHINGTON, J. M. (Ed.), I Have a Dream : Writings and Speeches that Changed the World, HarperSanFrancisco, New York, pp.101-106.

LEE, M. F. 1996. The Nation of Islam : An American Millenarian Movement. — Syracuse University Press, New York.

LINCOLN, C. E. 1962. The Black Muslims in America. — *In* : RAAB, E. (Ed.), American Race Relations Today : Studies of the Problems Beyond Desegregation. Doubleday & Company, New York, pp. 179-190.

LISCHER, R. 1995. The Preacher King : Martin Luther King, Jr. and The Word That Moved America. — Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford, XIV, 344 pp.

MILLETTE, J. C. 1995. The Hundred Years' War : Slaves Against Slavery in the Americas, 1789-1888. — Colloquium Papers, vol. III. Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts : Boston College, pp. 64-79.

MUHAMMAD, E. 1992. Message to the Blackman in America. — United Brothers Communications Systems, Virginia, 355 pp.

PATTERSON, O. 1982. Slavery and Social Death : A Comparative Study. — Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA) and London (England).

RABOTEAU, A. J. 1995. A Fire in the Bones : Reflections on African-American Religious History. — Beacon Press, Boston, XI, 224 pp.

STEWARD, T. G. 1888. The End of the World ; or Clearing the Way for the Fullness of the Gentiles. — A.M.E. Church Book Rooms, Philadelphia, III, 136 pp.

TALMON, Y. 1966. Millenarian Movements. — *Archives de sociologie européenne*, **7** : p. 159ff.

TAYLOR, C. 1997. The Millenarian Concept and the Evolution of Black Leadership in Black Pentecostalism and the Nation of Islam. — *In* : STROZIER, C.B. & FLYNN, M., The Year 2000 : Essays on the End, New York University Press, New York & London, pp. 217-229.

WALTERS, A. 1917. My Life and Work. — Fleming H. Revell Company, London & Edinburgh, 272 pp.

The *Réveil est-africain*,
East-African Pentecostalism and Transnationalism

by

André CORTEN *

SUMMARY. — A revival movement was born in Rwanda in the 1930s that rapidly spread to other East African countries, Uganda in particular. Called REA, it provided the groundwork for the development of an African Pentecostalism. REA emphasizes conversion rather than instruction, makes use of hymns of African origin and grants a significant role to lay members. A type of Pentecostalism highlighting these three elements had been introduced by Swedish missionaries in 1940 (the Church of the Pentecost first came to Rwanda under the denomination Swedish Free Mission, MLS) but only saw broad expansion in the 1960s. The millenarianism of REA is transformed by the Pentecostalism of foreign origin, yet it remained an important factor in the formation of the independent Rwandan state. Pentecostal pre-millenarianism generally causes believers to retreat from politics ; a vivid political imaginary rapidly overcomes this principle, however, as adepts share a transterritorial vision of the coming of the Kingdom. In 1983 the Church of the Pentecost counted 100,000 members. Since the 1990s the number of Pentecostals has increased enormously, not only for reasons specific to Rwanda but also for reasons more general to Africa. The transterritorial character of these religious movements serves to prepare the transnational reconfiguration of East Africa (on the subject of transnationalisation, see CORTEN & FRATANI (Eds.), Between Babel and Pentecost : Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America, London/Bloomington, IN, Hurst Publisher/ Indiana University Press, 2000).

RESUME. — *Le Réveil est-africain, le pentecôtisme et la transnationalisation est-africaine.* — Dans les années 1930 naît au Rwanda un mouvement de réveil qui essaime rapidement dans les pays de l'Est africain, en particulier l'Ouganda. Le REA va permettre le développement d'un pentecôtisme africain. Mettant l'accent sur la conversion plutôt que sur l'instruction, il reprend des hymnes d'origine africaine et accorde une place décisive aux laïcs. Le pentecôtisme qui valorise aussi ces trois éléments est introduit par des Suédois en 1940 (l'Eglise de la Pentecôte arrive au Rwanda sous l'appellation de Mission Libre Suédoise — MLS) mais connaît surtout une expansion dans les années 1960. Le millénarisme du REA est transformé par le pentecôtisme d'origine extérieure mais reste un vecteur important dans la formation du Rwanda indépendant. Le pré-millénarisme pentecôtiste conduit les croyants à un retrait du politique. Mais un imaginaire politique

* Département de Science politique, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), CP 8888, Succ. A., Montréal, QC, H3C 3P8 (Canada).

dépasse rapidement cette attitude de principe. Les croyants ont une vision transterritoriale de l'avènement du Royaume. En 1983, l'Eglise de la Pentecôte compte 100 000 membres. Depuis les années 1990, le nombre d'adeptes du pentecôtisme gonfle énormément pour des raisons spécifiques au Rwanda mais aussi générales à l'Afrique. Le caractère transterritorial de ces mouvements religieux prépare la reconfiguration transnationale actuelle de l'Est africain (au sujet de la transnationalisation, voir CORTEN & FRATANI (Eds.), Between Babel and Pentecost : Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America, London/Bloomington, IN, Hurst Publisher/Indiana University Press, 2000).

SAMENVATTING. — Réveil est-africain, de Oost-Afrikaanse pinksterbeweging en het transnationalisme. — In de jaren 1930 ontstaat in Rwanda een revivalbeweging die zich snel verspreidt in Oost-Afrika, vooral in Oeganda. REA genoemd, legt deze beweging de basis voor de ontwikkeling van een Afrikaanse pinksterbeweging. REA benadrukt bekering meer dan onderricht, herneemt hymnen van Afrikaanse oorsprong en kent leken een belangrijke rol toe. Een type pinksterbeweging dat eveneens deze drie elementen propageert, wordt door de Zweedse missionarissen in 1940 geïntroduceerd (de „Eglise de la Pentecôte" bereikte Rwanda onder de naam „Mission Libre Suédoise" — MLS), maar kent pas in de jaren 1960 een brede verspreiding. Het millenarisme van de REA wordt onder invloed van de buitenlandse pinksterbeweging gewijzigd, maar blijft een belangrijke factor in de totstandkoming van een onafhankelijke Rwandese staat. In het algemeen leidt het pre-millenarisme van de pinksterbeweging haar volgelingen van de politiek af ; een levendige politieke verbeelding overkomt echter dit basisprincipe. De gelovigen delen een transterritoriale visie van de komst van het Koninkrijk. In 1983 telt de „Eglise de la Pentecôte" 100 000 leden. Sinds de jaren 1990 is het aantal volgelingen aanzienlijk opgelopen, niet alleen om specifiek Rwandese, maar ook om algemeen Afrikaanse redenen. Het transterritoriale karakter van deze religieuze bewegingen bereidt de transnationale reconfiguratie van Oost-Afrika voor (over het transnationalisme, zie CORTEN & FRATANI (Eds.), Between Babel and Pentecost : Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America. London/Bloomington, IN, Hurst Publisher/Indiana University Press, 2000).

Shembe Movement between Zulu Spirituality and (Apartheid) Modernity

by

Peter CROSSMAN*

SUMMARY. — The Shembe movement in Zululand, officially the Nazarite Baptist Church, has often been referred to as a millenarian movement (LANTERNARI *et al.* 1963). The movement was founded in 1913 by an erstwhile Wesleyan Methodist pastor who left the mission church and, as a prophet and healer, gathered a following of nearly exclusively Zulu members. With time, the movement has grown to be the second-largest independent or indigenous church in South Africa with about half a million members today. Studies of religious classification since WILSON (1969) have argued how former categories of religious classification such as sect, cult, separatism, syncretism or messianism have become inadequate for the description of contemporary religious movements. More recently, it has been shown that many of the types have been invented or often employed in an effort to discredit the movements vis-à-vis a colonial or modernizing government or a dominant established religion (CHIDESTER 1992 for the South African situation). Millenarianism as a type could be subjected to both criticisms, and certainly so in terms of its use in the South African context. However, it will be the aim of the present study not so much to test the utility and adequation to the Shembe church of the term millenarianism, aspects which will certainly be touched upon indirectly, but to attempt to elaborate a self-understanding of the Shembe movement. With this in mind, the paper will attempt first to sketch the differing interpretations of the movement from a variety of perspectives : government, political, mission, religious, anthropological and sociocultural. From here it will move on to describe the Shembe movement in the interface between traditional Zulu religion, insofar as it may be known, and 20th century South African historical developments, namely the material and cultural dispossession of the Blacks under the Apartheid regime. The study will focus on the ambiguous yet forceful and persistent ancestral conceptions shaping indigenous movements and religious expression today. Rather than interpret this as a reactionary form of nativism based on conceptual alterity, the paper develops the perception that ancestrality provides the foundation for an endogenous ontology of community, identity and (re)production. It will then seek to identify and interpret elements of endogenous experience and practice of spirituality among contemporary independent churches who, rather than constituting an explicit resistance to modernity and globalization, tend simply to ignore them as long as they do not obstruct the self-constitutive process of their communities. In sum, rather than reflecting a passive anticipation of some utopian order, the Shembe movement represents an attempt to

* Africa Research Centre, KU-Leuven, Tiensestraat 102, B-3000 Leuven (Belgium).

(re)create a new society, an alternative community, in the contested space between Zulu spirituality and secular, hegemonic (Apartheid) modernity.

RESUME. — *Le mouvement shembe entre spiritualité zulu et modernité sud-africaine.* — Le mouvement shembe du Zululand (officiellement l'Eglise baptiste nazarite) a souvent été considéré comme un mouvement millénariste (LANTERNARI *et al.* 1963). Ce mouvement fut fondé en 1913 par un ancien pasteur méthodiste wesleyien. Celui-ci quitta cette église missionnaire pour rassembler derrière lui, en tant que prophète et guérisseur, une foule de fidèles presque exclusivement zulus. Avec le temps, le mouvement est devenu la deuxième Eglise indépendante ou indigène d'Afrique du Sud. Elle compte aujourd'hui à peu près un demi-million de membres. Depuis WILSON (1969), les études concernant la classification religieuse considèrent que les anciennes catégories (sectes, cultes, séparatisme, syncrétisme ou messianisme) sont inadéquates pour décrire les mouvements religieux contemporains. Plus récemment, on a montré que beaucoup de ces catégories ont été inventées ou du moins souvent utilisées dans le but de discréditer les mouvements aux yeux tantôt du gouvernement colonial, tantôt d'un gouvernement modernisateur, tantôt d'une religion établie dominante (CHIDESTER 1992 pour la situation sud-africaine). Le millénarisme en tant que catégorie n'échappe pas à ces deux critiques, en particulier dans l'usage qui est fait de cette notion dans le contexte sud-africain. Le but de cette contribution sera, cependant, moins de tester l'utilité et l'adéquation du terme millénarisme dans le cas de l'Eglise shembe (questions qui seront abordées indirectement) que de tenter d'élaborer une auto-compréhension du mouvement shembe. Gardant cela à l'esprit, nous essayerons d'abord d'esquisser différentes interprétations du mouvement à partir de diverses perspectives : gouvernementale, politique, missionnaire, religieuse, anthropologique et socioculturelle. A partir de là, on entreprendra de décrire le mouvement shembe dans l'interface entre la religion zulu traditionnelle (pour autant qu'elle puisse être appréhendée) et les développements historiques qu'a connus l'Afrique du Sud au 20ᵉ siècle, plus précisément le processus de dépossession matérielle et culturelle des Noirs sous le régime de l'apartheid. L'étude se concentre sur les conceptions ancestrales ambiguës, mais puissantes et persistantes, qui façonnent aujourd'hui les mouvements indigènes et l'expression religieuse. Plutôt que d'interpréter cela comme une forme réactionnaire de «nativisme» basée sur une altérité conceptuelle, l'étude développe le point de vue que l'«ancestralité» procure le fondement d'une ontologie endogène de la communauté, de l'identité et de la (re)production. Elle cherchera alors à identifier et interpréter les éléments d'une expérience et d'une pratique endogènes de la spiritualité dans les Eglises indépendantes contemporaines, Eglises qui, plutôt que d'opposer une résistance explicite à la modernité et à la globalisation, tentent simplement de les ignorer pour autant qu'elles ne bloquent pas le processus d'auto-construction de leurs communautés. En somme, plutôt que de refléter une anticipation passive de quelque ordre utopique, le mouvement shembe représente en fait une tentative de (re)créer une nouvelle société, une communauté alternative, dans l'espace disputé entre la spiritualité zulu et une modernité profane et hégémonique (apartheid).

SAMENVATTING. — *De Shembe-beweging, tussen Zulu-spiritualiteit en (apartheids) moderniteit.* — De Shembe-beweging in Zululand, officieel de Kerk van de Nazarener Baptisten, werd vaak beschouwd als een millenaristische beweging (LANTERNARI *et al.* 1963). Ze werd in 1913 opgericht door een voormalige Wesleyische methodistische

priester. Hij had de missiekerk verlaten en als profeet en genezer een groep volgelingen om zich heen geschaard die vrijwel allemaal tot de Zulu-gemeenschap behoorden. Door de jaren heen is de beweging uitgegroeid tot de op één na grootste inlandse Kerk in Zuid-Afrika. Vandaag telt ze ongeveer een half miljoen leden. Sinds WILSON (1969) hebben diverse godsdienstonderzoeken geponeerd dat, wat classificatie betreft, de oude categorieën (sekte, cultus, separatisme, syncretisme of messianisme) niet toereikend zijn voor de beschrijving van hedendaagse religieuze bewegingen. Meer recent werd ook aangetoond dat vele types verzonnen zijn of op zijn minst vaak zijn aangewend om de bewegingen in diskrediet te brengen in de ogen van een koloniale overheid, van een moderniserende overheid of van een dominerende religie (CHIDESTER 1992 m.b.t. de situatie in Zuid-Afrika). In het bijzonder wat het gebruik ervan in de Zuid-Afrikaanse context betreft, onsnapt ook het millenarisme als categorie niet aan deze interpretaties. Niettemin bestaat het doel van deze studie er niet zozeer in om het nut en de juistheid van de term millenarisme uit te testen m.b.t. de Shembe-Kerk — dit aspect zal zeker indirect aan bod komen — maar om een „zelf-begrip" van de Shembe-beweging te ontwikkelen. Met dit in gedachten zullen we eerst proberen de diverse interpretaties omtrent de Shembe-beweging op een rijtje te zetten, en dit vanuit verschillende gezichtspunten : overheid, politiek, missionering, religie, antropologie en socio-economische context. Daarna gaan we over tot de beschrijving van de Shembe-beweging, op het raakvlak tussen de traditionele Zulu-religie (voorzover deze gekend kan worden) en de historische ontwikkelingen in Zuid-Afrika in de 20ste eeuw — met name de materiële en culturele achterstelling van de zwarten onder het Apartheidsregime. De studie spitst zich toe op de ambiguë maar ook quasi onuitroeibare ancestrale concepten die vorm geven aan actuele inlandse bewegingen en religieuze expressievormen. Eerder dan dit gegeven als een reactionaire vorm van eng nationalisme (*nativism*) te interpreteren, verdedigen we in deze bijdrage de opvatting dat de ancestrale concepten de basis vormen voor een inlandse ontologie inzake gemeenschap, identiteit en (re)productie. Vervolgens stellen we een interpretatie voor van aspecten van de inlandse spiritualiteitsbeleving en -praktijk binnen hedendaagse onafhankelijke Kerken. Deze Kerken blijken zich niet zozeer expliciet te verzetten tegen moderniteit en globalisering maar ze neigen integendeel deze tendensen te ontkennen zolang ze het spontane interne groeiproces van hun gemeenschap niet hinderen. Samengevat komt het erop neer dat de Shembe-beweging, eerder dan voor een passieve anticipatie van een of andere utopische orde, staat voor een poging tot (her)schepping van een nieuwe samenleving, een alternatieve gemeenschap, in de betwiste ruimte tussen de Zulu-spiritualiteit enerzijds en de profane, hegemonische (apartheids)moderniteit anderzijds.

Aids, Herald of the Apocalypse

by

Quentin GAUSSET *

SUMMARY. — Aids is an exceptional disease that poses a challenge to every human society, not only on the medical level (given the fact that it is incurable) but also on the cognitive (where does it come from ?, how do we classify it ?) and moral (insofar as it is sexually transmissible) levels. As a consequence, different discourses attempting to explain the appearance of this disease, give it a meaning, or resituate it in a larger context. In Zambia, one particular discourse — coming from the independent churches — reinterprets Aids as a sign announcing the last judgement, which some expect to occur in 2000, and cites selected Biblical passages in order to prove that the appearance of this disease was foreseen in the order of things. This prophecy is accompanied by a moral discourse that presents Aids as divine punishment for sinners and infidels, while "good Christians" — monogamous and faithful to their wives — have nothing to fear. The present paper will seek to situate this discourse in its social, cultural, religious, moral and psychological contexts, and to study the relationship of this particular discourse with those of the medical and traditionalist domains.

RESUME. — *Le sida, signe annonciateur de l'apocalypse.* — Le sida est une maladie hors norme qui pose un défi à toutes les sociétés humaines, non seulement sur le plan médical (dû à son caractère incurable), mais également cognitif (d'où vient la maladie ? comment la classifier ?) et moral (dû à son caractère sexuellement transmissible). Il s'est par conséquent développé différents discours tentant d'expliquer l'apparition de cette maladie, de lui donner un sens, et de la replacer dans un contexte plus large. En Zambie, un de ces discours — venant des Eglises indépendantes présentes dans le pays — réinterprète le sida comme un signe annonciateur du Jugement dernier, prévu par certains pour l'an 2000, et cite des passages choisis de la Bible pour prouver que l'apparition de cette maladie était inscrite dans l'ordre des choses. Cette prophétie s'accompagne d'un discours moral qui présente le sida comme la punition divine des pécheurs et des impies, dont les «bons Chrétiens» — monogames et fidèles à leur épouse — n'auraient rien à craindre. Le présent exposé propose de replacer ce discours dans son contexte social, culturel, religieux, moral et psychologique, et d'étudier la relation qu'il entretient vis-à-vis du discours médical et traditionaliste.

* Institute of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, Frederiksholms Kanal 4, DK-1220 Copenhagen K. (Denmark).

SAMENVATTING. — *Aids, aankondiger van de apocalyps.* — Aids is een uitzonderlijke ziekte die elke maatschappij voor een uitdaging plaatst, niet alleen op medisch vlak (in het licht van haar ongeneeslijk karakter), maar ook op cognitief vlak (waar komt ze vandaan ?, in welke catagorie past ze ?) en op ethisch vlak (in zoverre het om een seksueel overdraagbare aandoening gaat). Als gevolg hiervan zijn verschillende vertogen ontwikkeld om de opkomst van de ziekte te verklaren, haar een betekenis te geven en in een bredere context te plaatsen. In Zambia herinterpreteert een bepaald vertoog — afkomstig van de onafhankelijke kerken — de aids-ziekte als een teken dat het Laatste Oordeel aankondigt, dat door sommigen in 2000 wordt verwacht. Daarbij worden stukken uit de bijbel aangehaald om te bewijzen dat het verschijnen van deze ziekte in de orde der dingen was voorzien. Deze voorspelling gaat gepaard met een moreel vertoog dat aids als een goddelijke straf voorstelt voor zondaars en ongelovigen waarvan de „goede christenen", monogaam en trouw, niets te vrezen zouden hebben. Deze bijdrage zal dit vertoog in zijn sociale, culturele, religieuze, ethische en psychologische contexten plaatsen en ook nagaan hoe het zich verhoudt ten aanzien van de medische en traditionele zienswijzen.

Millenarian Movements in Haiti and in the Caribbean

by

Laënnec Hurbon*

SUMMARY. — Millenarian movements, such as the Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals and Mormons, have had the kind of success in the Caribbean that has continuously incited sociological investigation. We propose here a quantitative evaluation of their progress from the 1970s to the present, and then to assess the impact these movements have had on the literary and artistic fields as well as on the political sphere, keeping in mind the particular inflections they take, on the doctrinal level, in the Caribbean context. This study will focus on two key problems today: first, the obsolescence of the Nation-State that impoverishes the most vulnerable social classes, those who are in the process of deruralization and otherwise socially mobile. Then, on the cultural level, the weakening of symbolic points of orientation traditionally upheld by the Catholic Church or by Afro-American cults. This is especially the case with Voodoo, a cult of African origin that has been redeployed in the context of slavery and that has managed to survive as a matrix of cultural practices serving as a base for the construction of collective and individual identities. We will of course attempt to offer some comparisons with certain millenarian movements of Black Africa.

RESUME. — *Les mouvements millénaristes en Haïti et dans la Caraïbe.* — Les mouvements millénaristes comme les Adventistes, les Témoins de Jéhovah, les Pentecôtistes ou les Mormons ont dans la Caraïbe un succès qui ne cesse de susciter les interrogations des sociologues. Nous nous proposons de faire une évaluation quantitative de leur progression des années 1970 à nos jours, puis de chercher l'impact de ces mouvements dans le champ littéraire et artistique ainsi que dans le champ politique, en tenant compte des inflexions qu'ils subissent au plan doctrinal dans le contexte caribéen. Cette investigation sera conduite autour de deux problèmes-clés d'aujourd'hui: d'abord, l'obsolescence des Etats-nations qui laisse désemparées les couches sociales les plus vulnérables, celles qui sont en voie de déruralisation ou en mobilité sociale. Ensuite, au plan culturel, l'affaiblissement des repères symboliques offerts traditionnellement par l'Eglise catholique et par les cultes afro-américains, et — notamment dans le cas d'Haïti — par le vaudou, ce culte d'origine africaine réélaboré dans le contexte esclavagiste et qui parvient à survivre comme matrice des pratiques culturelles servant de base à la construction de l'identité individuelle et collective. Nous tenterons, bien entendu, d'établir des comparaisons avec certains mouvements millénaristes de l'Afrique noire.

* CNRS Port-au-Prince (Haïti).

SAMENVATTING. — *Millenaristische stromingen in Haïti en het Caribisch gebied.* — Millenaristische stromingen, zoals de adventisten, jehova's, mormonen en leden van de pinksterbeweging, hebben in het Caribisch gebied het soort succes dat regelmatig sociologisch onderzoek heeft gestimuleerd. We zullen hier een kwantitatieve schatting van hun vooruitgang sinds de jaren 1970 voorstellen, en daarnaast nagaan wat hun impact is op het artistiek-literaire en het politieke vlak, waarbij rekening zal worden gehouden met de specifieke doctrinaire eigenheid in de Caribische context. De studie beschouwt twee kernproblemen van vandaag: ten eerste, de economische veroudering van de natiestaat, die vooral de meest kwetsbare sociale klassen treft, zij die betrokken zijn in de vlucht naar de stad of op een andere wijze ontheemd zijn. Ten tweede, op het culturele vlak, de afzwakking van de symbolische referentiepunten die traditioneel door de katholieke kerk en de Afro-Amerikaanse cultussen werden aangeboden. Dit is onder meer het geval voor de Voodoo, een cultus van Afrikaanse origine die in de context van de slavernij werd gereorganiseerd en die erin is geslaagd te overleven als matrix van culturele praktijken die bijdragen tot de constructie van een individuele en collectieve identiteit. We zullen ook de vergelijking doortrekken naar bepaalde millenaristische stromingen in Afrika.

The Aesthetics of the End of the World in Popular Congolese Painting

by

Bogumil JEWSIEWICKI*

SUMMARY. — Already in 1949 a Rwandan cleric wrote in a somewhat romanticized autobiography — probably a première in Central Africa — written in French and programmatically claiming to be Christian : "...my God, may your next 'parousia' be nothing more nor less than a definitive eradication of evil and not of men... in order to show them that poverty, in its simplicity, is a favour rather than a dishonour" (NAIGIZIKI 1949, p. 122). A reading of the entire passage allows one to form an idea of how and why the fragility of the new world, that of money and missionary Christianity, this justice of the "Incarnate Word", can be translated by a recurring reference to the end of the world, to millenarianism, to the Last Judgement. The institutional rigidity of this new world, incarnate in the colonial administration as much as in mission, could not help but incite deception. This particular factor was indeed a permanent source of trouble, the worm in the fruit — that one so ardently hoped would be perfect — of a Christianity that presented the clerical world with its autonomy. Thus, the aesthetic of this construction — its representations — of an end that would be nothing else than the beginning, constituted an important element that has barely been touched on by social sciences. In this paper I propose an analysis based on some thirty-odd popular paintings observed in three Congolese towns (Bunia, Kinshasa and Lubumbashi).

RESUME. — *De l'esthétique de la fin du monde dans la peinture populaire congolaise.* — Déjà en 1949 un clerc rwandais écrivait dans une autobiographie romancée, probablement une première en Afrique centrale, rédigée en français et se réclamant programmatiquement du christianisme : «...mon Dieu, que votre prochaine «parousie» ne soit ni plus ni moins qu'un coup de balai définitif pour détruire à jamais le mal et non les hommes... pour leur montrer que la pauvreté, dans sa simplicité, est plutôt une faveur qu'un déshonneur» (NAIGIZIKI 1949, p. 122). Le passage complet permet de se faire une idée comment et pourquoi la fragilité du monde nouveau, celui de l'argent et du christianisme missionnaire, cette justice du «Verbe incarné», se traduit par une référence récurrente à la fin du monde, au millénarisme, au Jugement dernier. La rigidité institutionnelle de ce monde nouveau, qu'incarnaient autant l'administration que la mission, ne pouvait qu'inviter à la ruse, mais cette dernière fut cause permanente du trouble, le ver dans le fruit, si ardemment voulu parfait, du christianisme qui donnait au monde ecclésiastique son autonomie. Ainsi, l'esthétique de cette construction — ses représentations — d'une fin qui ne serait

* Célat et Département d'Histoire, Université Laval, Québec (Canada).

que le commencement, constitue un élément important qui n'a guère été abordé par la science sociale. En me basant sur une trentaine de tableaux populaires de trois villes du Congo (Bunia, Kinshasa et Lubumbashi), j'en proposerai une analyse.

SAMENVATTING. — *De esthetiek van het einde van de wereld in de populaire Congolese schilderkunst.* — Reeds in 1949 schreef een Rwandese klerk in zijn bibliografie in roman-vorm (waarschijnlijk een primeur in Centraal-Afrika), geschreven in het Frans en zich programmatisch als christelijk uitgevend : „...mijn God, moge uw volgende 'parousie' niet meer noch minder zijn dan een definitieve zuivering die voor altijd het kwaad en niet de mensen uitroeit... om hen te tonen dat armoede, in zijn eenvoud, eerder een gunst is dan een schande" (NAIGIZIKI 1949, p. 122). De volledige passage werpt een licht op de vraag hoe en waarom de breekbaarheid van de nieuwe wereld, van het geld en van het christendom (het recht van het „vleesgeworden Woord") zich vertaalt in een weerkerende verwijzing naar het einde van de wereld, het millenarisme en het Laatste Oordeel. De institutionele inflexibiliteit van deze nieuwe wereld, verpersoonlijkt door de administratie en de missie, kon slechts leiden tot misleiding. Dit veroorzaakte echter een permanente bron van moeilijkheden — de spreekwoordelijke worm in de appel van het christendom dat aan de wereld der klerken zijn autonomie gaf. De esthetiek van deze constructie, haar representaties, van een einde dat slechts het begin zou zijn, is een belangrijk gegeven dat nog nauwelijks door de sociale wetenschappen is aangeroerd. Op basis van een dertigtal populaire doeken uit drie Congolese steden (Bunia, Kinshasa en Lubumbashi) zal ik er een analyse van voorstellen.

Inaugurating the Age of Bliss ?
The Millenarianism of Anti-Witchcraft Movements in the South African Lowveld

by

Isak NIEHAUS *

SUMMARY. — "African witch-cleansing cults go so far as to inaugurate the millennium, the age of bliss... in which pain, disease, untimely death, violence and strife, war and hunger will be unknown" (WILLIS 1970, p. 133). To date the hunting and the killing of witches has been seen as attempts to mystify exploitation, intimidate political opponents by generating fear, or to redefine generational and gender relationships (HARRIS 1973, MITCHELL 1956, STEADMAN 1985, BUKURURA 1993). These actions have explicitly been contrasted to witch-cleansing movements which aim to eliminate conflict and to recreate social integration — to inaugurate an age of bliss (WILLIS 1970, GREEN 1993, AUSLANDER 1993). This paper argues against the significance of the above-mentioned distinction and suggests that the differences between witch-hunting and witch-cleansing lie in method rather than in anticipated outcome. Violence against alleged witches too aims to expunge evil, to expel and misfortune and to "inaugurate an age of bliss". I explore these themes with reference to an analysis of anti-witchcraft movements in the South African Lowveld during the 1990s. These movements are seen in the context of the political transition from apartheid to democracy. Have we seen an age of bliss ? If not, how do villagers account for the perpetuation of misery in their everyday lives ?

RESUME. — *L'inauguration de l'Age de la Béatitude ? Le millénarisme des mouvements anti-sorcellerie dans le Lowveld sud-africain.* — «Les cultes africains de 'purification de la sorcellerie' vont jusqu'à instaurer le temps du millénaire, l'âge de la Béatitude... quand la douleur, la maladie, la mort intempestive, la violence et le conflit, la guerre et la faim seront inconnues» (WILLIS 1970, p. 133). Jusqu'à présent, la chasse aux sorcières, leur assassinat, ont été considérés comme des tentatives pour masquer l'exploitation, pour intimider les opposants politiques en provoquant la peur, ou pour redéfinir les relations générationnelles et génériques (HARRIS 1973, MITCHELL 1956, STEADAM 1985, BUKURURA 1993). Ces actions ont été explicitement opposées aux mouvements de «purification de la sorcellerie» qui ont pour but d'éliminer les conflits et de recréer l'intégration sociale — en vue d'instaurer l'Age de la Béatitude (WILLIS 1970, GREEN 1993, AUSLANDER 1993). Cette contribution traite de la signification de la distinction évoquée ci-dessus, et

* Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria 0002 (South Africa).

— 150 —

tente de montrer que les différences entre «chasse aux sorcières» et «purification de la sorcellerie» tiennent à la méthode plus qu'aux fins poursuivies. La violence à l'égard des sorcières vise aussi à écarter le diable, à chasser l'infortune et à «inaugurer l'Age de la Béatitude». J'explorerai ces thèmes et me basant sur une analyse des mouvements anti-sorcellerie dans le Lowveld sud-africain des années 1990. Ces mouvements sont situés dans le contexte de la transition politique de l'apartheid vers la démocratie. Avons-nous vu naître un Age de Béatitude ? Sinon, comment les villageois considèrent-ils la perpé-tuation de la misère dans leur vie quotidienne ?

SAMENVATTING. — *Het tijdperk van de gelukzaligheid breekt aan : het millenarisme van de bewegingen tegen hekserij in het Zuid-Afrikaanse Lowveld.* — „De Afrikaanse cul-tussen ter zuivering van de hekserij gaan zo ver dat ze a.h.w. het millenaire tijdperk van de gelukzaligheid inhuldigen... waarin pijn, ziekte, voortijdige dood, geweld en conflict, oorlog en honger onbekend zullen zijn" (WILLIS 1970, p. 133). Tot nu toe werden de heksenjachten en het ter dood brengen van heksen beschouwd als pogingen om uitbuiting te camoufleren, om politieke tegenstanders te intimideren door een klimaat van angst te creëren, of om de generatie- en genderverhoudingen opnieuw te definiëren (HARRIS 1973, MITCHELL 1956, STEADMAN 1985, BUKURURA 1993). Men plaatste deze handelwijze nadrukkelijk en diametraal tegenover de bewegingen „ter zuivering van de hekserij" — bewegingen die het bannen van conflicten en het herstel van de maatschappelijke inte-gratie tot doel hebben — zodat „het tijdperk van de gelukzaligheid" kan aanvangen (WILLIS 1970, GREEN 1993, AUSLANDER 1993). Met deze bijdrage stellen we de betekenis van bovenstaande opsplitsing in vraag. We willen aantonen dat de verschillen tussen het vervolgen van heksen en de „zuivering van de hekserij" liggen in de methode, eerder dan in het doel dat wordt nagestreefd. Met het geweld tegen heksen wil men namelijk óók het kwaad verjagen, het ongeluk verdrijven en „het tijdperk van de gelukzaligheid" zien aan-breken. Bij mijn onderzoek van deze thema's baseer ik me op een analyse van de anti-hekserijbewegingen in het Zuid-Afrikaanse Lowveld tijdens de jaren '90. Deze bewegin-gen zijn te situeren in de context van de overgang van Apartheid naar democratie. Hebben we inderdaad „het tijdperk van de gelukzaligheid" zien aanbreken ? En zoniet, hoe staan de dorpelingen tegenover de blijvende ellende in hun alledaagse leven ?

PAGAD : Vigilantism or New Liberation Struggle ?

by

Xavier RENOU*

SUMMARY. — In less than two decades, the South African society experienced the turmoil of a revolution, with large sectors of the population rebelling against the state, and a violent transition to democratic rule, marked by a less known civil war in the townships and rural areas of Kwazulu-Natal and the East Rand. The transition process itself raised many concerns. The "coloured" community, who had been reproached with being "too black" under the Apartheid regime, engaged itself reluctantly in the transition process, for fear of being now perceived as too white and thus excluded from the benefits of the new dispensation. At the same time, crime was on the rise all around the country, and many people and groups were responding to it through vigilantism. In 1995, a predominantly coloured and muslim organization emerged, People Against Gangsterism And Drugs (PAGAD), to mobilize along religious lines against gangsterism and drugs, and to force the political authorities to tackle the problem. Taking advantage of the general distrust towards the ANC government and the fear of crime, both important in the coloured community, PAGAD got at first a lot of support in this community. But while a violent war erupted in the townships between PAGAD members and drug dealers, with dozens of victims, the organization's discourse gradually shifted from a strictly crime-oriented and community-based one, calling up for a "djihad" against crime, to a more radical, and anti-state discourse about a "new liberation struggle" in defence of the "oppressed" of the world.

RESUME. — *PAGAD :* «vigilantisme» ou nouvelle guerre de libération ? — En moins de deux décennies, la société sud-africaine a vécu les tourments d'une révolution (de larges secteurs de la population se rebellant contre l'Etat) et d'une transition violente vers la démocratie, avec une guerre civile de moindre visibilité dans les townships et dans les régions rurales du Kwazulu-Natal et de l'East Rand. Le processus de transition lui-même souleva de nombreuses interrogations. La communauté «de couleur» (les métis), qui s'était vu reprocher d'être «trop noire» sous le régime de l'apartheid, s'engagea à contre-cœur dans ce processus, par crainte d'être désormais perçue comme «trop blanche» et, de ce fait, exclue des bénéfices du nouvel ordre. Au même moment, la criminalité augmentait partout dans le pays, et beaucoup de gens et de groupes y répondirent à travers le «vigilantisme». En 1995, émergea une organisation à prédominance métisse et musulmane, le Peuple contre le Gangstérisme et les Drogues (PAGAD), dont l'objet était de se mobiliser, dans une optique religieuse, contre le gangstérisme et les drogues, et de forcer

---

* Université Paris II – Assas (France).

les autorités politiques à s'atteler au problème. S'appuyant sur la méfiance généralisée à l'égard du gouvernement de l'ANC et la peur de la criminalité, deux sentiments très partagés au sein de la communauté de couleur, le PAGAD obtint dans un premier temps un important soutien au sein de cette communauté. Mais tandis qu'une véritable guerre se déclenchait dans les townships entre les membres du PAGAD et les dealers, faisant des douzaines de victimes, le discours de l'organisation changea graduellement de caractère : d'un discours anti-crime à caractère communautaire, on est passé à un discours plus radical, à un discours «anti-Etat» proposant une «nouvelle guerre de libération» afin de défendre les «opprimés» du monde.

SAMENVATTING. — *PAGAD : „vigilantisme" of nieuwe vrijheidsstrijd ?* — In minder dan twee decennia maakte de Zuid-Afrikaanse maatschappij een stormachtige revolutie mee — waarbij een groot deel van de bevolking het opnam tegen de staat — en een gewelddadige overgang naar de democratie — met een minder bekende burgeroorlog in de townships en op het platteland van Kwazulu-Natal en de East Rand. Het overgangsproces zelf riep vele problemen op. De „gekleurde" gemeenschap, die het tijdens het apartheidsregime had meegemaakt voor „te zwart" te zijn uitgescholden, engageerde zich met tegenzin in dit proces, uit angst vanaf nu het verwijt te krijgen „te blank" te zijn en dus uitgesloten te worden van de weldaden van de nieuwe orde. In die tijd nam de criminaliteit overal in het land toe, waarop talrijke mensen en groepen met „vigilantisme" reageerden. In 1995 zag een overwegend zwarte en moslimorganisatie het licht, People Against Gangsterism And Drugs (PAGAD), die vanuit een religieuze optiek de bevolking wilde mobiliseren tegen gangsterisme en drugs, en de politieke autoriteiten wilde dwingen om de problemen aan te pakken. Gezien het algemene wantrouwen tegenover de ANC-regering en gezien de heersende angst voor de misdaad — beide factoren vormden in de zwarte gemeenschap een belangrijk gegeven — slaagde PAGAD er aanvankelijk in veel steun te verwerven in de zwarte gemeenschap. Maar toen een ware oorlog uitbrak in de townships, tussen de leden van PAGAD en de drugsdealers, waarbij tientallen slachtoffers vielen, sloeg de organisatie een andere toon aan : van een discours rond misdaadbestrijding en gemeenschapsbelangen (een oproep tot een „jihad" tegen de misdaad) gingen ze over tot een meer radicaal en tegen de staat gericht discours rond een „nieuwe vrijheidsstrijd" om de "onderdrukten" in de wereld te verdedigen.

Green Book Millenarians ? (Sierra Leone)

by

Paul RICHARDS *

SUMMARY. — The rebel movement fighting a nine-year war against the government and people of Sierra Leone has been described as a bandit rabble. To many people the RUF was so amorphous and pointless a group as hardly to exist. In one report the insurgents were described as "Rebels without a Cause". Another international NGO assisting the democratic transition in Sierra Leone in 1997 stated "the problem in Sierra Leone is not rebel war but bad governance and corruption". In fact, the RUF has proved a much more persistent and organized movement than anticipated. It proved durable in near defeat, and several times regrouped, finally almost destroying the country in its advance on the capital in late 1998. Most explanations of the RUF seek to deny it an ideological basis, preferring instead to stress criminality and the lure of diamonds, but are hard pressed to account for its persistence. Maybe views are changing. The first international reporter to reach the RUF stronghold in northern Kailahun District, in November 1999 (Steven Coll of the *Washington Post*), found a group with an articulate leadership and a simplistic revolutionary programme based on the Libyan Green Book. The paper discusses the impact of the Green Book on young people in Sierra Leone over a number of years, and then assesses the extent to which this fed a Millenarian fantasy in the minds of young abductees. The analysis draws on Mary Douglas' theory of the secretarian enclave. The paper argues that organizational constraints of the RUF bush campaign served to foster a set of egalitarian social values based on Green Book ideas. Military, mercenary and societal threats to the integrity of RUF camps then provoked vengeful outbursts of apocalyptic fury. Under war-time conditions in the bush the RUF had become a sect by default. Millenarianism, it is suggested, is a social response to organizational challenges, and not a religious phenomenon as such.

RESUME. — *Un livre vert des millénaristes ? (Sierra Leone).* — En Sierra Leone, le mouvement rebelle qui, pendant neuf ans, a mené la guerre au gouvernement et au peuple a été décrit comme un ramassis de bandits. Beaucoup ont jugé le RUF si informe et insignifiant qu'on ne pouvait lui reconnaître une existence réelle. Les insurgés furent décrits, dans un rapport, comme «rebelles sans cause». Une ONG internationale qui assistait la transition démocratique en Sierra Leone affirma en 1997 que «le problème de ce pays n'est pas la guerre des rebelles, mais la mauvaise gouvernance et la corruption».

* Technology and Agrarian Development Group, Universiteit Wageningen & Research Centre, NL-6709 Wageningen (the Netherlands).

En fait, le RUF s'est révélé un mouvement plus durable et mieux organisé qu'on ne l'avait cru. Il a surmonté la menace de la défaite ; il s'est regroupé à plusieurs reprises, et a, en fin de compte, pratiquement détruit le pays, lors de sa marche sur la capitale fin 1998. La plupart des explications relatives au RUF cherchent à lui dénier toute base idéologique, insistant sur la criminalité et l'attirance pour le diamant, mais sont fort peu soucieuses de rendre compte de sa persistance du mouvement. Les idées sont peut-être en train de changer. Le premier reporter international à avoir visité la place forte du RUF dans le nord du district de Kailahun en novembre 1999 (Steven Coll du *Washington Post*), y a découvert un groupe possédant une direction articulée et un programme révolutionnaire — simpliste —, basé sur le Livre vert libyen. Cette contribution traite de l'impact, sur plusieurs années, du Livre vert sur les jeunes Sierra Léonais et établit dans quelle mesure celui-ci a pu nourrir un imaginaire millénariste dans l'esprit de jeunes déviants. L'analyse repose sur la théorie de l'enclave sectaire de Mary Douglas. La contribution établit que les contraintes organisationnelles affrontées par le RUF au cours de ses campagnes en brousse ont favorisé un ensemble de valeurs sociales égalitaires basées sur les idées du Livre vert. Les menaces militaires, mercenaires et sociétales sur l'intégrité des camps du RUF ont alors provoqué des explosions vengeresses de furie apocalyptique. Dans les conditions de la guerre en brousse, le RUF est devenu une secte par défaut. Le millénarisme, suggérons-nous, est une réponse sociale à des défis organisationnels, et non un phénomène religieux en tant que tel.

SAMENVATTING. — *Millenaristen van het Groene Boek ? (Sierra Leone)*. — De rebellenbeweging die in Sierra Leone negen jaar lang de regering en de bevolking bestookte, werd vaak beschreven als een bende misdadigers. In de ogen van velen was het RUF een zodanig vormeloze en inhoudsloze groep dat men haar bestaan nauwelijks erkende. In een rapport werden de opstandelingen omschreven als „Rebels without a Cause". Een andere internationale NGO die in 1997 in Sierra Leone de overgang naar de democratie begeleidde, stelde dat „in Sierra Leone niet de oorlog met de rebellen het probleem vormt, maar de corruptie en een slechte regering". Inderdaad bleek het RUF een veel sterkere en beter georganiseerde beweging te zijn dan men doorgaans dacht. De beweging heeft dreigende nederlagen overleefd en werd meerdere keren gehergroepeerd ; bij de opmars naar de hoofdstad in 1998 bracht het RUF het land op de rand van de afgrond. In de meeste verklaringen doet men alsof het RUF is gespeend van iedere ideologische basis, maar focust men daarentegen op de misdaad en op de verlokkingen van de diamantontginning. Er is nauwelijks oog voor de continuïteit van de beweging. Misschien is in deze visie verandering aan het komen. Toen Steven Coll van de *Washington Post* als eerste verslaggever de RUF-basis in het noordelijke Kailahun District bezocht, in november 1999, trof hij er een groep aan met een duidelijk aanwezige leider en een simplistisch revolutionair programma, gebaseerd op het Libische „Groene Boek". In deze bijdrage onderzoek ik de impact van het „Groene Boek" op jongeren in Sierra Leone, over een bepaalde tijdsspanne, en probeer ik te achterhalen in hoeverre het „Groene Boek" de ontwikkeling van millenaristische fantasieën bij jonge activisten stimuleerde. De theorie van Mary Douglas omtrent de „sektarische enclave" schraagt onze analyse. We betogen dat de organisatorische noden van het RUF bij hun acties in het oerwoud geleid hebben tot de ontwikkeling van een aantal egalitaristische maatschappelijke waarden, geïnspireerd op ideeën uit het „Groene Boek". Aanvallen op de integriteit van de RUF-kampen door militairen en huurlingen en vanuit de maatschappij hebben geleid tot wraakacties van een

apocalyptische razernij. De specifieke omstandigheden van deze oorlogvoering in het oerwoud brachten met zich mee dat het RUF inderdaad willens nillens verworden is tot een sekte. Het millenarisme, zo wordt door ons geopperd, is een maatschappelijke reactie op organisatorische uitdagingen, en niet een religieus fenomeen als zodanig.

CONTENTS — TABLE DES MATIERES — INHOUDSTAFEL

UNIVERSA B.V.B.A., Wetteren