

My Experience with Paul Ricœur

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Abstract

In this autobiographical essay, introduced by Ernst Wolff, Paulin Hountondji gives an account of his relation to Paul Ricœur. A sketch of his own academic development and his experience of the Parisian philosophy milieu in the 1960s serves as background for his choosing Ricœur as his doctoral supervisor. The essay makes plain the proximities between Hountondji and Ricœur (especially the study of Husserl), but identifies also occasional and missed encounters.

Keywords: Ricœur; Husserl; African philosophy; Science; Phenomenology; Unesco.

Résumé

Dans cet essai autobiographique, précédé d'une courte présentation par Ernst Wolff, Paulin Hountondji retrace sa relation avec Paul Ricœur. Le rôle de Ricœur comme directeur de thèse est replacé dans le contexte de l'expérience de Hountondji avec le milieu philosophique parisien des années 1960 et de l'histoire plus longue de son propre développement académique. L'essai met en évidence les proximités entre Hountondji et Ricœur (en particulier l'étude de Husserl), mais identifie également des rencontres ponctuelles ou manquées.

Mots-clés: Ricœur; Husserl; philosophie africaine; science; phénoménologie; Unesco.

Resumo

Nesse ensaio autobiográfico, introdução com uma breve apresentação por Ernst Wolff, Paulin Hountondji narra sua relação com Paul Ricœur. O papel de Ricœur enquanto seu orientador de doutorado é apreciado no contexto da experiência de Hountondji no meio filosófico parisiense dos anos 1960, bem como em relação a todo o percurso de seu próprio desenvolvimento acadêmico. O ensaio coloca em evidência as aproximações entre Hountondji e Ricœur (em particular o estudo de Husserl), e narra igualmente seus encontros e desencontros.

Palavras-chave: Ricœur; Husserl; filosofia africana; ciência; fenomenologia; Unesco.

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My Experience with Paul Ricœur

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Presentation of Paulin J. Hountondji by Ernst Wolff

This edition of *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* includes an historical testimony by Paulin J. Hountondji. He, along with Theophilus Okere and Nkombe Oleko,¹ is one of a handful of great African philosophers who had meaningful contact with Ricœur while they were studying toward their doctoral degree. In the article below, Hountondji details and contextualizes his relation to Ricœur, but it may be helpful to present him to readers of *ERRS* who are not yet acquainted with his work.

After his first stints as a lecturer at universities in Besançon, Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, Hountondji was appointed at the University of Abomey-Calavi² in 1972. He was also programme director at the Collège international de philosophie in Paris (in 1986 and in 1992). Since 1998, he serves as Director of the African Centre for Advanced Study at Porto-Novo. He has also made his mark as Vice-President of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (1998-2002), as Vice-President of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA, 2002-2005) and as a member of the steering committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (1998-2013). Furthermore, he was Benin's Minister of National Education and Minister of Culture and Communication during the early 1990s.³

Paulin J. Hountondji rose to academic prominence with the publication and translation of his 1976 book *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*⁴ (parts of which he refers to in this paper – his famous critique of ethnophilosophy and his study on Wilhelm Amo). Most of the themes that have occupied his philosophical attention throughout his career are already present in that volume: the diversity of forms of rationality, and the continuities and conflicts between them; the tensions between people's contextual and cultural specificity and the universalistic vocation of science; the status, scientific import and institutional embeddedness of different forms of knowledge; and the political possibilities and constraints of different forms of expression in a polarized postindependence world. All these questions are shaped by his special attention to the situation of contemporary Beninese and Africans, and are marked by his concern with clarifying the role of philosophy as a science and as a practice in the service of continuous liberation. Today, one can hardly overestimate the significance of Hountondji for African philosophy. For nearly fifty years, there have been few books and theses in African philosophy indeed that have not referred to his work.⁵ Furthermore, the relevance of his work for other regions in our globalized world is increasingly recognized.⁶

In "My experience with Paul Ricœur" [*Un maître inoubliable: Paul Ricœur*], Hountondji provides details of his own intellectual biography⁷ in relation to that of Ricœur and doing so, he makes a contribution to overcoming artificial and harmful academic divides.⁸

I. A Reductive View

I must have been in the first or last year of high school in 1958-59 or 59-60 at the Lycée Victor Ballot in Porto-Novo (the future Lycée Béhanzin)⁹ when Ms. Rouverand, wife of Emile Rouverand, director of the Protestant secondary school in Cotonou, quoted to us in passing, and quite incidentally, a few beautiful passages from the *Philosophy of the Will*, during the meetings of the Groupe biblique universitaire (GBU), of which I was one of the organizers at that time.¹⁰ Later, during my years of hypokhâgne and khâgne at the Lycée Henri-IV (1960-63), but even more so at the École normale supérieure (1963-67) and beyond, I reveled in some of Ricœur's beautiful texts. I have in my library *History and Truth*, *Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation*, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, *Oneself as Another* and some other texts. But here is the problem: my personal experience and my very brief journey with Ricœur have led me to see him above all, today as yesterday, as the excellent translator, commentator, interpreter, connoisseur and, to a certain extent, disciple of Husserl, which is, of course, a reductive view of this great philosopher.

So I want to be modest. Let no one expect from me a great exposé of Paul Ricœur's work and of the many strong reasons why all the countries, all the philosophical and scientific communities of the world are justified in claiming him as an integral part of their heritage.

As far as I know, Ricœur has written in French, English and German. He taught in France, in Belgium, in the United States, but he belongs to all continents. With regard to Africa, in particular, it should not be forgotten that from 27 to 31 December 1980, the Annual Conference of the International Institute of Philosophy was held at the University of Dakar, Senegal, under the high patronage of the President of the Republic, on the theme: "The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights." The introductory lecture was given by Paul Ricœur in the presence of President Léopold Sédar Senghor, who delivered a beautiful response. The members of the Institute could not be unaware that Senghor was performing with them one of the last acts of his office, since he had to tender, of his own will and under no compulsion, on precisely the December 31, 1980, his letter of resignation from the presidency in Senegal. In light of this event, and of the many militant articles published in *Réforme*, *Esprit*, *Christianisme social* and various other journals, one might be stimulated to examine Paul Ricœur's specific relationship to Africa in general and to Black Africa in particular.

I will not ask this question here.¹¹ I will limit myself to a personal and unpretentious testimony. As a result, I will not be able to refrain from talking about other people, including myself, and from evoking contexts and situations which, at first sight, have nothing to do with Ricœur but which, on closer examination, always lead back to him and allow us to understand why my encounter with him was for me, as for many others, an unforgettable experience.

II. A Doctoral Thesis

Ricœur agreed to supervise my doctoral thesis (*thèse de troisième cycle*) at the end of the 1960s. This thesis was on *L'idée de science dans les Prolegomènes à la logique pure et la première Recherche logique de Husserl* [The idea of science in the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* and the first *Logical Investigation* of Husserl]. The preparation of this thesis gave me the opportunity to be received once or twice by my professor at his home in Châtenay-Malabry. The defense took place in Nanterre in

June 1970 in front of a very prestigious jury including, besides Ricœur himself, Suzanne Bachelard and Emmanuel Lévinas.

My interest in Husserl goes back to my hypokhâgne year. I was 18 years old in 1960. Coming from Benin (Dahomey at the time) after high school and thanks to a scholarship from the Dahomean government, I was admitted to the Lycée Henri-IV to prepare for the entrance exam (*concours*) to the École normale supérieure. There were four of us Africans in the class: Eugène Ngoran Blanc from the Côte d'Ivoire, whom I never heard from again; Ahmed Sidi Baba, the calm and elegant Mauritanian, whom I was to see again a few years later in a hotel in Dakar, now a politician and minister in his country; the boisterous Yambo Ouologuem, who was to continue his preparatory classes in Lyon and become famous a few years later when he won the Renaudot Prize for his novel, *Le devoir de violence*; and me. Our philosophy professor, André Bloch, a brilliant teacher if ever there was one, sought to instill in us a love of authors. And he had chosen, to introduce us to Husserl, the long article from 1910, "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science." This gateway to Husserl was for me of capital importance.

After a failed attempt in 1962, I passed the entrance exam to the École normale supérieure, rue d'Ulm, in 1963. Which *agrégation* was I going to prepare for? The one in classical literature or the one, reputedly more difficult, in philosophy? I was very comfortable in Latin and Greek, but I thought it would be more appropriate for an African to try his hand at a discipline with a more universal reach. But I was scared. I spoke to Louis Althusser, the tutor-lecturer [*agrégé répétiteur*] (the "caïman") of philosophy. He immediately suggested to me an essay topic, which I had to complete in 48 hours, to test my level. I carried out my task. The verdict fell: I could prepare an *agrégation* in philosophy.¹²

At rue d'Ulm, Jacques Derrida, the second "caïman," gave fascinating seminars during which he made us read, and would himself scrutinize, some great texts of Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Husserl. When the time came for me to choose a subject for my dissertation for the Graduate Diploma [*Diplôme d'études supérieures*] (DES), I told him that I wanted to work on Husserl. He suggested that I explore *The Notion of hylè in Husserl's Philosophy*. On his recommendation, Maurice Patronnier de Gandillac, who had directed his own DES dissertation on "The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy" 10 or 11 years earlier, agreed to direct this work. I defended my dissertation at the Sorbonne in June 1965. At the same time, Paul Ricœur was teaching a course on Husserl at the Sorbonne. What a treat for the students!

I was lucky enough to pass the *agrégation* in 1966 on the first try. Georges Canguilhem was president of the jury. The most dreaded oral test was the "grande leçon." You drew at random one of the subjects proposed by the jury, you went up to the library of the Sorbonne, you had four or five hours to prepare your presentation. Afflicted since my childhood with a stammer that has never been overcome to this day, I did, however, on a few major occasions, not stammer at all. I probably inherited it from my father. He was a Minister in the Protestant Church, and he stuttered in his daily life, but he became surprisingly eloquent as soon as he went up to the pulpit, driven by a deep conviction and a great spontaneity.¹³ I drew a wonderful subject: "Development as a Sociological Concept." After the results were announced, Althusser jokingly said to me: "Canguilhem speaks of you with emotion." To hear this young African denounce what he considered to be an unacceptable form of Eurocentrism in the Descartes Amphitheater at the

Sorbonne, at the end of what was considered to be a well-constructed presentation, made quite an impression on the jury.

The joke had not fallen on deaf ears. Shortly afterwards, I requested an appointment with Georges Canguilhem. He received me in his office in the rue du Four, at the Institut d'histoire des sciences et des techniques. At the end of our conversation, it was agreed that I would write a doctoral thesis under his direction on the theme: "The Theory of the Relationship between Social Structure and the Genesis of the Scientific Spirit [*esprit scientifique*] since the Beginning of the Nineteenth-century." I intended to research, identify, and examine the authors who, since Auguste Comte, have expressed themselves on the socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions of the birth or rebirth of the scientific spirit. My concern was Africa. How can we ensure that the African continent develops within itself, in an autonomous way, a controlled [*maîtrisée*] history of knowledge and know-how? And what can the sociology of science, the epistemology and the anthropology of knowledge developed in the West teach us about this question?

This thesis never saw the light of day. I was an assiduous participant in Canguilhem's seminar. I presented a paper on Anton Wilhelm Amo, the Eighteenth-century African philosopher from what is now Ghana, who had a career at the universities of Halle, Wittenberg, and Jena, and then returned to finish his life among his own people, in the Gold Coast, around the middle of the century. Claire Salomon Bayet, who also participated in Canguilhem's seminar, was also the editor of a quarterly journal, *Les études philosophiques*. She invited me to edit my paper for publication – which I did.¹⁴ But the great thesis of which I dreamed was still not getting off the ground.

I then realized that I could, while waiting to be ready for this major thesis, take stock of my knowledge and my questions about the nature, the meaning, and the scope of what is generally called science. In this context, the contribution of Husserl was unavoidable. I turned to Paul Ricœur. He agreed to guide me. I was delighted.

I was very ambitious at the beginning. I wanted to understand the idea of science in Husserl by analyzing his work from beginning to end, or at least what was accessible in French and English, from the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* to the *Krisis*, through the *Logical Investigations*, the *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Formal and Transcendental Logic* and other texts. I soon realized how excessive this ambition was and how important it was to restrict the subject by writing more simply about the idea of science in the *Logical Investigations*. Better still, once I had started, I had to resign myself to reducing my field of investigation by limiting myself to volume 1 (*Prolegomena to Pure Logic*) and to the first of the six *Investigations* in volume 2, part 1 (*Expression and Meaning*).

Ricœur gave me a free hand. He did not put any pressure on the young researcher that I was, but trusted me, letting me evolve at my own pace, with the responsibility of reporting back periodically.

III. Beyond the Thesis

Ricœur is more than that, of course. Beyond the thesis director, I saw him as a fascinating man.

I was at rue d'Ulm when *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1965) was published. At that time, the *Normaliens* only swore by Jacques Lacan. One of them published a devastating review of the book. In contrast, I admired Ricœur's courage, the critical and free relationship he maintained with Freud outside the intellectual trends of the establishment.

I never had the opportunity to tell him this: one of the secret reasons for my admiration was that I saw in him the intellectual rigor, the independence of mind, the freedom, but also the extreme discretion of a thinker of Protestant origin and education. After a year of boarding school at the Lycée Henri-IV (1960-61), I lived during my two years of khâgne at 46, rue de Vaugirard, which at that time housed the Maison des étudiants protestants de Paris. Here, every day during the week, informal meetings were held at coffee hour and sometimes, in the evening, more formal meetings were organized by the leaders of the French Federation of Christian Student Associations (the "Fédé"). Ricœur was the guest of honor at one of these meetings, which I was unfortunately unable to attend. But I read with delight the mimeographed text of his introductory talk, which was titled something like: "The Meaning and Significance of Church Membership." It was written on the first page: "Do not publish."¹⁵ I kept this text for a long time, but to this day I have not been able to find it in the jumble of my old papers.

Nor did I ever have the opportunity to discuss with Paul Ricœur one of the questions that increasingly concerned me: the myth of "African philosophy," conceived as a system of collective thought. At the time, I was shocked to read in the writings of authors such as Bachelard, Camus, Lavelle, Gabriel Marcel, Chombard de Lauwe, Wahl, unqualified praise¹⁶ of Father Tempels' little book reissued by *Présence africaine* in 1949: *La philosophie bantoue*.¹⁷ The title was highly promotional [*publicitaire*], it is true. The Belgian missionary intended to rehabilitate Bantu thought and to show to what extent it was coherent and systematic, far from the "primitive mentality" described by some ethnologists.¹⁸ But this was not an excuse. I found it difficult to understand why these authors turned a blind eye to the blatant equivocations in this book. I saw in their attitude a guilty complacency in contradiction with their own intellectual practice founded on the idea of personal and responsible thought.

I don't think I ever discussed this with him in person. I would probably have explained to him why I had been disappointed by Tempels' little book with such a promising title. Husserl's warning against worldviews (*Weltanschauungen*) and the temptation to mistake them for philosophy, Althusser's warning against ideology and his demand for theory, surely had something to do with it – not to mention my commitment to an open and intellectually sovereign Africa.

Ricœur, however, was no stranger to this problem. A tireless reader, a universal mind always listening to others, with that intelligent listening that makes one see both the coherence and the limits of their discourse, it is not surprising that he was entrusted by Jacques Havet, then Director of the Social Sciences Sector at Unesco, with the direction of the last of the four major sections of the voluminous synthesis work on the *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences*.¹⁹ In this context, I was asked to report on the state of philosophical research in Africa. In his foreword to section IV,²⁰ Ricœur mentions my contribution, published in the meantime in *Diogenes* under the title: "Remarques sur la philosophie africaine contemporaine" [*Comments on Contemporary African Philosophy*].²¹

Ricœur also asked me, a few years later, to contribute to a collective work on *Les fondements philosophiques des droits de l'homme* [*Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*]. I don't know if I ever had the French version of this book in front of me. It must have been published later than the Spanish and English versions that I have actually seen. I had entitled my article: "His Master's Voice. Remarks on the Problem of Human Rights in Africa." It was published, at the time, in Spanish²² and English²³. But I remember as if yesterday the circumstances that inspired me to use that title.

It must have been in June 1980. I was living in a hotel near the University of Nairobi, having been invited by the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies as an external examiner. It was a Saturday morning. From the balcony of the hotel I could see a crowd on the campus and I could hear a muffled noise that became more and more precise as the crowd moved through the streets around the campus. It was a student demonstration. They were protesting vigorously against the cowardly murder of a young historian from Guyana who had once been their professor and had returned home, Walter Rodney, author, among other things, of the acclaimed book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. The collective indignation, the great anger of the Kenyan youth was, in my eyes, the most eloquent refutation of a commonplace that runs through the most erudite publications and that I had just found, as if by chance, in a text that was meant to be completely serious, according to which human rights were an essentially Western idea. This amounts to confusing two things: on the one hand, the intrinsic meaning of an idea or a value taken in itself and, on the other, the accidental circumstances, the history of its formulation in different cultures. For having formalized an idea better, or earlier than other cultures, the dominating West often claims, but unduly, its origin.

I do not forgive myself for a missed appointment, by my fault, with Paul Ricœur. It was, if I am not mistaken, at the Sixteenth World Congress of Philosophy in Germany, masterfully organized by Alwin Diemer, director of the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Düsseldorf. In the hustle and bustle of the thousands of participants who were coming and going, I had the good fortune to run into Ricœur. He offered me a specific time to meet at a specific place. I came late. I saw him leaving. He was already 20 or 30 meters away from me. I didn't dare run to catch up with him.

I remember that in July 2000, at the end of a period of convalescence in Paris and a few days before my return to Benin, I learned by chance that he was to give a lecture at the Sorbonne. I couldn't resist the desire to listen to him. After the lecture, I quickly went down the steps of the amphitheater to greet him. I dared to ask him: "When will you be able to come and see us in Benin?" I was sure I could find the means to organize, for dates that would suit him, a large regional, even international, colloquium that would bring together participants from all over Africa, and even outside Africa, to listen to him. The Inter-African Council of Philosophy, which I coordinated, had already on other occasions brought to Cotonou celebrities such as Jacques Derrida,²⁴ Richard Rorty, Alwin Diemer, then President of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (IFPS), Michèle Gendreau-Massaloux, Rector of the Agence universitaire de la francophonie, to name but a few. They had fruitful exchanges with a group of philosophers who were among the most productive in Africa.

Ricœur then replied: “Do you know how old I am? I am 87 years old. Send the invitation, we’ll see.” As soon as I returned to Africa, I discussed it with a few colleagues and wrote. The answer arrived without delay, signed by two of his assistants. Ricœur would not come.

Translated from French by Ernst Wolff

- ¹ As they testified – see Theophilus Okere, *Can There Be an African Philosophy? A Hermeneutical Investigation with Special Reference to Igbo Culture* (Leuven: ISP, 1971), IV and Nkombe Oleko, *Métaphore et métonymie dans les symboles parémiologiques. L'intersubjectivité dans les "Proverbes Tetela"* (Kinshasa: Faculté de théologie catholique, [1975] 1979), 7.
- ² Previously université du Dahomey and Université nationale du Bénin.
- ³ Information derived from Hountondji's CV (personal communication).
- ⁴ Paulin J. Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, transl. H. Evans and J. Rée (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, [1983] 1996) [1st French edition *Sur la "philosophie africaine". Critique de l'ethnophilosophie* (Paris: Maspero, 1976)].
- ⁵ A long selection from his bibliography is available in Franziska Dübgen and Stefan Skupien, *Paulin Hountondji. African Philosophy as Critical Universalism* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 179, 182-184.
- ⁶ Early contextualizations of Hountondji's thought in the landscape of African philosophy and with an explicit focus on the issues of decolonization or postcolonial critique can be found in Messay Kebede, *Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2004) and Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa. Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988). A comprehensive recent overview of his work is Dübgen and Skupien's, *Paulin Hountondji. African Philosophy as Critical Universalism*.
- ⁷ Cf. Paulin J. Hountondji, *The Struggle for Meaning. Reflections on Philosophy, Culture and Democracy in Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, [1997] 2002).
- ⁸ Hountondji's paper is a reworked version of his keynote address, delivered at the international conference, "Ricœur as world heritage," hosted by the KU Leuven, 19-21 November 2020.
- ⁹ Lycée Victor Ballot, named after the first governor of Dahomey (1894-1900). After the country's independence on August 1st, 1960, the school was renamed Lycée Béhanzin, after the last king of Danxomè, a fierce resister to French colonization.
- ¹⁰ Under the influence of the Rouverand couple, this association, which had been founded a few years earlier, was to commit hara-kiri during one of its general assemblies, giving rise to the Dahomean Federation of Christian Student Associations (the Dahomean "Fédé") affiliated with the Universal Federation of Christian Student Associations based in Geneva, which was judged less fundamentalist.
- ¹¹ However, it is worth reading Vincent Davy Kacou Oi Kacou, *Penser l'Afrique avec Ricœur* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013).
- ¹² The proposed subject was, I believe: "The nature of man." In his handwritten annotation, Althusser, after having expressed his satisfaction, added in the form of a regret or a warning: "You lock yourself in the unthreatened space of a philosophy of consciousness."

- ¹³ Benin was first “evangelized” by a British missionary, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman of the Methodist Church of Great Britain, himself an Anglo-African. He left Liberia, where a Wesleyan mission had already been established, and went to Badagry in present-day Nigeria before returning further west in 1843. Received by King Ghézo on March 7, 1843, he obtained permission from the latter to open teaching and evangelization stations in the kingdom of Danxomè. The first station was opened in Ouidah a few years later. It should be noted that the Catholic priests of the Society of African Missions of Lyon were to arrive in Benin 18 years later, in 1861.
- ¹⁴ Cf. Paulin J. Hountondji, “Un philosophe africain dans l’Allemagne du XVIII^e siècle. Antoine-Guillaume Amo,” *Les études philosophiques*, vol. 1 (1970). This article became chapter 5 of Paulin J. Hountondji, *Sur la “philosophie africaine”* [English edition: “An African philosopher in Germany in the Eighteenth Century. Anton-Wilhelm Amo,” in *African Philosophy*, 111-30 – Translator’s note. One may also be interested in the more recent article, Paulin J. Hountondji, “Die Re-Afrikanisierung des Anton Wilhelm Amo”/“Re-africanizing Anton Wilhelm Amo,” in Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, Jule Hillgärtner, Nele Kaczmarek (eds), *The Faculty of Sensing – Thinking With, Through and by Anton Wilhelm Amo* (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2021), 66-81 (German)/230-44 (English).
- ¹⁵ [“Sens et fonction d’une communauté ecclésiale,” republished in Paul Ricœur, *Plaidoyer pour l’utopie ecclésiale. Conférence de Paul Ricœur (1967)*, eds Olivier Abel and Alberto Romele (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2016), 13-90 and see Olivier Abel’s testimony on the circulation of Ricœur’s paper, *ibid.*, 8- – Translator’s note].
- ¹⁶ “Témoignages sur *La philosophie bantoue* du Père Tempels,” *Présence africaine*, vol. 7 (1949), 252-78.
- ¹⁷ Placide Tempels, *La philosophie bantoue* (Elisabethville [Lubumbashi]: Lovania, 1945/Paris: Présence africaine, 1949) [*Bantu Philosophy*, transl. Colin King (Paris: Présence africaine, 1959) – Translator’s note]
- ¹⁸ One naturally thinks of Lévy-Bruhl, author, among other works, of *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910) and *La mentalité primitive* (1911). But Tempels never quotes Lévy-Bruhl. His target is rather Raoul Allier, author of *La psychologie de la conversion chez les peuples non civilisés* (1925) and of a book on *Le non-civilisé et nous. Différence irréductible ou identité foncière?* (1927). Raoul Allier, as we know, was not just anyone: a graduate of the École normale supérieure, an agrégé in philosophy, then a pastor of the Reformed Church of France, a missionary in Madagascar, and a professor at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Paris. Who has never known that one can be a great scholar and talk nonsense at the same time?
- ¹⁹ Jacques Havet (ed.), *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences*, 2 vol. (Paris/The Hague/New York: Mouton/Unesco, 1978). In addition to the preface by Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow, Directeur-Général of Unesco, and the foreword by Jacques Havet, Rapporteur-Général, Vol. I includes two sections: 1. Anthropological and Historical Sciences, 2. Aesthetics and the Sciences of Art. Vol. II also includes two sections: 3. Legal Science, 4. Philosophy. This last section, subdivided into two chapters, is directed by Paul Ricœur.

- ²⁰ Cf. Havet, *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences*, vol. II, section 4: "Philosophie," 1127, foreword by Paul Ricœur, "Philosophy and philosophies Today."
- ²¹ Paulin J. Hountondji, "Remarques sur la philosophie africaine contemporaine," *Diogenes*, vol. 71 (July-September 1970), 120-40. This article was to become, under the title "Une littérature aliénée," chapter 1 of *Sur la "philosophie africaine"* ["An Alienated Literature," in *African Philosophy*, 33-46 – Translator's note.]
- ²² Paulin J. Hountondji, "El discurso del amo. Observaciones sobre el problema de los derechos humanos en Africa," in *Los fundamentos filosoficos de los derechos humanos*, pref. Paul Ricœur (Barcelona/Paris: Serbal/Unesco, 1985), 352-68.
- ²³ Paulin J. Hountondji, "His Master's Voice. Remarks on the Problem of Human Rights in Africa," in Unesco and International Institute of Philosophy, *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights*, intro. Paul Ricœur (Paris: Unesco Press, 1986), 319-32.
- ²⁴ Cf. Paulin J. Hountondji, "Jacques Derrida, l'Afrique, le colloque de Cotonou," *Critique*, vol. 771-772 (August-September 2011), 726-35.