

# OEDIPUS AND THE DOGON

## *The myth of modernity interrogated*

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This lecture is the result of a long lasting fascination, which concerns a title and a picture that for several years I have been confronted with. Both are in a book written by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the Lacanian oriented psychiatrist Félix Guattari, that is called *Mille Plateaux* and was published in 1980. It forms the second part of a book entitled *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*<sup>1</sup>. The heading of the article reads as follows: 28 novembre 1947 Comment se faire un Corps sans Organes? (November 28th, 1947. How to make a Body without Organs?)<sup>2</sup> And under this curious title stands the following drawing, with the caption: *L'oeuf dogon et la répartition d'intensités*. (The dogon egg and the repartition of intensities)<sup>3</sup>.

In this title and in the picture we find an extremely intriguing but somewhat obscure combination. I shall read you the first paragraph to give you an impression of the philosophical desparation that befell me during my first reading: "In any event you have one (or more), not in so far as it existed before already made and given although in all respects it could have existed before but in any event you make one, you can't desire it without making one and it waits for you, it is an exercise, an inevitable experiment, already executed at the moment upon which you undertake it. It is not reassuring because here you can fail. Or, it can be a deterrent, it can drive you towards death. It is desire as well as nondesire. It is not really a notion, but a concept, more a way of enacting, a total action. The Body without Organs, one does not attain it, one cannot reach it, one will never succeed in gaining entrance. It is a limit. It is called the Body without Organs. One finds oneself already on it, dragging oneself around like an insect, as hesitating as a blind person, or running around like a fool, traveller of the desert and nomad of the steppe."<sup>4</sup> The title is derived from a radioexperiment enacted by the French actor and writer Antonin Artaud, in which this theaterinnovator who by the way was considered to be more or less insane by the psychiatrists declares war on the organs. Philosophically spoken: he radically criticizes the way western individuals objectify and

experience their body and their desires. Then all sorts of strange descriptions of bodyexperiences pass in review. Experiences of so-called psychic retarded persons, from the schizophrenic to the addict and to the masochist. In doing this the emphasis is not as much on the pathological identity of the persons as it is on the indefinable intensity of their bodies. The writers are apparently not interested in the moral opinions of their fellowmen, nor in the scientific judgements of their professional colleagues. Rather, they focus their attention on the body as a field of forces or intensities, that can be described only from within by paying attention to the immanent dynamics. The body is conceptualised as a machine, as a selfconstituting process. The so-called coherence of the personal identity submerges in a struggle between affects, which off and on strengthen and on and off annihilate each other. Apparently everything revolves around a bodyconception that is not in concurrence with the traditional western idea of the body. We shall see that Deleuze and Guattari following Friedrich Nietzsche try to shortcircuit the relationship between I and body in order to destruct the modern subjectobject determination. Deleuze's philosophical project is sometimes qualified as 'thinking difference', in particular the repressed aspects of the existence of modern man. In his research he tries to show that the exclusion of the Other is an inherent part of the constitution of the identity of modern man. As such Deleuze's project is an attack on the arrogance of Western sciences, that pursue complete control on and ultimate determination of our inner and outer world. But all this would be of little relevance for our colloquium if their article would not have begun with that strange drawing, that they have borrowed from ethnological research on the myths of an African tribe: the Dogon. What role does it play in their analysis? I will examine the function of this myth in their philosophical discourse. But furthermore I take the efforts of Deleuze and Guattari as a specific application of the debate on the function of myth in Western thought. Therefore I will, after the presentation of their texts from this point of view and the exposition of the value of the Dogon myth for their perspective, briefly refer to existing discussions on this topic, both in Africa and Europe.

### **1. Hegel's devaluation of Africa**

Once occupying myself with African forms of thought, in the of my mind that very important question constantly surfaced: how can Western philosophy gain entrance to African forms of thought and at the same time avoid assimilating them into her own conceptual framework, as a result of which they inevitably will lose their specific meaning and function. After all, for more than a century the strategy of assimilation appeared to be the only alternative to a complete and disastrous denial. One of the most explicit articulations of that denial is probably the philosophy of history of G.W.F. Hegel. As a matter of fact, he assumed in *Die Vernunft der Geschichte* that in the area South of the Sahara "no history can take place (...). There is no goal, no state, where one can strive for, no subjectivity, only subjects that disorganize themselves."<sup>5</sup> Which means, nonexistent subjects, if we in concurrence with the conception of the Enlightenment define the subject as a selfcentered autonomous entity. Further on Hegel passes his final judgement on Africa: "This condition is not able to develop or form itself. In fact it has no history. Africa is a nonhistorical continent."<sup>6</sup> Well, the course of our history has outdated Hegel's ideas. The so-called civilizing activities of colonialism and imperialism have proven Hegel's all too absolute a spirit to be wrong. Even worse: as a result

of these developing activities Westerners gradually have to come to the conclusion that their idea of development was not only destructive for other cultures, but was even a bigger threat to their own. These excessive dynamics were caused not only by a different and apparently harmless orientation on time and space, but also by a dominating and eventually very dangerous attitude towards an outer and inner world, desires and physical processes.

## **2. Anthropology and criticism of modern society**

Is there a specific reason for the appearance of the Dogon myth in the book of Deleuze and Guattari? As a starting point I would like to place their book in a French tradition, in which French cultural anthropology or ethnology influenced very strongly the actual philosophical criticism of aspects of modern life. The bond between philosophy and ethnology goes to the 1930's. The abovementioned myth of the origin of the Dogon is written down for the first time by the French ethnologist Marcel Griaule.<sup>7</sup> He recorded the myth from the stories of one of the important tribe members. The presence of Griaule in the area between Mali and Burkina Faso ( then called: Upper Volta and his research on Dogon culture had of course everything to do with the repressive strategies of colonialism. For just as every self-respecting colonial power did France also tried by studying the customs and habits of the native people primarily to gain better control on them by understanding their behaviour. Griaule, a student of Marcel Mauss, one of the founders of the Institute for Ethnology in 1925, led an expedition from Dakar to Djibuti, through which they became acquainted with the Dogon. These tribes, which are culturally and religiously linked and number approximately 300,000 souls, became the object of extensive research. Their lifestyle, rites and myths were suddenly general knowledge, available to many French intellectuals. Griaule, who was at the same time one of the editors of a critical magazine in the thirties, called Documents, indirectly influenced his fellow editors for example Michel Leiris and Georges Bataille who wrote articles on avantgarde art and non-Western cultures and modes of thought in order to establish a critical stance against the dominating Western ideology. Western society in their view had reached an economic, cultural and political deadlock. To them fascism was one of the disastrous products of this deadlock. The works of Bataille, who was intensely occupied with analyzing the phenomenon of fascism<sup>8</sup>, had a great impact on later generations of philosophers, to which Deleuze belonged to. If we concentrate on the book of Deleuze and Guattari, we can easily recognize these critical aspects. It can indeed be qualified as a philosophical criticism of modern society. Of course, this criticism is not exclusively illustrated by means of the Dogon myth. Other non-modern and non-Western efforts to conceptualize the body are summed up. The Dogon myth is located in a multicoloured collection of works in which Spinoza's *Ethica*, Castaneda's *Lessons of Don Juan*, the *Tao Teh King* and the *Japanese Pillowbooks* are found. Sporadically there are references to the Dogon myth, in particular the Dogonegg from the drawing, as the womb of the world: "The Body without Organs is an egg", they state. The Dogon twins, the Nommo, a halfman, halfsnakelike, bisexual being whose place in Dogon myth I will specify later on is mentioned in relation to the structure of our desires, more specifically of the Unconscious as it is conceptualised in the works of Sigmund Freud. In short, the myth of the origin of the Dogon is compared with concepts of Western psychiatry. One way or the other there is according to the opinion of both writers a relation between Western

science and nonWestern myth, between embryology and mythology, between the biological and the psychic or cosmic egg: "The egg always points to an intensive reality, not undifferentiated, but where the organs uniquely differentiate themselves through grades, migrations and zones of proximity."<sup>9</sup> Part I of *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* confirms the assumption that an attempt is being made to develop another version of the relationship between the IWe and IBody relations from the perspective of a scientificomythological structure. Apart from the suggestion in the main title that there is a link between capitalism and schizophrenia, the subtitle illustrates this critical stance: it is called *L'AntiOedipe*<sup>10</sup>. The constitutive role of the myth of Oedipus in psychoanalysis is under discussion. And by implication the epistemological value of science as far as it uses metaphor and myth to signify and structure individual desires.

### **3. Oedipus as a mythical organizer of desire**

I would like to start by summarizing *L'AntiOedipe* from the perspective of the relation between nonWestern myth and psychological theories that structure and signify our so-called 'unconscious' drives and the effected physical processes. Although I am aware of the impossible task of giving a short summary of this very complex book, I still think it is possible with regard to the limited scope I am using. As one can conclude from the title *L'AntiOedipe* criticizes Freud's concept of the all determining activity of the Oedipus complex. According to Freud our inner life functions as an ancient theater. We are situated in the middle of a tragedy: the myth of Oedipus, who like a tragic hero in spite of his own good intentions, was trapped in the nets of fate as a challenged fathermurderer and incestuous son. To Freud social behaviour and all kind of institutions are functions of individual libidinal processes. But for Deleuze and Guattari individual desires are first of all group desires, in which the phantasma plays a constitutive role. From the point of view of the semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure, which is used by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to provide a new interpretation of Freud's psychoanalytical writings, the phantasma fulfills the role of a signifier: it stands in an arbitrary way for a process, that ultimately escapes final determination.<sup>11</sup> The signifier only suggests an ontological fundament, but in reality this fundament the so-called true structure of desire fails. There is no exclusive meaning of desire, which is the ever escaping signified. Deleuze and Guattari apply the arbitrariness of the signifier on the totality of Freud's theory. This implies that Freud's analyses of our desires is only one way to conceptualize them. It is part of the way our modern culture gives meaning to these processes and reproduces these meanings in practices. Which implies that language and social rules the so-called Lacanian symbolical order are inscribed on the body of the child, who however, continuously tries to resist this coding. Deleuze and Guattari draw the conclusion that the Unconscious is not a theater, like the antique tragedy, but a factory, a machine, that does not need to be explained from outside they explain: by means of a transcendent signifier, in particular Oedipus but can be perfectly understood from within: from its immanent functioning. The child's body is working autonomously: its needs and desires are immediately linked to its surroundings. These forces do not go by the book, in this case Freud's fairytalebook of psychoanalysis: in a paradoxical way the enormous amount of psychopathological categories (the sadist, pervert, neurotic, psychotic, schizophrenic and

paranoiac) proves its inadequacy. In short: the autonomous subject, this fictional entity as ruler of the inner and outer world, is subjected itself to if one can say so a more 'autonomous' instance: intensive forces that roam the empty desert of our bodies. In other words, identity is constituted by the exclusion of the Other. According to Deleuze and Guattari the meaning of our desires is to be found in the immediate but unconscious links they have with an actual and historical field. Individual and social desires can not be separated. It is precisely this separation they criticize as a specific modern presupposition, that is reproduced in the nuclear family. This type of family functions as a mediator for all social and historical forces. The father incarnates the Law, that forbids certain forms of behavior and stimulates others. Through his signifying activities history and society are inscribed on the child's body, by means of a rigid but almost invisible coding. The child's body however tries to transgress or decode these limitations incessantly. But the abundance of the body is more and more restricted. In all types of educational practises Michel Foucault rephrased them as disciplinary practises<sup>12</sup> the immanent functioning of the body becomes veiled. But once our attention is focused towards the extraordinary selfconceptions of persons whose coding has not been adequate for instance schizophrenics one notices completely different identifications. The body appears to be a point of saturation of social and historical identities. Even the borderline between animal and human existence is constantly transgressed.

#### **4. Criticism of Marx's separation of individual and social desire**

As I have said, the title of the book suggests a relation between this schizophrenia and capitalism. According to Deleuze and Guattari the capitalistic system functions in a schizophrenic way: it has an immanent activity that consists of decoding and coding. The capitalist system needs to open up new markets in order to function, but as soon as the authentic codes of these new territories are destroyed and overcoded as has happened in the Third World countries the areas are closed off and protected. Decoding and recoding, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are keyterms in *L'AntiOedipe*. Marx's analysis of the capitalistic economy is criticized by Deleuze and Guattari, because it did not take into account this schizophrenic feature. To them the revolutionary act consists in affirming the schizophrenia of the system. Not in fighting its transgressive and prodigal intensities, but to affirm them. Marx's analysis also rests on the modern presupposition of the separation of the private and the public order. However, contrary to Freud he reduced individual desires to collective desires. That is to say to our social needs that are determined by the production relations. In short, Freudian and Marxist analyses reduce each in their own way one field of desire to the other and take no notice of the transgressive intensities of both the individual and social body. Transgressions that in a tribal society like the Dogon are ritually installed in daily life. The strict diffusion of individual and social desires does not exist in this society. However, Western critics like Marx and Freud tried, by presupposing and reproducing this diffusion, to reduce desire ultimately to a coherent structure, whether it is the historical subject the Proletariat or the middle class Ego. This also implies that the behaviour of Marx's autonomous subject, that is to say that the struggle of the proletariat can not exclusively be the driving force of history. *L'AntiOedipe* tries to show that our collective desires cannot be derived solely from our social needs and our quest for happiness for all. And neither can they

be identified with the interests of the proletariat as a historical subject. According to Marx history will eventually dissolve itself in the full realisation of freedom: the socialist society. However, because of this presupposition it is quite impossible for marxism to explain on the one hand the fascination of the masses during the 1930's by fascism, on the other the excesses of communism itself. Ideology and alienation are not sufficient theoretical instruments to explain these atrocities. Collective desire also seems to act out of other interests, if we still can call them 'interests'. Wilhelm Reich is one of the first scientists who tried to explain the fascination by fascism in another way, appealing to the inner dynamics of our unconscious drives. To him fascism is, although perverted, still an expression of the will of the masses. As you can imagine, this explanation did not really win approval. Deleuze and Guattari restated Reich's still Freudian argument in a Nietzschean way. The Freudian Ego and the Marxist proletariat become expressions of the forces that cross both the individual and social body. But a problem arises: can this world of affects, of affectivity exist completely liberated from identities and boundaries? Or liberated from any discourse or signifier? Implicitly Deleuze and Guattari reject this option. They admit that an ecstatic experience of this affectivity, in which the subjectivity disappears instantaneously, is possible. The I can coincide with a total awareness of the body, with an unmediated corporality or in terms of Antonin Artaud: with the multiplicity of the organs, into which the organism dissolves. As I have said before the tribal society of the Dogon like all traditional societies in Africa seems to organize these transgressions in a more adequate way by means of rituals. These rituals are the practises in which individual and social desires are integrated by permitting transgressions. The individual body is attached to the social body, historical forces intertwine with actual forces. In Western society these rituals have disappeared or have become invisible. Deleuze and Guattari have unmasked psychoanalysis as such a ritual and propose a new kind of ritual, in which the reduction of the supposed two fields of desire does not take place. They name this therapeutic practise: schizoanalysis.

## **5. Dogon myth and the individual and social body**

Oedipus functions as a myth and in a way one could say that the utopian aspect of marxism is a transformation of a mythological dimension. Both theories have installed practises, in which transgressive powers are annihilated, regulated and strategically focused on the preservation of the old or the inauguration of a new community. In the Dogon society myth seems to fulfill these functions as well. According to the wise Dogon elder the Dogon egg structures Dogon society. Its signs generate life as it develops through different phases. They specify, classify and evaluate individual and collective behaviour in mythological and cosmological categories. Time and space are organised around mythological and cosmological events. Houses and villages are built conform to postures of mythological persons. To give an impression of the complexity of the myths I will give you some nuclear stories about the creation of the earth and mankind, according to the Dogon.

Amma, God, created our world in the form of an egg, filled with signs. In the egg we see a series of 266 points. All the points will later on develop into a specific form. From the four elements air, water, earth and fire the so-called collarbones of Amma, emanate via the dynamic principle of spiral vibration the second egg, the yala, that we find in the article in Mille

Plateaux. The signs form a fourfold serie: abstract signs, tokens or images, figures and eventually designs or factual things, that express themselves socially in a range of articulations: from buildingpatterns of houses to initiationrites. The emanation of the signs is related to the stories that reproduce the origin of the universe. Amma creates the sun and the moon in the form of pots. Hunks of clay thrown about form the stars, in which Sirius takes a special place: its eclips of sixty years determines the categories of time and the main funeral rites. Amma makes the earth of clay and saliva. When he wants to unit himself with the feminine earth, he can't penetrate her because his way is blocked by a termitehill. After the removal of the hill the union can take place. But this act of violation forms the first rupture with universal order. It is socially reproduced in the form of the female circumcision. 'Historical' facts are cruelly inscribed in the individual body. Because of the act of violation the earth does not give birth to the expected twins, the Nommo, but to a fox, that from then on is the symbol of all evil. However, a second attempt of Amma results in the birth of the twins. It is a being, whose upper part is human, while the lower part has the shape of a snake. They are green and slippery as water with sinuslike limbs and have a double sexuality. Once in heaven rejoined with their father they look down on their naked mother. To protect her they spread over her a dress woven of threads, that colours red form the blood. With this dress they give earth the first word: the languauge of the spirits. Technique and language are always tightly interrelated in Dogon myth. With every new form of language a new technique is given. One day the fox steals the dress and obtains power over the earth because of the implicated language. He rapes his mother. The second rupture of universal order. Amma withdraws form the earth and creates the eight ancestors out of himself. The Nommo, the twins, form the ancestors as bisexual beings and they are taken up in heaven. One pair returns to earth to give her the second language, that of the ancestors, and the technique of weaving. The third language, that of the present Dogon, is given together with the technique of forging. One story recalls the origing of this gift as follows: one of the ancestors steals the fire and slide down to earth on the rainbow, chased by the Nommo. They can't catch him, but because of his enormous speed he falls down on earth and breaks his limbs. Since then the limbs have adopted the human shape. The offspring of the ancestors were not yet mortal. The following event was the cause of their mortality. One day an old woman finds the red dress of the fox and puts it on. This effects an enormous power over the rest of the human beings. But the men get jealous and kill her. They put on the dress, but forget to tell the eldest man about this event. When this man dies, that is to say transforms into a spirit and takes on the earthly shape of a snake, he discovers this crime by meeting the dressed man. Because of his rage he forgets that he must speak the first language, that of the spirits and he adresses the men in the third language, that of human beings. This breech with the universal order brings about mortality: The man can't return to heaven but neither can he return to the state of a human being. So he just dies.

These are a few of the stories Griaule has written down. In his book *Le renard pale* (the pale fox) he describes the emanation of the signs. Griaule and Dieterlen, with whom he writes this book, that is published in 1965, emphasize the value of the signs in the Dogon culture. The signs give life. But, of course, for the Dogon these are by no means arbitrary additions to life. They rather form her vital nucleus. In the story of the origin we already noticed the power of

the word. The word in its turn is the expression of the power of the sign. It determines the world even before it in fact exists. The Dogonegg is properly speaking a complete creation in a nutshell. The creation so to speak emanates from the intensities that form the undefinable structure of the egg: "grades, migrations, zones of proximity".

The emphasis on the sign is probably one of the reasons why in *L'AntiOedipe* Deleuze and Guattari tell the reader that this whole story and the drawings that illustrate it are "a splendid theory of signs"<sup>13</sup>. For them this Dogonmyth gets the same epistemological value as the Oedipusmyth: it structures the individual as well as the social body. The myth functions as a signifier for individual en social behavior. For example: the story of the insemination of the earth by Amma in which he removed the termitehill, is reproduced in the circumsicion of boys and girls, which refers again to the separation of the female and the male part, which were united in the Nommo, but separated once the ancestors became mortal human beings.

## **6. Science ánd myth**

Let's return to our initial question: does myth function in Western discourse and how does it function in this specific Western discourse, that *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* inspite of all her radical intentions still is? Is it an ideal that the writers want to revive and transform in order to solve specific Western problems? Is it thé answer? Or is it only an illustration of another organisation of our desires, that they propose? Is there any prescriptive value or do they offer it to the reader as a description, that has an indirect critical function? Well, whatever their intentions may be, to me it can't be more than a esthetic proposal for another bodyexperience or an example of how actual and historical forces inhabit the individual body. In showing an articulation of the Other and opening up a space in which the difference productively emerges, one is able to develop a critical instrument. As such the Dogonmyth can function as an actual figuration of that limitconception, that Artaud named the Body without organs. As Deleuze and Guattari say themselves: the Dogon egg is a splendid theory of signs. It provides a theory of signification. But I think that, once we look at the Dogon society, we also become aware of hidden and condemned aspects of our own society. Aspects we can't see any more, because of the apparant disappearance of the constitutive power of myth and religion. This book reveals how desire is inscribed in the body in a cruel way and connected by ignoring the mediating role of the family immediately to the social field and history. It shows us a different meaning of time. The thinking of the Dogon is focussed to the past, not the future and completely unfamiliar with the idea of development and fullfilment in a near future. The timecircle is oriented to the star Sirius which eclipses every sixty years, in which Dogon society revitalises itself. History, social planning and collective selfrealisation find their essential expression in the Dogon egg. Its constituting power can open our eyes for the ritualizing functions of science in our modern educational and therapeutical practises, that can be recognized as rituals, in which science tries to fasten its grip on the body. Generally speaking it focuses our attention to the implicit mythological and ritualizing aspects of modern science.

I'm not sure whether I can draw this parallel, but perhaps we can recognize this tension in the recent discussion in Africa about the status of philosophy. On the one side the oral traditions



and the local systems of thought are emphasised as the original form of African philosophy, which is qualified as 'ethnophilosophy'. On the other side one tries to bring by means of a theoretical instrumentation these local stories on a theoretical level. This discussion touches our issue because the relation between myth and science here also seems to be the main target. The critics of ethnophilosophy are aiming their attack on the irrational elements in the local systems of thought. The modernist tendency in African thinking would rather strip itself from these irrational elements. In an article entitled *Mythe et philosophie. Réponse à Elungu, Towa et autres Irung Ishitambal'a Mulang* criticizes the radical division between these two points of view. In the English summary is stated: "The radical dichotomy between the rational and the mythopoetic is misleading, since philosophical thought, from presocratic to present times, is informed in no small measure by mythical elements. Not only have thinkers like Plato and Marx used forms of expression that properly belong to myth but, too, philosophers and philosophy as such can't proceed without in some measure having recourse to these forms of expression."<sup>14</sup> Here I would like to assert that in Western thought in spite of the fact that we have tried to banish myth in a radical way from our conception of world and history, we involuntarily reintroduced it in a very peculiar way. In order to display this point in its full extent I refer to a discussion which has been initiated decennia ago by Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. They state that the rational discourse of Enlightenment, which has become the dominating discourse in Western philosophy, has produced a new myth: the autonomous subject. Although modern philosophy flatters itself with the thought, that it completely freed itself from the shackles of mythology and externally imposed authority in the form of religion, many 20th century philosophers have recognized the fact that as in myth, Enlightenment gets trapped into mythology with each step it takes in order to enlarge the distance between itself and mythology. In the beginning of the Enlightenment myth seems to be transformed into sheer objectivity: the project of the Encyclopedia tried to objectify religious and mythical phenomena and transformed them into positive forms of knowledge. Further on Kant grounded this knowledge in the transparency of the autonomous, selfreflexive subject. But, Adorno and Horkheimer conclude: this subject, who thought he was the lord of creation and the driving force of history, became a myth himself. His urge to develop and to finalize, to objectify and dominate has produced counterforces which it can no longer control.<sup>15</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer come to the same conclusion as Mulang: myth and enlightenment are interrelated. Historically we can easily locate the perverted effects of the irrationality of the enlightened bourgeois society in our time: in fascism the lower middleclass embraced a secularized myth. They used and destroyed democracy and the autonomous subjectivity in favour of a technological violence in order to physically destroy the Other: Jews, gipsies, communists and homosexuals. But despite of its perversion it did not solely function in a negative way by providing a justification for racism, totalitarianism and genocide. Myth also offered to a completely destroyed community, as postwar Germany obviously was, a new identity and feeling of solidarity. It connected the German society once more with ongoing historical events. In other words: the functions of myth were apparently still very active in this proclaimed rational society.

## **7. Revaluation of African thought and practises**

Capitalisme et Schizophrénie shows that the criticism that Western society has developed in her own bosom can reach out for positive images which are found in nonWestern societies, such as the Dogon. Thinkers are forced to do this for two reasons. For a negative reason: because of the exhaustion of the utopian potential in the last decennia, effected on the one side by the desillusions grown out of the socialist experiments, that got more and more entangled in their own paradoxes. The socialist model that for a long time functioned as a last refuge appeared to offer no realistic alternatives, given the problems of the socialist countries. The disastrous experiences of May '68 and the stories of survivors of the Goelag made an articulation of the criticism in terms of marxist utopia impossible. On the other hand the liberal solution became more and more suspect, because the welfarestate seemed to lose itself in its own paradoxes. But there is also a positive reason. We came to realize that an insight in the causes of the decline of our identity necessitated 'knowledge' of that which for centuries we have excluded as the Other. By studying African societies and the myths that ground them, we can get an insight in these invisible and suppressed aspects of modern culture: for instance the necessity to transform the inevitable violence of our body and of the social body, to which we are continuously exposed. History has taught us to accept the violence that incorporates the Other be it the Dogon society or the transgressive powers of our libido and once again to find ways not to exterminate but to socialize and regulate these forces.

## Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie. Tome 2: Mille Plateaux*. Paris 1980.
2. Ibidem, pp. 185-204.
3. Ibidem, p. 185.
4. Ibidem, pp 185-186. I translated the French text into English.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, Ed. J. Hoffmeister. Hamburg 1965, p. 216-217. I translated the German text into English.
6. Ibidem, p. 234.
7. See Marcel Griaule/Germaine Dieterlen, *Le renard pâle. Tome 1. Le myth cosmogonique*. Paris 1965: p. 96.
8. See Georges Bataille, "La structure psychologique du fascisme". In: *La critique sociale*, no. 10-11, Paris 1933\34.
9. Op. cit. note 1, p. 202.
10. Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie. Tome 1: L'AntiOedipe*. Paris 1972.
11. See Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits I*. Paris 1966: pp. 251-289.
12. See Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité. La volonté de savoir*. Paris 1976, pp. 121-151. During that period Foucault and Deleuze influenced each other directly. See the preface to the American translation of *L'AntiOedipe* by Michel Foucault.
13. Op. cit. note 10, p. 181.
14. Irung Ishitambal'a Mulang, "Mythe et philosophie: Réponse à Elungu, Towa et autres". In: *Quest*, vol. 1 no. 1, 1987, p. 12.
15. Max Horkheimer/Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. Amsterdam 1947, p. 22