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"THE INVENTION OF AFRICA - Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge"
by V.Y. Mudirbe - Indiana University Press - 1988

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Mudirbe's book is an elegant academic essay on the search for the African identity and otherness with a Foucaultian analysis of the discourses about Africa and the relations between language, knowledge and power. For this reason, the search is concentrated in the study of the foundations of discourses about Africa.

His exhaustive analysis brings to consideration the most important facts, documents, reports and books, since the antiquity up to the most recent contributions, including the work of a variety of people with different background and interests.

Mudirbe demonstrates the way Africa has been invented by Western scholars who could see the question only by means of European academic models and political interests. This invention was also assured by African thinkers. He also shows that the native gnosis, faced as an exotic and exquisite order of knowledge, has been considered a kind of stigmatized philosophy. Underlying the facts of domination, there is an exercise of power of speech constructing a religious, social, economical, political and linguistic order in societies.

Mudirbe calls the attention of the reader by the fact that we can be involved by the words of language and be convinced by a discourse without real conscience of the facts of reality. The book is a brilliant analysis of the paradoxes in the discourses about Africa, and by extension, of the social minorities all over the world.

In addition to the fascinating philosophical and linguistic analysis, Mudirbe makes a comprehensive review of the anthropology related to Africa, and its social, political and educational consequences. The ingenuity and the wildness is usually the two faces of the same coin of madness.

Mudirbe has such an attractive style, a very clear and organized manner to present the subject, that the reader can hardly interrupt his reading before he reaches the last page. This comprehensive book deeply involved with historical, anthropological, social, linguistic, religious and philosophical

commitments to analyse and explain the reality of Africa, is a cornerstone of the academic work of this century. Mudirbe's *Invention of Africa* is provocative, challenging, and indispensable source of study for every scholar.