African Philosophy, Second Edition: Myth and Reality (African Systems of Thought)

Paulin J. HOUNTONDJI

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"Hountondji... writes not as an 'African' philosopher but as a philosopher on Africa.... Hountondji's deep understanding of any civilization as necessarily pluralistic, and often even self-contradicting as it evolves, is simply magisterial.... This is a precious gem of a book for anyone who wishes to reflect on civilization and culture." ?Choice

In this incisive, original exploration of the nature and future of African philosophy, Paulin J. Hountondji attacks a myth popularized by ethnophilosophers such as Placide Tempels and Alexis Kagame that there is an indigenous, collective African philosophy separate and distinct from the Western philosophical tradition. Hountondji contends that ideological manifestations of this view that stress the uniqueness of the African experience are protonationalist reactions against colonialism conducted, paradoxically, in the terms of colonialist discourse. Hountondji argues that a genuine African philosophy must assimilate and transcend the theoretical heritage of Western philosophy and must reflect a rigorous process of independent scientific inquiry. This edition is updated with a new preface in which Hountondji responds to his critics and clarifies misunderstandings about the book's conceptual framework.

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