

Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* and its Rival Ethnographies: The Kikuyu in the Mirror of Colonial Anthropology

Anne Marie Peatrik

CNRS, LESC, Université Paris Nanterre

2021

POUR CITER CET ARTICLE

Peatrik, Anne–Marie, 2021. "Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* and its Rival Ethnographies: The Kikuyu in the Mirror of Colonial Anthropology", in *Bérose - Encyclopédie internationale des histoires de l'anthropologie*, Paris.

URL Bérose : article2353.html

Publication Bérose : ISSN 2648-2770

© UMR9022 Héritages (CY Cergy Paris Université, CNRS, Ministère de la culture)/DIRI, Direction générale des patrimoines et de l'architecture du Ministère de la culture. (Tous droits réservés).

Votre utilisation de cet article présuppose votre acceptation des conditions d'utilisation des contenus du site de Bérose (www.berose.fr), accessibles [ici](#).

Consulté le 18 août 2022 à 21h39min

Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu (1938) by Jomo Kenyatta was the first academic anthropological monograph to be written by an African about his people. [1] It has led a tumultuous existence, being ignored, disparaged and celebrated in turn. During previous research into the remarkable history of this work, it became clear that other texts and their authors were engaged in relations of opposition or association with it, in particular during its production and its initial reception from the 1930s until the period following the Second World War (Peatrik 2014). These somewhat disparate writings form an indisputable part of *Facing Mount Kenya's* trajectory and essentially derive their existence from their implicit or explicit position relative to Kenyatta's work, insofar as their authors clashed, sometimes violently, over the legitimate representation or anthropological truth of the Kikuyu. In turn, these competing versions affected *Facing Mount Kenya's* own status and successive existences. This article seeks to unravel these interwoven influences and to reveal the hidden or forgotten story of a major work in the history of anthropology.

Many of these texts and their authors are little known today, except of course by the historians of Kenya who have preserved them from oblivion. We will focus on the works of three authors in particular: Parmenas Mockerie (*An African speaks for his People*, 1934), Kenyatta himself (*My People of Kikuyu and the Life of Chief Wangombe*, 1942; *Kenya: the Land of Conflict*, 1945), and Louis Leakey (*The Southern Kikuyu before 1903*, 1939ms, 1977).

An initial comment is necessary. These texts constitute an array of heterogeneous sources that were grouped together in response to the Mau Mau anti-colonial insurgency which began among the Kikuyu in 1952, almost fifteen years after the initial publication of *Facing Mount Kenya*, and led to Kenya's independence in 1963. Looking back across this broad chronology, these works can retrospectively be seen to intersect in a variety of ways that have been the subject of retrospective scholarly interpretations, in particular by political scientists and historians (Clark 1989, Berman & Lonsdale 1991) seeking to trace the origins of the political thought espoused by the independence movement's activists and leaders. Kenyatta, a student of Malinowski and 'detrribalized' Kikuyu in the eyes of some, became the first president of the Kenyan Republic in 1964, while Leakey, the 'white Kikuyu', opposed the Mau Mau and Kenyan independence before becoming the renowned palaeontologist that we know today. These two protagonists squared up to each other through their respective works, with the resulting intertextuality pointing to a tension between anthropology and politics rarely seen in the colonial situation.

While such retrospective and retroactive interpretations can be instructive, they may also obstruct our access to the authors' initial intentions, conceptual frameworks and analytical processes, as well as their approaches to writing and recording. And yet these reveal a great deal about the anthropological knowledge formed during this period before both the widespread adoption of academic anthropology and the decolonizations of the 1960s. In particular, the anthropological quality of *Facing Mount Kenya*, too often seen as falling victim to functionalist idealization, emerges more clearly when such an approach is adopted. Here, these texts will be considered for what they say or reveal about ethnologists in the colonial situation and the anthropology produced during these years.

A point of method should first be explained. The trajectory of *Facing Mount Kenya* can be broken down into three easily identifiable stages: firstly, the completion of a master's degree in anthropology by Johnstone Kenyatta – a Kikuyu former municipal employee, sent to London by a tribal association (the Kikuyu Central Association, or KCA) to protect its people's land interests. Written at the London School of Economics under the direction of B. Malinowski, Kenyatta's thesis did not attract much interest when first published. The second stage, that of fame, came much later, in direct connection with the decolonization crisis. As author and as leader of the independence movement, Jomo the 'Burning Spear' became world famous and *Facing Mount Kenya* an unprecedented success, coinciding as it did with the growing popularity of anthropology which was entering something of a golden age. From the 1990s onwards, *Facing Mount Kenya* took on its third (but by no means last) life when, through a confused association with the excessive hegemony of the Kikuyu in Kenya, it became the book of national discord. This, in short, is the strange fate of this master's thesis written in the 1930s by a British colonial subject essentially practising 'anthropology (almost) at home'.

This article examines these ghostly doubles of *Facing Mount Kenya* from a synchronic perspective, during a period of time interrupted by the Mau Mau crisis – a point of historical

rupture and source of interpretative interference that must be addressed. We will focus here on the production conditions of these texts, on their authors as individuals, and on the dissemination and reception of their works. But, beyond this, we must also seek an understanding of their respective positions and interlinkages. How are we to address this intertextuality, which does not yet seem to have been accounted for by the sociology of literature (Sapiro 2014)?

Vincent Debaene's *L'Adieu au voyage* (2010), and the dual register of writing he identifies among French ethnologists in the 1930s, starting with Marcel Griaule (*Les Flambeurs d'homme* 1934) and Michel Leiris (*L'Afrique fantôme* 1934) although there have been many others, offers an encouraging path forward. Many ethnologists have produced two versions of their own surveys – one governed by the criteria of objectivity and thoroughness, the other by a desire to testify to a lived experience with an indigenous people and to convey the atmosphere of their society – corresponding to two registers that have gradually drifted apart: the scientific and the literary. The ghostly 'doubles' of *Facing Mount Kenya* thus reveal the Kikuyu reflected in the mirror of colonial anthropology, and in the mirrors of these competing versions. While not all these doubles are of exactly the type identified by Debaene, his method of comparing texts that differ in nature but describe the same thing provides us with a useful entry point into our subject.

Finally, it is important to state the underlying reason for this interest in *Facing Mount Kenya*. As I conducted research among the distant cousins of the Kikuyu, the Meru of Kenya (Peatrik 1999, 2019), I realized that they occupied an ethnographic void – just like, as I later realized, other peoples in Kenya. This led to a desire to understand why the societies and peoples of these regions had been so little studied. In particular, their distinct political institutions, based on generational classes, had been misunderstood, distorted, or only understood too late. What, then, were we to make of *Facing Mount Kenya*, which protruded like some incongruous inselberg from this ethnographic desert? In the context of settler colonialism, what was the nature of the lasting confusion into which anthropology, as operator of knowledge, had fallen?

Parmenas Githendu Mockerie, the Unwelcome Compatriot

An African speaks for his People, a 95-page pamphlet by Parmenas Githendu Mockerie [Mukiri] published in 1934, is the first of *Facing Mount Kenya*'s various doubles. It retains a particular connection with *Facing Mount Kenya* – one laced with controversy, since Jomo Kenyatta was criticized for drawing on this text or being inspired by it to make his own contribution without ever referring to it. Mockerie, a Kikuyu and Kenyatta's travelling companion, appears in fact to have been the first African author to have advocated for his people (Calder 1983).

Among the various *athomi* (a Kikuyu neologism meaning 'those who learn/know how to read', and by extension the literate) – the first generation of boys, most often runaways from their

families, who were educated by missionaries – Mockerie appears as a real counterpoint to Kenyatta, who was also an *athomi* and a few years his senior. Details of his life are given in this text and in a ten-page autobiography, *The story of Parmenas Mockerie of the Kikuyu Tribe, Kenya, written by himself. The Life of an African Teacher*. Written at the same time, this life story appeared in 1936 in a collection of ten stories of Africans compiled by Margery Perham, a historian and political writer on the British Empire, and a student of Bronislaw Malinowski (Goody 1995: 27).

Mockerie was from the region of Fort Hall (Muranga) in the middle of Kikuyuland, which was less directly affected by colonial land-grabbing than Jomo Kenyatta's region of origin. A member of the Kikuyu Central Association, he accompanied Kenyatta on his second trip to London in the spring of 1931. The KCA activists, believing that Kenyatta had not maintained sufficient contact with them during his first stay, thought it wise to increase the size of the delegation. They thus offered this teacher the possibility of additional training and paid for his journey.

Travelling companions they may have been, but the temperaments and expectations of these two protagonists differed too greatly for them to remain allies after arriving in Europe. After engaging in various studies and making a series of trips around the continent, Mockerie decided to return to Kenya. As Kenyatta, who had been absent for some time (no one knew then that he had gone to Moscow), had not yet returned to London, Mockerie spent all the money for the return journey on a first-class ticket. Details are scarce but it appears that Mockerie, whose writings reveal a strong belief in the importance of education, went on to occupy positions of responsibility in school administration or even the colonial apparatus (Murray-Brown 1974: 360 n. 4).

Published by the Hogarth Press, which was founded by spouses Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and prefaced by Professor Julian Huxley, this testimony is of indisputable documentary value. The actual text by Mockerie is 65 pages, followed by a 20-page appendix entitled *Memorandum from the Kikuyu Land Board Association*.

After the story of his journey and crossing to London, punctuated by anecdotes revealing various aspects of racial segregation and some rather indirect references to his travelling companion, Mockerie outlines the life of the Kikuyu (chapter II), beginning with religion, the effect of Christianization on Kikuyu practices, and the historical and contemporary role of the 'Mohammedans' who had settled in the colony of Kenya. Chapter III (*Kikuyu Tribal Institutions*) is particularly illuminating. In the same limpid style used to describe his early years before joining the missionaries, where he evokes, among other things, his exploits as a hunter (1936: 159-163), [2]1 Mockerie describes in very simple terms, as if it were self-evident, the *itwika* system (1934: 36-43) of transmitting power between political generations, together with its democratic aspects; the debt owed by the incoming generation to the outgoing generation and the importance of ritual performances; and finally, the ways in which the activities of the generation currently in power had been impeded since the colonial conquest. Mockerie, it is true, was from the area where the central ritual of transmission was held

every thirty to forty years, in Gathanga. [3] The last three chapters, devoted to colonial rule itself, address the White control of the Legislative Council of Kenya, the need to prioritise the compulsory education of Africans in state schools, a survey 'to study the Kikuyu tribal laws, customs and folk songs' (1934: 64) which was hampered by the many authorizations demanded by the colonial authority (see note 2), and finally the land issues facing the Kikuyu.

The general tone of this text is reminiscent of the international reportage in vogue in those years, with the difference that this reporter was giving an account of his own people, as emphasized by the indefinite article of the title. Aware of Kenya's diversity, the author tells the reader that he will discuss the Kikuyu, whom he knows best, but not limit himself to them. In the same spirit, and in order to supply additional perspectives, Mockerie takes the approach of comparing Kenya with Uganda, a kingdom and protectorate under indirect British administration where he had continued his studies at Makerere College; with Senegal whose elected officials, as he discovered in Europe, sat in the French Parliament; and finally with the situation in the London metropolis. The relations of colonial domination are addressed using the broad terms of the 'ruling' or 'privileged' versus the 'subject' or 'unprivileged' races and classes. And even when describing situations that are clearly unjust – those of the 'squatters', peasants who left their lands in order to settle on White plantations and work there in order to pay the taxes imposed by the conqueror – the tone remains calm and the style restrained. This is in keeping with the frontispiece photograph, which shows this *African Teacher* in a suit and tie, sitting at a table and absorbed in his reading. The contrast with the photo of Jomo the 'Burning Spear', testing his weapon's sharpness (Peatrik 2014: 79), could not be clearer.

The last pages of Mockerie's text prepare the reader for the transition to the attached *Memorandum* (1934: 76-95). Very different in tone, this text issued by the Kikuyu Land Board Association (associated with the KCA) lays bare the harmful effects of colonization, and in particular the list of unfulfilled commitments, such as the recent 'Native Land Trust Ordinance' of 1930, and the growing mistrust towards the colonial state. Mockerie and Jomo Kenyatta had not been received as a delegation, and this annexed text was in a sense intended to compensate for that failure, with Mockerie's account adding to its appeal in the manner of a vivid illustration.

Professor Julian Huxley's four-page preface elevated the book's status. A biologist and evolutionist as well as key figure of the progressive intelligentsia, Julian Huxley had travelled to Kenya in the 1930s to assess the areas that might constitute the first natural parks. [4] The publisher was also far from neutral. The Hogarth Press, which was run by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, members of the progressive Bloomsbury circle that had been meeting since 1904 and with links to the Labour Party and the reformist socialism of the Fabians, published committed and avant-garde texts. In 1924, for example, it had published the most anti-colonial work about Kenya to date, written by the Scottish doctor Norman Leys who had served there, which became a landmark text on the question of anti-imperialism. An acquaintance of Norman Leys presented Mockerie to Leonard Woolf, who agreed to publish

An African speaks for his people, albeit reluctantly because he believed the book to be too limited in interest. Books on Kenya were known to sell well, but information is scarce on the dissemination and reception of this text, published in 1934 (Willis 1992: 230-231; Calder 1983; Dubino 2012: 234-235). The book's 1977 reissue in the United States was probably not unrelated to the waning popularity of Jomo Kenyatta, a leader exhausted by fourteen years of presidency whose legitimacy was increasingly being questioned, not least on the issue of whether he had been the first African to speak on behalf of his people. The publication of Louis Leakey's ethnography that same year (1977) is perhaps also not unrelated to this rediscovery of Mockerie – indeed, as we shall see, Leakey alludes to it.

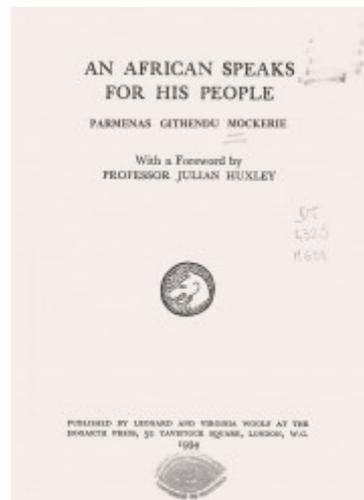
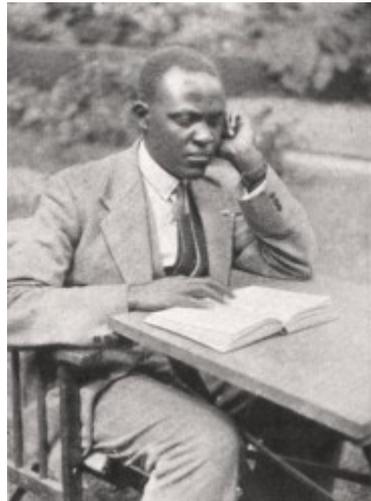


Fig. 1 and 2

Portrait of Parmenas Githendu Mockerie, frontispiece to *An African speaks for his people*, 1977 [1934]. (Collection A.-M. Peatrik).

However, a reading of Mockerie's text gives the lie to the notion of a crisis in the intellectual legitimacy of *Facing Mount Kenya*, in fact further emphasizing its status as a scientific work as well as Kenyatta's unique position. Tangible evidence is lacking, but it seems very unlikely that Jomo Kenyatta would not have read Mockerie's book, in which the KLBA/KCA's

Memorandum figures prominently, or the life stories of Africans collected by Margie Perham (1936). In these, the accounts written by Africans (four of the ten, including Mockerie's) are distinguished from those gathered by ethnologists (including Audrey Richard and Monica Hunter). These readings may, in a sense, have strengthened his desire to write something more than another recycled report or to lapse into an account that was too directly biographical and therefore limited. The pertinence of Kenyatta's decision to produce an anthropological monograph instead, as an act of methodical scholarship with the approval of the academic world, is thus all the more apparent, as is the determination and effort required to bring the project to fruition (Kenyatta's text came to 340 pages versus Mockerie's 65). Of course, Kenyatta could have at least mentioned this text but, in addition to the fact that he included almost no references anyway (the exceptions were Aristotle, Lord Lugard and a few administrative reports), an academic work such as this was hardly the place for the type of journalistic writing produced by Mockerie.

The texts produced by these compatriotic partner-rivals also reveal a tension over the choice of language used to describe Kikuyu customs and affairs. At the urging of Protestant missionaries, the Kikuyu language was written early, in order to facilitate the dissemination of the New Testament in the vernacular (Peterson 2004). Kikuyu customaries, also containing reflections on ancestral practices, had already been written in the Kikuyu language. Kenyatta himself had engaged in such work as early as 1928 with his journal *Mwigwithania* (cf. note 2). Once in London, he began to write journalistic articles in English as soon as he could (as in 1934 in the *Negro Anthology*, see below), seeking not only to make himself heard by the metropolitan public but also to take his marks in a race among Kikuyu literati to produce the first significant writing in English. Without the presence of Kenyatta as nascent intellectual, or the rivalry between these travelling companions, Mockerie's text might never have seen the light of day.

Kenyatta, the Detribalized Kikuyu

Johnstone Kenyatta and Bronislaw Malinowski did not meet each other by chance. Their ambitions were complementary, and they are said to have enjoyed an immediate rapport. By December 1934, Kenyatta had already lived in London for a long time and been on several trips around Europe. Malinowski, meanwhile, had just returned from a three-month trip that he had finally been able to organize in South and East Africa. He gained a literate informant who could enlighten him on the controversy surrounding female circumcision among the Kikuyu, and Kenyatta, a professor to supervise him on a university degree about his people, whom he wished to make more widely known. With a scholarship that Malinowski secured for him from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (see note 8), Johnstone was able to continue his studies and, at the end of 1937, defend his master's degree in anthropology, which was published in September 1938 (Peatrik 2014: 73-76).

What is immediately striking about the text is its density. A monograph rich in previously

unpublished data, *Facing Mount Kenya* makes one regret that work of this quality was not carried out for other peoples of Kenya during these years, so rare or mediocre are the ethnographies concerning them. After prefaces from Malinowski and Kenyatta (xv-xxi), this 339-page text consists of thirteen chapters of unequal size, followed by a glossary and an index of themes and the names of the various peoples. By way of bibliography, as was already mentioned, there are occasional references given in footnotes. Written by a Kikuyu presenting himself together with his credentials, the work itself is 'the reference'; it is, in short, self-referential, echoing the phrase with which Malinowski opens the work: 'Anthropology begins at home'.

The work covers, in turn, the presentation of the origin stories of the Kikuyu people and the kinship system (ch. I: 20 p.); land law (ch. II: 32 p.); economic activity, agriculture, animal husbandry, bartering and crafts including music (ch. III & IV: 44 p.); educational principles and practices (ch. V: 30 p.); the initiation of young people and feminine rituals (ch. VI: 34 p.); pre-marital sex life (ch. VII: 28 p.) and matrimonial institutions (ch. VIII: 22 p.); the system of government and judicial procedures (ch. IX : 45 p.). A final section deals with ancestral religion (ch. X: 35 p.), new religions (ch. XI: 10 p.), and magical and medical practices (ch. XII: 28 p.). The final chapter (9 p.), like any self-respecting conclusion, brings these various aspects together, but nonetheless paints a more coherent picture of the society than the body of the text suggests.

To illustrate the quality of the research, from this vast tableau, let us focus only on the sections on the institutions of age and generation (ch. I and IX), which are carefully described and interrogated in useful ways: unexpected but accurate details are provided, such as the fact that it is possible to still be a warrior at the age of 40; Kenyatta identifies a continuity between age grades/age groups and the family institution, not because of some irresistible penchant for social harmony but through an intuition that would later be drowned out by the lineage-centred theory of the cross-cutting of lineages by the age grades and age groups. It should be borne in mind that Kenyatta was trying to set out the details of a political system that was hitherto almost completely unknown (with the exception of Mauss 1931). He covers the question of the *itwika* transfer of generational powers in detail, but skirts around the *bûrûri/thî* concept of generational sovereignty, perhaps out of academic reserve. The book's very real anti-colonialism is in fact expressed in an indirect manner. Through its very existence, this scientific text produced by an African is anti-colonialist; this much is clear from the methodical description he gives of Kikuyu society, in contrast to the belief shared by almost all the colonists that these primitive peoples were anarchic and barbarous. Similarly, certain chapters and passages describe, with great economy of means, the absurd and unacceptable nature of imperial conquest and the colonists' domination: the parable of the poor man and the elephant (Kenyatta 1938: 47-52), the contradiction inherent in colonial domination (*ibid.*: 197), and indigenous methods of warfare compared to those of Westerners (*ibid.* : 205-215).

Published in September 1938, *Facing Mount Kenya* was a commercial failure, particularly for

Kenyatta who had hoped to profit from the royalties. Its frontispiece may have featured a photo carefully composed to attract readers, with the author dressed as an African chief testing his weapon's sharpness (this portrait gave rise to the nickname 'Burning Spear'), but this 'exhaustive' anthropological monograph, written in the somewhat dry style befitting such a work, was not particularly accessible and failed to find much of a readership at the time (Peatrik 2014: 80-85).

Penniless and forced by the declaration of war to stay in England, Kenyatta moved to the countryside where he found a job as a farm worker. He married an Englishwoman, Edna G. Clarke, and from this union with a 'White' – unthinkable if he had remained in Kenya – gained a son. As war spread across the globe and the prospect of returning to his country receded, Kenyatta was drawn to writing and began working on a novel entitled *White Man's Magic*. This fictionalized (auto-)biography of an African named Kenjimoo (a diminutive of Kenyatta) never saw the light of day (Murray-Brown 1974: 211, 364 n. 6). Kenyatta did, however, write two short works that were very different in style: *My People of Kikuyu and the Life of Chief Wangombe* (60 pages) in 1942; and *Kenya: The Land of Conflict*, a 26-page pamphlet, in 1945.



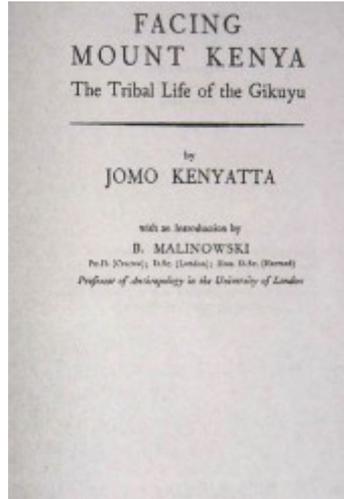


Fig. 3 and 4

Portrait of Jomo Kenyatta, frontispiece to *Facing Mount Kenya*, 1938.

(Collection A.-M. Peatrik).

The first of these works was a response to a request from the *United Society for Christian Literature*, which wanted to publish pamphlets on African countries written by Africans themselves (Murray-Brown 1974: 364 n. 7). [5] The required format was sixty pages, but the tone and turn of phrase are recognisably Jomo Kenyatta's.

From the first page, the author states that he will adopt the tone of the story-teller, '[...] which sometimes puts the truth into a mythological disguise' (Kenyatta 1942: 1). Written in a more accessible style than *Facing Mount Kenya*, the story is divided into two parts: an overview of the political institutions, and the biography of an exemplary man, Wangombe, from the northern frontier of Kikuyuland, whose life offers a window onto the society as a whole. Jomo Kenyatta is probably using this hero as a counterpoint to Waiyaki, a famous hero from the country's southern frontier who was mentioned in *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938: 46) and was the epitome of the leader who dies in exile after the colonists betray his trust (Lonsdale 1995: 240-291).

Returning to the Kikuyu forms of government, the central theme of these sixty pages, Jomo Kenyatta juxtaposes two points of view which he combines in a rather personal way: firstly, that of the generational system, which he calls the 'early forms of government'. To Jomo Kenyatta, this was now a bygone practice, and he treats it in a more condensed and distant way than in *Facing Mount Kenya* (indeed, in the manner of *Mockerie*) with several comments betraying a degree of irritation. Writing about the *itwika*, he wonders: 'Why all this fuss with ceremonial feasts and the formal change-over' (Kenyatta 1942: 11). He then discusses 'the Kikuyu system of chieftainship' as if it is a contemporary fact – a rather devious approach, since Kenyatta knew perfectly well that the Kikuyu did not possess such institutions. But, with the onset of modernity, he perceived the need somehow to legitimize the anti-colonial leaders in order to ensure they could effectively represent the people they spoke for (in this sense, *My People of Kikuyu* echoes the title of *Mockerie's An African speaks for his people*). The

age-grades through which men ascend and which Kenyatta describes are used to support this proposal, as is ‘the life of Chief Wangombe’ – his exploits as a shepherd and warrior, his marriage and founding of a family, and his sudden death shortly after the colonial conquest. In this overview, Jomo Kenyatta gets to the heart of a crucial question of political anthropology, but one which he is no longer addressing as an anthropologist but as a practitioner. In this discreetly but deliberately controversial text, Kenyatta delivers nothing less than a mini-treatise on Kikuyu politics in the form of a narrative.

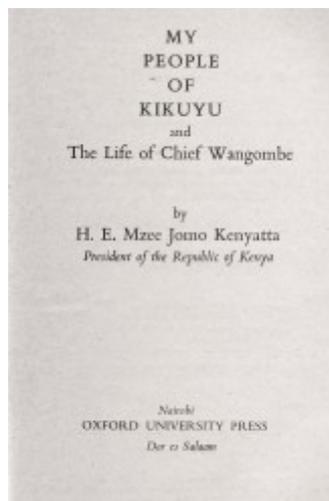


Fig. 5 and 6

Portrait of an older Jomo Kenyatta, frontispiece to *My People of Kikuyu*, 1966 [1942].
(Collection A.-M. Peatrik).

The origin of the second text is very different, being directly linked to the end of the war and the colonial crises that were erupting with increasing energy. Kenyatta had forged ever closer ties with African Americans in London and the International African Service Bureau (IASB). Founded in 1935 in response to the Ethiopian crisis, this association brought together activists for Pan-Africanism, a movement which sought to bring together all Africans regardless of their origins and was led in those years by George Padmore, one of the key

figures of Afro-Caribbean and Anglophone anti-colonialism (Boukari-Yabara 2014). Kenyatta's stature as an author, as a politician and as an authentic African grew among these activists, and it was within this milieu that *Facing Mount Kenya* found its first readership.

Padmore asked Kenyatta to write a pamphlet on the situation in Kenya. This became the 26 tightly printed pages of *Kenya: The Land of Conflict* (1945) which the IASB published in October 1945 on the occasion of the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester where, as befitted his reputation, Kenyatta was given pride of place.

This activist pamphlet repeats the basic structure of the KCA's *Memorandum* of 1934 (published in Mockerie's appendix) with various additions, but also bears comparison with the few pages entitled 'Kenya', signed Johnstone Kenyatta and published in the memorable *Negro Anthology* compiled by Nancy Cunard (1934: 803-806). That article, written when Kenyatta was still going by the first name Johnstone, had a clearly anti-capitalist tone backed up by precise data on large firms in colonial Kenya (Peatrik 2014: 77-78) that had disappeared in the 1945 text, but the anti-colonial message was now much more pronounced.

The 1945 brochure is enriched by historical details taken from *Facing Mount Kenya* and provides an update on the various conflicts: the gold rush in Kakamega (in western Kenya) and the expropriation of Africans; conflicts linked to overgrazing in the Kamba region; land-related tensions among the Taita; the conscription of Africans into British armies, forced labour and famine – all this was contrasted with the preferential treatment given to Whites in economic life and within political bodies. After this vigorous and wide-ranging indictment of the injustices committed against Africans, the conclusion is surprisingly moderate: where one would expect a call for something bordering on revolution, the text proposes reform and autonomy. But this was 1945, when the complete independence of the colonies was unthinkable. Similarly surprising is the image taken from the 'Burning Spear' photograph which illustrates the cover in the manner of a slogan. Finally, the author's words are legitimized in the foreword by George Padmore himself, who writes: 'Mr Kenyatta is the author of *Facing Mount Kenya* – an anthropological study of the tribal life of the Kikuyu – and is well qualified to speak for the Africans of Kenya'.

What are we to make of these publications and their effects on the status of *Facing Mount Kenya* and the position of anthropology? In particular, a comparison of these two (or three) short texts with the 1938 monograph sheds light on certain mechanisms involved in the production of anthropological knowledge in these years. [6] It is as if Kenyatta, in these two texts, is giving free rein to everything that he was unable to include in his monograph. [7] Having completed his monograph and demonstrated his ability as an African colonial subject to conduct research and his place among the academic elite, Kenyatta returns to his basic theme but engages different rhetorical registers: in *My People of Kikuyu and the Life of Chief Wangombe*, he takes on the role of the storyteller and narrates a tale, while in *The Land of Conflict* he adopts an accusatory and didactic style and develops the tone of an anti-colonial activist. In short, we again appear to be dealing with a different form of the 'two versions of a single text' proposed by Debaene – this time one scientific, the other literary and political.

But having examined Mockerie's texts, we can now see that Kenyatta in a sense adopted the writing methods that Mockerie had (modestly) employed, and which he had been unable to use in his academic monograph. This lends further credence to the idea that Kenyatta was familiar with Mockerie's writings. Unless, of course, these various texts represent various fashionable or competing approaches to writing in these years: academic, political and literary writing as a triple translation of the same anthropological content. Kenyatta, let us remember, was for some time drawn to writing literature and romantic fiction. The *athomi* had also acquired a taste for writing.

This experimentation with different registers may also explain a degree of suspicion towards Kenyatta the ethnographer. In these two texts, particularly the first, Kenyatta achieves effective results by mingling registers. He skilfully combines fantasy with highly precise data that is captured even more effectively than in *Facing Mount Kenya*, but the average reader does not possess the tools to separate the ethnographic wheat from the rhetorical chaff, and this mixing of genres casts doubt on the text as a whole. This is especially true since the size, tone and lower cost of these two texts meant they were more widely circulated and read than *Facing Mount Kenya*, a dense and less accessible work that was ultimately reserved for an intellectual elite.

Louis Leakey, the Kikuyu-ized White

While in the 1930s he enjoyed the kind of freedom in Europe that he had been deprived of in Kenya, the declaration of war forced Kenyatta the 'detrribalized' African to stay in distant England longer than he had anticipated. Meanwhile, Leakey, the Kikuyu-ized 'White African' [8] who returned from metropolitan England in 1937, resumed his journey to the Kenyan highlands in search of human fossils, Kikuyu customs, and a means of subsistence.

These two complex personalities, thrust into the limelight by the Mau Mau crisis, developed a curious binary relationship through their ethnographic rivalry and practice of anthropology. The two Kenyans knew each other from avoiding or confronting each other in London circles. Their early antagonism, which Leakey later brought to a head, is illustrative of the tragedy of the colonial situation. It draws on two competing versions or visions of Kikuyu identity, which they embodied in turn in the name of the real Kikuyu/Africans. [9]

Before becoming the renowned palaeontologist of the 1950s who triggered the race to discover ancient humans and hominids, Louis Seymour Bazett Leakey led a rather eventful existence. [10] Born in Kenya in 1903, not far from Kenyatta's place of birth, to missionaries from the Church Mission Society, Leakey's childhood and adolescence were not too different from the young Kikuyu among whom he lived. Fluent in their language, and incorporated into an age grade/age group at the age of 13, he also developed a passion for collecting fossils. After the Great War, forced to abandon this untrammelled rural existence, Leakey left for England to pursue his studies. At Cambridge University, he spent a year on a combined archaeology and anthropology course under Alfred Haddon. A zoologist by training who was

known for his ethnographic work on the peoples of the Torres Strait, Haddon represented the school in which physical anthropology still formed a continuous whole with material and cultural anthropology. Leakey returned to Kenya to work on excavations, and completed his PhD in prehistory in 1930. It was at this point that his life became more difficult. He became embroiled in controversy surrounding the reliability of his excavations and was discredited for a long time, before suffering a different kind of stigma when he left his wife and their two children to marry another woman. Losing all his support and resources, he sought to return to Kenya as quickly as possible (Berman and Lonsdale 1991: 150-152, 156).

His ability to speak Kikuyu had already brought him recognition as a specialist on this people. He lectured in London, published on the Maasai and the Kikuyu (1931) and began to appear as a prominent opponent of the representative of the Kikuyu Central Association, Johnstone Kenyatta. This was especially the case during the female circumcision controversy and the accompanying upsurge in anti-colonialism, which was seen as a consequence of the pernicious influence of missionaries by Kenyatta and as the product of a crisis of authority among the elders by Leakey. [11]

In London, however, it was around the person of Malinowski and his innovative conceptions of anthropology that their rivalry crystallized. In the early 1930s (Berman and Lonsdale 1991: 159-160), Leakey, seeking funding, sent Malinowski a plan for an African Scientific Research Institute that he proposed to set up and of course run, covering all areas of research, from anthropology to geology, archaeology, palaeontology and zoology. Unconvinced by Leakey's anthropological competence or this 'natural history museum' project which he considered outdated, [12] Malinowski did not support this application, whereas, as we have seen, he did support Kenyatta in securing an IALC scholarship. At the famous Malinowski seminar in November 1935, during a session on the clitoridectomy controversy among the Kikuyu, Kenyatta's presentation became the occasion for a heated verbal exchange with Leakey, who was in attendance. The two are said to have begun in English and then, as the tone intensified, switched to Kikuyu. This incident may never actually have taken place, but whether real or apocryphal, their confrontation and the use of Kikuyu invective set the tone for the relationship between these two contemporaries. [13]

Leakey managed to secure a scholarship from the Rhodes Trust [14] to carry out an ethnography of the Kikuyu, which provided him with some resources and allowed him to return to Kenya. [15] While also resuming excavations, he conducted a large ethnographic survey between 1937 and 1939, using some very distinctive methods which we will return to. When Kenyatta's monograph appeared in 1938, he was dismayed at being beaten to the punch. Their rivalry took a new turn, particularly since, though not mentioned by name, he likely felt targeted by the barbed reference in Kenyatta's introduction to the 'professional friends of the African'. [16] Completed in 1939, his manuscript on the Kikuyu did not find a buyer. Leakey refused to cut his manuscript down (it came to 1,400 pages when published in 1977) and no publisher would agree to publish it in full. It finally saw the light of day in 1977, five years after his death in 1972. This contrasts with Jomo Kenyatta, for whom only a few

months separated the defence of his thesis and the publication of his book. Another notable difference was the lack of supervision or critical feedback Leakey received while conducting his anthropological work. Instead, he self-validated and legitimized himself solely on the basis of his familiarity with the Kikuyu people and his status as both quasi-Kikuyu and archaeologist, adopting a disciplinary perspective in which anthropology was merely an extension of archaeology and physical anthropology. Clearly, a gulf lay between this approach and the new social anthropology advocated by Malinowski (and, let us not forget, Radcliffe-Brown). His rivalry with Kenyatta, the KCA activist who now had a master's degree in anthropology and a published monograph to his name, provided a renewed incentive for him to complete his research and manuscript. Indeed, it was perhaps his main motivation. Had Kenyatta never existed as an author, it is doubtful that Leakey would ever have devoted himself to this task in this way.

Although unpublished, the manuscript nonetheless began to establish a certain presence. Leakey ensured that others knew about it by allowing a select few individuals to read it and attest to its existence and size. Disseminated and given prestige in this way, the manuscript came to be accepted as an authority and helped establish Leakey's reputation in Kenya as a Kikuyu specialist. In the peculiar context of the Second World War in the colonies, Leakey, still living a precarious existence, was mobilized in the army and joined the intelligence service. His distinctive skills obliged or aided him to monitor potential actions by the 'natives', in particular the members of the KCA (an association that was banned during and even after the war) who might have been tempted to join the enemy. [17]

The post-war period was a time of professional and social rebirth for Leakey. Appointed director of the Coryndon Memorial Museum (the museum of Nairobi) in 1944, he organized the first major conference on African prehistory, the 'First Pan-African Congress of Prehistory and Quaternary Studies', which took place in Nairobi in 1947. He was no longer perceived as an outsider to colonial society, while remaining a 'professional friend of the African' who strongly believed in defending their point of view. When the threat of a Mau Mau insurrection led to the declaration of a state of emergency in October 1952, he was regarded as the pre-eminent specialist in this area. [18] He was consulted on numerous occasions by various senior officials, published countless articles in a range of newspapers, and wrote two works that drew directly from the famous manuscript and enjoyed great commercial success: *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu* in 1952 and *Defeating Mau Mau* in 1954. [19]

Arguing that the oaths used by Mau Mau insurgents to recruit supporters were a perversion of tradition and resulted from the many constraints imposed on Africans from which unscrupulous politicians were profiting, Leakey helped ensure that Kenyatta – who after much hesitation had returned to Kenya in September 1946 to a triumphant welcome – was designated the instigator of this movement and arrested in October 1952. He was summoned during Kenyatta's trial as an official English-Kikuyu interpreter, but challenged by the defence for having written a book (that of 1952) against the accused and forced to leave the court (Murray-Brown 1974: 262). This did not undermine his authority as the White Kikuyu

facing off against Kenyatta, the 'detrribalized' Kikuyu, who was sentenced to nine years of imprisonment. Practising a kind of applied anthropology, Leakey inspired the policy of rehabilitating the sworn-in Mau Mau (Berman and Lonsdale 1991: 190).

When independence was won after a hard struggle in this settler colony, Leakey applied for and obtained Kenyan nationality. Kenyatta, now the first president of an independent Kenya, did not openly hold his actions against him: 'forget and forgive' was the motto of the *Mwigwithania* ('Conciliator'). The multidimensional Mau Mau crisis had also been an intra-ethnic civil war, and the opinions of these two rivals did not differ on every point. Ultimately, now that independence had been won, Kenyatta did not seek the departure of the Whites. In fact, Kenya did not see an exodus comparable to that of the *pieds-noirs* fleeing Algeria in great numbers. As head of the Nairobi National Museum, Leakey continued his career as a palaeontologist, gaining renown for his 1959 discovery in Olduvai (Tanzania) of the oldest human remains associated with tools (Sutton 2006: 294). In this way, he gave life to the plan for a natural history museum that he had first proposed in the early 1930s.

The feedback effect of the decolonization crisis on the reading and analysis of these works cannot be ignored. What can we learn from this crisis, which has been the subject of innovative historical research in recent years? [20] What are we to make of this confrontation from an anthropological perspective, and what does it reveal about the politics or sociology of knowledge in this period? The consequences can be seen at several levels.

Leakey's position as a palaeontologist-ethnologist during the colonial crisis contributed to a chronic blurring of the status of anthropology in Kenya and the perpetuation of pre-Malinowskian anthropological categories there. The assimilation of anthropology as a colonial science to physical anthropology has persisted almost to the present day, together with the confusion of (increasingly) ancient humans with *Homo sapiens* in this region. [21]

One of the more immediate consequences of the crisis was the publication of Leakey's texts of 1952 and 1954, which were written very quickly in order to shed light on the Mau Mau uprising – or even to explain it, so sure was Leakey of his opinions. Owing their very existence to this crisis, and raising the question of the use or manipulation of customs for laudable or reprehensible purposes – key questions that lie at the origin of countless diverse works – these two texts play a role in our analysis but are not its subject (Peatrik 2014: 87-93). Rather, it is the original text, written before the Mau Mau crisis, that attracts our attention. Through its very existence and position in relation to Jomo Kenyatta's text, the manuscript (completed in 1939 and published in 1977 in three volumes totalling 1,400 pages and 650,000 words [22]) relates directly to the question of the writing of anthropology in the colonial situation of the 1930s.

A preliminary question: to what extent did the three published volumes correspond to the manuscript? As well as carrying out considerable editorial work – standardizing the transcription of Kikuyu terms and verifying various matters with the elders – the two editors also somewhat rearranged the text, without going so far as to alter the original structure of

the manuscript: 'A great deal of reorganization also had to be done, as the manuscript was still basically in the form it had taken during Leakey's discussions and interviews with the elders' (Leakey 1977: viii). But the editors also specify: 'The methodology, research and theory of this book, therefore, stand as written in 1939' (*ibid.*: ix). The final significant change was the replacement of the present tense by the past. In short, we can conclude that the text has not been greatly altered from its original state.

Several distinctive features can be gleaned by consulting these three volumes – and 'consulting' is definitely the word, since a linear reading is practically impossible. Indeed, this is another notable difference with *Facing Mount Kenya* – probably the most fundamental difference, which in a sense contains all the others.

In his foreword, Leakey (*ibid.*: xi-xv) expresses his feeling that many things were being hidden from him, something which long troubled him during his research. Although he spoke Kikuyu fluently, belonged to an age grade and age group, and had begun to move up through the ranks of Kikuyu seniority, this was apparently not enough to loosen the tongues of his interlocutors. The confession is amusing – which ethnographer has never felt like their interlocutors were deceiving them or withholding information! – but also illuminating. Firstly, it is revealing about the Kikuyu who, like many peoples of these regions, placed great importance on initiations and the acquisition, under oath, of secret knowledge intended to test novices and seal pacts or bonds. But in the 1930s, initiatory secrecy was still a long way from becoming a category studied by anthropology (Jamin 1977). In short, Leakey fell prey to a basic failure to understand the mechanisms of initiation or the obligation to maintain secrecy under pain of death. His preconceptions about the oaths and 'religion' of the Kikuyu nonetheless formed the basis of his recommendation that sworn Mau Mau be rehabilitated, a method that was abandoned because it ended up backfiring and actually strengthening the commitment of Mau Mau insurgents. [23]

Another revelation concerns Leakey's data-gathering methods. Relying mainly on the knowledge he had acquired in his early years, Leakey collated and supplemented this information with the help of a few select elders who were willing to respond. As part of this approach, Leakey (who was also conducting excavations at the time) relied on the connections of the 'chief Koinange, [24] with whom his father and later he himself enjoyed an excellent relationship, thus engaging in veranda-style ethnography rather than participant observation. But Leakey's youth spent among the Kikuyu did not suffice to make him the shrewd researcher he believed himself to be, and this is where another contrast with Kenyatta can be seen. Of course, Kenyatta also drew on his Kikuyu youth for the material of his ethnography; he too relied on personal connections to fill in gaps in his data, for example his half-brother who had remained in the country and with whom he corresponded (Kenyatta 1938 xvii). The difference was that Kenyatta also received training and supervision from a top-tier university. The issues of participant observation, the nature of the ethnographic relationship, training, and the state of knowledge and concepts within a discipline that was still being defined, therefore form the primary backdrop of any analysis

or possible interpretation of Leakey's ethnography.

The other major question follows from the previous one and relates to the overall economy of research as it appears in these three volumes. Leakey's objective in the 1930s was to assemble an overview of the life of the Kikuyu before the arrival of the Whites: 'a Study of Kikuyu law and custom prior to the coming of the white man' (Leakey 1977: 18). [25] This oral archiving work was to be followed by a second part: '... a record of the changes that have taken place in Kikuyu life, thought, and custom as a direct result of the coming of the white man' (*ibid.*). [26] We might scrutinize all of these terms, each of which refers to an important category: the distinction between 'laws' and 'customs', or the expression 'coming of the white man' to designate the colonial conquest (elsewhere compared to the arrival of the Romans (*ibid.*: xii) – the bringers of civilization who enabled the British barbarians to evolve, according to a popular narrative to which Leakey strongly subscribed).

Leakey's work is encyclopaedic, organized by headings not unlike those of *Notes and Queries in Anthropology* (1929), particularly in volumes I and III. The work is thus designed for consultation, using the table of contents or copious index (73 pages), an approach that reveals a great deal about Leakey's intentions and his view of ethnographic work. Similarly, it is important to note the regret he expresses at not being able to include a description of certain techniques and crafts, which would have required an additional volume (*ibid.*: xiii). In short, there is no dominant theme or common thread, except by default when he briefly refers to the family as the organizing force (*ibid.*: 1-3). By contrast, Kenyatta's work is framed by the question of land (ch. II) on the one hand and the Kikuyu system of government (ch. IX) on the other.

We could continue to pick apart Leakey's text for its many quirks or outdated decisions (even for its time), but we must not overlook a remarkable feature that makes reading these sections both difficult and rewarding: the incredibly detailed manner in which he describes the rites and the biographical rites of passage, in particular in volume II, which appears to be less of a jumbled mix than the others. Leakey breaks down what he considers to be the constituent elements of these rituals into the smallest possible sequences, as if seeking to isolate the indivisible units that make up a process or a gesture in order to ensure a satisfactory description. He views ritual activity as a material activity. It is tempting to see this as the mark of an archaeologist for whom the truth is the sum of the excavated remains, arranged to reveal the whole from which they come. In seeking to capture the flow of a ritual act, Leakey reverses his interpretive lens. Thus I was able to find within these endless and often impenetrable pages the crucial details necessary to clarify certain aspects of funeral rites (Peatrik 1991) and, in particular, the mechanisms of the hybrid processes that constitute the Kikuyu age and generation system, probably the most complex to be deciphered in East Africa (Peatrik 1994).

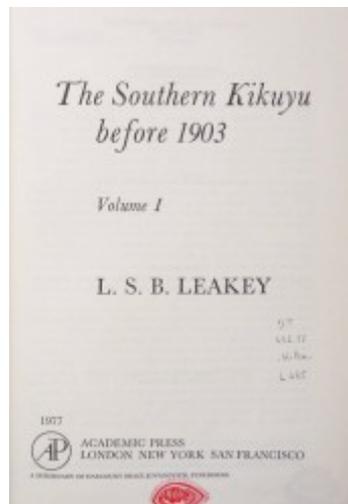
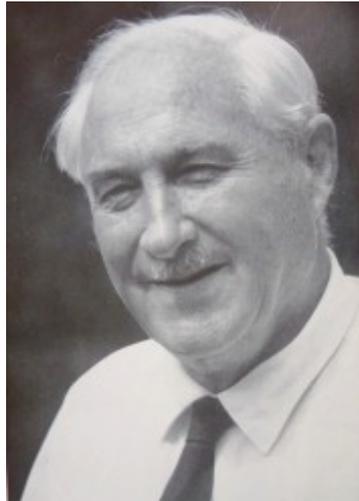


Fig. 7 and 8

Portrait of Louis Seymour Bazett Leakey in his later years, frontispiece to *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903*, 1977 [1939].

(Cl. A.-M. Peatrik).

One other effect produced by these three volumes is also worth commenting on. Leakey had no grammar or vocabulary with which to analyse the mechanisms and dynamics of the Kikuyu society or system, but his endless stream of descriptions and even some of his mistakes conceal certain relevant intuitions or imply them through omission: for example, rituals are referred to as if they were the driving force in the production of the social and the political among the Kikuyu. Similarly, the author unburdens himself of data which he realizes is important but is unable to otherwise incorporate by placing it at the beginning and at the end of his work. By way of introduction, Leakey provides the biography of an elder (Kabetû wa Wawerû) which resembles the life stories gathered by Margerie Perham (1936) and his own autobiography (1937), but most importantly reflects – although Leakey appears not to realize this – a particularly confusing aspect of these societies (which he also never refers to as such), in which the life of the individual recapitulates or seeks to recapitulate the life of the society, and vice versa (Peatrik 1995). While the overall political economy of *ituika* –

or *itwika*, both transcriptions exist – eludes Leakey entirely, he provides some very useful information in this area and, on such a complex topic, can easily criticize on page 1281 the ‘two Kikuyu writers’, Parmenas Githendu Mockerie and Jomo Kenyatta, who are also listed in his short bibliography (Leakey 1977: 1285): a devious jibe inflicted in passing since, by citing these two authors in this way, he is as much displaying academic integrity as he is downgrading Kenyatta’s opus by listing it alongside Mockerie’s reportage.

These notable differences may point to the divide between Leakey/Haddon and Kenyatta/Malinowski, but they should not obscure what connected these rivals. Their contrasting approaches, indicative of the profound changes taking place in anthropology in the 1930s, conceal the shared objective of their research: an authentic quest by the Kikuyu to raise awareness of their people and put right the wrongs committed against them. From Leakey’s perspective, this would help improve the civilizing regime of the Whites; for Kenyatta, it meant regaining independence. In the settler colony of Kenya, the administration was hostile to research by ethnologists until the late 1940s, while the ‘natives’ were not allowed to move around, meet or engage in exchanges freely. In this stifling context, the enterprise of anthropological knowledge was established within the cracks of colonial control, both spurred and constrained by issues pertaining to conquest and the legitimization of the African land grab. London, as a European metropolis where words could be exchanged and spread, represented the other forum where this demand for knowledge found concrete expression.

These texts, which were contemporary with *Facing Mount Kenya* and already known to historians, are not in themselves a discovery. However, a cross-sectional analysis of each of these authors and their writing processes, as well as the dissemination of these texts, reveals a forgotten commonality of fate, forged from both rivalry and the exchange of underlying ideas or reciprocal influences that existed both simultaneously and retroactively. The identification of connections between the writings of Mockerie, Kenyatta and Leakey and an exploration of this intertextuality serve to enhance the status of *Facing Mount Kenya* as a scientific text and reveal the catalysing effects of Kenyatta as both person and project. Behind each of these writing projects lay a political intent. The tension between scientific and literary writing, identified as a structuring force by Debaene, appears to increase dramatically in the colonial situation (here being that of Kenya) with the emergence of political writing. Literary aspirations, however, are not absent from Kenyatta’s projects nor those of his rivals, and the void thus produced is filled by a final type of writing – that of biography, autobiography, or auto-ethnography. Each of these authors drew the material for their analysis from their own existence; their lives were their data source. Their own journey became material for reflection, expression and narration, all the more so because, as previously mentioned, among these East African cultures the course of one’s own life provided (and in a sense still provides) a scale of reference for that of society as a whole. The tribulations of these three rival-partners, and their tussle for authority, reveal much about the production of ethnography and anthropological knowledge in the colonial situation in the 1930s, and thus contribute to the development of the history of anthropology – and,

through the use of new tools, to the advancement of the anthropology of knowledge.

Epilogue

In the introduction to his monograph, Kenyatta writes the following words of gratitude to Raymond Firth, author of *We, The Tikopia* (1936) and Malinowski's assistant at the London School of Economics (LSE) at the time: 'I am indebted to Dr Raymond Firth for his careful reading of the manuscript and his technical advice on anthropological points' (1938: xvii). Firth's role in the *Facing Mount Kenya* project is often overlooked. The *We* in his monograph's title already pointed to the question of the author of anthropological knowledge. Firth, who apparently continued to correspond with Kenyatta, went on to become a professor at LSE and, at a seminar in 1966, coined the term 'auto-ethnography' with reference not only to *Facing Mount Kenya* and Jomo Kenyatta, but also to the latter's heated exchange in Kikuyu with Leakey. This is reported by David Hayano (1979: 99-100) who attended Firth's seminar and, in an exploratory article on the notion of at-home ethnography, argues for the renewed use of auto-ethnography, a borderline form of biography according to Fabre, Jamin, Massenzio (2010).

Bibliography

Ashton, E. O., 1943. Reviews of books, *Africa* 14 (2), p. 102.

Berman, Bruce, 1992. 'Bureaucracy and incumbent violence: colonial administration and the origins of the "Mau Mau" Emergency', in Bruce Berman & John Lonsdale (ed.), *Unhappy Valley II. Violence and Ethnicity*, Oxford, James Currey, p. 227-264.

Berman, J. Bruce & John M. Lonsdale, 1991. 'Louis Leakey's Mau Mau. A study in the politics of knowledge', *History and Anthropology* 5 (2), p. 143-204.

Berman, J. Bruce & John M. Lonsdale, 1998. 'The Labors of *Muigwithania* : Jomo Kenyatta as Author, 1928-45', *Research in African Literatures* 1998 (1), p. 16-42.

Blixen, Karen [Isak Dinesen], 1937. *Out of Africa*, London, Putman

Boukari-Yabara, Amzat, 2014. 'Les militants noirs anglophones des années 1920 à 1940', special issue 'L'Atlantique noir de Nancy Cunard', *Gradhiva* 19, p. 30-51.

Buijtenhuijs, Rob, 1971. *Le mouvement 'Mau Mau'. Une révolte paysanne et anti-coloniale en Afrique noire*, La Haye-Paris, Mouton.

British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1929. *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*, 5th ed, London, Royal Anthropological Institute.

Brown, Richard, 1973. 'Anthropology and the Colonial Rule : Godfrey Wilson and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Northern Rhodesia' in Talal Asad (ed.), *Anthropology and the colonial Encounter*, London, Ithaca Press, p. 173-198.

- Cagnolo, C., 1933. *The Akikuyu. Their customs, traditions and folklore*, Nyeri (Kenya), Mission Printing School.
- Calder, Angus Lindsay, 1983. 'A note on Parmenas Mockerie', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, March 1983 18 (1), p. 128-130.
- Charton, Hélène, 2011. 'Acteurs, victimes et témoins de la violence dans l'histoire. L'exemple des Mau Mau (Kenya)', *Cahiers d'études africaines* 201 (1), p. 169-182.
- Clark, Carolyn M, 1989. 'Louis Leakey as Ethnographer: on The Southern Kikuyu before 1903', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 23 (3), p. 380-398.
- Clifford, James & Georges E. Marcus (eds.), 1986. *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Debaene, Vincent, 2010. *L'Adieu au voyage. L'ethnologie française entre science et littérature*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque des sciences humaines'.
- Dubino, Jeanne, 2012. 'Globalization, Inter-Connectivity, and Anti-Imperialism: Leonard Woolf, The Hogarth Press, and Kenya', in Ann Martin and Kathryn Holland (eds.), *Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary Woolf* (Selected Papers from the Twenty-Second Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf 7-10 June 2012), Clemson University, Digital Press, p. 231-236.
- Firth, Raymond, 1936. *We, The Tikopia. A sociological study of kinship in primitive Polynesia*, London, George Allen & Unwin.
- Fabre, Daniel, Jean Jamin and Marcello Massenzio, 2010. 'Jeu et enjeu ethnographiques de la biographie', introduction to themed issue *Auto-biographie, ethno-biographie, L'Homme* 195-196, p. 7-20.
- Gathigira, Stanley Kiama, [1934] 1970. *Mikaiire ya Gikuyu* ('Customs' of the Gikuyu), Nairobi, Equatorial Publishers.
- Goody, Jack, 1995. *The Expansive Moment. The Rise of Social Anthropology in Britain and Africa 1918-1970*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Hayano, David M., 1979. 'Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects', *Human Organization* 38 (1), p. 99-104.
- Hobley, C. W. [1922] 1938. *Bantu Beliefs and Magic*, London, Frank Cass reprint 1967.
- Jamin Jean, 1977. *Les Lois du silence. Essai sur la fonction sociale du secret*, Paris, Éditions François Maspero.
- Kenyatta, Johnstone, 1934. 'Kenya', in Nancy Cunard (ed.), *Negro Anthology*, London Wishart & co, p. 803-806.

- Kenyatta, Jomo, 1937. 'Kikuyu Religion, Ancestor-Worship, and Sacrificial Practices', *Africa*, 10 (3) p. 308-328.
- Kenyatta, Jomo, [1938] 1978. *Facing Mount Kenya, The Traditional Life of the Kikuyu*, Nairobi, Heinemann Kenya.
- Kenyatta, Jomo, [1942] 1966. *My People of Kikuyu and the Life of Chief Wangombe*, [London, Lutterworth Press] Nairobi, Oxford University Press.
- Kenyatta, Jomo, 1945. *Kenya: the Land of Conflict*, London, Panaf Service.
- Lambert, Harold E., 1956. *Kikuyu Social and Political Institutions*, London, Oxford University Press (for the International African Institute).
- Leakey, Louis S. B., 1931. 'The Kikuyu Problem of the Initiation of Girls', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 61 (Jan.-Jun.), p. 277-285.
- Leakey, Louis S. B., 1937. *White African: an early autobiography*, London, Hodder and Stoughton.
- Leakey, Louis S. B., 1939. Manuscript, *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903*.
- Leakey, Louis S. B., 1952. *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*, London, Methuen & co.
- Leakey, Louis S. B., 1954. *Defeating Mau Mau*, London, Methuen & co.
- Leakey, Louis S. B., 1977. *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903*, London, Academic Press, 3 vol.
- Leys, Norman, 1924. *Kenya*, London, published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press.
- L'Estoile, Benoît de, 1997. 'Au nom des "vrais Africains": les élites scolarisées de l'Afrique coloniale face à l'anthropologie (1930-1950)', *Terrain* 28, p. 87-102.
- Lonsdale, John, 1995. 'The Prayers of Waiyaki. Political Uses of the Kikuyu Past', in David M. Anderson & Douglas H. Johnson, *Revealing Prophets (Prophecy in Eastern African History)*, London, James Currey, p. 240-291.
- Lonsdale, John (ed.), 2015. 'Foreword', in S. H. Fazan. *Colonial Kenya Observed: British Rule, Mau Mau and the Wind of Change*, London, I.B. Rauris, p. i-xxxvii.
- Mauss, Marcel, 1931 [1971]. 'La cohésion sociale dans les sociétés polysegmentaires', in *Essais de sociologie*, Paris, Minuit, p. 133-147.
- Mockerie, Parmenas Githendu, 1934. *An African speaks for his People*, London, published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press [repub. 1977 New York, AMS Press].
- Mockerie, Parmenas Githendu, 1936. 'The Story of Parmenas Mockerie of the Kikuyu Tribe, Kenya (written by himself). The Life of an African Teacher', in Margery Perham (ed.), *Ten*

- Africans*, London, Faber and Faber, p. 159-172 [repub. 1963 Northwestern University Press].
- Murray-Brown Jeremy, 1974. *Kenyatta*, London, Fontana/Collins.
- Ogot, Bethwell A., 2005. Britain's Gulag, *Journal of African History*, (46), p. 493-505.
- Peatrik, Anne-Marie, 1991. 'Le chant des hyènes tristes. Essais sur les rites funéraires du Kenya et des peuples apparentés', *Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire*, 11, p. 103-130.
- Peatrik, Anne-Marie, 1994. 'Un système composite: l'organisation d'âge et de génération des Kikuyu pré-coloniaux', *Journal des Africanistes* 64 (1), p. 3-36.
- Peatrik, Anne-Marie, 1995. 'La règle et le nombre: les systèmes d'âge et de génération d'Afrique orientale', *L'Homme* 134 2, p. 13- 49.
- Peatrik, Anne-Marie, 1999. *La Vie à pas contés. Génération, âge et société dans les hautes terres du Kenya (Meru Tigania-Igembe)*, Nanterre, Société d'ethnologie.
- Peatrik, Anne-Marie, 2014. 'Le singulier destin de *Facing Mount Kenya. The Traditional Life of the Gikukyu* (1938) de Jomo Kenyatta. Une contribution à l'anthropologie des savoirs', *L'Homme* 212, 4, p. 71-108.
- Peatrik, Anne-Marie, 2019. *A Complex Polity. Generations, initiation, and territory, among the old Meru of Kenya*, Nanterre, e-books by the Société d'ethnologie, 'French ethnography in translation'.
- Peterson, Derek R., 2004. *Creative writing. Translation, bookkeeping, and the work of imagination in colonial Kenya*, Portsmouth NH, Heinemann.
- Perham, Margery (ed.), 1936. *Ten Africans*, London, Faber and Faber, p. 159-172 [repub. 1963 Northwestern University Press].
- Routledge, W. Scoresby and Katherine Routledge, 1910. *With a Prehistoric People: the Akikuyu of British East Africa*, London, Edward Arnold.
- Sutton, John. E. G., 2006. 'Denying history in colonial Kenya: the anthropology and archaeology of G. W. B. Huntingford and L. S. B. Leakey', *History in Africa* 33, p. 287-320.
- Sutton, John. E. G., 2007. 'Archaeology and Reconstructing History in the Kenya Highlands: the intellectual legacies of G. W. B. Huntingford and L. S. B. Leakey', *History in Africa* 34, p. 297-320.
- Sapiro, Gisèle, 2014. *La sociologie de la littérature*, Paris, Éditions La Découverte, 'Repères' 641.
- Wax, Murray L., 1976. 'Introduction to the Plenary Address 35th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology St. Louis, Missouri', *Human Organization*, 35 (4), p. 331-333.
- Willis, John H., 1992. *Leonard and Virginia Woolf as Publishers: The Hogarth Press (1917-1941)*,

Charlottesville, UP of Virginie.

[1] This article was first published in 2019 in French: 'Ethnographies rivales: les Kikuyu dans le miroir de l'ethnologie coloniale (Kenya)', in Christine Laurière & André Mary (dir.), *Ethnologues en situations coloniales*, Les Carnets de Bérose n° 11, Paris, BÉROSE, pp. 330-362. Translated from French by Jesse Kirkwood.

[2] These tales of hunting in the tropics were well received by readers. This story is also a reminder that the Kikuyu engaged in hunting as well as agriculture and breeding, thereby challenging the rationale of the colonial administrative according to which tribes were delimited and labelled according to hypothetical economic specializations.

[3] In addition to the research conducted by Mockerie (1934: 64), snippets of information on the transfer of power between generations (*itwika*) could be found in a few publications. In 1934, Githendu might have consulted the missionary explorers W. Routledge and K. Routledge (1910: 237-238), who refer to a mysterious worship of a serpent known as 'Ai-twī-ka' [*itwika*]; the colonial administrator C. W. Hobley (1922/1938: 209-219), in a chapter entitled 'The Constitution and Working of Councils', which links progression through the age grades and age groups with celebration of the 'great itwika feast' (212); or the Consolata missionary C. Cagnolo (1933: 120-125) who speaks of the 'great secret called Itweka' and scoffs at the mysterious atmosphere created by the elders. Two other sources, this time written in Kikuyu (and unfortunately still not available in Kikuyu with parallel translation), were also accessible to him: copies of the small newspaper *Muigwithania*, published in 1928/1929 by Kenyatta, and the 85-page customary produced by his compatriot Stanley Kiama Gathigira in 1934, *Mikaiire ya Gikuyu* [Kikuyu 'customs'] (Berman & Lonsdale 1998). These reveal that, in those years, educated Kikuyu were keen to practise written Kikuyu (Peterson 2004) and strove to learn about their customs and conduct research among their people. These efforts were often hampered by the colonial administration, which was fearful of this kind of initiative, as well as that shown by professional ethnologists (cf. the obstacles encountered by Evans-Pritchard in Kenya in 1936, Sutton 2006: 298). Seen from this perspective, by writing *Facing* (1938), Kenyatta was participating in this movement while also moving beyond it – further illustrating, if it were necessary, the importance of his meeting with Malinowski and the training he received in the rapidly developing field of anthropology.

[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Huxley. Accessed 26 April 2015.

[5] At least two other pamphlets appeared in this church-sponsored collection intended for an African readership (Ashton 1943). This kind of short text, focusing on particular ethnic groups or peoples and often featuring a large number of illustrations, became quite popular, at least in Kenya. Situated at the intersection of methodological and missionary anthropology, these writings constitute another site for the production of popular anthropological knowledge in pre- and post-independence Africa.

[6] These texts were first considered from a political history perspective by Berman & Lonsdale (1998), although our analysis differs in significant respects.

[7] This is evidenced by a letter from B. Malinowski, dated November 1936, written in support of Johnstone Kenyatta's candidacy for a scholarship from the IALC (International Institute of African Languages and cultures) where the professor presents his student as follows: 'I should like to state in an entirely confidential manner that since the aim of the Institute has always been entirely non-political, the present application is of high importance. Mr. Kenyatta started his work at my department about two years ago. At that time he had a definitely political bias in all his approach. This, I think, has been almost entirely eradicated by the constant impact of detached scientific method on his mental processes. The highly depoliticizing influence of scientific anthropology has worked a remarkable change... Since Mr. Kenyatta has considerable influence on African students, and also on the educated Africans in Kenya, the contribution will be not only towards the advancement of theoretical studies, but also towards the practical influence of anthropology' (cited by Berman & Lonsdale (1991: 161). Letters of recommendation are a very specific exercise, and deciphering this kind of document requires a degree of caution. It should be borne in mind that the president of the IALC was Lord Lugard himself, one of the founders of colonial Kenya and a major advocate of 'indirect rule'. Nevertheless, Malinowski's account clearly indicates the particular effort required of Kenyatta in writing *Facing* under academic supervision, and this is what most interests us here.

[8] The title of his autobiography published in 1937, this became a nickname for Leakey. Kenya was popular with the British public and readers loved this kind of saga (Dubino 2012: 232). Cf. the success, that same year, of *Out of Africa* by Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen).

[9] Cf. the exploratory note by Benoît de L'Estoile (1997), which sheds light on the 1951 altercation between Griaule and an African named Taoré (*ibid.*: 98-100) but is less convincing on indirect rule in the context of a settler colony.

[10] In this section I draw on data from the pioneering research undertaken by political scientists and historians Carolyn M. Clark (1989) and, above all, Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale (1991), working within a critical approach to anthropology (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Based on unpublished archives, Berman and Lonsdale's work should soon appear in the form of a book.

[11] In the 1920s, Protestant missionaries, especially those of the Church of Scotland Mission, demanded that their Kikuyu converts abandon the custom of clitoridectomy. While the renunciation of most customs, with the exception of polygamy, had not greatly bothered these converts who saw their Christianization as a promotion, this requirement, which impinged on issues of ontogeny and the imperatives of marriage, created an unprecedented conflict. Many Kikuyu Christians abandoned these missions and founded their own churches and schools (this was the start of independent churches and schools of the same name). The crisis became so severe that the colonial administration had to require the Protestant missionaries to abandon their campaign (Buijtenhuijs 1971 84-86; 125-128).

[12] It should be recalled that the social anthropology advocated by Malinowski lay behind the creation of research centres in Africa, starting with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia in 1937 (Brown 1973), and later the East African Institute of Social Research in Makerere Kampala, Uganda, in 1948. Both were directed by former students of Malinowski.

[13] Sources on this altercation are from much later (Wax 1976; Hayano 1979: 99-100); Berman and

Lonsdale (1991: 161 n. 19) found no trace of it in the seminar archives.

[14] A foundation established at Oxford University in 1903 in accordance with the will of Cecil J. Rhodes, founder of Rhodesia, and one of the most famous agents of the British imperialist project. Malinowski, meanwhile, had managed to secure funding from the Rockefeller Foundation in the US for the research grants of the IIALC (founded in 1926).

[15] Leakey then sent the IIALC a request for additional funds. He was rejected in even more scathing terms by Malinowski, who mocked his claim to be carrying out anthropology under the pretext that he was fluent in Kikuyu: 'Otherwise, we might entrust the study of the constitutional history of this country, or its economic organization, to any taxi-driver in London' (cited by Berman & Lonsdale 1991: 160).

[16] After emphasizing that his research provides an African point of view that readers will find of great interest, Kenyatta, addressing another category of readers, adds: 'At the same time, I am well aware that I could not do justice to the subject without offending those "professional friends of the African" who are prepared to maintain their friendship for eternity as a sacred duty, provided only that the African will continue to play the part of an ignorant savage so that they can monopolise the office of interpreting his mind and speaking for him. To such people, an African who writes a study of this kind is encroaching on their preserves. He is a rabbit turned poacher.' (Kenyatta 1938: xviii).

[17] Berman and Lonsdale (1991: 152, 166, 174-178).

[18] A choice made by H. E. Lambert, the former district commissioner who was highly regarded for his knowledge of the anthropology of the Kenyan 'natives', illustrates the remarkable renown achieved by Leakey and his manuscript. In the introduction to his work (1956: v) published in response to the Mau Mau crisis, Lambert felt obliged to state that he had consulted the manuscript, even though his expertise far exceeded Leakey's in many areas and these two personalities of the colonial scene took great care to avoid meeting each other. As the final stage of anthropology in the colonial context, the ethnography produced by colonial administrators is a promising field into which historians have only recently begun to delve (Berman 1992; Lonsdale 2015).

[19] Meanwhile, and in direct connection with the Mau Mau crisis and Kenyatta's subsequent arrest, *Facing* also experienced a boom in sales (Peatrik 2014: 87-90).

[20] See H  l  ne Charton's review (2011) of the most significant recent research: David Anderson (2005), *Histories of the Hanged. Britain's dirty war in Kenya and the end of Empire*; Caroline Elkins (2005), *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*; David Branch (2009), *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya*; see also the review article by Bethwell A. Ogot (2005) and his contribution to the Kenyan debate.

[21] It was in the shadow of the prestigious department of palaeontology, where funding and prestige were concentrated, that the ethnographic collections of the Nairobi National Museum were grown. Leakey directed this process with the assistance of Jean Brown, a specialist in material culture. The ahistorical aspect of anthropology was emphasized and precolonial history barely recognized as a possible object of study (Sutton 2006; 2007). This enormous cache now awaits a visit by an anthropologist historian, especially with this sequence being closed since the Kenyan Parliament approved new

regulations for national museums in 2006. The 'colonial' ethnography rooms of the Nairobi museum were closed, with the only alternative plan being to develop new collections by local and county museums. For now, there is no solution to this shambolic situation. Note that at the same time, the contrasting fate of *Facing* helped to seal this development: like its author, the book was celebrated before experiencing, a very marked decline and a reversal of its fame in Kenya (Peatrik 2014: 93-102).

[22] Carried out by Gladys Beecher, Leakey's sister who became a missionary's wife, and Jean Ensminger, an anthropology student who had lived in Kenya. They also noted the difficulty of going through the manuscript, with its endless pages and overabundance of material.

[23] The practice of swearing oaths was widespread in East Africa and, in a certain sense, still is. Oaths of all kinds were sworn in the most diverse situations and involved a very wide range of practices and gestures, from the most inoffensive actions to degrading and deliberately imposed transgressions. In this context, Leakey's emphasis (in his 1952 and 1954 works) on the barbaric nature of the Mau Mau oaths as a sign of regression in civilization triggered by the disintegration of Kikuyu morals following the colonial shock was not only erroneous, but was also particular cause for concern because Leakey recommended 'purification' rites to release individuals from their oaths. Leakey was thus giving substance to the very thing he was claiming to fight against, in a sense encouraging the use of these oaths. 'Villagization', education, the activation of internal rivalries and the use of force were far more effective in ensuring the military (but not political) defeat of the Mau Mau insurgents.

[24] The personality of Koinange, an essential connection used by Leakey in his ethnography, speaks volumes about the fundamental conflicts that constituted the Kikuyu political arena. One of the key issues at stake was knowledge of Kikuyu customs, the reason why political commentators and historians have taken such an interest in their anthropology. Koinange, a 'big man' and administrative leader at the heart of a network of influences, was very hostile towards the KCA and represented one of the major factions that were dividing the Kikuyu. One of Koinange's sons, Peter Mbiyu, nonetheless went on to become one of Kenyatta's most reliable allies. Githendu Mockerie was a representative of another network within the KCA (Berman & Lonsdale 1991: 168-169, 176-178).

[25] The year of 1903 featuring in the work's title is in fact that of Leakey's of birth – in Kenya, it should be remembered! This detail says a great deal about both the author's position and that of the Whites.

[26] Later, he partly fulfilled this idea with the two essays taken from his ethnography, mentioned above, which were published in response to the Mau Mau crisis.