This collection brings together six papers of the some seventy that were presented at the international symposium held at Université Laval in October, 1987 entitled "Mémoires, Histoires, Identités". Organized jointly by the History Department of Université Laval, the Ecole des Hautes études en sciences sociales de Paris and the Laboratoire 363 "Tiers-Monde-Afrique" CNRS/Université Paris VII, the symposium aimed to stimulate reflection and research on the links between the construction of identities and the production of history as a discourse on the past, and thus on the links maintained by two modes of production of History—the academic and the popular. Achieving this objective required a broadening of the empirical field to avoid unduly singularizing African experiences.

The papers here concentrate on the process of the production of history by historical actors or by cultural intermediaries who, educated or not, are not of the university milieu which imposes the western conception of historical discourse. The relationships between academic and popular discourse and between the norms of the dominant culture and the practices of dominated cultures are at the center of the analyses.

Isaiah Berlin recently summarized the past century as follows:

"The other, without doubt, consists in the great ideological storms that have altered the lives of virtually all mankind: the Russian Revolution and its aftermath—totalitarian tyrannies of both right and left and the explosions of nationalism, racism, and, in places, of religious bigotry, which, interestingly enough, not one among the most perceptive social thinkers of the nineteenth century had ever predicted."

This observation offers a global justification for the conference in question. History, especially that which claims to be scientific, played a large role in the "ideological storms" Berlin mentioned. There was a time when the scientific mode of production of historical knowledge, reserved for societies using the written word, was used as a principal criterion for being "civilized", leading us often to mistake the production of history with that of the automobile. Worse yet, we have dreamed collectively (and have paid for it by having experienced terrible nightmares) of being able to produce an ideal society, or even an ideal humanity.

Before discovering rather abruptly that African societies could be of interest not only to anthropology, but to history (just when the prestige of history began to decline in the West...) we transferred to it the equation of scientific knowledge with social progress. The prestige of literacy and

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thus of the school grew without respite even if the evidence of these mechanisms' social mobility did not always justify it. Not only does the writing of history follow closely behind the development of literacy, but its discursive production progressively assimilates our norms (often through the example of the book), as the examples of Yoro Dyao and Alexis Kagame attest. As in the West, the production of history in Africa is an exercise in the presentation, if not in the promotion, of a societal project. Nevertheless, as Perrot and Boulegue justly insist, one must not confuse the political scope of history with its free manipulation. Paradoxically, it is probably the best guarantee against an uncontrolled, and therefore undetectable manipulation.

The passing into the written, which seems to have introduced a profound restructuring of the historical account, has not necessarily led, as argued by Vidal and Chrétien, to its being given more exactitude. The basis of Kagame's historical writing—who, if he did not write for the West, certainly constructed his discourses to Western tastes—was profoundly political. His strategy of producing "the effect of the real" made use of two western interpretations of his work. One in the light of ethnological reason (I borrow the expression from J.-L. Amselle) makes him an intermediary between the primitive and modern, while that in the light of historic reason offers him the rank of an informant. Insisting on belonging to "the indigenous clergy of Rwanda," Kagame used one interpretation to legitimize himself in the other, when not referring to oral archives that he had put into writing, guaranteeing their preservation in accordance with the wishes of those who provided the information. His conception of history as legal process must be understood within the context of the elaboration by the "Plan d'écennal de développement économique et social" which Vidal reminds us he hoped to influence. The translation of the oral into the written when only the 'civilized' possessed the laws was demonstrated in Belgian Africa by the exclusion of the Africans from the Napoleonic Code. "L'odeur du père" as cultural process has much more in common with cultural anthropophagy (O. de Andrade) than with the mimicry in the effort of the intermediary to establish a legitimate past (see, e.g., Cheikh Anta Diop).

The "conversion from the oral to the written" realized a century ago by Yoro Dyao is also structured by "a combination of a nostalgia of the past and an identity affirmation" while it is the carrier of a political project of "nos ancêtres sénégalais" (not unlike "nos ancêtres les Gaulois") that developed from an affirmation of the state's traditions.

Vidal begins her contribution by observing that "University-produced understandings of Africa are constructed in large part thanks to the relations established between European specialists and the Africans" while Chrétien insists that the knowledge of the latter is constructed by means of an unequal exchange between the oral and the written. He demonstrates that often the oral passed on in missionary publications served
as a relay between the oral and the professional historian. This situation, in which every reflection of a representation of the past projects its very own, forces us to reflect on the chain of transmission which is lost less in the night of time than in the succession of the models of writing and of speaking. The written contributes to it "la griffe de l'oralité" (Vansina) and the oral adds "la griffe des linotypes" (Chrétien), while the written tradition of the évolutés takes the form of a general collective history which borrows its "quasi-ontological function of authenticating the truth" from writing.

Perrot studies another, largely neglected, dimension of the production of history, its collective "mise en scène" and the inscription in the countryside. In this case, the latter is explicitly political since the "cimetières eotiles" are marked by concrete monuments bearing inscriptions in French (despite the renaissance of the Eotile language) and placed by the Eotile under the protection of the Ivoirian state, thus filling the political void created by the Sanwi secession. The historical discourse that supports this inscription of Eotile history sacrifices the diversity of lineage history to unity and attempts to prove the existence and anteriority of an Eotile state.

The reconstruction of the past is at the same time experienced locally through ceremonies, pilgrimages, communion through dreams with ancestors, etc, which invests the island of Monobaha with being an Eotile "lieu de la mémoire," translated in historical discourse as the Monobaha kingdom.

The most complex question raised in this paper is that of the unity between the structure of historical discourse and historical experience. The Eotile seem to have lived the historical renaissance in the mode of performance while claiming that it should be said and written in the narrative mode. What, then, would be the place of narration in discourse and in historical experience; must we, as Carr postulates, necessarily suppose that unity of structure exists between discourse and experience?

Tonkin leans toward Sieh Jeto's structure of discourse, a contemporary oral historian isolated by his infirmity from the written (see also another case analyzed by Biaya) without being able to claim that he totally ignores the written. She shows that the structure of his discourse is narrative but suggests that it is a case of narration in which the duration in time is replaced by movement in space. If so, we will be forced to re-examine the oral historiographies of migrations and, at the same time, to return to a more critical examination of the paradigm of the Bantu migrations.
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2. Other papers will be published as part of edited volumes, as well as in two numbers of *Cahiers d'études africaines*.
8. Marcia Wright analyzes this question in relation to the individual strategies of the social promotion of women in Africa in one of the *Cahiers d'études africaines* papers.
10. His must be compared with Léopold Senghor's project, which was as much literary as political.