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Ciluba books.
Photographed by
Albert Kasanda.

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Leitung: Nico Nassenstein

Philosophy and genre: the essay in Ciluba in the development of critical consciousness

The ability to question the meaning of life can be viewed as the starting point of any critical consciousness. The best expression of this ability is through people's most intimate language, that is, the language through which they have first articulated their own condition as human beings in the world. This paper aims to explore this hypothesis, with a particular focus on Ciluba. Ciluba became a written language in the second half of the nineteenth century, thanks to the work of explorers, missionaries, and colonial agents. A lingua franca in the Kasai region (DRC), Ciluba also became the language of school education. It has served as a medium for creating and safeguarding the modern Luba identity, while at the same time helping to raise social and political awareness. To illustrate these points, we examine two essays in Ciluba, François Kabasele's *Ndi Muluba* (2004) and Auguste Mabika Kalanda's *Tabalayi bana betu* (1963). Our philosophical interrogation is contextualized within the ERC-funded project, based at the University of Bayreuth, entitled "Philosophy and Genre: Creating a Textual Basis for African Philosophy" (2020-2025), which studies the role of textual genre in the expression of philosophical thought. Ciluba is one of ten languages represented in the project and the essay is one of the multiplicity of genres the project analyses, next to the novel, several genres of poetry, and digital genres.

Albert Kasanda is Senior Researcher at the Department of Political Philosophy of the Institute of Philosophy at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, the Czech Republic. He is also a Senior Researcher in the ERC-funded project based at the University of Bayreuth, "Philosophy and Genre: Creating a Textual Basis for African Philosophy" (2020-2025), where he concentrates on the genre of the essay in Ciluba.

Alena Rettová has degrees in Philosophy, German Studies and African Studies as well as a PhD from the Charles University in Prague. Her PhD research, working with texts in six African languages (Swahili, Shona, Ndebele, Lingala, Bambara, and Yorùbá), was published in 2007 as *Afrophone Philosophies: Reality and Challenge*. In April 2020, Alena joined the University of Bayreuth as Professor of African and Afrophone Philosophies.

Weitere Informationen: www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de

