Dreamt memories from Africa

WILLIAM ROPP

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"(...) One sees little innocence in Ropp's vision of the child; the experience is already there and in place. In fact, some of Ropp's children, at least to my eye, even seem to have the memory of the Holocaust about them – (...) Ropp told me that Mali was "hell", and I am guite certain these children lack all the material luxuries of the West. But look at them. They are swimming, playing, fishing, doing all those things children do. Samuel Johnson in his novel Rasselas: Prince of Abissinia has the philosopher Imlac explain to Rasselas that "The Europeans ... are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed." Does the fact that their eyes glow so fiercely mean anything other than that they are inquisitive and as interested as any other child might be in this French photographer who had travelled so far to photograph them? Ropp's vision is that of the eternal child wherever he or she might be. (...)

Prof. John Wood in the foreword





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WILLIAM ROPP

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