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QUEST: Philosophical Discussions is an African Journal of Philosophy. It intends to act as a channel of expression for thinkers in Africa, and to stimulate philosophical discussion on problems that arise out of the radical transformations Africa and Africans are undergoing.

QUEST includes materials on both current subjects related to Africa, and subjects of general philosophical interest, serving an international public of professional philosophers and intellectuals in other disciplines with philosophical interests. Original articles written in either English or French will be published, each with a summary in the other language. **QUEST** appears twice per year in June and December.

Contributions: Articles should normally not exceed 6,000 words in length and should be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 200 words. The latter should preferably be in French where the article is in English, and vice-versa. Manuscripts should follow the citation format of the journal. Contributors should provide a short biographical note.

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CONTENTS

Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba <i>Philosophy and African Intellectuals: Mimesis of Western Classicism, Ethnophilosophical Romanticism or African Self-Mastery?</i>	4
Mogobe Ramose <i>Hobbes and the Philosophy of International Relations</i>	18
Oumar Diagne <i>Voix et Existence</i>	36
Christian Neugebauer <i>Hegel and Kant - a Refutation of their Racism</i>	50
J.K. Kigongo <i>Human Rights in the Context of Uganda's Political Experience</i>	74
Marvin C. Sterling <i>The Ethical Thought of Martin Luther King</i>	80
J.A.I. Bewaji <i>Dr. Chr. Neugebauer's Critical Note on Ethnophilosophy in the Philosophical Discourse in Africa: some remarks</i>	95
Lansana Keita <i>Eurocentrism, by S. Amin (review)</i>	104
Pieter Boele van Hensbroek <i>Einführung in die Afrikanische Philosophie by Chr. Neugebauer (review)</i>	114
Howie H. Harriott <i>The Theory and Practice of Autonomy by S. Dworkin (review)</i>	118
Notes on Contributors	122

EDITORIAL

This first issue of QUEST's fifth year of publication provides you with a number of interesting contributions, showing the scope and diversity of philosophical orientations and themes in present-day African philosophy.

Controversial points of view on the proper role of intellectuals in Africa are expressed in various contributions. Reactions to these views will be published in the forthcoming issues of Quest.

The diversity of contributions shows that Quest constitutes a forum that stimulates critical debates and discussions on relevant philosophical and current issues. Quest does not commit itself to any narrow orientation and in many cases the published articles do not reflect the opinion of the editors. However, the editors try to avoid both very general articles (e.g. on 'the' African philosophy) and technical articles that would fit specialized journals better.

The rapidly increasing readership in Africa strengthens Quest in its conviction that it is on the right way.

EDITORIAL

Ce premier numéro de la cinquième année de parution de Quest vous propose plusieurs contributions intéressantes qui donnent une impression de la diversité des orientations philosophiques et des thèmes de la philosophie africaine contemporaine.

Dans plusieurs articles figurent des points de vue controversables concernant le rôle que doivent avoir aujourd'hui les intellectuels africains. La rédaction vous invite à donner vos réactions sur ce point par les prochains numéros de Quest.

Ces articles si variés montrent que Quest constitue un espace stimulant les débats ou discussions critiques sur des sujets philosophiques et actuels pertinents.

A cet égard, Quest ne se lie pas à une orientation de pensée donnée et place également des articles qui ne reflètent en aucune façon les opinions de la rédaction. De préférence, l'on n'accepte pas les articles à vocation très globale sur la philosophie africaine et les articles très spécialisés.

Actuellement, le nombre de lecteurs en Afrique connaît une forte progression, ce qui constitue un soutien pour Quest.

Résumé

Cet article traite essentiellement de la possibilité d'existence et de la tâche des intellectuels africains et de la philosophie africaine. L'on retrace l'origine de la philosophie au niveau de la différenciation sociale et des oppositions sociales, en particulier pour ce qui est du contraste existant entre le travail intellectuel et le travail manuel. Ainsi, pris dans une épistémologie sociale à dominante étrangère, les intellectuels africains sont aussi le fruit d'une situation sociale. Un héritage de l'explorateur, du missionnaire, de l'ethnologue et du spécialiste des questions de développement; et l'Afrique se trouve toujours définie d'après le point de vue de l'autre, qui a une position dominante, et est placée en périphérie, en marge.

Aussi les intellectuels africains ne sont-ils pas capables de donner à l'Afrique une image qui lui soit propre et d'accorder la réalité africaine paralysée au rythme qui est le sien. Ils doivent aller à la recherche de leur propre position sociale, adopter une position critique vis à vis de tous les domaines de la vie et donner au pouvoir du peuple et à l'autodétermination de l'Afrique une position centrale. S'adapter à des paradigmes venant d'ailleurs et à la structure de rémunération de la science occidentale ne revient qu'à s'adapter à une épistémologie sociale eurocentrique et frustrer l'expression d'une véritable créativité. A différents points de vues Cheikh Anta Diop est un exemple édifiant pour nous. Cependant, l'eurocentrisme n'est pas seulement une erreur pouvant se corriger facilement: c'est une erreur découlant de la situation matérielle des intellectuels africains et de l'Afrique elle-même. Un changement social par le biais d'une adhésion consciente auprès du peuple africain lui-même, leur autoréflexion, leur aspiration à l'autodétermination. C'est alors seulement qu'une philosophie propre à l'Afrique devient possible.

PHILOSOPHY AND AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS:
MIMESIS OF WESTERN CLASSICISM,
ETHNOPHILOSOPHICAL ROMANTICISM
OR
AFRICAN SELF-MASTERY?

E. Wamba-dia-Wamba

Until recently, and for a long time -since about the 15th century-, the entire African population was relegated to the status of manual laborers, if not just means of production. Philosophically these people (viewed as subpeople) have always been denied the possession of any virtue (arete). Western Philosophy, at its very apogee, theorized the justification of that regulation. It is perhaps in Hegel's philosophy of history [Hegel (1975)], that this theorization reaches the clearest expression. Philosophical currents, in the world at large, that 'deviated' and went 'astray' asserting that the masses of laborers could achieve self-mastery were often ridiculed and relegated by their philosophical masters, to non-philosophy, not even **false** or **mistaken** philosophy. This has been the active unconscious of the 'theoretical party'. The whole of political philosophy -at least according to A. Skillen [1977]- is based on theorizing the justification of the idea that there must be some dominating others for society to achieve its natural grounding. Fundamentally a celebration of the State per se.

Indeed not long ago, the very notion of **African intellectual** would have sounded ridiculous, a meaningless provocation. How can manual laborers, that philosophy has always required to 'stay in their place of no virtue'[Rancière (1983)], become intellectuals? Especially the black African manual laborers thought of having nothing between their shoulders. There is a real paradox in Tempels's work that claimed to have laid bare philosophy of **unphilosophical** people 'staying in their place of no virtue'. And Senghor's theorization of the Negro Emotion at the same level as, if not above, the greek reason is no less paradoxical: how can this very 'quality of the brute', this anti-virtue per excellence, be claimed to be so philosophically refined? Has not the body, with its bodily qualities, been the very **bête noire** of philosophy? The philosopher has tended to start philosophizing by bracketing her/his own body.

Philosophy has been about division; 'refined people' separating themselves from the collective mass of manual laborers requires philosophy to justify this separation and to persuade the masses of people to 'stay in their places'. Philosophy materializes the separation and even contradiction between manual labor and intellectual work, it is shaped by the form of exploitation (whether collective or individualized and whether inside or outside the production process) of the manual labor. When the entire African population is relegated to the status of manual laborers -through European domination- philosophy can only be European self-celebration and denigration of Africa.

To be sure philosophy, love of wisdom, i.e. reflective critical search for 'truth' on humans and their environment, historically started in **different places** at **different times**. In a certain sense, we may say that the movement for or against 'African Philosophy' is another beginning of philosophy.

Philosophy started with a transformation of people's **historical consciousness**¹ induced by class formation and thus class struggles, involving an increasing distance from nature, a breakdown of community leading to, among other things, a separation between manual labor and intellectual work and between survival and life². In this situation the interpretation of the existing traditions and their attendant world view, cosmogonies, etc. by the various 'social opposites' is no longer self-evident but become class divided: one has to prove and persuade others that one's interpretation is exemplary. This appeal to rationality is necessary when, as in ancient Greece, exploitation is individualized and outside the production process. When exploitation is collective, then the state imposes the 'exemplary' interpretation³.

In ancient Greece, for example, philosophy with its technical apparatus -the argumentative technique- emerged at the same time as rhetoric and in fact developed against it [Richir (1976)]. Parmenides (c. 540-450 B.C.), it is said, clearly distinguished two methods of cognition, two ways to knowledge: the way to truth and the way to opinion. This distinction becomes crucial only when there are many conflicting points of view or interpretations of reality, when one needs to demonstrate

the truth character of one's interpretation and to **persuade** others to accept it. The question "How do we know anything?" becomes only relevant in a socially divided society. In a pre class-differentiated community, an organic community, the members do not experience the crisis of interpretation of the 'foundations' of the community and thus do not need to persuade others and argue for their interpretation. When, however, social differentiation takes place through perennial foreign domination, as in Africa, philosophical argument is not in place either: demonstrating the truth character of one's interpretation and persuading oppressors to accept it is rather ineffective -to say the least.

Plato, after Parmenides and others, differentiated good rhetoric from a bad rhetoric, differentiating the quest for truth or the love of wisdom from 'sophistic' argumentation. Aristotle, later on, opposed philosophy to rhetoric viewed as a degenerate logic of opinion adapted to **common sense**, appearances or seeming. This split between 'truth or love of wisdom' and 'common sense' is socially experienced, historically constituted⁴. In any case, ultimately the split will be the prolongation of the split between the state -the 'guardian of order' and the 'materialization of the principle of universalism'- and civil society, torn with contradictions.

More recently, Ch. Perelman [1960, 1969], for example, opposed rhetoric -seen as the art of argumentation adapted to a specific and singular audience- to philosophy -seen as the art of argumentation aimed, in principle, at a 'universal audience'. Hegel took this universal aspect to be incarnated in the state, historically after religion as the principle of order and after the natural order [Camatte (1986a, pp 1-70), (1986b, pp 1-89)]. The philosophical category of 'being' refers to the need of cohesion of those fragmented parts. With a real community still existing, the Bantu could not have needed the category of 'being'⁵ -its absence points to the fact that the breakdown of the community was incomplete.

Why this all? To give some indication by way of examples, that a philosophy expresses a **social contention** [Nkrumah (1970)], and is

determined by that against which it emerges. S.Robert, from an epistemological point of view, has shown that epistemic structures are closely related to the dominant social relation of class exploitation.

If "Western interpreters as well as African analysts have been using categories and conceptual systems dependent on a Western epistemological order, and even in the most explicit 'Afrocentric' descriptions, models of analysis explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or unknowingly refer to the same order" [V.Y. Mudimbe (1984, p.3)], then the intellectual work on Africa or by Africans remains a prolongation of Western perennial domination on Africa. The 'theoretical party' alone may not be able to bring forth a properly 'Afrocentric' epistemological order -I have elsewhere called this situation "the crisis of Africanism" [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1986, pp.19-29)].

In Africa, as elsewhere, the question of philosophy is linked to the formation and development of intellectuals as a social stratum. Intellectuals, as a social category, emerge as a consequence of the separation of manual labor from intellectual labor in society -this is one of the so-called great differences that communism aims at abolishing. In its historical development, human society has moved, in relation to its social division of labor, from a solid unity of manual and intellectual labor to a separation (individually and socially) of intellectual work from manual labor. That is why, as A. Gramsci said⁶, in class societies not all people do exercise the function of an intellectual even if all people do think. The separation gave rise to a social stratum of intellectual "producers" whose magnitude keeps growing, diversifying and becoming more and more complex. Philosophy-doing, as a relatively autonomous social activity, emerged as a historical outcome of that separation. In pre-class divided communities, where intellectual work was not fundamentally separated from manual labor, philosophy as a social activity did not exist. This does not mean, however, that people were not thinking. But, most likely they were not thinking systematically about thinking. There is a sense in which it is true what Y.M. Guisse says: philosophy was a *pensée de la crise de la pensée*, a reflection of the crisis of thought in circumstances of social crisis [Guisse (1979, p.14)]. A derailed thinking induced by perverse alienation from

human community becoming increasingly inhuman.

The emergences of **African Philosophy** as a specific way of philosophizing -more or less initiated by P. Tempels's Bantu Philosophy- must be traced to the colonial and neo-colonial forms of separation between intellectual work and manual labor in Africa. Those forms are fundamentally determined by the antagonism opposing imperialist domination (in its pre-colonial, colonial and neo-colonial developments) on Africa and the African people's various forms of resistance and struggles for true national independence and self-emancipation. Indeed, ethnophilosophy has been a way of recognizing a certain capacity of thinking and spiritual creativity on the part of unphilosophical dominated African people. It was, in a way, an attempt by colonialists to recognize 'produced individuals' (breaking their social ties from the barely surviving primitive community under attack) and use them as possible African ideological **askaris** (watch dogs) of colonialism -a movement away from formal colonial subjugation of the African societies to their real colonial subjugation.

It would seem that **the catechist** has been the central figure among the various forms of African intelligentsia which have emerged through the slave-trading, colonizing and neo-colonizing relationship of Western domination on Africa. The catechist was not only the ideological **askari** of the dominant regimes in dominated societies of Africa, but the militant propagandist of dominant ideas towards the large masses of people. During this long period of Western domination, the explorer, the missionary, the ethnologist and the developmental social scientists have been the central figures of the **social epistemology of domination**⁷.

The explorer was discovering for humanity things that Africans were living with all along. The missionary discovered how pagan and sinful Africans were and thus how thirsty for salvation they were. The ethnologist, of course, discovered how static, primitive, a-historical the Africans' ways of life were and implied that these needed to be dynamized (i.e. historicalized). The developmental social scientist (or modernizer) discovered how backward, underdeveloped and unmodernised these lands and peoples were. Is it surprising to find out that some of those roles have been played by self-styled Marxists? Anyway, the overall

view of what is the specific identity of Africa has been theorized as a dramatic default of being human; this has been called **ethnophilosophy** i.e. a philosophy of and for the dominated Africa. It does not matter whether or not actual ways of thinking of some real Africans fit in this way of viewing things. The fact is that this specificity is discovered, theorized in the face of a humanity that dominates it and requires it to be so dominated.

Is it too much to link even the etymology of the term Africa to this search for a difference requiring to be dominated? The term Africa came from the greek **Aphrike** meaning **not cold**; from the latin **Aprica** meaning **sunny**; and **Afriga** meaning **land of the Afrigs**, the roman term for the people living in the Southern part of the roman empire. **Africa** is thus a term which comes from a comparative awareness of differentiation from an European point of view. It was a European attempt at grasping an un-European difference. European philosophy has been theorizing this **difference** -not as a positive Other, but as a target, a **colonizable** target. A philosophy of Africa viewed from the point of view of its difference from Europe is a philosophy of peripheralization.

In an important public lecture, Issa Shivji, said that intellectuals as a social body which gives society its image does not exist in Africa. While some African intellectuals exist as individuals, there is no corps of African organic intellectuals disenchanted with the status quo. This is not the appropriate place to enter in the debate around the existence or non-existence of such a corps of African organic intellectuals [Shivji (1986, p.5-19)]. In the main, however, individual intellectuals, in Africa, have not gone beyond the roles and functions of **sophisticated catechists**, i.e. militant propagandists of dominant -essentially Western- ideas towards Africans and have thus been unable to give to African societies their images. Paraphrasing Marx, individual African intellectuals are unable to make African petrified relations dance by singing before them their own tune. The point is to permit the Africans not even a moment of self-deception and resignation.

Being an intellectual, as I wrote elsewhere [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1983a, pp.16-27)], is more than just fulfilling a socially determined intellectual task; it is also understanding fully its implications, its

relations, to other tasks (i.e. its social quality) and performing it in a way which makes a difference to the **quality of human society as a whole**. It is also being able to perceive the task as a **vibrating knot of relationships**. This is actually what unites all those intellectuals who have helped the masses of humankind to make this world a livable place from the nameless creators of wisdom in Africa, America, Asia, Australia, ..., the Socrates's of all times, the Spinozas, the Vesales, the Leonardos, the Einsteins, the Ibn Khalduns, the Mahatma Gandhis, the Mozarts, the Martin Luther King Jr's, the Luxemburgs, the Kollantais, the Bertrand Russells, the Fanons, the Marxs, the Nkrumahs, the Sartres, the Lenins, the Mao-Ze-Dongs, ... many of those kinds of intellectuals are not even known: they remain -and will remain- nameless although their contributions -to the extent that they helped humankind see, grasp and understand the underlying patterns, the music of these vibrating webs of patterns in things and people- helped improve the quality of human life. Very briefly, being an intellectual is acting constantly to avoid one-sidedness, i.e., being moved by a partisanship against one-sidedness (one should truly be moved by Socrates's simple realization: "You don't know it; I don't know it; let us keep talking, dialoguing, some day we may know it").

As I see it, the emerging task of intellectuals in Africa has been to make a critique of every sphere of African society and contribute in the theorization and realization of **African people's power** i.e. the self-determination of African people. Vacillating between imitatio/mimesis of western classicism and ethnophilosophical romantic search for, or celebration of, African identity, African philosophy has, in the main, failed to theorize the problem of the African self-mastery. The theoretical work devoted to the appeals of the **authenticity movement**, making even neocolonialism be authentic, has hardly clarified the issue of the African self-mastery. What to do to achieve African self-mastery? By whom, where, how? The reigning classes, through clientilism and other forms of class alignments around the developmentalist state have opted for dependency on international capital. The philosophical justification of this arrangement could not have possibly gone beyond **imperialist philosophical classicism**. Until peripheralization, dependency is arrested can

even African self-identity be philosophically achieved and theorized?

As we hinted earlier, philosophy from its diverse beginnings has been protracted denial of self-mastery by manual workers. And Marxist philosophy that has named the proletariat as the incarnation of the unity of the theoretical party (critique) and the practical party (practical activity) is now in crisis [Wamba-dia-Wamba (forthcoming) and (1984)]. The proletariat from whose perspective a truly universalist humanism could be reconstructed is nowhere to be found. The working class movement has failed to develop an independent political capacity to enable it to carry out its proletarian task of the organization of a politics of the domination of non-domination [Badiou (1985)], of people's self-mastery. The creative promises of Socialist States' experiences and people's liberation wars have faded away without having led to people's self-mastery and self-emancipation.

Having often failed to grasp the **historicity** of each Marxist breakthrough (October 17, The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, etc.), African Marxists have tended to view Marxism as a scientific discourse, a technology or a consecrated revolutionary ideology one had only to **adopt**. Governments, parties, even liberation movements have found it completely normal to **adopt** Marxism-Leninism as a **tool** that guarantees victory. The conceptions of the politics of emancipation and the theoretical contributions, we are aware of arrived at through that adoption, hardly, internalized the teachings and lessons drawn from the failures elsewhere.

The African situation, where intellectuals are hemmed in by paradigms that were set elsewhere, with legitimization and reward systems that skew their work negatively and a total science system which in its operation is by nature imitative and non-creative [Goonatilake (1987, p.20)], demands **intellectual creativity**. The intellectual work has become here increasingly a religious cult to the god called 'The Donor', which shapes a social epistemology opposed to the necessary African struggles against one-sidedness. Can African philosophy receiving all its clues from the center or concentrating on crude romantic defence of African identity provoke such a creativity? Social conditions for creativity, in

Africa, seem to be difficult to provide. Socio-economic conditions and the dominant social epistemology seem to be hostile to the directive **dare to think the unthinkable!**

The great African savant, Cheikh Anta Diop who represents, according to the sociologist Jean-Marc Ela, "the unique and exceptional phenomenon the black continent has produced in the history of ideas" [Ela (1986, pp.42-58)], sought, as a way of provoking cultural creativity, to redynamize African culture through an erudite historical regression to the remotest African antiquity. It is perhaps too early to say whether or not that attempt will lead to the necessary overthrow of the dominant social epistemology in Africa. The social awareness of the possibility of different (or parallel) civilizational filiations, however, can be a very fruitful source of new ideas.

It is true that eurocentrism which informs the dominant social epistemology in Africa is not just a simple error of approach or a simple product of ignorance, but an expression of material relations of Western domination of Africa (as well as the world). The simple criticism of eurocentrism which fails to deal with the politico-socio-material organization of the transformation of those dominant material relations won't succeed to overcome it. Without political (although essentially formal) independences of African countries, for example, the scholarly refutation of colonial historiography, although an important element of the ideological struggles waged by African people, would not have had much force and efficacy.

Nevertheless, starting from the point of view that African people think, and don't just reflect or express the material antagonism with Western domination, the revitalization of the African capacity to think may produce and in fact inform the process of transformation of those material conditions of European domination. It is needless to say that the diffusionist model of 'spreading the revolutionary ideology' to the masses of African people to mobilize them won't invigorate their thinking capacity. Ultimately, the cultural revolution or Renaissance preparing for the planned African self-emancipation will be conquered by the thinking masses of the African people themselves.

I have begun elsewhere [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1983b)] the critique of Cheikh Anta Diopism which I feel to be the core of Afrocentric Africanism and whose true critique^s should open up for new creative ideas on Africa. In our humble opinion, Cheikh Anta Diop's theoretical work is a protracted research for the Afrocentric subject, for the **maker** of the history of African self-emancipation. Since Africa has fallen under Western domination, this subject is nowhere given empirically, it has to be discovered: Who has made, from the remotest African antiquity, the history of African self-emancipation? That Cheikh Anta Diop has, sometimes, tended to inscribe that subject into formal structures of language, social organization or physical appearances should not cover that strong point. It is after all by identifying that subject throughout the African entire history, that the African subjective element will be consolidated.

This anti-paper was intended only to provoke thought. If we have succeeded in doing so, our objective has been achieved. The immediate task of African intellectuals is to provoke creative thinking capable of undermining the dominant social epistemology that emphasizes mimicry and routine learning through diffusionism. If philosophy, as it is practiced now cannot help achieve that objective, a new type or mode of philosophizing has to be attempted.

Notes

1. In the meaning of this term according to Heller (1982).
2. In the way this particular separation is theorized by Raoul Vaneigem (1986).
3. Reference is made here to the sophisticated work of Serge Robert, especially in Robert (1978).

4. It is interesting, in this context, to reflect on what circumstances allow Kwasi Wiredu to argue that science is an opinion [Wiredu (1980)].
5. Jacques Camatta's letters to me on the question of Placide Tempels' Bantu Philosophy.
6. For more details see C. Buci-Gluckmann (1975).
7. This expression is used in the sense that Susantha Goonatilake (1987) uses it.
8. Marx distinguished a "vulgar or dogmatic criticism" from a **true criticism**. A criticism within the framework of what is being criticized is a vulgar or dogmatic criticism. It is not a demonstration of errors and an exhibition of the origin and genesis of those errors. The true criticism shows the inner genesis of the Holy Trinity in the human brain, for example. It describes the act of its birth. "So the truly philosophical criticism of the present state Constitution not only shows up contradictions as existing it **explains** them, it comprehends their genesis, their necessity". (Reference is made here to the **Theses on Feuerbach**).

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Résumé

La structure et l'organisation des relations internationales contemporaines révèle des analogies philosophiques évidentes avec la philosophie politique de Thomas Hobbes. Au fond, Hobbes embrasse une philosophie politique égo-logique. Contrairement à l'accent déplacé de Hobbes sur l'égo-logie, nous posons la thèse du philosophique politique holo-cyclique, c'est-à-dire, qu'il y a, fondamental et en réalité, un seul moi, le moi cosmique ou naturel, qui simultanément fait connaître son caractère et conserve soi-même par le type de comportement d'entité concret, en particulier des organismes vivants. A cette condition, l'individualité ou la différence entre les entités, est un moment essentiel, pas un moment nécessaire, dans la manifestation continue et la conservation de la nature comme le moi universel. Par conséquent, l'individualisme, comme le produit de l'individualité, c'est une orientation mauvaise vers la vie, spécialement la vie politique, parce qu'elle tend à poser la priorité sur l'orientation commune, holistique et universaliste vers la vie. La dernière est plus en harmonie avec la nature comme le moi universelle ou cosmique.

HOBBS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Mogobe B. Ramose

The purpose of the present essay is to present in broad outline the case for holistic thinking on the ground that such a mode of thinking is an imperative of the holistic character of life [Davies, 1983, p.63, 69]. The idea of life as a holistic phenomenon means that the manifest complexity of order and organisation of life in the physical sense cannot be fully and properly understood in terms of reductionist or fragmentative thinking. This latter appears to be the dominant characteristic of western scientific thinking. However, it may well be plausibly argued that the plea for holistic thinking is itself reductionistic. Consequently, holistic thinking could be regarded as no more than another mode of reductionistic thinking. We suggest by way of response that it is false to regard holistic and fragmentative thinking as radically opposed as well as mutually exclusive modes of thought. Rather we hold that there is a mutual foundedness and complementarity between both modes of thought. The possibility condition for synthesis is analysis but analysis without synthesis is inconceivable. In the light of this we take the epistemological view that perception is always perception of a specific wholeness [Bohm, 1971, pp. 29-30]. Accordingly, the wholeness precedes its constitutive parts only perceptually. Thus perceptual precedence may not be construed to mean genealogical (evolutionary) precedence of the wholeness relative to its constitutive parts. Consequently, what we would wish to stress is the primacy of holistic thinking and the philosophical consequences that ensue from such thinking.

Our point of departure here is that there is a physical basis for life. Matter, however conceived, is the basis upon which life continues to emerge. It is precisely the apparent contradiction between life and non-life (organic and inorganic matter) with non-life giving rise to life, provided this latter is organised in a specific manner [Peacock, 1965, p. 18], that renders a purely materialistic conception of life both difficult to understand and to accept. The dominant view of the natural sciences is that in principle physics, chemistry and biology including the related sciences can ultimately answer the question - what is life? - on the

understanding that the universe is a causally closed system [Sheldrake, 1981, p. 25]. It is an open question at this stage of our scientific knowledge of the universe whether or not the dominant view of the natural sciences holds. Furthermore, even if it could ultimately be scientifically proved that the universe is a causally closed system such proof would not of necessity preclude the possibility that there is 'a meaning behind existence' [Davies, 1987, p. 203]. The natural sciences are evidently not able to extend their method of observation and experimentation to all levels of existence especially the axiological level that is, the level of the quest for the meaning and value of life [Davies, 1981, p. 88]. Accordingly, it is sensible to draw a distinction between the physical and the metaphysical conceptions of life. Part of our intention here is to apply this line of reasoning to the political philosophy of Hobbes. However, our discussion of Hobbes' political philosophy will be subordinated to the principal aim to give a broad outline of holistic thinking with particular reference to international relations. It will therefore be assumed that the reader is reasonably familiar with the political philosophy of Hobbes.¹

Hobbes' basic philosophic position and outlook, as distinct from his mode of philosophising, contains three elements, namely, (i) recognition of bodies or objects external to us; (ii) the assertion that sense or perception is the foundation of all human conceptions; and, (iii) the assertion that all that is - being - is body. In view of this, we are led ineluctably to the often repeated conclusion that Hobbes propounds materialism. Against the background of his critique of Cartesian dualism, Hobbes postulated monistic mechanistic materialism. It is from the standpoint of this specific materialism that Hobbes enunciated his philosophy of nature (body), his philosophy of man (man), and his political philosophy (citizen). There is thus a clear connection between Hobbes' mechanistic materialistic conception of nature and his political philosophy. Similarly, we will apply this approach to our distinction between a physical and a metaphysical definition of life. Accordingly, the material base from which life ineluctably emerges shall form the basis of our proposed specific philosophy attuned to holistic thinking.

Hobbes' philosophy as a whole was infused by a method whereby knowledge about a body could be acquired and explanation of its behaviour be given. To arrive at the knowledge of the causes and in order to be able to explain them,

Hobbes, however, assumed like Descartes that nature had an underlying mathematical structure which was not apparent to sense but which could be unfolded by the definitions and demonstrations of the geometrical method [Peters, 1956, p. 54].

Furthermore, he held that since every event is in motion, all sorts of natural processes must be explained by analyzing complex appearances into the underlying motions of which they consist [Hobbes, 1962, p. 75]. The philosophical outlook to nature and science during the time of Hobbes subserved motion and mathematical science [Burt, 1954, pp. 126-7]. Hobbes insisted upon the application of the same philosophical outlook and method with regard to the study of human behaviour in the realm of politics. It is against this background that we shall now turn to consider the political philosophy of Hobbes.

HOBBES' THEORY OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

Hobbes divides human history into two categories, notably, the **status naturalis** and the **status civilis**. In the former state, Hobbes argues, the human being possesses the right of nature by virtue of which anything may be done in order to preserve the life of the individual human being. By so doing, the human being would be fulfilling the obligation imposed upon him by nature - naturalistic deontology. For convenience, this obligation will be described as the law of nature. Obedience to the law of nature precedes the duty to obey any other law created after the civil society has come into being. Thus the law of nature is always obligatory **in foro interno**. However, as soon as civil society becomes established - in itself a mark of transition from the **status naturalis**-the same law remains binding but not operative for as long as the

others agree to be regulated by the commands of a common legislator. In this new situation - the **status civilis** - the duty to obey the law of nature becomes operative **in foro externo**. But in this latter context the binding nature of the law is always conditional upon the others' fulfillment of their self-imposed obligation to obey the laws enacted by a common legislator. Thus the voluntary but conditional submission to the laws of a common legislator forms the basis of civil society. For Hobbes the institution of the civil society (commonwealth) is designed primarily to create conditions conducive to the self-preservation of the individual human being. Thus the good of the collective whole, the commonwealth, derives its meaning and justification from the necessity of individual self-preservation [Hobbes, 1951, p. 177]. This is not to say, however, that Hobbes would readily concede that his common legislator - the absolute sovereign - be deposed by those who have placed him in power. The absolute sovereign is thus the epitome of the grand human machine - the Leviathan - brought into being by the collective consent to surrender conditionally the individual right to pursue the imperatives of the law of nature. Seen from this perspective the commonwealth is a veritable social contract; an agreement as a result of which society comes into being.

IMPLICATIONS OF HOBBS' THEORY OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

The epistemology of Hobbes is based upon the recognition that all ideas present in the mind of man occur because of the ongoing contact between the human organs of sense and objects in nature. Thus for Hobbes, causation is a continuous process in which bodies in motion affect one another. Hobbes uses exactly the same epistemological framework in the construction of his theory of the social contract. Motion is the hallmark of his concept of **metum mutuum**. His notion of mutual fear as an aversion coupled with the opinion of possible damage represents only one aspect of his theory of human behaviour. Appetite or desire is another aspect of his theory. Appetite is once again defined by him as motion towards that which causes it. In terms of human behaviour this process of positive and negative motion is centered

around his idea of 'endeavour' (*conatus*). Endeavour is, according to Hobbes,

small beginnings of motion, within the body of man, before they appear in walking, [...] and other visible actions [Hobbes, 1951, p. 177].

Evidently, the principle of motion is central not only to Hobbes' epistemology but applies also to his theory of human behaviour. Therefore, we venture to suggest that after he had adopted - his own criticisms notwithstanding - the cosmological and the scientific perspective of his day, Hobbes adapted the outlook to his elaboration of the theory of the social contract. The social contract represents the principle of motion at work. On the one level the individual perceptions form and colour individual psychology because of motion and on another level the psychological content of the individual motivates him to seek other individuals in order to conclude a social contract with them.

The principal reason for the conclusion of the social contract is to secure the preservation of the individual self. Individual self-preservation precedes collective self-preservation. Thus the Leviathan, by definition a mortal god, rather die in order to secure and uphold the primacy of individual self-preservation. Hobbes espouses a political philosophy based upon a radical egology: a fundamental opposition as well as dichotomisation between 'I' and 'them'. For Hobbes the collective whole makes sense only if the 'I' is recognised as radically other in relation to other parts constitutive of the same collective wholeness. This radical egology underlines not only the precarious (mortal) nature of the grand human machine called the Leviathan but it is simultaneously the affirmation that by virtue of the law of nature each and every man has an equal right to be free. This means that:

in the absence of certain special conditions which are consistent with the right being an equal right, any adult human being capable of choice (I) has

the right to forbearance on the part of all others from the use of coercion or restraint and (2) is at liberty to do (i.e., is under no obligation to abstain from) any action which is not one coercing or restraining or designed to injure other persons [Hart, 1975, p. 175].

Equality of freedom then means that there can be no supreme legislator above the individual self whose laws ought to be obeyed by the individual despite the latter's wish to the contrary. Of course, this statement cannot be accepted without qualification by those committed to belief in a deity or Supreme Being. This notwithstanding, it is clear that Hobbes' espousal of a radical egology means that the individual human being is an ineradicable unit of analysis and that the same individual is absolutely free but may voluntarily choose to be conditionally free in a situation in which reciprocity of rights is recognised. Thus the basic thesis of Hobbes appears to be that the quest to preserve the individual self is paramount: it is an axiological primacy even though the individual self may not in temporal or genealogical terms precede the wholeness of which it is always a part. That which this thesis underlines, therefore, is an orientation towards the world in accordance with which the 'I' or 'self' must be regarded as a fragment of the primordial wholeness and consequently everything must be considered from the viewpoint of the 'I' since it is the 'I' which is deemed to be the center of the universe. We hold that this thesis is the hallmark of Hobbes' fragmentative mode of thinking. Further, we suggest that Hobbes' political philosophy characterised by this kind of fragmentative thinking underlines the conceptual framework ; indeed the theory and practice of contemporary international relations. We shall posit a contrary thesis and thence maintain that the structure and organisation of international politics may be altered in terms of our thesis. Before this, however, we now turn to a brief characterisation of contemporary international politics.

We propose to give some of the main features of contemporary international relations in order to support our claim that Hobbes'

political philosophy, infused with the fragmentative mode of thinking, is the paradigm of contemporary international politics in particular. We shall therefore eschew an historical account of the evolution of the system of states in Western Europe and the extension of the system to other parts of the world.² We distinguish between the terms 'international politics' and 'international relations'. The former shall mean 'the mutual dealings of constituted legal authorities acting on behalf of their peoples within the international system' whereas the latter term shall cover 'all relations across national frontiers between governments and peoples, and including non-governmental organisations as well as the formally constituted authorities of the states' [Northedge, 1976, p.16].

The organisation and conduct of international politics rests upon the Hobbesian concept of **status naturalis**. In accordance with their commitment to this concept, states appear to be unwilling to relinquish their freedom to exercise their right of nature unless others are willing to reciprocate. The claim to the right of nature is widely recognised to mean that in international politics each state is under no **a priori** obligation - **in foro externo** - to submit to the authority of any other state or a collection thereof. This may be exemplified by the theory of the just war; itself one of the major elements of the historical legacy of antiquity and the **Republica Christiana**. The just war theory was the melting pot within which individual states nurtured and established their subjective claim to determine absolutely that which constituted the **causa portandi gladium**. It provided - and continues to do so albeit with some modifications - the political-ethical foundations of each individual state's claim to the right of nature and the exercise thereof in its relations with other states. This is known as the doctrine of sovereign independence.

Nationalism was among the chief elements in the struggle for statehood in modern Europe. To all appearances, it continues to play a vital role in both international politics and international relations. The concept of nation-state together with the corresponding elusive concept of national interest are too familiar to require special pleading here.

We wish to emphasize that these twin concepts have greatly assisted and continue to do so - the process by which whatever differences that exist in the human race as a wholeness may be upheld. The differentiation of the human race from whatever vantage point appears to recognize implicitly the right to be different. The apparent reciprocal recognition of this right has greatly facilitated the process whereby the human race has been and continues to be fragmented into national entities each asserting or claiming self-determination within a well-defined territorial expanse. Seen from this perspective, nationalism and the national interest are the concretisation of the Hobbesian notion of **ius naturalis** - the right of nature. At the same time they are the manifestation of the fragmentative mode of thinking because this mode of thinking not only affirms some differences that we may find in the human race as a wholeness but also concedes the fundamental fragmentation (categorical division) of the human race into specific national entities. This mode of thinking was at the heart of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia heralding the rise of the modern state in Western Europe. The Treaty

laid the formal basis of the new international order. It provided the watershed in at least three senses. First, it terminated the wars of religion occasioned by the Reformation; second, it finally reduced pope and emperor to the status of mere princes on a footing of equality; and third, it legitimated an international order based on the existence of independent, sovereign states [Parkinson, 1977, p. 44].

The modern system of states [Wight, 1970, pp. 9-10] is therefore an affirmation of Hobbes' thesis of naturalistic deontology as well as his fragmentative way of thinking. We propose to conduct a philosophical questioning of this thesis - Hobbes' espousal of an egological political philosophy - by giving the elements of holistic thinking as well as those of a corresponding holocyclic political philosophy.

HOLOCYCLIC POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

At the level of intersubjective and international politics Hobbes' thesis together with its corresponding mode of thinking have thus far acted as a brake in the construction of a wider and deeper basis for ensuring the preservation of human beings. That this is so is exemplified by the continuing threat of nuclear omnicide despite the thaw in relations between the two principal actors in international politics, namely, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. This threat, if carried out, will be a tragic celebration of human irrationality based upon and guided by an egological political philosophy. Human rationality will therefore be vindicated by an alternative theory and practice of politics. Thus a systematic elaboration of holocyclic political philosophy - as an alternative theory and practice of politics - would come in as a supportive and strengthening element in the attempt to deal with the problem of preservation. In this context we propose to problematise, in accordance with holistic thinking, the twin concepts of preservation and self-preservation. Research in the sphere of modern biology is one of the pillars of the empirical foundation for holocyclic political philosophy. On this basis the construction of this latter political philosophy is in reality a conceptual analogue based upon research in modern biology as well as related natural sciences. For this reason we will present first the findings of modern biology with regard to human perception and subsequent upon that we will define holocyclic political philosophy. Our concern with human perception is evidently an epistemological investigation. The main thesis of modern biology with regard to the problem of human perception appears to be that whatever the human being perceives is experienced instantaneously as a wholeness but the instant experience of the wholeness cannot be represented at once through the medium of language. What happens in the realm of language is that both the simultaneity and the wholeness become fragmented. The wholeness is fragmented into an image series whereas instantaneous simultaneity is broken down into a time series.

According to Foucault, in the domain of language perception becomes fragmented into a time and image series.

What distinguishes language from all other signs and enables it to play a decisive role in representation is, therefore, not so much that it is individual or arbitrary, but that it analyses representation according to a necessarily successive order; the sounds in fact, can be articulated only one by one; language cannot represent thought, instantly, in its totality; it is bound to arrange it, part by part, in a linear order [Bohm, 1971, p. 27].

The process of fragmentation means in effect that what was an instantaneous experience of wholeness in simultaneity becomes, in the sphere of language, divided up into a time and image series. This fragmentative process is based upon holocyclination and cyclation. The former speaks to attentiveness 'to an unbroken totality of movement in many directions at once, and not in a series of fragmentary steps from one place to another, in a definite direction' whereas the latter means 'the two-directional movement involving on the one hand the outgoing motions of the individual human being and the incoming objective sensations' [Foucault, 1970, p. 82]. Cyclation involves the awareness that motion is fundamentally two-directional in the sense of motion toward and motion away from. This is clearly reminiscent of Hobbes' conception of appetite and aversion based on the principle of motion. This fundamental duality of motion presupposes the existence of an entity capable of motion; be it subject or object. Ontologically such an entity is always part of the greater environing wholeness: it is within and of the greater wholeness. Accordingly, it is a partial wholeness in relation to the greater environing wholeness. The position of the partial wholeness within the greater wholeness does not - with particular reference to human beings - of necessity define its role a la Hobbes' mechanistic conception of nature. On the contrary, the hypothetical delusion of human volition (freedom), which Hobbes anachronistically

concedes [Bohm, 1971, p. 27], reveals that the role of the human being in the universal order of things cannot be fixed and determined once and for all: it is apparently neither unalterable nor unfolding in accordance with an immutable grand design. In addition the human being cannot be regarded aprioristically as the center of the universe; the greater environing wholeness. This ontologico-epistemological perspective based upon the interplay between cyclation and holocyclation is a basic starting-point for holistic thinking.³ It is in sharp contrast to Hobbes' starting-point, namely, that all that there is must be placed in the service of the individual human being since the latter is constitutive of the greater wholeness (Leviathan) in the sense that genealogically the part precedes the political wholeness.

The point of departure for holistic thinking is the recognition that the initial act of fragmentation begins with the division of nature into organic and inorganic matter; into subject and object whenever the human mind tries to understand and explain life and the universe.⁴ As already suggested, fragmentation occurs at the linguistic level through procedation. This latter means 'to think or describe in terms of uni-directional movement' [Bohm, 1980, pp. 2-3].

The above findings from biology, and, indeed from Gestalt psychology and related sciences appear to be echoed in the philosophy of Foucault. With reference to the presupposition that the fundamental duality of motion is meaningful only if there exists an entity - be it subject or object - capable of motion Foucault's concept of 'a fundamental finitude' understood as the human being, reveals a significant kinship with this understanding. According to Foucault,

At the foundation of all empirical positivities, and of everything that can indicate itself as a concrete limitation of man's existence, we discover a finitude - which is in a sense the same: it is marked by the spatiality of the body, the yawning of desire, and the time of language; and yet it is

radically other; in this sense, the limitation is expressed not as a determination imposed upon man from outside [...] but as a fundamental finitude which rests on nothing but its own existence as a fact, and opens up the possibility of all concrete limitation [Foucault, 1970, p. 315].

Consonant with the starting-point of holistic thinking, and, without denying the uniqueness of the human being, we suggest that the root-metaphor of the totality or wholeness of perception leads by way of extrapolation to the philosophical concept of the wholeness (universality) of the human family. The conception of the oneness of the human family recognizes and affirms the separateness and individuality of each human being but at the same time questions whether and to what extent such recognition and affirmation may be used to secure a radical fragmentation of the human family. The main focus here is an axiological questioning of the grounds upon which axiologically neutral characteristics such as human sexuality and pigmentation may be valued to justify the exclusion of the other from reasonable access to the basic needs of life as well as subordinating the other to ensure such exclusion.

It is suggested here that the tight division of the human family into specific nation-states, either on the grounds already referred to or on the basis of language or culture, is a veritable example of fragmentation leading to exclusion and subordination of the other. The structure and organisation of contemporary international politics tend to recognize such exclusion and subordination as facts of international life. Such recognition is not necessarily based upon a philosophical inquiry into the accepted 'facts of international life'. The widespread justification for the avoidance of a philosophical inquiry into accepted 'facts of international life' appears to be the thesis that the reason for the existence of any state is to secure its own self-preservation by way of enlightened pursuit of its national interests in the theatre of interna-

tional politics. Thus Hobbes insight of individual self-preservation within the state is now extended to the sphere of international politics. Accordingly, contemporary international politics is a thorough vindication of Hobbes' egological political philosophy. It is this philosophy which has now placed humanity face to face with the threat of nuclear omnicide. War is the **leitmotif** of this philosophy since the other is considered, in the first instance, to be a threat to the individual human being. The image of the other as a threat is the hallmark of Hobbes' conception of **metum mutuum**. Thus encounter with the other as a threat always involves the possibility that I may be killed and die. Seen from this perspective, the imperative to secure my life is a struggle against death or non-life. Applied to international politics, the **leitmotif** of war in the political philosophy of Hobbes means that life and death constitute the basic elements of the ontology of contemporary international politics. The focus of this struggle against death is the preservation of the specific individual state. It is in this sense mistakenly construed, we shall argue, as self-preservation. Our argument in search of the true meaning of self-preservation will conjoin the points mentioned below to holistic thinking. These are:

- (i) that the aggregation of states, which are the main actors in international politics, is ontologically and historically preceded by the plurality of individual beings constituting the specific states;
- (ii) that ontologically, and so, in terms of biological evolution, the respective individual human beings are themselves preceded by the greater environing wholeness through which they inextricably exist end thus are part thereof;
- (iii) whenever the individual human being or other entities vanish out of visible existence, it does not necessarily follow ontologically that being as experience and reality also undergoes a similar process of evanescence;

(iv) that in consequence of the ontological and historical primacy of the greater environing wholeness over both the state and the individual human being, it is the holistic viewpoint; the universalist, impersonal, de-centered understanding of the world and the individual self which must take precedence over the viewpoint of the finite minitude which is the individual self. It is therefore apparent that the illusion of self-preservation is in reality a function of the preservation of the life of the veritable self that there is, namely, the cosmic self which need not be interpreted in theistic or idealistic terms.

We suggest, on the basis of the foregoing, that our proposal for the elaboration of a holocyclic political philosophy is based upon empirico-philosophical grounds. The root-metaphor of the totality or wholeness of perception leads by way of extrapolation to the philosophical concept of the wholeness (oneness) of the human family. The stress on the human character or humanity of each individual human being renders holocyclic political philosophy humanistic as well. Accordingly, we define holocyclic political philosophy as the philosophical statement that humanity is only one whole; it consists of a plurality and a pluriformity of finite minutes called human beings, each ontologically constituted by and always part of the greater environing wholeness. By virtue of motion there is always the possibility condition of knowledge of the self but from the point of view of the wholeness, that is, the impersonal, de-centered universalist point of view. At the level of national and international politics such knowledge recognizes that whatever the differences among individual human beings, the fact that each individual human being is a fundamental finitude cannot be nullified by differences pertaining to geographic origin, nationality or the colour of the skin.

Contrary, to the Hobbesian conception of self-preservation, we suggest, in accordance with the above definition, that the apparition of the other is primarily a beckoning, an invitation to life. The other is invited by another to live since it is recognized that both share the

will to live. The decentering of the self from the cosmos allows for the invitation of another to life. On this understanding death will occur as a result of the very biological nature of the other as a finite minitude in the universal order of things. It will not be the result of the mis-interpretation of the other as a threat to individual life. Thus both the other and myself would be ontologically and situationally engaged in the life-giving process which enhances not my individual self-preservation, in the first place, but the preservation of the greater environing cosmos of which we are all infinitesimally minute parts. To be conscious of the other's will to live and to be willing to support and contribute to the other's will to live is not only the essence of holocyclic political philosophy but it is also to be conscious of my own will to live. This is admittedly an outline of the elements of holocyclic political philosophy.

Contemporary issues such as the liberation of the oppressed including women, justice and development can be considered within the context of holocyclic political philosophy as a viable theoretical-practical alternative to the narrow and sterile dogma of self-preservation.

Notes

1. DAVIES, P., *God and the New Physics*, Penguin Books Ltd.: Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1983. p. 63
2. BOHM, D., 'Fragmentation in Science and Society', in FULLER, W., (ed.) *The Social Impact of Modern Biology*, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1971. p. 29-30
3. PEACOCKE, R.A., 'The Molecular Organisation of Life', in RAMSEY, I.T., (ed.) *Biology and Personality*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford 1965. p. 18
4. SHELDRAKE, R.A., *A New Science of Life*, Blond and Briggs Ltd. : London 1981. p. 25

5. DAVIES, P., *The Cosmic Blueprint*, Heinemann: London 1987. p.203
6. DAVIES, P., *The Edge of Infinity*, Dent J.M. & Sons Ltd.: London 1981. p. 88
7. For a detailed discussion pertaining to Hobbes' political philosophy, see RAMOSE M.B., *The Legalistic Character of Power in International Relations*, an unpublished Doctoral dissertation presented to the Catholic University of Leuven, (K.U.L.): Belgium 1983. p.50-85
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10. BURTT, B.A., *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, Doubleday & Co., Inc.: Garden City, New York 1924 (1) 1954. p. 126-127
11. HOBBS, T., *Leviathan*, (ed.) PLAMENATZ, J., William Collins Sons & Company Limited: London 1951. p. 177
12. *Ibid.*
13. HART, H.L.A., 'Are there any Natural Rights?' in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. LXIV, No. 2, Whole Number 370 1975. p. 175
14. For a detailed discussion on this topic see, RAMOSE, M.B., *op. cit.*, p. 86-92
15. NORTHEDGE, F.S., *The International Political System*, Faber & Faber: London 1976. p. 16
16. PARKINSON, F., *The Philosophy of International Relations*, Sage Publications: Beverly Hills, London 1977. p. 44
17. WIGHT, M., *System of States*, (ed.) BULL, H., Leicester University Press Ltd.: London 1970. p. 9-10
18. BOHM, D., 'Fragmentation in Science and Society', *op. cit.*, p. 27
19. FOUCAULT, M., *The Order of Things*, (ed.) LAING, R.D., Tavistock Publications Ltd.: London 1970. p. 82
20. BOHM, D., 'Fragmentation in Science and Society', *op. cit.*, p. 27
21. Here we have in mind Hobbes' famous essay 'Of Liberty and Necessity'. Bearing in mind Hobbes' methodology and his monistic materialism, his recognition of 'liberty' is, at the very least, methodologically questionable.

22. In Bohm's article already referred to the same author argues that 'holocyclation is the fundamental description of perception, while analysis into procedative steps of separate parts or aspects is at most a useful abstraction [...] Holocyclation [means that] [...] perception consists, not in seeing objects as isolated entities, but rather, in an over-all awareness of the relationship between the individual's outgoing movements and the incoming sensations [...]'
23. BOHM, D., *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul: London 1980. p. 2-3
24. BOHM, D., 'Fragmentation in Science and Society', *op. cit.*, p. 28
25. FOUCAULT, M., *op. cit.*, p. 315.

Summary

In our modern world we are used to generalized modes of communication, such as Radio, T.V. and the Press. In this context we have developed an objectivist conception of communication, as the one expressed in the model: Sender / Medium / Receiver.

The present article sets out to show that communication cannot be reduced to models which take communication to be objectifiable and quantifiable, as if human relations could be reduced to mechanical processes of interaction.

The voice constitutes an irreplaceable factor in the communication between individuals. It is a form of subjective communication which is both more basic than other forms and harbours aspects of communication that cannot be reduced to other forms of communication.

VOIX ET EXISTENCE

Oumar Diagne

Dans le monde habituel de la communication, nous sommes habitués à des discours, des concepts et des notions relatifs généralement à la Radio, à la Télévision ou à la Presse. Il nous arrive aussi de faire souvent cas d'outils modernes comme le Téléphone, le Télex, l'Informatique, etc. Nous avons ainsi une conception objective de la communication qui nous fait tout de suite penser au schéma classique **émetteur / médium / récepteur**; comme si le monde des relations humaines fonctionnait selon des modèles mécaniques, rigoureux ou logiques, ne faisant appel qu'à un minimum d'esprit de déduction ou de discernement pour livrer les tenants et les aboutissants de toute forme de liaison communicationnelle entre deux individus. Nous voulons, par la présente étude, montrer que tout l'univers de la communication n'est pas réductible à des schémas objectifs, numériques ou quantitatifs, et que la voix constitue, par exemple, quotidiennement, un facteur irremplaçable de communion entre les individus, tout en restant une valeur absolue en soi, c'est-à-dire une pure donnée qualitative. Souvent, cette forme de communication subjective apparaît comme plus profonde et plus révélatrice que les comportements ou attitudes que nous imposent une technologie de pointe ou des langages conventionnels.

Ce qui nous fait penser que le thème de la voix appartient, avant tout, à la philosophie de l'existence et que le langage, en tant que donnée originnaire, préexiste à nos codes sociaux ou institutionnels: il parle d'abord en l'homme avant d'être une adresse à autrui.

Quand Heidegger définit l'homme comme être-au-monde, c'est, selon une optique dédactique, pour faire ressortir l'idée que des situations comme le sommeil, l'amour, la foi ne sauraient venir entièrement à la transparence, à l'intelligibilité, en dehors de l'expérience qui les donne dans la profusion et la chaleur de leur vécu. Mais l'esprit de finesse nous enjoindrait de croire que, si toute intuition profonde participe d'abord de la sensation puis du sentiment tels qu'ils procèdent de notre expérience du monde, il ne serait pas moins méritoire de tenter d'exprimer en concepts clairs ce qu'on a ressenti à travers des intuitions **floues**. L'esprit de finesse s'emploie ainsi plus subtilement à traduire la communion en langage de communication, c'est-à-dire en termes communicables, mais uniquement sous parodie de rapport, de compte-rendu,

et jamais dans le vif du sujet.

Ainsi, la problématique de la voix ne saurait être adéquatement posée sans celle de la présence, si nous savons que la communicativité vocale n'est telle que si deux individus - deux corps - se trouvent en mesure et situation de correspondre dans la langage intime d'une réponse mutuelle coactivement rendue et naturellement ressentie par les deux sujets. Il y a là une spontanéité irréalisée de chacun à descendre vers le tuf qui fonde une communion innommable et irremplaçable des consciences en présence. En l'occurrence, c'est la situation même qui devient sujet, et ceux qui la vivent, objets.

Un exemple classique - attribué à Bridoux, (cf: *Le Souvenir*, P.U.F. 1970) nous en dit long: sous les grondements assourdissants des canons, la mère dort d'un sommeil profond à côté de son enfant lui aussi endormi; mais au moindre soupir de l'enfant, la mère se prend à surrauer, elle qui se reconnaît inconsciemment le **devoir naturel** - tout paradoxal que paraisse ce terme - de répondre à, de coïncider avec l'appel du nourrisson; situation d'inter-pellation au sein de laquelle chacun, à son insu, invoque l'autre et le retrouve au fond d'une communion sans nom. Il y a là l'émergence factuelle de toute une vérité première qui surgit de ce que nous appelons à tort un **état second** - le sommeil; ce sommeil qui, pourtant, tout en restant lui-même en intensité et en profondeur, suscite comme instrument de communion la voix, à savoir la relation bruitée.

Il y a aussi, dans cette relation communiant entre la mère et l'enfant, davantage que du simple biologique: la linguistique nous en fournirait l'idée d'une langue an-articulée, trans-expressive entre la mère et l'enfant; la psychanalyse nous renverrait à l'existence d'un inconscient lointain et commun qui veille de manière têtue sur la nécessaire réminiscence de souvenirs archaïques appartenant à une ascendance génétique. Et le tout entre en harmonie dans le système codé d'une tout autre sémiotique.

Ce pont à la fois biologique, linguistique et psychanalytique correspond à l'image indépassable d'une présence plénière, montrant ainsi que c'est dans la participation naturelle, non laborieuse de chacun, que l'être - avec recouvre la plénitude de son état, de son sens et surtout

de sa spontanéité; ce qui est laborieux étant perçu comme participant du suspect.

Assurément, une voix familière n'est pas seulement une voix qui nous transmet un remerciement, une félicitation, un agrément, un ordre ou un compte-rendu quelconque. Car en-dessous de la voix familière qui communique une pensée ou un sentiment, il faut savoir déceler, dans l'intervalle des sons modulés, la nomination d'une présence, la célébration momentanée d'un **vécu-avec** profond qui délimite l'espace d'un monde compris et accepté, l'univers d'une convivialité au sein de laquelle nous nous percevons soudain comme résidents insoucians, non laborieux, d'un monde qui a cessé de nous étonner, de susciter en nous l'émoi permanent de l'étrangeté, c'est-à-dire de l'inhabituel, du menaçant.

Ainsi les voix familières avec lesquelles nous vivons, auxquelles nous sommes habitués, que nous reconnaissons aussitôt, et auxquelles nous ne faisons plus attention dans le flux d'une routine enivrante, sont les voix qui nous parlent le plus utilement et le plus profondément; car elles entretiennent discrètement l'harmonie, la stabilité et l'euphorie oubliée d'une présence humaine multiple qui redimensionne le monde, rajuste les consciences sur le niveau moyen d'un univers où tout a momentanément sa raison, sa place, son sens.

La vie de famille ne saurait moins le prouver ... jusque dans ces voix qui viennent parfois visiter la maison, participer à l'intimité du foyer, quand nous allumons la radio ou la télévision. Ces voix que les ondes nous font parvenir sont parfois trop présentes dans notre vie intérieure. Telle voix de speaker sera aimée, attendue et religieusement entendue car, en plus des nouvelles rassurantes qu'elle donne, elle apporte à la famille réunie une part de chaleur et d'unité, d'où il n'est même plus fait attention parfois au message véhiculé. A tel moment, on a ses préférences de chaînes de radio ou de T.V. parce qu'y parle quelqu'un de bien précis.

Mais certains penseurs se sont entendus autrement au mystère de la ruse, du stratagème dans l'espace des relations humaines; laquelle perception se justifie pleinement du mystère que recèle l'acte vocal et que savent manipuler certains esprits contre d'autres.

Nous retrouvons ici, sous un autre angle, le thème de la voix

comme puissance factuelle, mais agissant cette fois immédiatement et activement sur le corps - de l'autre - dans sa nature neuro-biologique. A ce sujet, donnons la parole à Paul Valéry: "Pas d'insensibilité aux compliments. Nul n'y échappe, hormis l'homme souffrant. La plante humaine semble s'épanouir sous les louanges. On voit l'immonde fleur s'ouvrir et le feuillage frissonner. C'est une chatouille profonde, que certains pratiquent avec légèreté. Elle agit même sur l'homme averti et le dispose bien, si l'opération est assez habile et indirecte. L'homme averti ressent une révolte d'être manié et d'obéir à cette volupté, comme le corps ferait aux actes lents d'une savante courtisane. Mais cette révolte même est un doux mouvement d'orgueil qui procède du sentiment de mériter toujours louange plus grande que toute louange donnée. Et par ce mouvement, l'amour de soi ne fait que se transformer en soi-même" (1943, pp. 78-9).

Il y a là toute une médiation à approfondir sur le corps - cette nature botanique de l'homme - face à la puissance d'envoûtement de la voix; envoûtement au sujet duquel il convient de se demander s'il n'existerait pas au fond un consensus originel, sur quoi le corps et la voix entretiendraient un langage ésotérique codé sur les chiffres d'une grammaire et d'une logique réfractaires à l'analyse rationnelle: chansons, musique et tous autres arts du corps relevant du rythme, de la cadence et s'impliquant naturellement dans la problématique de cette question.

Il est évident que, dans cet exemple de Valéry, on ne peut scinder le contenu de la louange - les idées - d'avec son support, le son qui le transmet, encore moins ce son d'avec le timbre qui le module. Car d'une, la louange comme telle fonde un tout dont toute partie absente réduirait ou abolirait la totalité, et d'autre part, la précision même de l'exemple met en exergue la sensibilité du corps, du corps sain, sous l'effet intro-actif de la parole vocale comme émission vibratoire et euphorique. Le contenu s'identifie d'autant plus à la voix que le message - la louange - serait moins efficace une fois écrit. Assurément, la voix recentre, surimprime et surtout personnalise ce que l'écriture aurait froidement tracé, reproduit, ou décrit.

Une observation sagace nous révélera comment certains harangueurs de foules arrivent à plonger sous un envoûtement total leur

public rien que par la manipulation du message vocal ou mieux de la voix messagère. Cet exemple nous en dit long sur Hitler au comble de ses transports oratoires: "C'était le moment où la foule lui était le plus étroitement soumise. Il s'accomplissait une copulation monstrueuse, un inceste non prévu par les codes sacrés. La foule fécondée devient grosse de démons qui mettent peu de temps à sortir de son ventre. C'est la raison qui explique qu'un seul homme puisse être père de tant de maux". [Ceronetti (...), p.37]

Il y a lieu d'envisager ainsi un véritable statut ontologique de la voix dans sa puissance à sécréter de l'être, à favoriser entreprise, naissance, création, progrès, en un mot, raison et passion de vivre. Et il ne serait pas mal à propos de se demander si l'histoire, le destin des peuples ne se résume pas souvent à des cristallisations de messages vocaux savamment transmis par quelques hommes. Ici les mots et les analyses semblent n'être qu'un prétexte, devant l'impérieuse et suprême finalité de la voix.

Heidegger faisant allusion au langage, pensait déjà que l'homme est le berger de l'Être; mais les grands manipulateurs de foules ne sont-ils pas les Bergers des bergers, pour autant que c'est eux qui dictent les voies, les normes et les fins en fonction de quoi l'Être vient habiter les bras et les cerveaux pour se constituer **praxis**.

Nous opérons ainsi par ce mot sur Hitler, le passage de la botanique à la génétique, encore dans le registre de la voix à laquelle le manipulateur capiteux saura toujours imposer son omnipotence et sa plurivalence; bref, son savoir-pouvoir.

Artaud, pressentant la nécessité d'une révolution du théâtre traditionnel à partir d'une action directe et profonde dans les organismes des spectateurs, fournissait l'exemple du serpent et de la musique de charme: "Si la musique agit sur les serpents, ce n'est pas par les notions spirituelles qu'elle leur apporte, mais parce que les serpents sont longs, qu'ils s'enroulent longuement sur la terre, que leur corps touche à la terre, par sa presque totalité; et les vibrations musicales qui se communiquent à la terre l'atteignent comme un message très subtil et très long; ... je propose d'en agir ainsi avec les spectateurs comme avec les serpents qu'on charme et de les faire revenir par l'organisme jusqu'aux

plus subtiles notions" [Artaud (1964, p.126)].

Nous retrouvons là encore cette connivence symbiotique (au sens étymologique du terme) entre la chair et le son, la matière et le bruit, comme si notre perception, ou mieux notre vécu corporel de la musique devait nous enseigner de façon impérieuse l'existence possible d'autres outils scientifiques et d'autres lunettes épistémologiques plus aptes à nous faire découvrir la totalité du monde comme réel unique et univoque d'une part, et la totalité du savoir comme entité indivise d'autre part; cela au détriment et au-delà de notre division du savoir traditionnel qui assigne à la physique son objet, à la linguistique le sien, etc. ... jusqu'au cloisonnement rétif qui a trop légèrement enfanté nos spécialistes modernes.

Nous avons jusqu'ici perçu la voix comme phénomène, volonté ou désir émanant d'un sujet; d'un sujet trop présent par l'influence exercée ou recherchée sur l'interlocuteur ou l'auditeur. Nous avons aussi constaté que cette voix a plus rôle et fonction dans la communicativité que dans la simple communication, par son pouvoir de créer une véritable osmose de pensées et sentiments entre les différents individus en présence. Toutefois cette réflexion sur la voix tournerait court par la lacune qui en exclurait la problématique psychanalytique que soulève la question vocale comme telle; en l'occurrence le sens et le rôle de la voix dans le rêve. Nous pourrions, à titre de simple indication, mentionner que la voix abrite tout un univers psychologique dont une sémiologie (même sommaire) nous présenterait une variété significative de vies affectives, mentales en général parmi les individus: la voix de rogomme résonne comme étant celle qui dit un usage abusif des liqueurs et du tabac chez le sujet, la voix de tête comme propre à celui familier aux idées et à la gymnastique intellectuelle, la voix de ténor comme celle du chanteur de métier ou du professeur confiant Chaque personnalité s'imprime ainsi dans la voix de celui qui la porte, comme toute voix peut toujours en quelque façon donner à voir une personnalité de fond d'où parle le sujet vocalisant. La voix apparaît ainsi comme un outil ou plus exactement une méthode (au sens étymologique du mot) pour approcher déjà une personnalité, une vie intérieure. Combien de fois la voix n'a-t-elle été à l'origine d'une admiration soudaine ou d'un dégoût brusque dès les

premiers moments d'une rencontre.

Ces détails étant évoqués, nous en venons au rêve car il constitue l'élément de choix de la psychanalyse pour une approche plus systématique de la voix.

Jung s'est intéressé de très près à cette question de la voix comme donnée qui intervient souvent dans le rêve, et pas n'importe comment. En effet, la voix fait irruption dans nos rêves tantôt pour nous annoncer la bonne nouvelle, tantôt comme mot d'ordre, semonce ou menace sonnante, mais magnanime et autoritaire, pour se constituer acte d'appel ou de rappel à l'ordre, ou tout bonnement d'initiation à une nouvelle vie qui purifie, reconvertit le rêveur, à charge pour celui-ci de s'engager dès la veille consécutive dans la voie du renoncement, de l'abnégation où l'a impérieusement appelé l'écho de la sagesse. Et Jung de préciser: "Souvent la voix se fait entendre ... Elle formule toujours une déclaration autoritaire ou un ordre qui frappent soit par leur bon sens et leur vérité, soit par leurs profondes allusions philosophiques. C'est presque toujours une déclaration précise; d'habitude elle survient vers la fin du rêve et, en règle générale, elle est si claire et convaincante que le rêveur ne trouve rien à lui répliquer. Elle offre, en effet, le caractère d'une vérité indiscutable, à tel point qu'elle paraît souvent être le résultat final et pertinent d'une longue délibération inconsciente, au cours de laquelle tous les arguments auraient été soigneusement posés" [Jung (1958, p.79)].

Sous ce rapport, l'intérêt euristique du phénomène de la voix dans le rêve se situe, par-delà l'autorité et la solennité du message fourni, dans l'imprécision (sinon l'inexistence) d'un support humain, d'un sujet factuel reconnaissable, identifiable comme autour du discours transporté par la voix. On peut toujours imaginer cependant un sujet possible derrière le message, en fonction de son contenu. Il s'agit ainsi souvent "d'un personnage plein d'autorité: tel un chef militaire, le commandant d'un navire ou un vieux médecin ..." [Jung (1958, p.79)].

Toutefois, Jung estime que l'inconscient du rêveur reste le seul méritant en cette occurrence, pour être à l'origine d'une telle manifestation d'intelligence ou organisation finalisée dans l'univers psychique du sujet. Nous savons d'une manière générale que Jung n'indexe pas l'in-

conscient comme étant seulement l'entrepôt désespéré et ruminant de nos pulsions refoulées, de nos mauvais souvenirs, et encore moins de stimuli primitifs émanant de notre constitution génétique.

Jung ira jusqu'à privilégier parfois l'inconscient sur la conscience lucide de veille: "Je dois admettre le fait que l'inconscient est capable, par moments, de manifester plus d'intelligence et de finalité que n'en est actuellement capable l'introspection consciente" [Jung (1958, p.80)].

Il faut toutefois comprendre que cette affirmation ne pose cette qualité de l'inconscient que parce que celui-ci, en tant qu'il constitue le lien où s'entreposent nos pulsions et tendances refoulées, rend possible le rêve; ce rêve qui comprend la voix de la sagesse. Cependant un débat reste encore ouvert autour de la paternité de la voix comme provenant, à l'origine, de quelqu'un de bien déterminé; autrement dit pour certains psychanalystes, la voix ne serait rien d'autre que la voix du rêveur lui-même dont l'inconscient se serait impérieusement exprimé par cette forme discursive; ainsi le contenu de la voix serait une récitation (étymologiquement: le fait de lire à haute voix) de l'inconscient s'exerçant sur un empire de pulsions et de désirs.

Au contraire, Jung resté profondément catholique, estime que la voix n'est pas toujours forcément l'émanation de l'inconscient du sujet, et que cet inconscient lui-même, "n'étant qu'une simple et commode hypothèse de travail", reste inféodé à un univers de symboles religieux étant capables parfois de nous interpeller en dépit, et même à l'encontre, de notre profonde volonté. Ainsi Jung précisera: "La voix me procure certains contenus mentaux tout comme un ami qui me confierait ses idées. Il ne serait pas exact ni d'ailleurs décent - ce serait un plagiat, de faire passer ses paroles pour mes propres pensées" [Jung (1958, p.81)].

Jung tient ainsi à ce que la part soit faite entre la voix comme puissance extérieure absolue intervenant en conseillère au sein d'une autre totalité psychique déjà personnalisée, et la voix comme accueillie, domiciliée par un inconscient qui ne peut prétendre se l'approprier que comme simple lieu qui l'abrite. Jung présente ici le cas d'un intellectuel sceptique qui aurait des pulsions homosexuelles et qui aurait fait un rêve au cours duquel une voix l'interpellerait en ces termes, au moment où il entrait dans une église pour se purifier: "Ce que tu fais est

dangereux. La religion n'est point un impôt que tu dois payer pour pouvoir renoncer à l'image de la femme, car cette image est indispensable. Malheur à ceux qui se servent de la religion comme d'un succédané: elle doit, comme suprême réalisation, s'ajouter à toutes les autres activités de l'âme. C'est alors seulement que tu seras béni" [Jung (1958, p.76)].

Tout porte à croire, par ce cas cité, que le rêveur (cet intellectuel sceptique ...) ne peut, étant donné son sens moral très peu religieux, produire par lui-même ce qu'il a perçu par la voix, et que celle-ci n'a dû donc certainement émaner que "d'une personnalité plus complète, dont le moi conscient du rêveur ne représente qu'une partie" [Jung (1958, p.85)].

Ce qui au demeurent, renforce l'autorité et l'emprise de la voix, et telle qu'elle se manifeste dans le rêve, c'est qu'elle constitue un mystère qui ne choisit mieux son temps et lieu de manifestation que dans l'état onirique, situation d'exception où justement l'individu, totalement abstrait de toutes les excitations et rumeurs des préoccupations quotidiennes, se retrouve distant du spectacle de nos gestes et mouvements de veille, pour ne plus se prêter (par-delà l'oreille, il prête tout lui-même) qu'à l'invocation qui donc appelle au dedans. La voix du rêve ne peut alors se donner comme opération, en effet, que sur la surface lisse et tranquille de l'esprit du rêveur qui se prépare à l'écoute en tombant dans un sommeil profond. Bergson avait perçu déjà ce phénomène dans le rire: "l'indifférence est son milieu naturel. Le rire n'a pas de plus grand ennemi que l'émotion" [Bergson (1978, p.2)].

Certains mystiques (ou bien simplement poètes ou méditatifs) s'entendent tout aussi intensément à la signification intérieure de la voix que le rêveur en sommeil qui sait accéder à la révélation. Ainsi la parole du monde intérieur est différente de la parole qui nous vient du dehors. Celle-ci est factice, contingente, et circonstancielle; celle-là est naturelle, universelle et éternelle. Universelle non dans le sens de répandue, comme à tous, mais dans le sens où chacun porte en lui cette voix intérieure virtuelle qui peut résonner en lui pour un repli sur soi, car: "l'appel ne retentit pas au-dehors. Bien au contraire, le bruit le recouvre et il tend à devenir ainsi plus ou moins indistinct. Pour le

percevoir, il faut prêter l'oreille, non celle qui orne le visage, mais l'oreille du coeur qui doit être découverte puis inlassablement éduquée afin de renforcer la finesse de sa qualité d'ouïe" [Davy (1974/78, p.16)].

Ce mot de M.M. Davy correspond ainsi à une invitation non seulement à s'écouter, à faire attention à l'appel du Soi intérieur, mais sur tout à **renforcer**, à cultiver ce sens de l'écoute qui ouvre à un monde de vérité et de plénitude, à soi-même entier et authentique plutôt qu'au-dehors où ne se passe que vanité. Vanité que M.M. Davy désigne en ces termes: "La nostalgie s'éprouve plus fortement quand l'homme tente de se dépouiller et pénètre intérieurement dans le mystère de la pauvreté qui fait taire les bruits des vains discours et des bavardages intérieurs; tous les savoirs de pacotille s'éclipsent. L'homme intérieur peut éprouver alors une certaine tristesse, celle d'avoir consacré beaucoup de temps et d'énergie à des choses inutiles ..." [Davy (1974/78, pp. 19-20)].

Cette activité introspective, comme nous venons de le constater, demeure consciente, délibérée et semble même devoir obéir au rythme et à l'intensité d'un exercice vital. Et c'est là que M.M. Davy pose une conception de la voix opposable à celle de Jung: car tandis que l'une met l'accent sur la lucidité, l'état de veille, et l'exercice, l'autre pose inconscient, le rêve, l'instant comme lieu de manifestation privilégié de la voix. Mais l'aurorité et la solennité de l'appel se retrouve ici et là, si l'on sait que pour M.M. Davy: "Peu importe le nom donné à la voix formulant l'appel. On peut l'appeller Dieu, Divinité, Vie, Lumière. Il est possible de la concevoir comme le cri inlassable du grain de sénévé, de moutarde, de riz dont parlent les traditions et qui exige d'être nourri. Le Dieu appelle, le Soi appelle ..." [Davy (1974/78, p.17)].

A la lumière des développements qui précèdent, la voix apparaît comme donnée polysémique présentant les forces tour à tour de la parole, de la volonté, du timbre, de la poussée de plainte, de l'appel rêvé ou du silence invocateur. Nous conviendrons au surplus que cette sémiologie s'inscrit et trouve ses limites dans la structure de la langue française.

Toutefois, à y regarder de près, on s'aperçoit, comme à l'évidence, que parole, gémissement, appel rêvé ou silencieux correspondent à un

langage de signes. Ils sont, autrement dit, investis d'une signification interprétable sur la base de données concrètes connues, usuelles et générales, parce que vécues **ne varietur** dans toutes les cultures.

Nous sommes ainsi amenés à nous questionner sur le statut et la signification de la voix perçue comme timbre, musicalité, résonance spécifique propre à un seul et même individu. De fait, la voix, sous cet aspect, ne peut être saisie et interprétée objectivement; elle se déploie comme subjectivité, suggestion, support de monde. Cela car la voix communique, en l'occurrence, quelque chose d'ineffable que seule l'ambiance d'une atmosphère, d'un univers de vie total, peut aider à justifier et à saisir. La voix aurait ainsi une signification, une portée (au sens étymologique) musicale avec son rythme, son harmonie, à l'instar d'un son de guitare ou de banjo qui serait, en plus des dons du joueur (génie, talent, qualité des doigts, etc. ...), le produit rigoureux de tous les matériaux composant l'instrument. Ce qui induit l'idée plus profonde que la voix, dans ce sens, annonce toujours l'origine d'où elle émane, la nature du corps vivant qui l'émet avec sa biologie (génétique), sa physiologie du moment, son histoire, son psychisme, à savoir l'ensemble des idées, préoccupations et états mentaux qui habitent le sujet vocalisant.

C'est ce que Julia Kristeva voulait exprimer en écrivant ces lignes sur Barthes mort: "Le présent reste la seule dimension où je peux penser, lire, entendre Barthes. Est-ce parce que j'ai l'impression que cet écrivain nous donne d'abord et essentiellement une voix? Ce timbre d'une fragilité ferme confère à sa communication immédiate, malgré la discrétion de la conservation, malgré la distance, la force d'un contact physique. L'homme qui s'adresse à vous livre une parole au-delà du sens. Rien que par le tremblement de ce non-sens, de ce plus que sens vocal, il avoue tout son histoire et son corps" [Kristeva (1952, p.119)].

La voix retentit ainsi comme le son, le bruit extériorisé d'un univers qu'on ne peut plus ramener seulement au sujet parlant conscient, initiateur et émetteur de pensée, mais qu'il faut penser en rapport avec un vécu global, tant psychique, centré en un sujet qui parle et qui, articulant des paroles dans des sons, tente de rencontrer le monde extérieur par le truchement du bruit; car le monde comme visée, sous la

forme d'autrui ou sous forme d'objets s'avère, pour une part, structurelle de la voix, de la même manière que l'objet est toujours déterminant de l'acte, de l'activité du sujet. La voix dans son essence, appartient ainsi à l'existence, en dépit des techniques utilitaires ou commodes auxquelles la soumettent musiciens, politiques, charlatans, etc.

L'existence comporte des données qui semblent préexister à l'individu qui donc les trouve déjà, prégnantes de sens, de portée et de valeurs. La voix et le don de création sont parties de ces données. Ils sont des éléments inéluctables de la toile de fond culturelle sur laquelle s'adosent toutes les cultures, quelle que soit leur diversité. Ils sont de ce langage invisible et sibyllin qui nous manipule subrepticement, nous prend en compte le long de l'existence, nous mène et nous assigne impérieusement nos orientations, et cela à notre insu le plus total: car ce dont nous sommes souvent convaincus, c'est que nous sommes les initiateurs de tout ce que nous faisons, parce que pensons-nous, notre volonté dispense, de façon autonome, le cogito qui décrète, supervise et finalise nos actions. Or cette volonté elle-même, nous ne la maîtrisons comme effective et factuelle que dans sa partie consciente, c'est-à-dire à partir du moment où nous sommes en mesure de l'apercevoir surgir, se dessiner comme chaleur et profusion de sentiments, de projets, mais aussi et plus mystérieusement, comme émanation d'une source obscure, lointaine et inactuelle, dont ne pourra jamais rendre compte notre existence de veille avec ses méthodes et possibilités habituelles. Ce langage originel, l'art le fait apparaître, il l'actualise, le réalise, lui donne vie. Les artistes sous l'impulsion d'une illumination ou d'un messianisme tacite, expriment ce logos originaire à travers le poème, le tableau, la mélodie ou la danse: œuvres silencieuses, solitaires, qui accrochent la conscience vigile sur le mode d'une interpellation, pour lui faire percevoir que la vie n'est pas seulement l'apparent, l'actuel, et qu'au contraire, elle procède, participe et se nourrit d'une instance inactuelle et mystérieuse si nous comprenons le mystère, avec Gabriel Marcel, comme quelque chose dans lequel on s'enfonce sans cesse et qu'on n'épuise jamais.

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Résumé

Il est remarquable de constater que le racisme de Hegel est fréquemment rejeté, mais rarement critiqué de manière approfondie. Le racisme de Kant est même presque inconnu. Cet article soumet les opinions racistes de Hegel et de Kant à une critique minutieuse portant tant sur la base empirique des opinions que sur leur cohérence du point de vue de leurs philosophies respectives. Il apparaît que la base empirique de leurs opinions racistes est tout simplement l'ignorance qu'ils ont de l'Afrique et des Noirs. En outre, leurs opinions ne sont pas cohérentes par rapport à leur philosophie et ceci dans de nombreux domaines.

Hegel se caractérise par une vision reconnaissant aux Noirs une infériorité culturelle fondamentale, vision basée sur sa théorie 'Weltgeist'. La vision de Kant implique une infériorité biologique basée sur une théorie des races. Leur racisme doit être vu dans le cadre de leur philosophie idéaliste, à fonction idéologique, s'associant facilement au nationalisme, au chauvinisme national et au racisme. Le fait que de nombreux philosophes africains fassent peu attention au racisme de Hegel et de Kant peut être mis en rapport avec leur orientation ethno-philosophique, une orientation annonçant aussi le chauvinisme national mythique petit-bourgeois.

HEGEL AND KANT - A REFUTATION OF THEIR RACISM

Preconditions for an African Philosophy

Christian Neugebauer

A Sketch of the 'Theoretical Discussion'

The faux-pas of Hegel is quite well known in the discourse of the academic philosophy in Africa, but there is a considerable lack of a theoretical discussion and refutation. Even P.J. Hountondji claims that Hegel is irrefutable (cf. P.J. Hountondji (1984, p:24)), and other famous academic philosophers in Africa, like H. Odera Oruka, K. Wiredu, P.O. Bodunrin, only to mention few, do reply at all on a theoretical level to Hegel's racism. They are at best just quoting the relevant sentences¹ and turning away with a fully justified moral detest. But this is not enough for a critical and rational philosopher which they rightly claim to be.

In the European discussion Hegel's racism is a well hidden and even an unknown fact, or at worst his racism is not even acknowledged as such. So it should be no surprise, that there does not exist any theoretical discussion², in fact, the opposite is the case. Leading British, French and German Marxists are keeping an embarrassing silence, not to mention the conservative philosophers, who celebrate Hegel, of course, keeping a 'critical distance', as they themselves believe and like to claim.

Thus, my first aim with this article is to overcome this lack of theoretical refutation of Hegel.

Kant's racism is unknown to the academic philosophy in Africa and it is only known to a few circles in Vienna and Frankfurt/Main. The relevant passages are now easily available in an anthology (published 1985) edited by E. Henscheid. Thus, my second aim is to document these relevant passages and to discuss their position in Kant's theoretical framework.

The Relevance of Hegel and Kant for the Research on 'African philosophy'

I certainly do not wish to deal in a direct way with the problems of research on 'African philosophy' in general, problems which are well known and partly covered by the issue of 'ethnophilosophy' and the discussions it has generated (cf. P.J. Hountondji (1983), Okot p` Bitek (1967), A. Césaire (1962), M. Towa (1988 forthcoming), G.R. Hoffmann (1984), Christian M. Neugebauer (1987a, 1987b and 1990)). To me the relevant point seems to be that as long as racism can raise its Medusean Head - with the voice of the so-called Enlightenment - any thorough research on 'African philosophy' is confronted with a serious threat to its very subject, because racism can, and mostly does, prepare the field for misleading concepts either in a direct or indirect way. A sign on the wall should be P.F. Tempels 'Bantu Philosophy', as well as the theories of ethnologists on so called 'tribal Africa', which famous sociologists like O. Nnoli (cf. 1982) and A. Mafeje (cf. 1971) have demonstrated to be misleading.

Thus, one of the main presuppositions, besides many others, for delving into 'African philosophy' must be to destroy, criticise and refute the argumentative-stock of racism and, above all, to show its contradictions, galimathias and ridiculousness. Unless this is done, racism will always have the possibility to raise its dangerous and ugly grimace. It is the philosopher's duty to destroy the theoretical foundations of racism, even if recognising that she or he is part of this grimace (cf. P. Bruckner (1983), A. Kalpaka (1986), L.V. Thomas (1975)).

A second argument for taking up the struggle against racism on a theoretical level, as a prerequisite for any research on 'African philosophy', could be derived from P.J. Hountondji's clear stance against ethnophilosophy. If an ethnophilosophical approach has to be avoided (a view, which nearly all important African philosophers such as H. Odera Oruka (cf. 1981, p:3), and P.O. Bodunrin (1981, p:8), to mention a few of them, correctly hold), then there is no way but to counter racism, since the classical ethnophilosophical approach is either containing racist attitudes, axioms and theses (via a national chauvinism), or it is

leading to racist conclusions; either in a direct or indirect way (cf. Th. Büttner and Ch. Rachel (1974), K. Büttner and H. Loth (1981), G.R. Hoffmann (1984), Ch.M. Neugebauer (1987a and 1988)). To avoid 'the pitfall of Ethnophilosophy' (H. Odera Oruka) and to criticise this approach on a thorough theoretical level means in consequence to reject and refute the ideology called 'racism'.

The Question of Quotation

First some didactical remarks:

I am fully aware of the fact, that only few philosophers in Africa as well as elsewhere are not conversant enough with the German language, although a number of classical texts of philosophy were written in German (as, for instance, texts of Hegel, Kant, Marx, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Fichte, Nietzsche, Husserl, Schopenhauer, Carnap, Popper, Jaspers and Feuerbach, etc.). I regard it as a question of scrutiny and scientific approach to quote, if possible, from the original text or from a translation authorised by the author³.

Secondly, in dealing with such an important subject the philosopher should not give room for unnecessary criticisms and making him or herself dubious by using an ambiguous translation. The source, the words themselves, should be to the best of one's knowledge and belief beyond doubt. Therefore, it is a basic requirement is to quote from the original text, in the original language, to avoid plain and foreseeable counter-arguments (false translations etc.). The 'rest' is and will be a mater of argumentation, text interpretation and source-critique. Hic Rhodus, hic salta!

Thirdly, in the following chapters I do not wish to deal with philosophico-historical⁴ consequences, which Hegel's faux-pas has had on the academic discourse in Africa (as, for example, P.J. Hountondji's scholastical manoeuvre to split Marx from Hegel, or the deep misunderstanding of the dialectical approach, which K. Wiredu demonstrates in his book (cf. K. Wiredu (1980, p:180-181)), and, last but not least, E.A. Ruch's abuse and misuses of Hegel's concepts (cf. Ch.M. Neugebauer (1987a, p:275-277)).⁵

Hegel

It is possible to sum up Hegel's assertions concerning the question of philosophy and culture in Africa in seven theses:

1. Africa is static
2. Africa is primitive
3. Africa is without history
4. Africa is profligate
5. Africa is savage
6. Africa has no proper philosophy
7. Africa is a culturally homogeneous 'continent'.

The relevant passages can be checked in: G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophie der Geschichte, in: Werke in 20 Bände, Bd. 13, p:120, 122, 129, Frankfurt/Main, 1970; and I guess that there is no need to quote these passages, since they are fairly well known.

The first important question is: what is termed as 'Africa' by Hegel? It is obvious that Hegel does not perceive Africa as a continent; otherwise he could be easily refuted with Egypt and Ethiopia as counter-cases in point. Hegel seemed to foresee this possibility, therefore he is expressis verbis (ostensibly as we shall see later) excluding Egypt and Ethiopia from the 'African spirit':

"Egypten wird im Übergang des Menschheitgeistes von Osten nach Westen betrachtet werden, aber es ist nicht dem afrikanischen Geiste zugehörig" (G.W.F. Hegel (1928,p:145))

Mutatis mutandis, Hegel is postulating the same for North-Africa (cf. G.W.F. Hegel (1928, p:145)). In this way Hegel has eluded his opponents of valuable arguments, namely to put forward Egypt and Ethiopia as counter-examples, if we want to refute Hegel system-immanently. Thus we cannot use proverbs, myths, legends and folksongs - always said sub auspicio to counter Hegel within his system - because Hegel writes about these sources as being a 'bleak consciousness' of a 'bleak' people.

"...denn sie sind noch trübe Weisen und daher den Vorstellungen trüber Völker eigen." (G.W.F. Hegel (1928, p:26))

Thus, it would be a Pyrrhic Victory to bring in proverbs etc., (an attempt J.O. Sodipo pursues. Sodipo considers proverbs to be philosophical sources by referring to Aristotle (cf. J.O. Sodipo (1984, p:75-76))).

In a system-immanent approach, then, there are two ways of criticising Hegel: 1. the empirical way; 2. the logical way. The first approach I define in a wide sense as radical, the second as scholastic.

The Empirical Approach

This approach consists of pursuing a consistent and radical critique of Hegel's sources. Thus the prime question will be: what are Hegel's main sources?

Hegel's definition of 'Africa proper' is at the same time unmasking his main source about 'Africa' - **ignorance**; ignorance on which he is - *expressis verbis* - relying when he is figuring out the 'African spirit'.
"...südlich von der Wüste Sahara gelegene, das eigentliche Afrika, das uns fast unbekanntes Hochland und schmalen Küstenstreifen am Meer." (G.W.F. Hegel (1928, p:135))

Claiming and referring to ignorance as a source for historiography, Hegel is clearly and obviously contradicting his own principles, which approve of only three sources of history: the 'ursprüngliche', 'reflektierende' and 'philosophische'. But Hegel nowhere delineates a kind of history which relies on ignorance. Therefore, it is possible to place Hegel's statements on 'Africa proper' into the realm of fairy-tales - always being based on his own principles and basis of argumentation.

Hegel's second source is missionary reports, however, without qualifying them in a proper way, and Herodotus. Thus, the main source remains to be ignorance, which, however, does not have a proper foundation in Hegel's theoretical edifice. There is no getting away with Hegel being suspected to be an apologist of colonialism and with his being 'bleaked' by German colonial ambitions in so called colonial Africa. This is clearly evidenced by his putative vindication of slavery; Hegel is anticipating the basis of argumentation of the 'white man's burden':

"Etwas anderes charakteristisches in der Betrachtung der Neger ist die Sklaverei. Die Neger werden von den Europäern in die Sklaverei geführt und nach Amerika hin verkauft. Trotz dem ist ihr Los im eigenen Land fast noch schlimmer, wo ebenso absolute Sklaverei vorhanden ist; denn es ist die Grundlage der Sklaverei überhaupt, daß der Mensch das Bewußtsein der Freiheit noch nicht hat, und somit zu einer Sache, zu einem Wertlosen herabsinkt." (G.W.F.Hegel (1928,-p:137))

That this ostensible vindication must fail seems now to be evident, because it only rests upon the picture Hegel has delineated from 'Africa proper', which, as we have seen, does not even have theoretical support in Hegel's own edifice.- q.e.d.

Now I wish to deal with the second empirical counter-argument, in which I am also pursuing a system-immanent refutation.

Hegel claims that the only way - in the strict sense - to raise the 'negro' seems to be the Islam:

"...und nur der Mohammedanismus scheint das Einzige zu sein, was die Neger noch einigermaßen der Bildung annähert." (G.W.F.Hegel (1928,p:137))

If we accept this prejudice that the 'negro' can receive education, culture and refinement (these three words would approximately cover the semantic sense of the German word 'Bildung') only from the Islam, i.e. from outside, since the Islam is (because of the passive and static character of the 'negro') regarded as an extraneous element by Hegel, we have nevertheless the possibility to put forward Christianity in Ethiopia as a counter-example, in case we are arguing within Hegel's edifice. Because in Ethiopia Christianity has led the 'negro' to 'Bildung'. And Hegel disregards Ethiopia on purpose. For on the one hand Ethiopia, in Hegel's sense, belongs to 'Africa proper' (cf.G.W.F.Hegel (1928,-p:135), but on the other hand, Ethiopia is in the edifice of Hegel a priori impossible, i.e. a contradiction, since (in the strict sense) Christianity is only accessible to a 'reifen Weltgeist', which stands in a superior opposition to 'Naturgeist', to which the 'negro' belongs, ac-

ording to Hegel.

Thus the conclusion is either that the 'negro' also belongs to the 'reifen Weltgeist' (because of Christianity in Ethiopia), but then Hegel is contradicting all his statements about the 'primitive negro' who is belonging to the 'Naturgeist'. Or the conclusion is that the 'negro' is only belonging to the 'Naturgeist', as Hegel believed. In this case, however, it is impossible to explain Ethiopia's Christianity. Ethiopia's Christianity remains an unsolved and contradicting riddle for Hegel, as long as he regards and maintains Ethiopia as a part of 'Africa proper' (cf.G.W.F.Hegel (1928,p:135)).

The Logical Approach

On the one hand Hegel claims that Ancient Egypt has nothing in common with the 'African spirit':

"Egypten wird im Übergang des Menschengestes von Osten nach Westen betrachtet werden, aber es ist nicht dem afrikanischen Geiste zugehörig." (G.W.F.Hegel (1928,p:145)).

On the other hand, however, Hegel holds that the religion and the state-system of Egypt really contain 'African elements', that it partly belongs to the 'African spirit':

"Wir haben hier das afrikanische Element zu gleich mit der orientalischen Gediegenheit an das mittelländische Meer versetzt." (G.W.F.Hegel (1928, p:275)).

Thus Hegel contradicts himself logically, in a non-dialectical way, because he maintains that p and not-p are simultaneously true (Egypt belongs to the 'African spirit' - Egypt does not belong to the 'African spirit').

We may conclude that Hegel's zealous statements on 'African culture' contain a full-blown racist attitude that is not based on a racial theory. This means that the supposed inferiority of negroes is not caused by, or linked with, any biological factors. The inferiority is, so to speak, not based on a natural inability. On the contrary, Hegel explains the alleged inferiority on the very basis of his 'Weltgeist'--

theory. But this putative explanation contradicts his own principles. His statements on the 'African culture' are fully incommensurable with his system and even logically opposed to it. Hegel can be regarded as a forerunner of cultural racism (Kulturrassismus) or differential racism (Balibar/Wallerstein). The positive side of this fallacy seems to be that staunch Hegelians can no longer refer to their Master's utterances and treatment of 'African culture', unless they wish to be self-contradictory. But my remarks can and shall not excuse, let alone forgive, Hegel's racist attitudes towards 'African culture', which have so profoundly influenced and stimulated other racist approaches. Herein lies the very justification to combat Hegel's irrational racism.

Kant

Documentary Part:

In this paragraph I wish to document the relevant passages which indicate Kant's racism.⁶

Kant discerns four races in a racial pecking-order. The 'white' on the top, followed by the 'yellow' and the 'negro' and at the bottom the American or 'red race'. The pecking-order is defined by a decrease in mental and general ability:

"In den heißen Ländern reift der Mensch in allen Stücken früher, erreicht aber nicht die Vollkommenheit temperierter Zonen. Die Menschheit ist in ihrer größten Vollkommenheit in der Rasse der Weißen. Die gelben Inder haben schon geringeres Talent. Die Neger sind tiefer, und am tiefsten steht ein Teil der amerikanischen Völkerschaften." (§4, p:15)⁷

In a previous paragraph, Kant gives pragmatical hints how to beat up the 'negro' in an efficient way. He is advising us to use a split bamboo cane instead of a whip, so that the 'negro' will suffer a great deal of pain but without dying (because of the 'negro's' thick skin, he would not be racked with sufficient agonies through a whip). Therefore you need a cane, a split cane, that is, in order to cause wounds that are large enough to prevent suppuration underneath the

'negro's' thick skin.

"Die Mohren,..., haben eine dicke Haut, wie man sie denn auch nicht mit Ruthen, sondern gespaltenen Röhren peitscht, wenn man sie züchtigt, damit das Blut einen Ausgang finde, und nicht unter der dicken Haut eitere." (§2,p:11)

Kant anticipates Hegel, when he is stating the laziness of the 'negro', which will be only alleviated through coercion therefore the split bamboo cane:

"Alle Bewohner der heißesten Zonen sind ausnehmend träge. Bei einigen wird diese Faulheit noch etwas durch die Regierung und Zwang gemäßigt." (§4,p:15)

The general character of the 'negro' according to Kant is composed of imagination, laziness, hesitation and jealousy:

"Die aufgeweckte Einbildungskraft macht aber auch, daß er oft etwas wagt: aber die Hitze ist bald vorüber, und die Zaghaftigkeit nimmt ... ihren alten Platz ein." (§4, p:16-17)

Kant further writes that the 'negro' does not possess by nature any feelings and is endowed with a ridiculous (läppisch) character. 'Läppisch' is a terminus technicus in Kant's edifice and equals the english word 'passivity'. He, the 'negro', has never created anything relevant for mankind; neither in art nor in science, according to Kant.

"Die Negers von Afrika haben von der Natur kein Gefühl, welches über das Läppische steigt. (...) (Es ist) nicht ein einziger jemals gefunden worden, der entweder in der Kunst oder Wissenschaft, oder irgendeiner anderen rühmlichen Eigenschaft etwas Großes vorgestellt habe." (Kant 1970, p:880)

So far the relevant passages.

Next I shall clarify the position of the term 'race' in Kant's edifice.

First. Kant generally regards 'race' as 'class distinctions' between animals, human-beings etc., because these distinctions are inevitably inherited by nature.⁸ Thus the race-pecking-order installed by Kant is: 1) is inevitably inherited by nature; 2) consists of class distinctions.

Therefore, Kant writes, the mixing of races should especially be avoided. It can only cause misfortune and damage.⁹

Second. At the beginning, mankind consisted of only one single race. According to Kant, this can be evidenced by the process of how the 'negro' got his black colour. As a baby, the 'negro' is white. A few week after the baby is born, the colour, spreading out from the navel and the penis resp. vagina in concentric circles, begins turning into black.

Kant is on the one hand obviously echoing the old Christian dogma of the homogeneous origin of mankind in order to prove God's law of universality and on the other hand, Kant is clearly indicating his main source of information about Africa and the 'negro' - ignorance:

"Die Neger werden weiß geboren, außer ihren Zeugungsgliedern und einen Ring um den Nabel, die schwarz sind. Von diesen Teilen aus zieht sich die Schwärze im ersten Monat über den ganzen Körper." (§2.1.,p:10)

150 years earlier (1648), a missionary named F.Romano was writing more or less exactly the same:

"I naturali del Congo sono tutti di color negre chi pui, e chi meno;... Quando nascendo, non sono negri ma bianchi, e poi a poco a poco si vanno facendo negri" (quoted from:V.Y.Mudimbe (1985,p:155)

Third. Kant states that the term 'race' is well established in the 'reason' (Vernunft) of any natural scientist.¹⁰

Theoretical Discussion

If we take it for granted that the term 'race' is well established in 'reason', then, no matter which aspect of 'reason' is stressed, Kant still has made an ambiguous remark. It is a priori impossible that the term 'race' is an 'idea' (Idee) or an a priori. The term could much less be a principle or law. If it should be an 'idea' then Kant has produced the fallacy of hypostatizing an 'idea'. In conclusion: 'race' cannot be a well established term in 'reason' without ambiguity to Kant's edifice.

But this does not seem to be the main fallacy, because, first, there are enough other examples in which Kant contradicts his own definitions or principles, a fact, however, which does not seem to puzzle the Kantians (e.g. F. Kaulbach (1982, p:164)). And secondly, I regard this fallacy as a minor, purely scholastical problem for Kantians only.

The main problem is, that Kant, contrary to Hegel, has based his racist attitudes on a racialist theory, because, as Kant argues, the alleged inferiority of the 'negro' is of an inherited type, i.e. it has solely a biological quality.

If someone wishes to argue that Kant is a milieu theorist, then it should be remembered that 'race, as soon as it is established as such, contains an unchangeable quality by nature. Kant continues by saying that the 'negro', being one representative of the four 'races', is bound with the others into his ostensible race hierarchy, which has from now on an unchangeable quality.

Arriving at this point the system-immanent refutation seems (sic!) impossible. If the presupposition is racist, no inherent logical contradiction will arise in deducing from this axiom a racist pecking-order. So, a system-immanent refutation does not seem to be cogent, yet it is possible as we shall soon see. Perfunctorily seen, Kant is simply making a false empirical statement, which only requires an empirical refutation. But I think that it is not an urgent task to repeat the well known empirical facts here against any kind of racist theories.¹¹

In the light of these well known facts, St. Körner is not so far away from the truth by remarking that with Kant we are indirectly listening (via Schopenhauer, O. Spengler and Heidegger) to the coming racial mania of Nazibarbarism.¹²

Thus, Kantians can no longer hold firm to Kant's statements on the 'negro' and, furthermore, cannot expect any further support from their Master, because 'modern' Kantians know the empirical facts. 'Modern' Kantians are forced to accept the statements of Kant, if they wish to remain Kantians. Especially in the field of the 'physical geography', which is more of an empirical discipline, according to Kant, the empirical proofs are established as the most important 'tour de

raison'.

The third question will be: did Kant have any possibility to gain another point of view; or to put the question differently: which sources of evidence were used by Kant?

Kant, as we know, asserts that the experience of nature and of mankind constitutes 'Weltkenntnis' which belongs to the realm of 'pragmatical reason'.¹³ Experience here is not only to be taken in the sense of the scientific-methodological approach of 'pure reason', but also in the sense of 'art' (Kunst): to utilize the 'Weltkenntnis' in a pragmatical way, i.e. to utilize it usefully.¹⁴ Thus, on the theoretical level, we have two possible approaches to the question of how Kant sustains his statements on the 'negro': 1. via scientific experience; 2. via useful experience.

Concerning scientific experience, Kant does not give us any empirical evidence (or experiment) to prove his experience. He just loosely sums up the prejudices of the various academic circles of his time (with hardly any reference). Seen from that point of view, Kant has failed to comply with his own theoretical demands.

To refer to the question stated above, we have to ask whether Kant could have come to a different point of view concerning this topic. The answer must be: yes! In Kant's time, a considerable number of 'black' or African scholars,¹⁵ writers etc. were living or had lived in Europe. They obviously demonstrated the ability of the 'African spirit', to speak ironically with Hegel. A few names would suffice to prove my claim: Augustinus, A. Pushkin, the famous A.W. Amo or, looking at the American continent of the 18th and 19th century, e.g. the writer J. Thomas and the scholar G.W. Williams.

Concerning the second kind of experience, Kant does not directly claim and give a 'useful experience'. But one may be indirectly derived from it: slavery. For slavery makes perfect sense in explaining the 'useful' hints for beating up the 'negro'.

But this will immediately contradict Kant's postulate of man as a homo noumenon, who possesses a free will and who knows the categorical imperative. According to the categorical imperative, slavery must be illegal, because it hardly involves a contract; slavery is always imposed,

coerced and not based on a free settlement between two individuals, as Kant categorically demands. Therefore, man is used as a means and not as an end, which thus clearly contradicts the second formulation of the categorical imperative. Although I would still not regard slavery as justified, even if a settlements would have existed. The above argument is only valid within Kant's system.

To conclude: Kant could not use a 'useful experience', because in that case he would have postulated an 'intelligible nature'. And an 'intelligible nature' cannot exist a priori, since it contradicts the categorical imperative. Thus, a first possible contradiction turns up.

If it is not slavery, which justifies the beating up of the 'negro', what else could it be? Beating for the beating's sake? This will also contradict the categorical imperative, thus another possible contradiction comes up. Another 'solution' may be that the beating of the 'negro' is necessary to lead him to the acknowledgement of his duty and to introduce him to civilization. But this also contradicts a principle of the categorical imperative: the will must be autonomous and not led by heteronomous causes. Or, as Kant puts it, a moral consciousness sub auspicio a material gain cannot be called a moral one. It is obvious that if someone is beaten in order to reach a moral attitude he is 'just' fearing the bamboo cane and not forming his will by autonomy. Therefore, this alleged justification is also contradictory to Kant's edifice.

In case he has not committed any of these fallacies, which evidence has he actually used? The answer seems to be: ignorance and prejudice. And both are not, as it is commonly known, proper sources in Kant's system - a last possible contradiction appears.

In short: there are no possibilities¹⁶ to defend Kant's racism within his edifice in a non-contradictory way.

Concluding Remarks

We may conclude that both Kant and Hegel, seen in general and from their subjective self-understanding, seek to give racism a rational

and coherent place in their edifices and that both have failed. Therefore, both their philosophies could be partly reformed, thus destroying their dangerous and anti-humanistic orientation. Generally both systems are basically idealistic approaches, as Marx, Engels, F.A. Lange, G. Lukacs, A. Gramsci and Dietzgen, to name a few, have evidently demonstrated. These authors have unmasked the ideological character of idealistic approaches and their various inconsistencies both in relation to empirical evidence and to system-immanent coherency.

Thus, their racist attitudes cannot be considered an exception, and actually they are not. Ultimately, their racist attitude (as part of their idealism) can be explained from the material conditions of their society (as well as the perpetuation of racism in general). But I think there is no need and space to outline this dialectical link here. The embarrassing silence of European philosophers and intellectuals concerning these racist attitudes of both Hegel and Kant (not to mention other 'enlightened' racists such as Voltaire, Hume and Stirner) is explainable and 'understandable'. Their racism is on the one hand part and parcel of the European racial mania against the Jews, as F. Fanon has evidently demonstrated: "Ein Antisemit ist zwangsläufig negerfeindlich." (F. Fanon (1985, p:89)). On the other hand their racism is a constituting factor - but not the only one - of the various nationalisms in Europe. The very same conditions which cause the hatred against the Jews are responsible for the humiliation of the 'negro'.

Very similar causes can be taken up to explain the equally embarrassing silence - seen optimistically, it is perhaps a pondering silence - of African philosophers on both European racial mania and African racist attitudes, which are so closely linked with the various national chauvinisms. These find their academical elaboration in the various ethnophilosophical approaches to constitute an 'Akan-philosophy' or 'Yoruba-philosophy' etc. Here, 'philosophy' is just an euphemistic expression for nationalism, a term that I wish to discern from state-nationalism (cf. Ch.M. Neugebauer (1987a)).

Some philosophers may protest (and I am certainly doing injustice to a few of them) and claim that a critique of European racism actually exists. If these philosophers claim that a racism has been recognised, I

definitely agree, but they do not criticise racism and colonialism in general.¹⁷ Just to name a problem does not mean to explain or to understand it, much less to draw further conclusions in word and action from it.

Generally speaking, African philosophers lag behind the thorough criticisms from African sociologists, as O. Nnoli, S. Amin and Y. Tandon etc., or African writers, like O. p'Bitek, Ng'wa Thiongo, J. Mapanje or S. Ousmane, to name a few.

In preparing African racist attitudes many philosophers have helped and are actually still helping to build up, or at least to prepare the ideological preconditions, via nationalism, for racism. I accept the former partly progressive role and the necessity of Négritude, African Personality, 'Akan-philosophy', Panafricanism (a movement which the early Padmore regarded correctly as a petit-bourgeois one) etc. for the anti-colonial struggle. But today, the material and ideological conditions have changed and these approaches have become a trap, an ethnophilosophical trap in the case of the African philosophers, as far as their mental production is concerned. Thus, these philosophers who are pursuing an ethnophilosophical approach are, consciously or not, preparing the field for national chauvinism. And chauvinism has, in the history of mankind, always been to the benefit and profit of the propertied bourgeoisie, in the last resort, however. This kind of chauvinism leads, under economic pressure, eventually to racism (cf. Ch. Neugebauer 1990).

The perhaps greatest and most tragic failure of most anti-colonial movements is that they have just stressed the national or state-national question in disfavour of the social one. Furthermore, they have mostly misunderstood the deeply ingrained capitalist character of colonialism (cf. R. Cohen (1986) and B. Turok (1986)). They have set the various epiphenomena as the explanatory factors, which have caused the romantic illusion that colonialism can be resolved by a cultural revolution or/and a nationally orientated reform of the colonial state (a case in point is B. Diagne, who was defending forced labour in Senegal in 1930). The philosopher O. Fasina - to do justice - has in his criticism on K. Büttner unmasked this aspect:

"The coming of colonial rule is then seen as the coming of an alien culture. Colonial conflicts appears to be more than a clash of cultures, a conflict of spiritual values, civilizations (one ideological precondition for ethnophilosophy; Ch.M.N.) The 'inner nature' of colonialism, its essential connection with capitalism is concealed. The social scientist of course believes that his theory is correct. ... He is unaware that his theory masks exploitation." (O. Fasina (1985, p:188))

This sketchy analysis is *mutatis mutandis* applicable to the various anti-colonial movements as well as to ethnophilosophy.

At this point, I wish to recall the words of O. p'Bitek (spoken at the National Arts Festival of Zambia in Lusaka, 1967). In his words he has warned in vain against racism and discrimination in Africa, which is even worse than the South African Apartheid, according to p'Bitek:

"Sie praktizieren eine so unbarmherzige Diskriminierung, daß selbst die südafrikanische Apartheid im Vergleich dazu noch sanft erscheint." (p'Bitek (1982, p:250); I have to excuse myself for not quoting from the original text, which is not available in Austria).

I strongly believe that in Africa every philosopher, and, in general, every intellectual, knows what happened to p'Bitek after his Lusaka-speech. A traumatic incision that is today a tragic reality. With this paradigmatic sign on the wall in mind the African philosopher is afraid, since he has nothing to offer than critical reason in order to criticise racism. Yet this critical reasoning is, objectively seen, a small economical base. Such a criticism will inevitably lead to a confrontation with Africa's *petit-bourgeoisie*, who delves into a mythical national chauvinism and in consequence racism in order to legitimate its dictatorship and atrocities, as F. Fanon has paradigmatically delineated (and it is symptomatic that Fanon is only very quietly discussed in the African discourse of philosophy). Due to the lack of space, I do not wish to elaborate further on this subject.

I hope to have given some hints at the historical connection between ethnophilosophy, nationalism, and racism. But also to have contributed a small mosaic to the criticism of racism as embodied in

the philosophies of Kant and Hegel; a criticism, which I regard as a theoretical presupposition for any research and discussion on 'African philosophy'. But still enough other problems will remain.¹⁸

To the motto of Wiredu 'forward philosophers, let us philosophize', I modestly wish to add: 'be courageous and concerned'.

Notes:

1. A case in point is L. Keita (1974).
2. An exception is 'perhaps' L. Frobenius, but he has only superseded Hegel's racism by his own, when he speaks about the 'passive negro character', only able to brutality, and which has a moral lassitude, (cf. J.O. Sodipo (1980, p:379-392)) and J.M. Ita (1973).
3. This should be understood by most African philosophers who are on the one side celebrating the 'language difference' as a **tour de force** for philosophical reasoning, although they are on the other side happily forgetting their approach, when they come across the various German philosophers, which is unavoidable for any respectable philosopher in the world.
4. On the term 'philosophico-historical' cf. F.M. Wimmer (1981).
5. Not to forget L. Keita, who says: 'Thus ignored by Geist African history, according to Hegel, is nothing but...barbaric act.' (L. Keita, (1974, p:46)). But Africa is not being ignored by Geist, Africa is 'just' in the state of 'Naturgeist'. This does not make any difference to the result, but L. Keita so torpedoes his desired aims.

6. The quotations are from: I. Kant, 'Physische Geographie', Zweyter Band, Königsberg 1802, in: Der Neger, Hrsg.: E. Henscheid, Frankfurt/Main, 1985, p:7-22. References to the page-numbers are put in brackets at the end of a quotation.
7. The same quotation may be found in: Physische Geographie, Zweyter Band, 1. Abs. §3 (IX, 195), in: Kant-Ausgabe der 'Philosophischen Bibliothek', Hrsg.: K. Vorländer, Leipzig 1920.
8. Cf. I.Kant VIII, p:121, in: Kant-Ausgabe der 'Philosophischen Bibliothek', Hrsg.: K. Vorländer; cf. also R. Eisler, 'Kant-Lexikon', Berlin 1930, p:439.
9. Cf. Anthrop. 2.T.C. (IV, p:271), in: Kant-Ausgabe der 'Philosophischen Bibliothek', Hrsg.: K. Vorländer.
10. Cf.R.Eisler, 'Kant-Lexikon', p:440.
11. Cf. H. Seidler and H. Rett (1982).
12. Cf. St. Körner (1980, p:54).
13. Cf. F. Kaulbach 1982, p:294).
14. Cf. F. Kaulbach (1982, p:295).
15. Some may be annoyed about **this difference/ my differentiating** between 'black' and 'African' and **that I am/ my** putting the word 'negro' in quotation-marks. The reason is, first, that the word 'negro' in German contains the same semantical connotation as the English word 'nigger', and I could not **overcome/ bring myself not to use/ to using** it without quotation-marks. Secondly, I would like to refer, on a theoretical level, to the, in my opinion, correct criticisms of C.J. Robinson's on the term 'negro', 'black' etc.: "The African became the more enduring 'domestic enemy', and conse-

quently the object around which a more specific, particular and exclusive conception of humanity was moulded. The 'negro', that is the colour black, was both a negation of Africa and a unity of opposition to white. The construct of Negro, ..., suggested no situatedness in time, that is history, or space," (C.J. Robinson (1983, p:105)).

16. The very same contradictions appear in Kant's justification of the capital punishment for murderers as K. Fleisch proves in her doctoral thesis 'Der soziale Tod' (1988, forthcoming).
17. Even conservative-liberal philosophers are stating this deficit, e.g. O.A. Nduka (1982; 1986) or E.P. Elungu (1984).
18. I regard P.J. Hountondji's criticism of ethnophilosophy the first necessary departure-point. But his study can by no means be regarded as a satisfying conclusion. Further analysis will have to be made on this matter.

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Résumé

La question des droits de l'homme, considéré sur le plan philosophique, en particulier l'éthique et la philosophie politique, a une grande étendue. Cet article, cependant, se concentre sur un perspective éthique sur cette question: la relation entre l'état et l'individu, en rapport, spécifiquement, avec la situation en Uganda.

THE ETHICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF UGANDA'S POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

J.K. Kigongo

Introduction

As a consequence of a political experience of about a hundred years of coercion Uganda seems to be undergoing a political transformation in the area of relationship between the state and the individual¹; there is emerging a disposition or tendency in her political leadership towards building harmony between the state and the individual. A major implication of the political change is that the right of political participation due to the individual by virtue of his genius is bound to attain its legitimacy, and subsequently undermine authoritarianism. But the change is lacking support of a strong ethical foundation to ensure the viability of the harmony.

Coercion

The creation of Uganda by colonialism as a geo-political unit and also the sustenance of the colonial system were based on coercion, direct and indirect coercion. The former took the form of forced amalgamation of different ethnic communities into a single political unit by means of conquest, intimidation and suppression of resistance against the colonial imposition. The latter involved moulding and manipulation of the vanquished to make them submit to the will of the colonial ruler. This was a form of intellectual colonialism pursued through alien education. A phenomenon entailed in the colonial coercion is the element of authoritarianism, if by authoritarianism is meant what Kwasi Wiredu says, that, it is any human arrangement which leads to a person being hindered in the development of his own will².

The post-colonial state was also founded on a system of political subjugation, hence perpetuation of authoritarianism. While intimidation and suppression were characteristic of military dictatorship, this dictatorship itself was an outcome of a wider form of authoritarianism. This was an epistemological attitude in the political leadership that

they had wisdom and therefore authority to rule. Accordingly, the rest of the society was supposed to submit and conform to the will of the state authoritarianists.

The colonial and post-colonial political leadership had inevitably to be authoritarian to ensure their survival. This was because they lacked legal and moral legitimacy in the society, having usurped political power. The nature of the establishment of the colonial system was definitely a political usurpation. The post-colonial political leadership was a product and instrument of the colonial **status quo**.

The issue of human rights in the context of Uganda

Authoritarianism entailed in both the direct and indirect forms of coercion was bound to stifle the genius of the individual, besides restraining his political participation, and subsequently the individual's potential for self-determination and self-realization. Because no normal human being can consciously submit his genius to the will of another coercion caused a conflict between the individual and the state. Hence it motivated consciousness for self-determination and self-realization.

The right to preservation of one's genius is an ethical or moral right, and the most fundamental of all human beings rights. In the context of Joel Feinberg's definition of moral rights, it is a person's entitlement held to exist prior to or independently of any legal or institutional rules, and is of fundamentally important kind held equally by all humans, unconditionally and unalterably³.

The fundamental nature of the right of one's genius can be appreciated in two senses. First, genius, as it is defined in the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary is the special inborn faculty of any individual⁴. Second, it is the foundation of one's will; the will ought to determine and direct any endeavour of a human being in the process of shaping a human personality. Therefore this right of genius that entails right of will ought to be inalienable and inviolable.

In the situation of colonial coercion the right was primarily an ethical issue, while in the situation of post-colonial coercion it was an ethical and political issue. The ethical dimension of the issue in both cases was the consciousness of the coerced individual that he ought to

be free from the coercion which was destined to constrain his genius and will and also his political participation. Politically the consciousness for self-determination and self-realization in the context of colonial coercion, though a disposition of individual human beings, tended to be more of a desire for collective freedom, that is freedom of a people, from colonial coercion. In the post-colonial state while also there was the element of desire for freedom of a people from state coercion, there was more pronounced individual consciousness for self-determination and self-realization.

The individual consciousness seemed to become more conspicuous over the time due to the fact the authoritarian state was turning into a tyranny, an extreme form of direct coercion characterised by institution of oppressive and suppressive political measures. In a situation where the political leadership suffered from crisis of confidence as they lacked legal and moral legitimacy amidst growing consciousness for freedom, extreme coercion was inevitable in the attempt by political leadership to survive.

Nevertheless, the political consciousness of the oppressed having been deeply entrenched in the society coupled with its ethical justification, it was gradually undermining the epistemological myth of the authoritarian state. The downfall of the myth generated the motivation for the political transformation.

The basic idea which induced the disposition towards political transformation was the thinking that the people ought to be governed under a political system which developed out of their will and participation. The idea envisaged a collective responsibility between the rulers and the ruled for guiding the society. The principle of collective responsibility in political participation was anticipated by the government of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) as a vital political doctrine in building a harmonious relationship between the state and the individual⁵. The NRM emerged as an expression and outcome of the political consciousness.

The ethical foundation

Attainment of a viable harmony between the state and the individual needs the support of a strong ethical foundation to translate the principle of collective responsibility into practical reality. While the growth of political consciousness as a reaction against the system of authoritarianism was itself an element of ethical disposition, it lacked the backing of a strong system of ethical values. A society subjected to a period of almost a century of political subjugation could not evolve a strong ethical base. Since coercion tended to constrain the potential of the individual for the development of his genius which is the foundation of individual ethics, he could not develop ethical traits which could evolve into a strong system of ethical values in the society. Besides the coercion itself, colonialism had upset the basis of the African traditional way of life, including the educational which was the determinant of ethics in the African society. Thus there developed an ethical vacuum in the mind of the individual and in the society.

The ethical situation was compounded by the alien education pursued under colonialism and perpetuated by the post-colonial regimes. The education caused a metaphysical dilemma to the individual, that is, a crisis of identity, as he swung between the dichotomy of being African and the one becoming modern, being what he was and becoming what he was not. Such a conflict in the conscience of the individual undermined more the intellectual capacity of the individual to develop a system of ethical traits.

In view of the need to have a firmly instituted system of ethical values to govern the political behaviour ethical values such as honesty and tolerance, among others, ought to be integral elements of human consciousness and hence of the society. However the disposition towards political transformation having been a product of ethical and political consciousness in the society points to a possibility of developing the ethical system.

Conclusion

Implied in the necessity for the society to have a system of ethical values for guiding the relationship between the individual and the state is the need to have a system of education which, among other elements, has a significant ethical orientation. Nevertheless, the issue of education should be considered comprehensively in a separate paper.

Notes

1. The term **state** as is used in the paper means an independent political community. See Stanley I. Benn, "State" in Paul Edwards (ed.) The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Vol.8) (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967: p.7)
2. Kwasi Wiredu, Philosophy and an African Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980: p.21)
3. Joel Weinberg, Social Philosophy (Englewood Cliffs New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973: pp.84-85)
4. Macdonald, A.M. (ed.), Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (Edinburgh, W and R Chambers, 1972: p.543)
5. The NRM took over political power in January 1986.

Résumé

Dans cette article j'essaye de faire trois choses. Premièrement, j'essaye de montrer que dans la sphère de la métaphysique Dr. King avait accepté le personnalisme, c'est-à-dire, une forme de l'idéalisme. Deuxièmement, je prétends qu'on peut inférer deux conséquences importantes de cette position métaphysique. Et troisièmement, j'affirme qu'un activisme social de la sorte que pratiquait Dr. King deviendrait obligatoire pour chaque personne qui acceptait une position métaphysique comme celle qu'il a soutenu.

THE ETHICAL THOUGHT OF MARTIN LUTHER KING

Marvin C. Sterling

The aim of this paper is threefold. First, I shall attempt to give an account of the main features of Dr. King's metaphysical position. Secondly, I shall call attention to two important consequences which he took to follow from his position. And thirdly, having explicated his notion of 'agape', I shall maintain that some such social activism as that practiced by Dr. King becomes morally binding on the individual who is persuaded of the truth of such a metaphysical view.

Dr. King subscribed to the metaphysical view sometimes referred to as **Personalistic Idealism**. As a form of the Panpsychist Ontology, Personalistic Idealism contends that Ultimate Reality, that is, the **basic stuff** which the universe is made of, is Mind. According to this view, there is no other genuine substance apart from mental substances, i.e., the universe is nothing but a vast multitude of indivisible entities, each one of which is **essentially conscious** and **non-extended**. Moreover, albeit these basic entities - due to variations in their degree of development - are conceived of as differing drastically from one another in the quality or grade of their consciousness, nonetheless at no point in their development (not even at the primitive phase of evolution where they appear to the visual sense to be merely non-living earth or stone) are they thought to possess the characteristics that make for materiality.

In his book entitled Stride Toward Freedom, Dr. King states the following:

I studied philosophy and theology at Boston University under Edgar S. Brightman and L. Harold DeWolf. Both men greatly stimulated my thinking. It was mainly under these teachers that I studied Personalistic Philosophy - the theory that the clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in Personality. This personal idealism remains today my basic philosophical position. Personalism's insistence that only personality - Finite and Infinite - is ultimately real strengthened me in two convictions: It gave me metaphysical and philoso-

phical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality (1958, p.82).

In the above quotation, Dr. King endorses Personalistic Idealism in an altogether explicit manner. On the negative side, his opposition to the materialist view of the universe is equally clear. Consider how vehemently he rejects the Materialist Ontology in the following passage from his anthology Strength to Love:

This man-centered foolishness has had a long and oftentimes disastrous reign in the history of mankind. Sometimes it is theoretically expressed in the doctrine of materialism, which contends that reality may be explained in term of matter in motion, that life is a **physiological process with a physiological meaning**, that man is a transient accident of protons and electrons travelling blind, that thought is a temporary product of grey matter, and that the events of history are an interaction of matter and motion operating by the principle of necessity. Having no place for God or for eternal ideas, materialism is opposed to both theism and idealism.

This materialistic philosophy leads inevitably into a dead-end street in an intellectually senseless world. To believe that human personality is the result of the fortuitous interplay of atoms and electrons is as absurd as to believe that a monkey by hitting typewriter keys at random will eventually produce a Shakespearean play. Sheer magic! It is much more sensible to say with Sir James Jeans, the Physicist, that **the universe seems to be nearer to a great thought than to a great machine**, or with Arthur Balfour, the Philosopher, that we **now know too much about matter to be materialists**. Materi-

alism is a weak flame that is blown out by the breath of mature thinking.

This second quotation from the writings of King not only brings out clearly his opposition to the metaphysics of materialism, but also gives further corroboration for the claim that he subscribed to the Panpsychist Ontology.

I wish to call to your attention at this point a specific portion of the above quotation from Stride Toward Freedom. In that passage King says that Personalism's "insistence that only personality - finite and infinite - is ultimately real strengthened me in two convictions: it gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality." From this passage it is abundantly clear that King believed that the idea of a personal God and that of dignity and worth of human personality are - at least in a weak sense - logical consequences of a Personalistic metaphysics. Moreover the more charitable interpretation here would take it that King regarded the latter as logical consequences of Personalism in the sense of being provided with greater plausibility on the assumption of the truth of this particular metaphysical position. Let us examine these two claims in turn.

As for the first point, I think that King was right to suggest that Personalism renders more plausible the idea that God is personal. For the central thesis of Personalism is that Reality, **as such**, is **personal**. Accordingly, we have the almost trivial argument that if Personalism is true, then **all** Realities are personal, and if all realities are personal then the All-Perfect of Supreme Reality is personal. Consequently, on the assumption that Personalism is true, then the All-Perfect or Supreme Reality is personal. And by the Word 'God' we simply mean the All-Perfect or Supreme Reality. Therefore, if Personalism is true, then God is Personal.

But before I move on to the second point, let me quote a relevant passage from Strength to Love. For it is important to be clear concerning what King was getting at when he spoke of God as **personal**.

To say that this God is personal is not to make him a finite object beside other objects or attri-

bute to him the limitations of human personality; it is to take what is finest and noblest in our consciousness and affirm its perfect existence in him.

Let me now say something in defense of Dr. King's second claim. It would appear that his reasoning might be reconstructed as follows. First, it is King's contention that personality **as such** has supreme **value**. Now, if personal idealism is the correct view concerning the nature of Reality, then it is personality that constitutes the very essence of every human individual. On this view, it is a serious mistake to regard the human individual as merely a particular sort of highly complex, material composite. Personalism implies that the human individual cannot legitimately be thought of as just an intricate conglomeration of material particles which is accidentally, and thus only temporarily, possessed of thought and feeling; rather, it implies that the human individual is a unitary, incomposite, substantial entity, and that personality constitutes his own, enduring, and inalterable nature.

Consequently, if the Personal Idealism is true, then - since personality as such has supreme value - it follows that each human individual, by reason of his very essence, is the locus of supreme value, i.e., is the place, so to speak, where supreme value is to be found. And it is reasoning along these lines which underlay Dr. King's contention that all human individuals are to be respected supremely, revered supremely, and LOVED SUPREMELY - irrespective of what their accidental or non-essential characteristics might happen to be.

But the basic premise which supports this line of reasoning is that personality, as such, has supreme value. What justification is there to corroborate this contention? King does not explicitly address the point in the passage cited. However, it appears that his position was pretty much the following.

Again, the question we are concerned with is **What justification is there for the contention that personality, as such, has supreme value?** Toward the end of his book, Strength To Love, King states that personality "means simply self-consciousness and self-direction " (1963a, p.155). In other words, insofar, as we rightly conceive of personality, we will necessarily have in mind the attributes of rationality and

autonomy, the human powers of Reason and Free Will. Let us take this as our point of departure. For, understood in this sense, personality must be viewed as being - by its very nature - the well-spring or potential source of all good qualities, including those noblest of attributes which, taken together, constitute true beauty of character.

Thus, to express it metaphorically, personality may be seen as the treasury of interior affluence, that is, the spiritual affluence of wisdom, compassion, courage, generosity, fortitude, self-sacrifice, forbearance, unselfishness, and universal benevolence. It is certain that Dr. KING regarded such lofty traits of character as these as the essential and eternal contents of personality.

The upshot of these remarks is that Dr. King was correct in maintaining that if we grant the truth of Personal Idealism, then his notion of the dignity and worth of human personality takes on increased plausibility. Moreover, this shows clearly the philosophic underpinnings of Dr. King's endorsement of the **Love Ethic** of Christianity.

However, there is one aspect of this Judaeo-Christian Love Ethic which Dr. King was especially concerned to formulate with clarity, and to provide with philosophic justification. I refer to the injunction to love our enemies. In attempting to resolve the conceptual difficulties which this injunction seems to pose, and in order to lessen the appearance of paradox, Dr. King undertook an analysis of the meaning of **love**. He was acutely aware of the importance of emphasizing that love should not be identified with weak sentimentality, that is, that it should not be conceived in purely emotional terms. In his book Strength to Love he states the following: "The meaning of love is not to be confused with some sentimental outpouring. Love is something much deeper than emotional bosh." (1963, p.50) King clearly saw that the tendency to think of love as an affectionate feeling is the main source of the implausibility which initially attaches to the idea of loving our enemies.

In moving beyond this negative account which stresses that love is NOT just an affectionate feeling, that is, in order to give more positive insight into the nature of love, King makes a distinction between three different kinds of love. Consider the following passage from Strength to

Love:

In the Greek New Testament are three words for love. The word 'eros' is a sort of aesthetic or romantic love. In the Platonic dialogues 'eros' is a yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. The second word is 'philia', a reciprocal love and the intimate affection and friendship between friends. We love those whom we like, and we love because we are loved. The third word is 'agape', understanding and creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. An overflowing love which seeks nothing in return, 'agape' is the love of God operating in the human heart. (1963a, p.50)

I would like to offer some additional clarification in connection with the above distinctions. Moreover, in attempting to shed further light on these three types of love, I shall bear consistently in mind King's important observation that love may not legitimately be conceived in exclusively emotional terms, that is, his point that love is not merely an **affectionate feeling**. More specifically, I shall offer an account of love in general as a complex psychological structure, whose component elements are inseparably tied together. Accordingly, I submit that love, broadly speaking, may be viewed as a three-dimensional mental structure; it possesses a cognitive dimension, an emotive dimension, and a behavioral dimension. The cognitive aspect of love consists in THINKING, the emotive aspect in FEELING, and the behavioral aspect in OUTWARD ACTION. These three aspects of love are intimately linked together, and they vary concomitantly. That is, any given mode of thinking is inextricably bound up with certain corresponding ways of feeling and behaving. Let us now examine 'eros', 'philia' and 'agape' in the light of these general considerations concerning love.

What, then, is 'eros' or aesthetic love? 'Eros' is that love which is based on the value or goodness of the loved object. It is a three-fold acknowledgment of the value or goodness of a thing. To love a thing in the sense of 'eros' is to **acknowledge** its value or goodness both COGNITIVELY and EMOTIVELY, and also to behave (or to be disposed to

behave) toward the thing in question in a manner that is in conformity with such an acknowledgment. A **cognitive** acknowledgment that a given thing is good consists in THINKING of that thing as good, or ideally, in understanding or realizing that it is good. An emotive acknowledgment that a thing is good consists in taking delight in the thing itself, and/or rejoicing in its well-being. **Behavioral** acknowledgment of the goodness of a thing consists in behaving toward that thing in any of the various ways which constitute external expressions of an internal assessment of that thing as good.

Let us illustrate these points by the use of a sensual example. I love strawberry-flavored ice cream. This love is an example of a sensual love, involving primarily the sense of taste. This love which I have for strawberry ice cream is also an example of eros or aesthetic love. For it is based on a certain value or goodness characterizing the loved object, namely the ice cream. My love for strawberry-flavored ice cream is - at the cognitive level - my realization that this ice cream possesses certain good qualities, a certain value. Emotively speaking, this love consists in the joy and delight which I take in these good qualities of ice cream. At the behavioral level, this love is simply the total set of actions and action-dispositions which I exhibit in connection with strawberry-flavored ice cream insofar as I am deprived of it, and I try to preserve it when I am in possession of it.

As for 'philia', or reciprocal love, this is the love which we display **toward a friend**. In the case of 'philia', the loved object is favorably disposed toward the one who loves, and this favorable disposition in the loved object is the sole basis of the love which is directed upon this object. What is distinctive about 'philia' is that the actual object of this kind of love is not the person toward whom it is directed, but rather a certain **FACT** about that person. With 'philia', the real object of my love is the **fact that** a person is favorably disposed toward me, a source of my well-being, a center from which benefits habitually emanate toward me. At the cognitive level, thus, my 'philia' towards a person consists in my realizing or understanding the value of that person's favorable disposition toward myself. Emotively speaking, it is my taking joy and delight in this same fact; and be-

haviorably speaking, it consists in my acting in a manner which expresses an interior acknowledgment of the value attaching to this fact (e.g., conferring such benefits upon that person as will promote his/her happiness, with the aim of keeping him/her favorably disposed).

The third type of love which Dr. King distinguishes he refers to as 'agape'. 'Agape' is love which is **disinterested** in the sense of being unselfish. As indicated in the above quotation from his book Strength to Love, Dr. King defines 'agape' as an understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill toward all mankind. The words **understanding** and 'goodwill' in King's definition are undoubtedly references to what I have described as the cognitive and emotive dimension of this love, respectively. Moreover, the behavioral dimension of this love would seem to be at least part of what the words 'creative' and 'redemptive' are employed by Dr. King to refer to. Thus, we may take it that 'agape' is characterized by the same three-dimensional structure as was noted in connection with 'eros' and 'philia'. However, I submit that what is distinctive about 'agape' is its particular object. The unique object upon which 'agape' is directed is the human being **as such**, that is, the human being vis-a-vis his essential humanity.

The upshot of the above remarks is that Dr. King called attention to this distinction between 'eros', 'philia' and 'agape' in order to emphasize that when he himself spoke of love, it was in the sense of 'agape'. Dr. King's Doctrine of 'Agape' constitutes the veritable foundation on which the magnificent edifice of his ethical teachings is erected. To recognize that King's references to love are almost invariably references to 'agape' is particularly important in order to appreciate the great wisdom that underlies his oft-repeated exhortation that we should love even our most malicious and spiteful enemy. When rightly understood, there is nothing whatsoever in the idea of loving our enemies which can be viewed as implausible or paradoxical.

At this point I would like to highlight four distinct claims concerning 'agape' which Dr. King either explicitly embraces or tacitly espouses in his writings and talks. These are the following:

- (1) Agape is fundamentally different from philia.

- (2) Agape is disinterested.
- (3) Agape is **higher** than other varieties of love.
- (4) Agape is fundamentally different from 'eros'.

Through an examination of the earlier quotation from Strength to Love (1963a, p.50), it is easy to see that King did indeed subscribe to these four assumptions concerning 'agape'. In the ensuing lines I would like to make some brief critical remarks with respect to each of these assumptions.

As regards the first claim, Dr. King was surely correct in his belief that 'agape' is fundamentally different from philia. For the very nature of 'agape' is such that any instance of love which exhibits this nature is necessarily ruled out as a case of 'philia'. For example, 'agape' is essentially an unselfish variety of love, whereas 'philia' by its very nature is unavoidably a selfish variety of love. In 'philia' the **loved** object, i.e. the friend, is viewed primarily as a potential source from which profit or benefits may be gained for oneself, that is, for the person who **loves**. Superficially viewed, 'philia' seems to be the love of another person, namely the love of one's friend. However, in reality it is ultimately reducible to the love of self. But, as stated, the nature of 'agape' is radically opposed to this. consequently, Dr. King is altogether correct in his claim that 'agape' is fundamentally different from 'philia'.

The second contention is that 'agape' is **disinterested** love. In this context 'disinterested' can be taken as roughly synonymous with 'unselfish'. Thus, to say that 'agape' is disinterested simply amounts to saying that 'agape' is an unselfish variety of love; but still, we can understand this unselfishness in at least two different senses. In one sense, to say that 'agape' is unselfish would amount to saying that it is not based on any goodness or value in the loved object, and thus does not involve taking any real delight in the **loved** object. On this usage, we would be required to say that insofar as any given instance of love involves taking joy or delight in the loved object, it must be regarded as selfish, for the quality of such love would be vitiated by the **personal** enjoyment experienced by the lover in contemplating the goodness of the loved object. However, in another sense of the word 'unselfish', to say that 'agape' is unselfish would amount to the claim that it is

directed upon the **reality** and **well-being** of another person FOR THEIR OWN SAKE (that is, as ends in themselves), and not simply as means to some other end beyond themselves. If we think of 'agape' as unselfish in this second sense, then, emotively speaking it will consist in taking joy and delight in the very BEING and WELFARE of another person, considered IN THEMSELVES, and not merely as instrumental for the production or acquisition of some good beyond themselves. For the sake of brevity, let us refer to the first sense of 'unselfish' as sense #1, and to the second sense as sense #2.

Now, if we understand 'disinterested' as meaning 'unselfish' in sense #1, then I submit that this second assumption which Dr. King makes concerning 'agape' is incorrect. In other words, it would be a mistake to say that 'agape' is disinterested, if by 'disinterested' we mean that it is not based on any goodness or value in the loved object. For if 'agape' were admitted to be disinterested in this sense, it would be not only arbitrary, irrational, and hypocritical love, it would actually be logically impossible. If 'agape' were disinterested in this sense, then I maintain there could be no such thing as 'agape'; it would be a mere **ens rationis**. For it is simply not possible for love not to be based on the goodness or value of the loved object, any more than it is possible for a rectangle not to have four sides.

Doubtless there are cases in which a person may **seem** to love something which has no goodness, or is even decidedly evil. For example, the suffering, misfortune, or defeat of another person are things which it is possible a person may **seem** to love. But this is possible only insofar as the **lover** - through imagination and deluded judgment - transforms what in itself is evil into something good. In such cases it is imaginary **good** thing which is the real object of love. Consequently, since the notion of a love which is not based on any goodness or value in its object is logically unacceptable, it would be a mistake to say that 'agape' is disinterested in sense #1 above.

But if we understand 'disinterested' as meaning 'unselfish' in sense #2 above, then dr. King is correct in his assumption that 'agape' is disinterested. I shall discuss this point further in connection with the fourth claim listed above.

The third claim is that 'agape' is a **higher** variety of love. With respect to this claim, I wish to say that - however we choose to interpret the somewhat nebulous term 'higher' - Dr. King is correct in his assumption. The metaphorical force of the concept 'higher' derives at least in part from the fact that the literal highness of a position, state or condition is in direct proportion to the amount of effort or exertion required to reach that position, state or condition. This is the main significance of the physical comparison involved. Similarly, we customarily describe in metaphorical terms as 'low' those states or positions which are attained with little or no exertion. Consistently with this usage, we may say that 'agape' is a **higher** variety of love, and the justification for this is that agape is unselfish love. Moreover - although pre-reflectively we may ordinarily fail to take cognizance of the fact - attainment of the state of character in which we are able to show forth **genuinely** unselfish love requires a good deal of effort. It is very easy to love oneself; it is also quite easy to love others **for the sake of self**. However, it is a much more difficult thing to love others **for their own sake**. This requires strenuous mental exertion. Moreover, this kind of love, this unselfish love, is a higher variety of love for precisely this reason. Accordingly, Dr. King is right to suggest that 'agape' is a higher variety of love, for it is essentially unselfish.

The fourth and last contention listed is that 'agape' is fundamentally different from eros. Why does Dr. King make this assumption? It would appear that his main reason for regarding 'agape' as fundamentally different from 'eros' is that 'agape' is an essentially disinterested variety of love, while 'eros' is based upon goodness or value in the loved object. However, as I indicated in the foregoing, 'agape' cannot be disinterested in the sense of not being based on any value or goodness in the loved object (i.e., the word 'disinterested' should not be taken to mean 'unselfish' in what I earlier labeled as sense #1). This view of 'agape' would degrade it to the level of an entirely arbitrary, irrational, and hypocritical love. Thus, 'agape' is not disinterested in a sense which would force us to say that it is fundamentally different from 'eros'. In fact, 'agape' just is 'eros', but a special variety of 'eros'. Accordingly, every case of 'agape' is a case of 'eros', but not

every case of 'eros' is necessarily an instance of 'agape'. Consequently, 'agape' - contrary to the standard view expressed in the theological literature - is not fundamentally different from 'eros', and the fourth contention listed above must be rejected.

Let me conclude by calling attention to one of the most weighty considerations which led to Dr. King's ascribing superlative importance to the notion of 'agape'. Briefly stated, this is the fact that 'agape' constitutes the principal means through which actualization of the Beloved Community is possible. Dr. King employed the expression 'Beloved Community' to designate the ideal state of mankind as a whole, the apex of social evolution which he envisioned for humanity. The Beloved Community is that **promised land** of racial harmony and international solidarity which Dr. King was **allowed** to gaze upon from the **mountain-top** of that dazzlingly intense spiritual illumination which characterized the last days of his earthly existence. 'Agape', for Dr. King, is the key to this ideal state of humanity. For he regarded this **understanding, creative, and redemptive goodwill for all men** as the source and true foundation of all the virtues which constitute moral excellence. Moreover, the Beloved Community is brought into existence in proportion as moral excellence pervades and comes to predominate in human society. That is, the process through which Dr. King's Beloved Community is to be established is rooted in the individual but has ramifications for the whole of human society. As individual human beings succeed in cultivating within themselves the attitude of universal benevolence and thereby become established in moral excellence, this nobility of character will naturally be reflected in the quality of interaction between individuals, groups, and nations.

This is the celebrated dream of Dr. Martin Luther King. In his Doctrine of 'Agape' he provides us with the formula for realizing **the dream**; moreover, this is the chief significance of the notion of 'Agape' in his philosophy.

Now, if Personal Idealism is the correct view concerning the nature of reality, then each human individual, by reason of his very essence, is the locus of supreme value. And if the human individual is the locus of supreme value, then any mode of thinking, feeling, or

behaving which presupposes that the individual's worth is dependent on some characteristic peripheral or external to personality is fundamentally misguided. But the racist mentality which underlay the discriminatory social institutions which prevailed during King's time **just** is a mode of thinking, feeling, and behaving which presupposes that **race** is the primary determinant of individual worth. Moreover, race is incontrovertibly something peripheral or external to personality. Consequently, if Personal Idealism is true, then the racist mentality is fundamentally misguided.

But to struggle in opposition to that which is fundamentally misguided is simple justice. Thus, if the racist mentality is fundamentally misguided, then to struggle in opposition to this racist mentality is simple justice. Moreover, to do that which constitutes simple justice is in every instance morally obligatory. Consequently, if to struggle in opposition to the racist mentality is simple justice, it follows that to struggle in opposition to the racist mentality is morally obligatory. And since it was previously established that the truth of Personal Idealism implies that the racist mentality is fundamentally misguided, it necessarily follows that if Personal Idealism is true, then to struggle in opposition to the racist mentality is morally obligatory.

Finally, since the social activism to which Dr. King devoted his life may briefly be characterized as a sustained and vigorous struggle in opposition to the racist mentality, it follows that if Personal Idealism is true, then social activism of the sort to which King devoted his life is morally obligatory.

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**DR. Ch. NEUGEBAUER'S CRITICAL NOTE ON
ETHNOPHILOSOPHY IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL
DISCOURSE IN AFRICA
SOME REMARKS**

J.A.I. Bewaji

In section one of this very compact, yet lucid, essay [Quest Vol.IV No.1], Dr. Neugebauer attempted to place the issue of ethnophilosophy within the context that makes its meaning, content and implications explicit. He thereby identified the trilemma faced by the autochthonous African philosopher whose thought, in order to be meaningful, authentic and interesting, must constitute an exposition of a non-existent African traditional, undiluted and original mode of thought, or he must accept an alienating role of irrelevance and/or non-originality, because of his pretension to belonging to the universe of a community of philosophical scholarship, or he must accept the impossible conclusion of the colonial ideology that justifies the desiccation and decimation of African peoples and cultures, namely, that Africans never originated any logical thought and philosophy, not by accident but because of an innate, genetic inferiority. All these are patent and potent precipices that perilously scare the emergent African philosopher without respite as his European counterpart is not ready to voluntarily grant any relief by acknowledging the universality of reason. Hence, as he says

African intellectuals are eventually captured by the (paradoxical) European myth of Africanness Hence we can identify the dawn of a new paradigm of neo-colonial ideology: the capacity to cope with ethnocentrism and overcome it in a critical way, is said to be a genuine European quality, whereas the static adherence to an alleged tradition, mostly made in Europe, appears to be solely a Third-World quality and of course an imperative for the sake of authenticity (pp.45-46).

In section two, the author's critique of Tempels' Bantu Philosophy unravels the presupposition of the Tempelsian thinker that compels the emergent African, nay, Third World scholar to become apologetic in his

attempt to understand the views of his people on universal problems and in his presentation of same to the international intellectual community; a community to which he at once belongs and does not belong by virtue of his being human on the one hand and of being an African (or a Third World scholar) on the other. The internal contradictions of Bantu Philosophy of Tempels is a consequence of Tempels' search for the non-existent primitive Bantu and the justification, one, of a cloaked racism which makes palatable and moral colonialism, alienation and exploitation; two, a rediscovery, in imagination, of an African equivalent of Christian scholastic ontological categories, consequently, third, the rationalization of false authenticity in tribal folklore.

The section on 'The African Debate on Tempels' constitutes a review of attempts to identify the origins, aims and limits of ethnophilosophy as it gradually climaxed in Hountondji's seminal book African Philosophy: Myth and Reality¹, while the section on 'General Ethnophilosophy in the African Philosophical Discourse' helps to illuminate the works of African scholars from Kagame to Oruka, by identifying the dual formats of ethnophilosophising in Africa - the first being classical, imperialist, colonialist ethnophilosophy and the second being neo-colonialist, nationalist, general ethnophilosophy. The futility of the first is obvious from the faulty premises and mistaken conclusions from which it arises and to which it leads. But the second is not easily overcome because of the nationalist and intellectual imperatives that impel it.

Now, while it may not be obvious the role played by "inherent class-contradictions in Africa" (p.55) in the development of ethnophilosophy of the latter form (I personally do not see this class antagonism), the author's points concerning the futility of the psychologically encouraging (having maybe a mainly placebo effect) penchant for undue nationalism serves the end of showing the need to always reflect the universal nature of the discourse of philosophy, no matter where and who undertakes it. Peculiar social, cultural and intellectual circumstances may dictate the content and tenor of discourse, but, like the various notes serve to constitute the totality called symphony or music,

all attempts to genuinely philosophise constitutes worthy contributions to philosophical discourse in so far as they obey the necessary canons of debate; these attempts would lose meaning when considered otherwise.

Hence as the author recognized in his concluding remarks, a lot of useful research is taking place, using the genuine raw materials of peculiar cultural backgrounds but this has been done without any conscious effort, by some of these scholars, to erect national philosophies. These efforts have consequently generated further discussions and assisted in the furtherance of knowledge. But charlatans do exist here as elsewhere, whose concern is not directly that of constructing ethnophilosophical edifices initially but who, for selfish reasons, end up doing so. These are intellectual accidents that are avoidable and it is hoped that Neugebauer's paper will signal this type of researches to a halt. For, as Soyinka is reputed to have retorted, since a tiger need not celebrate its tigrity, so also a Negro need not celebrate his Negritude.

Thus Neugebauer's critique of ethnophilosophy is informative and courageous by its clear unmasking of a tendency towards undue paternalism and defence of an equally bogus alternative to colonial imperialism stemming from bigoted reasoning sourced in a crooked logic and warped empirical foundation called the **African nature**, the **African mind** and/or the colour bar, as in silhouetted racism that has been profoundly exhibited by the cultural traditions of the east and west, placing African and other Third World peoples on the short end of the stick by marginalizing them. Thus, he exhibits in an unusually lucid and equally unusually forceful logical sequence, a synthesis that unmasks the illogicalities in both racism and ethnophilosophy.

But Neugebauer's effort may lead to an involuntary, because unintended, *cul de sac* and consequently to a discouragement of the development of the very positive, non-apologetic individualistic and discursive philosophical tradition he correctly (with my total support) sincerely craves. This possible consequence cannot be easily glossed over without consigning, unduly, genuine philosophical works to a limbo of impossibility. The difficulty is this: if the African philosopher, qua

philosopher, is to make valuable contribution to scholarship he has no business either being apologetic or paternalistic; such an attitude of mind helps to foster negative and unscholarly discussion; if again he is to operate from the perspective of a transcendence of assumed unanimity of thought (ersatz exoticism which compels the type of nationalistic/ideological philosophising typical of Wiredu (1980, 1985) via the linguistic device, the evasive apologetic mytho-metaphysical cum intuitionistic approach of Anyanwu (1984) and Momoh (1989) that is symptomatic of ethnophilosophy, which is also cloaked in the Sodipo/-Hallen (1986) hermeneutical/phenomenological approach that leads ultimately to a fallacious analogic-reductive and subtractive methodology), then he must shed the penchant for false authenticity - a needless one anyway; and finally, if he is to make useful contribution in recognition of the dialectical process of recursive forward and backward movement of ideas he must limit himself to the task of engaging in a critique of the type A.G.A. Bello (1987) and M. Oke (1988) conducted on Wiredu or that undertaken by S. Gbadegesin (1984) and M.A. Makinde (1985) on Abimbola (1971, 1976) and Sodipo (1973) on cause, effect, chance and human destiny among the Yoruba (even though these latter contributions still suffer a la Neugebauer, some of the trappings of ethnophilosophising). However, desirable as the foregoing are, they are fraught with difficulties not recognized (or, is it anticipated) by Neugebauer, namely,

- (i) that the results of these efforts, when properly conducted (to the satisfaction of Neugebauer) must still be located within a cultural milieu that, understandably, has been informed both by the acceptable, though, as he puts it, **controversial** submission of Hountondji, viz,

So called modern Africa is just as traditional as pre-colonial Africa in the only acceptable sense of the word traditional- tradition does not include, but necessarily implies a system of discontinuities (quoted by Neugebauer, p.60)

and by the fact that this makes the African philosopher still a product of an experience tinted in his background but fashioned

out in similar continuous and discontinuous manner, making him pliable to the community of universal scholarship. In this regard the works of Bello and Oke must be regarded as culturally located just as Quine's philosophy or any other philosopher's works in the east or west has been, without prejudice to their contributions to scholarship. The force of this point cannot be ignored, because even Neugebauer's critique stems from a cultural tradition which does not for that reason make his effort either apologetic, paternalistic or ethnocentric.

- (ii) the continuities and discontinuities to which Neugebauer and Hountondji have alluded are motored on exogenous sources of cross-cultural interaction of centuries among peoples of the world. But as this goes, it ignores the endogenous factors which I have always canvassed (with very little support from other quarters, to the best of my knowledge) that the so-called cultural unanimity of Africans is not only bogus on the grounds of the diversity of Africa and Africans (cf Gyekye 1987) but also because, even within the same ethnic group or even (now) nation states, dissenting opinions have almost always been ignored (Bewaji 1983, p.75; 1985, p.345 and 1988a, p.327)². In contemporary societies, the effectiveness of the various media of information dissemination and codification has made this process of conscious and unconscious suppression and/or jettisoning difficult if not impossible; but, and this must be emphasized, the much vaunted practice of democracy, with all its endearing advantages, is masked and sugar-coated tyranny of the vocal majority³. When one imagines the survival of dissenting minority opinion in societies with little or no direct personal record of views, the possibilities of uses and abuses of this fact will forcefully dawn on us. In this regard, I have on various occasions cautioned against such universal generalisations as that there were no atheists in traditional African societies when sayings that suggest disbelief in deity abound, or, that all things Africans are religious (Idowu 1962) or that reason is hellenic as emotion is African or that Africans were through and through communists in their traditional societies. The diverse

views that I advert to are the internal (and external) continuities and discontinuities that necessarily underwrite philosophic originality and critiques in all parts of the world and which must not be discounted in the case of African Philosophy.

However that may be, another great danger which Neugebauer's critique of ethnophilosophy has posed is the total alienation of the possibility of authentic (nay, to avoid the opprobrious insinuations you may substitute **original** if it fits your semantic preference) contributions to possible solutions of perennial philosophical problems, though such attempts arise from a cultural background. In this regard my discussion of Bolaji Idowu's pioneering book Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief and the mind and body problem in 'Body, Mind and Soul' (1990) fall within this category⁴.

No doubt such efforts may generate controversial responses but one need not despair as per force one would be, going by Neugebauer's arguments, simply because the discussion is based upon idea generated from a certain cultural tradition. I am sure that this is an avoidable impasse if Neugebauer will reexamine his views along the lines thus far suggested.

Finally, in spite of his efforts, Neugebauer still has to demonstrate that his typification of philosophy is universal in application. This point constitutes the achilles' heel of Wiredu (see Oke 1988), Sodipo, Bodunrin, Oruka, Hountondji and many other autochthonous African philosopher's acceptance of the **modern western philosophy as the universal paradigm model of philosophy**, which is another form, though inverse, of paternalism in disguise. The fact that the western philosophic tradition has become pervasive in this and many other parts of the world is accidental, not a product of there being no alternative. Parenthetically, one may remark that often the need to recourse to a culture in its historical antecedents need not be with the intention to glorify such a past as Nkrumah did in his early works or as Nyerere did in conceptualising African socialism. It may be merely a preparatory prelude to the critical discussion of important issues. Hence, in concluding, let me reiterate

One may very much wish for an authentic African Philosophy comparable to occidental analytical philosophy, the oriental intuitionism or American pragmatism when one considers abstract philosophising, particularly in the areas of logic, epistemology and metaphysics. Here in lies the almost irresistible temptation to reify the folk ideas of a conglomeration of African societies as African Philosophy. But shorn of intellectual smuggling bred out of inordinate but unnecessary ambition to prove the African an equal of other peoples, such endeavors are doomed to fail ad initio. It is therefore clear that many things that have been held forth as African Philosophy cannot be so regarded ... (Bewaji 1983, p.75)

But this should not be a cause to despair, rather it is a call to self-critical philosophical toil by those who have made it their duty to search for wisdom.

Notes

1. In my review of this book in Kenyan Journal of Sciences (Vol.1, series C, 1988) I attempted an elaboration of a critique of the emerging popular trend among some African Philosophers (academic teachers of philosophy) to see a cheap way of getting published in the orandishing of various incoherent ideas ascribed to their so-called traditional African.
2. This is the type of situation that seems to suggest that there were no atheists in traditional African societies, a fact which many things seem to contraindicate. Some of the issues raised here are discussed in my essay "Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief-Beyond Idowu, Mbiti, etal" presented at the 8th Congress of Nigerian Philosophical Association, Uyo, August 1990. See also Bewaji (1983, p.75).

3. A parallel controversy in science and other spheres of intellectual discourse is one concerning objectivity where a predominating tradition constitutes the jury in its own cause, thus making well nigh difficult the survival of other/counter opinions.
4. See my "Body, Mind and Soul" read at the Nigerian Association for Religious Tolerance (NARETO) Conference in October 1990 at the University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria.

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REVIEW

Eurocentrism. By Samir Amin. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989. Pp. xiii and 152.

Reviewed by Lansana Keita.

Samir Amin has generally been known over the years as one of Africa's foremost theoreticians of socialist (essentially Marxian) economics. Texts of his such as Accumulation on a World Scale, Unequal Development, The Future of Maoism, Neocolonialism in West Africa are well-known in certain circles. More specifically his critical analyses have been founded on the center-periphery dependency model which seeks to explain the economic and political relationships between the industrialized center ('The North') and the peripheral raw material producing nations of the Third World ('The South'). Amin's thesis is that the dependency relationship between the developing nations and the West has not changed in any qualitative way since formal political independence. The solution he proposes is an economic delinking from the West and the establishing of genuine socialist societies. It is worthwhile to cite Amin on this important point:

Allow me to suggest that the utopians are on the contrary, those who obstinately pursue an objective - the Europeanization of the world - that is clearly impossible. Delinking is in fact the only realistic course of action. It is necessary to recognize, however, what this course entails and what hardships it imposes over the long phase of transition that it requires. It also must be understood that delinking hinges on equally necessary change in the West, as part of a total reconstruction on a global scale (pp.116-117).

Amin further supports this thesis by arguing that no genuine development for the Third World is possible within the world capitalist system

(p.123).

In the case of Africa the idea of an economic delinking of Africa from Europe is no doubt a radical idea which would be vigorously opposed by those minority social classes which help supervise the conveyor belts that siphon off Africa's economic wealth to the West. For the African neocolonial bourgeoisie (Fanon would agree with this characterization) rewards for properly supervising the neocolonial enterprise include **favoured nation** treatment in terms of I.M.F. and World Bank loans, which in many instances are used for the purchase of military equipment or are promptly returned to secret accounts in Western banks. This unequal relationship is further reinforced by accelerated capital flights engendered by interest repayments on loans from Western governments and corporations. It is for this reason that the populations of Africa, in general, do not perceive any real qualitative transformations of their societies in the postcolonial era.

In general it is the analysis of this dependency relationship between the West and the Third world that has preoccupied Amin's research efforts. However with the recent text Eurocentrism Amin demonstrates his skill as a veritable polymath of the caliber of Frantz Fanon and Cheikh Anta Diop - two of Africa's most versatile theorists. This text makes some original points concerning the history of culture and would be regarded by some Westerners as expressing rather provocative ideas on the history of Western thought and the role that capitalism plays in the maintenance of the present economic structure of the world. Amin's timely text promotes the thesis that capitalism, the dominant economic system in the West, operates not as a neutral system of imbalanced economic exchange based on the principle of private wealth but as the kernel of a cultural package founded on the principle of Eurocentrism. This Eurocentrism pretends to be universalist in that it "claims that imitation of the Western model by all peoples is the only solution to the challenges of our time" (p.vii), but is actually anti-universalist since "it assumes the existence of irreducibly distinct cultural invariants that shape the historical paths of different peoples" (ibid.).

According to Amin, Eurocentrism is a modern phenomenon which

dates back only to the so-called European Renaissance. As a cultural phenomenon Eurocentrism, as Amin argues, is founded on the myth that the classical Greeks were the true cultural and racial ancestors of Western Europeans. In short, Eurocentrism is founded on the racial worship of things Greek. Yet as Amin points out Ancient Greece developed and flourished in an essentially non-European cultural environment. Nevertheless the Eurocentric thesis "(i) removes Ancient Greece from the very milieu in which it unfolded and developed - the Orient - in order to annex Hellenism to Europe arbitrarily; (ii) retains the mark of racism, the fundamental basis on which European cultural unity was constructed; ... " (Eurocentrism, p.90). The same principle is at work in Eurocentrism's arbitrary annexation of Christianity to structure it into an essentially European religion. Furthermore, as Amin continues, its ostensibly racist and immutable view of culture and peoples of the Orient prompts the characterization of Eurocentrism as a **prejudice that distorts social theories**.

Given that Europe proper, in the view of Amin, was not sufficiently civilized to adapt the Hellenistic and Eastern Christian cultures - thereby reinforcing the historical claim that the culture of the heartland of Europe bore little resemblance to that of ancient Greece (p.53) - it is not surprising that Eurocentrism would hope to forge the idea of 'Europe' only on the basis of the problematic concept of race which serves as the foundation block of modern racism.

This racism is so well entrenched that "Hitler went so far as to apply to non-German Europeans the general European racism toward other peoples" (ibid., p.xiii). Amin's analysis also leads him to charge Eurocentrism with an inability to see anything other than the lives of those who are comfortably installed in the modern world For Eurocentrism has brought with it the destruction of peoples and civilizations who have resisted its spread. In this sense, Nazism, far from being an aberration, always remains a latent possibility, for it is only the extreme formulation of the theses of Eurocentrism (ibid., p.114).

And what drives Eurocentrism is its capitalist engine clothed in the **ideology of the market**. The products of this economic system are not culturally neutral as they infest the Third World and other areas and are viewed primarily as status symbols, regardless of any use-value and appropriateness for local conditions. It is this **consumption without production** on the part of the parasitic bourgeoisies that helps fuel the dictates of the Eurocentric culture of capitalism. As Amin puts it: "The bourgeoisies of the Third World know no other goal; they imitate the Western model of consumption, while the schools in these countries reproduce the models of organization of labor that accompany Western technologies" (ibid., p.140).

Given the influence of Eurocentrism in the contemporary world the important question is what are the historical antecedents which have led to the present situation. Amin explores this question in the first section of his text ("Central and Peripheral Tributary Cultures") and points out that the tributary cultures of the pre-modern world (Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, the Islamic world, etc.) were in many respects the cultural and technological progenitors of what developed into European civilization. Amin argues specifically that the **Renaissance** which served as the catalyst for the European conquest and appropriation of huge portions of the globe ought to be viewed as a synthesis of the technological and metaphysical knowledge developed by the tributary cultures of the non-European world. The result of this is the present political-economic relationship between the West and Third World, center and periphery, and exploitation and dependence. As stated above, Amin's solution to this intolerable situation is what he refers to as **delinking**, i.e. a radical break between center and periphery instigated by radical forces in the periphery.

The society that Amin envisages as a solution to the problem of capitalism is definitely socialist in structure. This socialism will be universalist, thus necessarily in conflict with "Eurocentric capitalist barbarism" (p.152). This Eurocentric capitalist culture, according to Amin, "has led the world into a serious impasse" (p.152) characterized by its goals of forcing ordered equilibria of East-West and North-South relationships. And if these equilibria are to be maintained, "the risks of

violent conflicts and an increase in brutal racist positions will grow" (pp.151-152).

Amin attempts to deflect the possible argument against his solution to the problem of Eurocentric capitalism, that Marxian socialism is itself Eurocentric with the argument that a Eurocentric approach to Marxism does exist (p.120) but that nevertheless "it is possible to break the impasse of Eurocentrism, common to both the dominant bourgeois culture and vulgar Marxism" (p.121). Amin claims to have applied a universalized Marxian analysis with his model of peripheral and central tributary forms of social and economic material relations. A genuine socialist world according to Amin is one that "will be superior to ours on all levels ... only if it establishes a genuine universalism, based on contributions of everyone, Westerners as well as those whose historical course has been different" (p.152).

However I believe that it would be instructive to examine further the concrete effects of Eurocentrism on the African world in the form of unworkable cultural transplants, the fossilizing of traditional African cultures and continuing economic hegemony. Contemporary Africa is still being greatly affected by Eurocentrism clothed in the culture of capitalism with its Swiss Banks, I.M.F. conditionalities, the World Bank and the Pope's ever constant African itinerary. In sum, the material and the metaphysical life of Africa is continuously being shaped (of course there is resistance here and there) by the Eurocentric paradigm. In this connection, Amin's insightful and radical solutions would strike many Eurocentric Africans as odd, unworkable, even dangerous.

But consider in retrospect the potentous analyses of Frantz Fanon (Wretched by the Earth) on the neocolonial role played by Africa's nascent bureaucratic bourgeoisies which by taking control of the state machinery either through one party rule or military coup place themselves in the best position to appropriate sizable portions of the national incomes of their nations. The impetus to play this kind of prescribed role springs from a cultural indoctrination with the principles of Eurocentrism. For this sector of the African population the blight of Eurocentrism manifests itself as a singular adulation of German automotive products, French and Italian vestimentary products, and English and Swiss

private schools. But Eurocentrism is much more than the caricaturing of the superficial aspects of European culture by certain African elements. Eurocentrism in reality is something like a paradigm, which produces and maintains a particular ideology by appeal to the enforcing power of international capitalism. This enforcing power acquires legitimacy by working through international structures institutionalized by the ideology of Eurocentrism. Consider the forms of institutional Eurocentrism expressed, for example, in the structure of international bodies such as the United Nations, the World bank, the I.M.F. which control and lend legitimacy to the Europe generated bantustan-like nation states of Africa.

Ideological Eurocentrism reinforces the fictive nature of the African **nation state** as if the historical creation of the nation state by Europe represented something resembling political progress. Yet it is this amoral manipulation of whole peoples in the establishing of the **modern** nation state that has been at the source of much mayhem and wastage of resources in Africa and elsewhere.

These institutional structures constitute what one might call the political aspect of the ideology of Eurocentrism, but there is also a cultural-anthropological side to this cultural phenomenon. This aspect of Eurocentrism manifests itself in the constant usage and popularizing of the language and concepts of a value-laden European anthropology, which finds expression in the popular media.

But the more serious aspect of this though is the inability of the non-European world (Africa included) to separate modern technology - the fruit of an empirical science which has its roots in Africa and Asia - from the merely incidental cultural trappings and accoutrements of Eurocentrism. The ideology of Eurocentrism would seem to claim that since modern technology proves more efficient than its traditional counterpart that, therefore, the incidental cultural (legal, aesthetic, political, etc.) products of the West represent the most advanced forms of such. Yet the truth is that there is no logical connection between modern technology and the cultural forms of the West. It should also be pointed out too that Eurocentric ideology also erroneously assumes that certain cultural forms such as democratic government, individual

rights, etc. are exclusively of Western provenance. Again, this is not the case.

Thus it is disappointing to observe that modern and modernizing societies of much older tradition and greater pedigree than that of the arriviste West - consider, for example, China and Japan - have unnecessarily succumbed to the rather contingent surface features of Western civilization. It is just these apparently innocuous adaptations that help fuel the ideology of Eurocentrism. In the same context there is not much resistance to the false notion that 'democracy' and 'freedom' are most upheld in those nations founded on the cultures of Europe, when in actuality the nations of European settlement external to Europe were founded on the massive abuse of the human rights of the indigenous peoples of North and South America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other areas. The same could be said about the European colonization of Africa - made successful only by ineffable methods of repression from Cairo to the Cape. This repression continues through Eurocentric institutions like the I.M.F. and the postcolonial state apparatuses controlled by collaborative authoritarians, the pliant substitutes for the departed governors of colonial times. It should be understood that any coherent theory of democracy and human rights must involve necessarily the question of retributive justice. Yet Eurocentric political theory and practice has not yet seen fit to acknowledge the logically founded retributive deserts due to the human by-products of the Atlantic trade and New World servage, and the victims of indirect and settler colonialism on the African continent and elsewhere. The logical point is that a consistent theory of democracy and human rights requires that justice in all its forms be applied rigorously.

An exploration of the idea of Eurocentrism as suggested by Amin would support the view that the non-European world is in conflict with an ideology emanating from Europe and its successor cultures which seeks unilaterally to universalize concepts and practices among peoples, who in accepting such always run the risk of being objectified, hence dehumanized in the process. It is at these junctures that the naive sociobiological theories of racial chauvinism central to Eurocentrism strives for validity regardless of their logical tenor.

Of course it should be recognized that Eurocentrism is merely an ideology which could be successfully combated once its parameters and claims are recognized and understood. Yet though it is just an ideology, which prompts certain kinds of behaviour (both voluntary and enforceable), Eurocentrism yields results that are extremely pernicious for Africa's peoples in particular. Consider the following summary of its activities:

- (1) Eurocentric economic conditionalities create severe economic dislocations among the societies of Africa and the African peoples of the Western Hemisphere.
- (2) The result of this is a lack of economic growth and increasing numbers of economic refugees seeking to move to the European world where a more complex division of labor possesses the scope for varieties of low-skilled labor.
- (3) The movement of peoples into the urban areas of Europe and North America lead to increased Eurocentric xenophobia founded on principles of racial chauvinism.
- (4) Thus the flow of resources from the African could be characterized as a zero sum game (favoring the European world) constituting three forms:
 - (i) flow and flight of capital to the West's banking systems.
 - (ii) raw materials flows.
 - (iii) human capital flows, both high-skilled and low-skilled.
- (5) Capital flows from the European world are used strategically and sparingly in the form of arms and outdated technologies.
- (6) Eurocentric forms of culture as expressed in films, music, clothing, etc. are sold (**dumped** is the proper economic term) below cost on the African market. The real impact of this cultural assault is to present an idealized and misleading view of the European world.

Given the unfreedoms that Eurocentrism imposes on the African world it becomes necessary, therefore, not only to examine its structure theoretically but also to offer recommendations as to how the present situation could be addressed. I say this because human beings in general

set much store by freedom; in fact it is just this special feature of human existence that has proven itself to be a necessary condition for genuine humanity. Thus the intellectual examination of Eurocentrism necessarily establishes a mark in favor of human freedom. One might, therefore, consider the following sketch of what an analysis of Eurocentrism might entail.

- (1) The existing political structures of the Africa world have been inherited from colonialism and therefore ought to be examined. In this regard the structure of the state in Africa, the rights of individuals, the question of political accountability, etc. must be analyzed.
- (2) There must also be a re-examination of the received doctrines of international economics as they apply to the African world. This would entail analyses of the concept of exchange rates, convertibility of currencies, etc.. This examination should lead to increased South-South dialogue in the forms of increased trade and communication.
- (3) Of importance too is the need to critically evaluate the principles of international law as they are applied selectively by the nations of the European world within the context of such control mechanisms as the permanent Security Council of the United Nations.
- (4) There is also the need to reformulate the existing theories of applied economics in such a way that novel forms of economic organization could be established. This might entail the establishing of regional economic areas whose development would be supported by the creation of research centers in technology and agriculture. This would entail too the identification of possible sources of capital funds from within the African world, and the eventual creation of a single or regional currencies.
- (5) The above analyses necessarily bring into question the fictive nature of the existing states of Africa, all of which are creations of Eurocentrism. Rational thought demands that modalities should be sought whereby they could be integrated into larger and more meaningful economic and political spheres.

I imagine that the above discussion could be viewed as a possible implementation of Amin's idea of delinking, as a response to the Machiavellian dynamics of the ideology of Eurocentrism in the areas of politics, economics and general culture. The hope is that an adequate response to the undeserving hegemonic influence of Eurocentrism would lead optimally to a situation of international comity between peoples and nations.

In fine Amin's text Eurocentrism is what I would consider a foundation text -a text which examines critically the faulty epistemology and consequently fictitious ontological claims of Eurocentrism. This ideology which springs from particular and contingent historical circumstances has sought (and in many instances obtained) universal reification by projecting itself throughout the world according to the dynamics of the culture of capitalism. This capitalism in its relentless quest for political control, profits and sources of raw material constantly attempts to manufacture a culture which justifies institutional structures founded on principles of racial chauvinism. This is the way in which, I believe, Amin's text should be read and developed on.

REVIEW

Einführung in die Afrikanische Philosophie, by Dr. Chr. Neugebauer
Afrikanische Hochschulschriften: München/Kinshasa/Libreville, 1990
reviewed by Pieter Boele van Hensbroek

There is a tendency of appearing more works on African philosophy than of African philosophy, but an introduction in the field in German is something that should be welcomed. Especially if its author is exceptionally well read in modern African philosophy and presents his material from a very clearly recognisable position, not hesitating to criticise severely whatever views that are, or might give rise to, conservatism or racism.

Neugebauer's 'Einführung' is a 300 pages summary of a more than thousand pages dissertation on African philosophy since 1970, defended in Vienna in 1987. The book appeared in the series Philosophie Africaine Contemporaine of the 'Academie de la Pensée Africaine' edited by Dr. M. Bilolo.

The subject of the 'Einführung' is, like the dissertation, restricted mainly to the academic African philosophy and to the last 20 years, leaving out developments in North-Africa and the Republic of South Africa. Restrictions which the author explicitly recognises.

It is a curious book. Reading it is like trying to start an old car under very cold conditions: it gives off many rumblings, pangs and dots of smoke before it starts running for a moment to halt again suddenly, after which we have to get started again with a lot of pre-remarks, small digressions, explanations of restrictions etc.. The result of this cumbersome start of the book is that only after more than fifty pages the story starts running in a more or less regular rhythm and we are well over a hundred pages before it is in full swing (that is with the criticism of Tempels). One has the feeling that everything said before that could well have been the subject of an attractive, much less oversystematic, introduction. Probably Neugebauer's Einführung has inherited the style of the original dissertation, in which every single

step taken has to be justified against possible interventions from possibly malicious opponents.

The book certainly does not make a good introduction for students, who would be tired and have their heads spinning with preliminaries, side remarks etc. before coming to any substance. What, for instance, about the following ordering of 'Gestalten' of isolation of African academics, which we find on p. 36:

1. collective isolation, which is of qualitative nature
2. language isolation, which is of qualitative nature
3. individual isolation, which is of quantitative nature

The student might be more entertained by a simple sentence which explains about various forms of isolation of African academics.

But even the more dedicated reader will often be with his head in a whirl. Why, for instance, this ordering of the book in the following three sections (p.16): I. The Main Discussion (on p. 16 called 'Hauptdiskussion', on p. 41 'Hauptbeiträge'); II. African Socialism - Ethiopian philosophy - Akan philosophy (on p.183 called 'Die Philosophiehistorie und der Afrikanischen Sozialismus'); III. K. Wiredu. No remark is spend on this ordering which itself remains rather unsatisfactory in structuring the book.

Again Chapter I, the Main Discussion, receives itself a rather curious ordering by focussing successively on Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Tempels, Dewey and Horton. With some of these philosophers the reception among African philosophers is discussed, with others (e.g. Kant and Hegel) we hear about their views on Africa and Negroes, plus a critique of these views. With Marx again its primary importance for African philosophy is stressed, but after that its reception receives only minimal attention. With Neugebauer being a marxist himself, it would have been especially interesting to have a long chapter exactly on the Marx-reception in African philosophy.

Apart from these imbalances and asymmetries in the presentation a more substantial critique could be raised about introducing African philosophy with a list of these key philosophers. It remains a description very far from the key problems which Africans themselves put forward. If an African author discusses Aristotle's concept of substance

when presenting his ideas, he is normally not in the first place practicing a reception of Aristotle, but dealing with his own problems. One would do more justice to present African philosophers by starting off from the problems which they put themselves than from the issue of reception.

A strong point in Neugebauer's analyses is his ideology criticism. He attempts to take philosophies not only at face value, but to ask further questions, mainly about their ideological contents and possible functions. This is a continuous theme in the book. When discussing the social position of African intellectuals and philosophers in particular, and when discussing views on the tasks of philosophy in Africa and on a number of other places this leads to interesting sections. Although we also find quite ridiculous overstatements. Like on p. 37 where he suggests that African philosophers need laborious study to learn even one African language.

The critique of ethnophilosophy in its different shapes is undoubtedly at the center of Neugebauer's analysis of African philosophy (see also his article in QUEST vol.IV no 1 and his article in this issue of QUEST). The key to this criticism is Neugebauer's basic scheme about the origins and dangers of identity-thinking. In congruence with the German cultural history, as analysed by Marx and Lukács, he sees identity-thinking in Africa as the expression of a bourgeois class which is powerless to lead its society and dependent on outside powers. It can only realise itself under these conditions by a liberation in the spirit instead of in the actual world. The philosophy of this class is just a 'Herrschaftsinstrumentarium' which at the same time distracts attention from its failure as a class and legitimises its positions of power. It should be understood as a superstructure phenomenon in its class-character as an ideology of power (p.116).

Ethnophilosophy as a product of colonial and neo-colonial relations is, in this perspective, tendentially a form of racism, as the fictitiously created 'tribal' (or 'African') identities are just the pre-forms of national or tribal chauvinism, equally fictitious superiority-claims, discrimination and finally racism. It is all part of one universal, conserva-

tive and proto-fascist syndrome, which only deserves the most absolute rejection possible.

The scheme itself is quite convincing and probably politico-cultural relations worked in actual fact like that in a number of historical situations. But we should of course not mistake conceptual scheme for reality and the connections which are suggested in the scheme for natural necessities. It remains an empirical exercise to prove that certain philosophical views serve particular ideological purposes. And one can doubt if the outcome will be always clear or even point into the same direction. The curious thing about history is that our schemes often fall short of capturing its dynamics, we see too many unexpected things happen: true peoples power can turn into vicious dictatorship, the great Nkrumah into a redeemer and catholic priests into revolutionaries, while currently we see 'democracy' and 'human rights' replacing 'socialist revolution' as the number one political ideal! The assumption that we know the basic dynamics of Western societies has too often been misleading, let alone that we can assume to know the (cultural) dynamics of societies which are in many respects different from the Western ones on which most available conceptual knives are sharpened.

In the context of African philosophies this could lead one to the legitimate conclusion, contrary to Neugebauer, that issues like 'identity', 'nationality' etc. could turn out to have different faces. The issue of 'Africanity' already, does not seem to fit Neugebauer's scheme well. 'Africanity' as an issue plays a role in so many different African discourses of so many ideological shades, that there seems to be more behind it than just disguised conservatism and a definite connection to particular class-interests.

The value of Neugebauer's book is definitely its outspoken political stand, which, translated into philosophical analysis, stirs up controversies and lively debate. On many points his analysis is also more thorough and comprehensive than those available. It is therefore a must for those involved in the debates on African philosophy or those monitoring these debate. As critical introduction, however, it is hardly recommendable.

BOOK REVIEW

The theory and practice of autonomy. By Gerald Dworkin. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

by: Howie H. Harriott

The concept of autonomy has in recent years become one of great importance not only for moral and political philosophers, but also in the practical dimensions of life, especially in public policy decisions. Thus in political theory, questions arise as to how we can be said to be autonomous agents when we are bound to obey the dictates of the state. In philosophical ethics, the justification of morality is often taken to require that the agent himself is the ultimate source of authority for the moral principles he endorses; and in the biochemical and legal fields, puzzling dilemmas involving the issue of autonomy revolve around questions of moral responsibility, paternalism, behaviour modification programs, and deception in research.

Given the various ways arguments involving **autonomy** occur in the diverse literature, the very nature of autonomy is one worthy of investigation. Dworkin in The theory and practice of autonomy provides a stimulating and highly original theory of autonomy, and he demonstrates the relevance of the theory to a variety of **applied** areas mostly in the biochemical field.

The project of developing a unified theory is not one that is guaranteed to work, especially since we have no prior reason to suppose that the many ways in which appeals to autonomy are made in ethics, politics and the social sciences can be viewed as instances of one fundamental concept of autonomy. It is evident too that many writers who have implicitly or explicitly adverted to **autonomy** do not share the same intuitions about what it encompasses. Dworkin, however believes that despite the different emphases found in the literature there is a possibility of showing that these different perspectives share in the **abstract** theory of autonomy.

Dworkin's optimism is strengthened by the following observation. Most of the theories of autonomy have two invariant features: Autonomy

is held to be a property of persons, and it is thought to be a desirable quality.

Any attempt to theorize must do so within certain bounds, and Dworkin sets out the sort of constraints which will guide his theorizing. The desiderata are not unlike those we might want in scientific theorizing, and they are quite demanding. They amount to logical consistency, empirical possibility and various other value-related criteria. Thus, Dworkin wants it that the notion of autonomy should not be so tightly construed that the theory entails that no one can be said to be autonomous, or that persons such as ourselves who have been influenced by parents, cultural traditions and similar conditioning are automatically judged to lack autonomy. Significant to the task of Dworkin's theory is that apart from being an empirically realistic one which aims to cover the ground within single abstract framework, the theory must be no merely descriptive categorization. It must characterize autonomy and it must show why it is or it ought to be considered a valuable thing.

It is obvious that answering such a task must involve substantive claims about the nature of the self, and about human nature. The first five chapters flesh out the characterization of an autonomous self within the constraints of his normative desiderata. First some points about autonomy. Having decided (rightly) that there is no possibility of providing necessary and sufficient conditions for one to be an autonomous agent, autonomy is characterized as " ... the capacity to raise the question of whether I will identify with or reject the reasons for which I now act" (p.15). It follows from this that autonomy is preponderantly a second-order evaluative scheme. Autonomous persons should have the capacity as well, to make effective changes in their first-order motivations which they have scrutinized. Dworkin is keen that being autonomous should not be seen as an over-intellectual capacity.

The notion of autonomy too is not to be conflated with that of liberty. Locke's example fits nicely here. The man who is told that he is in a locked room which has been secretly unlocked has had his autonomy and not his liberty of action interfered with. The famous example of Ulysses and the Sirens provides a paradigm case of the kind of richer evaluative structure that Dworkin wants. A person may deli-

berately restrict his liberty (and autonomy) in order to preserve his autonomy.

In order to escape paradox, the evaluation of autonomy is to be seen as one of wide scope over a broad span of a person's life. Note that this is in tune with the empirically realistic basis of his theorizing. But it is this desire to create an all-encompassing theory which provides problems for Dworkin.

For instance, on his account of autonomy, it follows that: "... the autonomous person can be a tyrant or a slave, a saint or sinner, a rugged individualist or champion of fraternity, a leader or follower"(p.29).

But it should be worrying if, for instance, a slave or say a servile individual were to be called autonomous, as he would be under Dworkin's vision. All that is required for Dworkin's agent to be autonomous is that the agent is able to reflect on his first-order motivations and to find some congruence between his second-order reflections and first-order motivations.

Contrary to Dworkin, most of us might agree on the following point. An Untouchable, for example, who objected to being treated as equal to his fellow men, and who after self-reflection preferred to be thought of as unworthy of any form of respect, must be someone who lacks autonomy in an important sense.

But we can see in part where the problem lies. Dworkin's attempt to find a unified theory of autonomy leads him to a **contentless theory** of autonomy, or what he refers to as a weak theory of autonomy.

If we don't like the above consequences of his weak theory of autonomy, it is, says Dworkin, because we have been influenced by the strong view of autonomy, with its heavy emphasis on self-determination. The **strong view** is a label which covers the philosophical positions advanced by Kant, and among more recent philosophers, the sort of position laid out in Robert P. Wolff's In defense of anarchism and John Rawls's A theory of justice.

Support for the weak view comes in part by derogating the strong view. The Dworkin claim is that the strong view with its demand for substantive independence is "... not one that has a claim to our respect as an ideal"(p.21). Roughly, the ground for this attack on the strong

view is that it is at variance with aspects of our psychological nature. Strong autonomy is (allegedly) inconsistent with the demands of friendship, cooperation, loyalty and other sorts of commitments which we prize. On his view, our fascination with the strong view is misguided and must be tempered.

He argues, for instance, that the common view in economic theory that more choice is always an unqualified good is a consequence of the strong view. The dogma has it that the creation of a market provides greater autonomy through greater choice. Rightly, he sees that the unbridled creation of more choices might undermine other values. Thus my virtuous motivation to give blood could be undermined by the creation of a market, even though I now have two options: give or sell.

Ultimately, this sort of example suggests to Dworkin that, unlike the strong theorist's position autonomy is a good thing, but not a supreme good, over and above other goods worth having. It is a good, over and above other goods worth having. It is a good that has to be balanced against others.

Dworkin does a fine job of showing how this weak view of autonomy is linked to a procedural idea of justice, and he explains how it is linked to a procedural account of ethical principles. One wonders though if the argument against the strong view of autonomy attacks the philosophically most interesting versions of it. For instance, Wolff's work is used as an example of the strong view, but no mention is made of the ideas of William Godwin, whose Enquiry concerning political justice presents a powerful philosophical case for a strong theory. Godwin makes a case for the highest possible premium to be placed on autonomy. We prize it, for instance because we prize creativity in ourselves, and so it too is tied up with a vision of the good life. So perhaps there is more to the possibility of defending the strong view of autonomy as an ideal worth clinging to.

The applications of the theory are of a piece with the formal contentless account of autonomy. No substantial policies are defended, but the role of autonomy in issues such as behaviour control, entrapment, and decision-making for the incapacitated are thoroughly explored.

Despite the problems I have outlined, the work is rigorously argued

for, and whatever one's view of Dworkin's theory, a substantial point has been shown: **Autonomy** can now be treated as an autonomous discipline.

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Abonnements: voir dernière page.

CONTENTS

Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba <i>Philosophy and African Intellectuals: Mimesis of Western Classicism, Ethnophilosophical Romanticism or African Self-Mastery?</i>	4
Mogobe Ramose <i>Hobbes and the Philosophy of International Relations</i>	18
Oumar Diagne <i>Voix et Existence</i>	36
Christian Neugebauer <i>Hegel and Kant - a Refutation of their Racism</i>	50
J.K. Kigongo <i>Human Rights in the Context of Uganda's Political Experience</i>	74
Marvin C. Sterling <i>The Ethical Thought of Martin Luther King</i>	80
J.A.I. Bewaji <i>Dr. Chr. Neugebauer's Critical Note on Ethnophilosophy in the Philosophical Discourse in Africa: some remarks</i>	95
Lansana Keita <i>Eurocentrism, by S. Amin (review)</i>	104
Pieter Boele van Hensbroek <i>Einführung in die Afrikanische Philosophie by Chr. Neugebauer (review)</i>	114
Howie H. Harriott <i>The Theory and Practice of Autonomy by S. Dworkin (review)</i>	118
Notes on Contributors	122