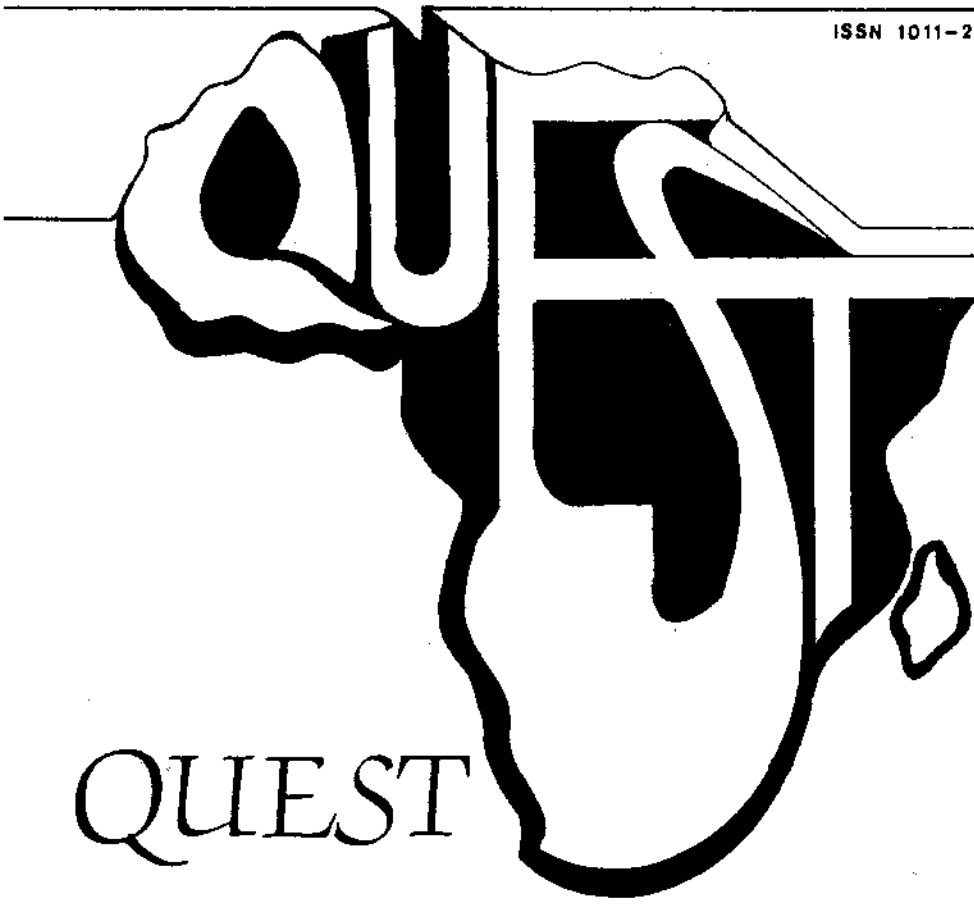
ISSN 1011-226x



QUEST

Philosophical Discussions

An International African Journal of Philosophy
Revue Africaine Internationale de Philosophie

Vol. IX No. 1 June 1995

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.

Subscriptions: US$ 35.- (institutions); US$ 25.- (individuals); Africa US$ 20.- (institutions); US$ 15.- (individuals). Payment by credit card or cash; cheques payments should alwayse include $9.- to cover bank charges.
Quest, PO Box 9114, 9703 LC Groningen, The Netherlands

CONTENTS Quest Vol. IX No. 1 June 1995

THE PLACE OF PAN-AFRICANISM IN WORLD HISTORY[1]

Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba

> "...the evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and throve with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the Black people." Mao-Ze dong.

We are in the planetarian era, the epoch of the so-called 'rapid globalization'. It took about 500 years to come to maturation: from the world wide primitive accumulation which led to the rise of capitalism in Europe to the extension of capitalism to the most remote corners of the planet Earth.[2] Resistances to the accumulation and the extension had to be destroyed through wars of conquest, genocides, enslavement colonizations, enclosures, looting, deporting, murdering, 'low intensity warfare', violent destruction of self-sustaining survival systems, violence against women (mass rapes, slave breeding farms, forced sterilization, sex tourism), 'imperial diseases', etcetera. Still resistances go on. Black people[3], despite their crucial founding contribution as slaves, as gifts to capital, as colonial and neocolonial forced labourers, have lived this period principally as victims and subordinates, as a legitimate prey. From non-people (speaking machines-cum-commodities), to sub-people (1/3 of a person in the first US constitution), to dominated people.

Indeed, the attempts to justify the resulting unequal system gave rise to the idea of classifying people of the world by race and then setting them in a social hierarchy. The white supremacist doctrine of civilization was built on it. For a long time, Black people were confronted with a common fate (first racism, then colonialism) which caused them to turn about and accept a common identity[4]- which the negritude movement, for example, sang.

Resistances against such an imposed fate were heavy. Some mothers preferred killing their children to having them sold, some

refused to bear children just for selling them. *Lemba Kangaism*[5]- doctrine and practices for protecting the community -, for example, arose in the slave devastated area of Kongo society. Escaped slaves, here and there in the Americas, staged maroonian revolts.[6] These profiles of courage are often left in historical silence. The first successful slave revolutionary victory, under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverturre, took inspiration from *Lemba Kangaism* in its first anthem: *Kanga Bafioti. Kanga Mindele* - protect the weak and tie up (arrest) the white! Abolitionist historical self-celebrations have marginalized in written histories daring slave initiatives.[7]

Ultimately, Pan-Africanism, as a form of global consciousness is the realization that no Black person will be free until all Black people are free, emerged precisely to confront the old race-based global consciousness which underlined capitalist expansionism. It aimed at defending human equality, human rights against racial discrimination and at organizing the process of liberation of Black people from subordination world-wide. Any thought or doctrine is always determined by that against which it arises - thus its limitation.

The horizon of Pan-Africanism, was to develop into a form of internationalism and emancipatory politics. The latter starts from the conviction that things are not to remain so because they are so: people may live differently than they presently live. It is rooted on a break from submissive consciousness in favour of a political consciousness which is an active, prescriptive attitude to reality, politics as a prescriptive invention.[8]

Since about 1989, a world-wide consensus seems to exist, especially around social movements, on the need to expand democratic rights, extend all human rights to all people. A new global consciousness is rising, one which discredits the old one built on racial, religious, gender or cultural discriminations. This is a significant development.[9] Doubts still prevail though. The ancestors to this modern global consciousness have not always been consistent in upholding human equality and rejecting the subordination of Black people. The secular traditions of the French and American Revolutions did not

necessarily recognize the major contribution by Toussaint L'Overture to struggle for human liberty. The Enlightenment *philosophes*, for example, could not have seen him as an associate. Condorcet and Diderot, so much acclaimed, for example, did not favour a rapid transition to end slavery.[10] The visions of the global class unity of the socialist and communist movements often failed to 'deminoritize' Black labourers. Even communist parties held the view that colonialism was a 'shortcut' for the development of productive forces. Pan-Africanists such as Aime Cesaire[11] and George Padmore[12] had to resign from those types of parties. The claims to a world community of believers in Christianity and Islam did not consistently fight against the race-based social hierarchy, despite protesting voices such as that of Las Casas. 'Humanist' priests in Kongo demanded only that slaves be baptized before boarding the slaving ships - one of these was even named Jesus! Placed at the bottom of social hierarchy (some theologians even speculated that Blacks had no soul), Black people were denied civilization, culture, and history.[13] Their experiences were said to have no educational value, no truth value and no knowledge value. It is principally to provoke the break with submissive consciousness, on the part of some Africans believing in their being useless to 'humanity', that people like Cheikh Anta Diop worked so hard to set the record of African civilizations straight.[14]

The notion of a racial hierarchy in intelligence and creativity became most influential when European empires were at their greatest extent (1890-1940). Of course, the fact that imperial museums were filled with African artifacts and that acclaimed European artists such as Picasso copied some Congolese art forms for example, does not prove African artistic inferiority. Anyway, the brutal colonial expropriation of land and labour was justified on the basis of the hierarchy. Western powers portrayed themselves as the purveyors of 'civilization' and the territorial occupation of Africa was done in the name of 'bringing civilization to Dark Africa'.

It was during this period also that concrete organizational forms of

Pan-Africanism (e.g. the Pan-African congresses) took shape. Despite colonial conditions in Africa, Africans participated actively. Panda's party, *Union Congolaise* (1919-1930), for example, participated in the 3rd Pan-African Congress which took place in Brussels, in 1921.[15] Two other Congolese, from the Belgian Congo, went to Jamaica, in 1928, to meet with Marcus Garvey. A small Pan-Africanist movement, led by a certain Jackson, organized an anti-colonial struggle in the Belgian Congo. The maroons' struggles and successful resistances, slave victories, anti-slavery movements and struggles, and the abolition of slavery itself, were not successful in abolishing white supremacist ideology and practices, highly supported by European imperialism. The complete freeing of Africa became viewed as the condition for the abolition of the Black person's bondage.

Certainly, anti-colonial national determination movements gave tremendous impetus to the vision of racial equality. Through its 5th Congress, Pan-Africanism made important contributions to victory in Africa. The establishment of a global system of nations - including African ones -, all with equal legal standing (ending the second-class citizenship in World Affairs); the expansion of literacy, national systems of education; formal renunciation, in many national and international declarations, of discrimination by race, ethnicity, religion, or gender, and an extension of principles of non-discrimination into many new areas; the changing social conditions of women and the rise of feminist critiques of society giving rise to a range of debates not only about gender discrimination but about the nature of human interdependence in general, leading to new claims of human rights; technical advances of modern telecommunications[16], and the end of Cold war; all these things have considerably undermined the race-based global consciousness. Pan-Africanist struggles and cultural and scientific productions have had an impact as well.

Having been obtained on the basis of 'defeat through victory'[17], political independence in Africa was a limited victory. It reproduced, with minor changes, the colonial partition of Africa and the imperial restructuring of her economy. Hopefully, apartheid will die soon, with

the success of the non-racial democracy being struggled for. Until recently apartheid, a system exclusively based on the 'minoritization' of Blacks, echoing the race based global consciousness, has continued to drag on. US imperial democrats have refused to endorse the UN condemnation of apartheid as "a crime against humanity", and settled only for the weak "gross violation of human rights." Indeed, the general reluctance to view the Atlantic slave trade as a human holocaust and the continued resistance against the demands for reparations for both the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism (based on unjust wars of conquest and thus having no moral or legal justification), means that the 'minoritization' of Black people on the basis of race remains active in the global consciousness. The recent retreat in the pursuit of racial equality in the imperial democratic USA is well known. "Despite pervasive litanies about Latin America's 'color blind racial democracy', blatant discrimination continues to plague descendants of the ten millions of African slaves who were brought to toil on the plantations and mines of the New World. Such discrimination is compounded by a nearly universal denial of black heritage and identity, even in countries with large black populations, which has effectively rendered blacks invisible."[18] While still being squeezed through structural adjustment programmes and debt servicing, Africa, especially sub-saharan Africa, is increasingly marginalized and sinking into absolute poverty as she continues to transfer capital abroad.[19] The historical role of Pan-Africanism must be revitalized.

World Context of Democratization

Democratization or redemocratization has to be conceptualized at the level of the whole planet Earth. It involves world global relations of power and not just those inside a specific territory. It is good to have full democracy in a reservation, but the most crucial thing is to democratically abolish the reservation itself. Democracy has also to be

grasped from the point of view of its entire history. The experiences of a great part of humanity have been bypassed in systematizing the theory of democracy. When the majority of the people of the world were reduced to colonized and neocolonized subpeople, initiative and creativity in relation to democracy were made an affair of the few. Imperial democrats have been responsible, in many ways, for maintaining authoritarianism in many parts of the world-sometimes in the name of democracy.

A democracy erected on the basis of colonial conquest and entertaining in its midst native people in reservations, aborigines, etcetera, must be criticised from the point of view of those victims. People without rights in those democracies constitute a radical witness of the limitations of those democracies. In my opinion, the ancient Greek democracy - Agora democracy - is comparable to the Mbongi (fire place) palaver[20] the first excluded slaves, women and strangers and the second (sometimes only) excluded women. This comparison has been ruled out by the fact that you cannot deny civilization to people in whose modes of life you can discover civilizational elements. National Conferences, at least in some African Francophone countries, certainly were inspired by experiences of African palaver.

Social movements (old and new), including democracy movements around the world, are demanding for consistent democracy, a democracy-from-below. Imperial democrats act as democrats in some parts of the world and as imperialists supporting all kinds of authoritarianism elsewhere.

As "rule of the people by the people for the people", historical experiences of democracy have often been based on a concept of people which excluded some other people. The challenge of world social movements is to see the entire humanity be constituted as one community of people i.e., democratization, at global level, aims at eradicating situations of 'minoritization' of remaining parts of humanity. It aims at creating a political space of general equality around which multiple and diverse individuals, peoples, groups, races, classes, and gender may contend in the pursuit of their respective

destinies. The extension and the centrality of human rights in this challenge has led people in a wide range of countries to feel free to criticize the state, which constitutes the principal force tampering with various human rights rather than protecting them.[21]

There won't be a meaningful democracy in one corner of the world when the whole world is fundamentally undemocratic. Imperial democrats, now regrouped in the gang of the G7, and other Northern democracies, consume more than two-third of the world resources. No meaningful desire is rising in those countries to democratize the situation by changing power relations in favour of redistribution of world wealth at all levels. A certain level of material empowerment is necessary to compete effectively in a democratic way. Schemes being put in place: from structural adjustment programmes (welfarist aid rather than productive or strategical one)[22] to GATT, decisions still aim at squeezing the remaining one-third world resources out of the poor. Africa is now sending more capital to the Center than the aid she is receiving, thus intensifying her sinking into absolute poverty. The UN system, as organized for the world conjuncture of after 1945 - and already obsolete - tends towards becoming a machinery for the New World Order.

Democratization is creativity itself and not just a model to be applied to a territory. The imperialism of dominant paradigms concerning democracy as well as development, must be challenged. Western democracies (imperial democracies) should not be allowed to have a monopoly on democracy. The entire range of historical experiences of peoples, movements, groups who have fought for democracy and peace must be taken into account. Imperial powers are now portraying themselves as the guardians of world peace and democracy, as the best promoters and defenders of democracy and human rights. The starting point of emancipatory politics is that all people think (every person thinks). Dominant paradigms imply that few people have the right to ask questions for themselves and that others disarm themselves of the right to ask those questions for themselves.[23] The dominated person is the one on whom and at the expense of whom

dominant paradigms exercise effect. These paradigms block his/her right to creativity and innovation. For every paradigm it must be asked by whom, for whom, how and for what purpose questions are being asked. The operationalization of democracy (scope, forms of representations, types of elections, form/regime of state, etcetera) must be subordinated to the fact that all human rights of every person be upheld. The history of democracy is precarious.

Advances and deepening of democratization may be followed by retreats. There are signs of retreat in western democracies. While their countries have become internationalized or multinationalized, through immigration laws they are practising a form of national cleansing. They have become increasingly unable to deal democratically with 'minorities'. Blinded by capitalist triumphalism, lessons from the collapse of socialist states concerning democracy, namely consistent recognition, tolerance for, and respect of multiple differences, cannot be learned. Western values are presented as uniquely universal and so-called particularist values are fought against.[24] The development of techno-bureaucracy has brought a rule by experts in all domains, restricting political discussions and decisions.[25] A gap is growing between hyper-specialized and esoteric techno-science on the one hand and citizens' knowledge on the other. Knowledgeable people have more rights than ignorant citizens. The desire and need to democratize knowledge seem to be retreating. If the community is unable to control its knowledge, as it is said in Kongo society, the community is at the mercy of the few 'sorcerers'.

With the protracted character of world economic crisis, a tendency has developed to reduce politics to economics: democracy is reduced to market economy, and economy becomes the sole permanent political problem. This is the other side of developmentalism in countries of the South. Society is increasingly divided on unequal basis: the haves and have nots, those who have the right to live and those who live by dying little by little.

Talks of the 'end of history' are an indication of the collapse of great aspirations for the future. There is a profound crisis of

revolutionarism giving rise to a real intellectual abasement and powerlessness to conceive great ideals. The healthy conflict of ideas is being reduced to conflict of interests or racial ethnocentrism. Democratic institutions (parties, pressure groups, etc.) are already showing signs of decay. Great problems of civilization - including the threat to the life process per see, posed by industrial civilization - are not emerging as problems of public debates.

With reference to Cheikh Anta Diop's typology of states[26] in world history, the existing system of states was born out of conquest. The political independence movements in colonial states born out of conquest did not completely transform these. The articulation between military and civilian power has always favoured the military one. This factor has profound implications for democratization. How can the articulation be reversed in favour of the civilian power? The defeated states, in 1945, which were forbidden to arm themselves are now rearming themselves. While it is true that liberalization (marketism) is not the answer to all problems of human rights (as the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberation National-EZLN shows), armed struggles have not necessarily led to consistent democracy.

The Cold War ended, this is a good thing for democratization. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen how to deal effectively with its legacy, i.e., its extensive machinery and militants - the Mobutu's. It is like in South Africa, the apartheid legacy will be a major challenge for democratic struggles.

The world is in real motion. Forces of consistent democracy and those of the status quo are contending. A new global consciousness, favouring the first camp, is rising. It stands against racial discrimination: the success of post apartheid non- racial democracy in South Africa; and that of resolving the Chiapas question based on the discrimination of Maya native population are positive developments. It stands against religious discrimination: democracy will be challenged by the outcome of the struggle against fundamentalism (in Algeria, ex-Yugoslavia, etc.) . It stands against ethnic discrimination: whether in

Rwanda, Burundi or elsewhere, the challenge is to democratically build a multi-ethnic state. It stands against gender discrimination: the democratic challenge here may be to come up with a new theory, conception, and practice of love as the basis of the best interdependence relationship between man and woman at all levels.

The deminoritization of peoples, groups and the recognition of full individual rights is ultimately a form of emancipatory politics against the submissive consciousness of accommodation to the violation of human rights world wide. Pan-Africanism must internalize these gains to be able to become a truly emancipatory political movement.

Africa: Democratization and Second Independence

For the last five hundred years, which it has taken the present planetarian epoch to maturation, Africa has been under siege. Centuries of international slave trade were followed by economies of predation and formal colonization. For a long time, most (if not all) of the people of Africa were not people at all, they were commodities often obtained by storming villages. African 'mercantilists' who emerged through the process did not feel the labour hunger European mercantilists felt.[27] They were selling the then strategical element of the production process to other countries in exchange for commodities which were essentially irrelevant for the local development of production. Their counterpart European mercantilists were putting African slaves into the production process in the so-called New World.[28] In this atmosphere, it was difficult for the remaining Africans to freely relate to themselves.

Institutions of survival which developed under those circumstances, from the *Mbongi* palaver to the *Lemba Kangaism*, in the Kongo area for example, are not well-known. Histories produced on the basis of paradigmatic silence (echoing the notion that uncivilized people know nothing, or that only Europeans 'discover' things) do not give any account of those experiences - taken up by oral traditions.

Colonial rules, imposed by force, were based on the cultural justification that Africans were not full human beings. Their institutions were defamed and studied only to enhance the colonial grip ('indirect rule' being in fact very direct) on the African people. The colonial partition of Africa blocked the process of the developing Africanization (various people increasingly coming to contact and relating to themselves) of African peoples. In this regard, by reproducing, with minor changes, the colonial partition of Africa, the OAU is a continuation of the Berlin conference.

With the gradual (sometimes sudden) break of social ties, provoked by capitalist privatization of property, many people have lost the secure sources of their means of life, no matter how insufficient these were, and have become reduced to lives of unspeakable poverty and misery. In countries of Africa, community ties were the main form of security for most people until very recently. The privatization of clanic land through enclosures without compensation, introduced by colonial economies of predation, accelerated the breaking of those ties. The latest social tie now under pressure of being broken is the family itself (the community family called 'extended family' as well as the nuclear one). Its material basis is increasingly destroyed by throwing children to the street, which has become their only 'social security'.

Even after political independence, African economies continued to be based on forced labour (labour-power paid below its value), making it necessary to reproduce or create new forms of bondage (clientalism etcetera) as sources of peoples' means of life. The process of individuation thus tends to be limited. Demands for liberal democracy remained limited to urban environments and limited social categories. Mass struggles tended to be based on common identity and demands for group interests and rights, rather than individual rights. Models of democracy proposed by the departing colonial states failed to take root.

Dominant myths serving as paradigms of action, which emerged through the mass struggles for national independence and self-determination, were all based on and emphasizing common identity, interests, rights vis-a-vis the permanent threat of an outside enemy.

These included the West, as an enemy and as a model to aspire to, cultural identity to be reasserted under permanent siege; independence not as a project of continuous struggle but as a time of victorious celebration; development as a pretext of mass political demobilization and aspiration to consumerism rather than a vision for mass political remobilization; liberation as a symbolic call, rather than a construction of a rational conception and reasonable vision of the world. Democracy as political pluralism appeared as threatening anarchy. Cold war polarizations reinforced this global consciousness. The break with early post-colonial experiences of multi-partyism was thus seen as an advance - where this happened more or less voluntarily.

In some cases such as Congo-Zaire, the possibility of a peoples' sovereignty appeared threatening to the Western Cold War powers. Lumumba and other militants who stood firm in favour of peoples' controlled national sovereignty had to be eliminated.[29] Congolese became unable to relate to themselves freely and practice democracy. Western powers (especially the USA) inspired assassinations, instigated secessions, and coups d'etat. Thereby the people's sovereignty was assassinated and state power was entrusted into the hands of pro-Western Cold War militants (Mobutu and his Binza group).[30] These "abused the Congolese-Zairian state to meet the demands of foreigners morbidly obsessed with the threat of communism"[31] in Congo-Zaire. Mass struggles gravitated and were localized around the demand for a Second Independence, i.e. the resurrection, as it were, of the people's sovereignty. Mulelist mass-armed insurrections, protracted students struggles (through marches etcetera), workers' often illegal strikes, all this made the state become more repressive. Repression became the very core of government's policy. Freedom and human rights of the dissenters and critics were very badly tampered with. Eventually, single party state regime became the institutional framework for repression as a policy.

Various types of social movements came to the fore after the end of the Cold War and the formal acceptance, by the regime in place, of multi-partyism. These included struggles against state interference in

music and other art forms; struggles against misuses of the Bible in favour of gender oppression - specifically led by the Female protestant Theologians' Association; struggles against arbitrary taxes at the market - led by market women's association; struggles against bureaucrats' land enclosures - led by *la solidarite paysanne*; religious struggles for independent churches against state-coopted ones; struggles for independent student associations against the one party youth section; struggles against one party women section; struggles for a second party movement; struggles for a free press and mass media; struggles for the autonomy of magistrates - led by the advocate association etcetera. All these struggles and movements aim at the reconstruction of society on the basis of a profound transformation of the state in favour of one which respects the proper articulation between the common interest (public) and the private interest.[32]

It became clear that, to achieve this, the various protagonists had to come together in a national conference to first empower themselves as a people capable of exercising national sovereignty while drawing the contours of a new state and a new society. The local, still existing, Cold War machinery and militants have almost blocked the advance of the democratization process. In a number of countries of Africa, democracy has been reduced to multi-partyism. When elections did take place, on that basis, they brought minor reforms in the functioning of state. A vibrant civil society is needed for a real political pluralism.

Africa is experiencing almost all the problems world democracy movements are confronted with: violation of individual human rights, religious fundamentalist exclusivism, ethnic discrimination (even genocide), threat of military coups d'etat, racial discrimination, loss, erosion, or usurpation of national sovereignty, gender discrimination, economic exploitation, foreign domination, civil wars, state terrorism, state non-accountability, intolerance, negative values, etcetera.

There is no real forum in which African masses of people involved in the struggles to confront these problems can exchange their experiences. Pan-African structures of democratic empowerment, independent of states, must be worked out. They may be important for

the deepening of the democratization process, the democratization of Pan-Africanism itself, and the process of unification of Africa. Post-colonial states have continued to make it very difficult for African people to constantly interact and relate to themselves. Pan-Africanism must bring those forces together, which are active in making political pluralism a reality inside each country of Africa. It will be one way of contending with the pro-imperialist NGO's aiming at dominating civil society in African countries.

Conclusion

The world is in a rising motion: no clarity of a single vision emerges after the dissolution of socialism. Democratization and redemocratization aim at the need to recognize and respect the multiple differences which characterize our humanity. The unity of humanity must be achieved under the banner of multiplicity and avoidance of one-sidedness. The deepening of democratization in each country in Africa and the democratic opening of borderlines of African countries (through various ways, including telecommunications) will allow African people to interact and democratically relate to themselves. This process will allow African people not only to achieve and control national sovereignty but to be able to control the continent and its resources. Pan-Africanism must root itself in that process so tat its vision can become enrichedly popular.

Notes

1 Paper presented at the 7th Pan-African Congress, 3-8 April 1994, Kampala (Uganda).

2 This issue is well examined by Edgar Morin and A. B. Kern, *Terre-Patrie*. (Paris:Editions du Seuil 1993).

3 "African People, Black People", expression inspired by Mongo Beti's

review *Peuples Noirs- Peuples Africains.*

4 Theme developed by Patrick Manning in his *Songs of Democracy: the World from 1989 to 1991*, forthcoming.

5 John M. Janzen, *Lemba, 1650-2930* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1982).

6 C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Washington, D.C.: Drum and Spear Press, 1969).

7 This important theme of paradigmatic silence in historiography is being thoroughly investigated by Jacques Depelchin.

8 For details on emancipatory politics see, E. Wamba-dia- Wamba, "Democracy, Mutipartyism and Emancipative politics in Africa: The case of Zaire: *Africa Development* vol. XVIII, No. 4, 1993, pp. 95-118.

9 For details, see Patrick Manning, op. cit.

10 According to a book, *Les Miseres des Lumieres* by Louis Salamolins, brought to my attntion by Jacques Depelchin (personal correspondence).

11 See his *Lettre a Maurice Thorez.* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1956).

12 *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1956).

13 G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the philosophy of World History: Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

14 See his work of synthesis, *Civilization or Barbarism* (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991).

15 Kalubi M'Kola, *De Paull panda á Simmon Kimbangu* (Kinshasa: Editions Betras, 1982).

16 Details in Patrick Manning, op. cit.

17 Irungu Houghton, *Defeat through Victory: Two Case Studies of African Nationalist Movements: Kenya 1940's to 1969 and Zimbambwe 1960's to 1988.* (Dar es Salaam: MA Dissertation in History, UDSM, 1991).

18 Special issue of *Report on the Americas on The Black Americas; 1492-1992.* Vol. XXV No. 4, February 1992. p. 15.

19 Mary Chinery-Hesse, "Poverty Alleviation in Developing countries, with particular reference to Africa". Keynote Address made at th conference on Social (In)Security and Poverty as Global Issues, Maastrict, 5 March 1994.

20 E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, "Expriences of Democracy in Africa: Reflectioons on the practices of Communalist palaver as a Method of Resolving Contradictions Among the people" *Philosophy and Social Action.* Voll. X11, No. 2, April-June 1986, pp.19-29.

21 Again, for details, see Patrick Manning, op cit.

22 The Marshall Plan for post-1949 Europe and aid given to defeated Japan, after 1945, constitute cases of strategical types of aid.

23 Mamousse Digne, "Contribution 'une critique du principe des paraigms dominants" in Joseph Ki-Zerbo (ed.), *La Natte des Autres: pour un Developpenent Endogene en Afrique*. (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1992). pp. 109-119

24 Jeremy Seebrook, "On the Dangers of Western Fundamentalism", *Philosophy and Social Action*, 18(3) 1992, pp 27-31.

25 Edgar Morin and A.B. Kern, *Terre-Patrie*, op .cit.

26 Cheikh Ant Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, op. cit. Chap.8.

27 William A. Darity, Jr. "Mercantilism, Slavery and the Industrial Revolution" *Research in Political Economy*, vol. 5, (JAI Prese, Inc. 1982), PP 1-21.

28 Today, members of the African ruling classes keep resources in their accounts abroad rather than invest them at home. Their counterpart in the West put their resources through the World Bank structures to get more money through schemes of debt servicing of developing countries.

29 Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa - From Eisenhower to Kennedy* (New York: MaCMillan Publishing Co., Inc, 1982).

30 E. Wamba-Wamba: "National Reconciliation in Zaire: Reasons for the Impasse." *CODESRIA Bulletin* No. 2, 1993, pp.

31 This articulation has been at the core of democratic thought since Pericles, according to Jacgues Ranciere, *Aux Bords du politique* (Paris: Editions Osiris, 1990).

Summary

It is commonly taught that platonicism requires the exclusion of the poet from society. That thesis is inaccurate. Indeed, any poet who, because of the lies contained in his art, endangers society in the fields of ethics and politics is ostricized. In the ideal city, however, the new poet who produces works going in the direction defined by the philosopher, has his place.

LE POETE DANS LA CITE PLATONICIENNE

Gogoua Gnanagbe

Faut-il exclure le poète de la Cité? A une époque comme la notre qui se réclame de la philosophie des droits de l'homme, cette question est absurde. Pourtant, dans l'Antiquité, à en croire les textes des écrivains et des philosophes, elle a suscité d'interminables controverses. Le poète Thébain Pindare, à l'instar de la plupart des Grecs, professe que la poésie ouvre les portes de l'immortalité aux héros les plus illustres.[1] Aristote la valorise avec des arguments différents en proclamant que la tragédie, par la crainte et la pitié qu'elle provoque, opère la purgation des passions.[2] Cette catharsis a été perçue par certains interprètes sans doute trop soucieux de lire les textes anciens avec des lunettes modernes comme un signe avant-coureur de la cure psychanalytique. Quoiqu'il en soit, l'important, à nos yeux, est de remarquer que Pindare et le Stagirite sont favorables à la place du poète dans la société. Avec Platon, par contre, la situation semble bien différente. On croit communément que sa doctrine préconise systématiquement l'exclusion du poète de la cité. Qu'en est-il exactement?

L'objectif de cette étude est de nuancer la thèse de l'ostracisme en dégageant d'une part sa signification et d'autre part les conditions de possibilité de la poésie authentique.

Une doctrine philosophique, faut-il le préciser, est une vision critique et systématique du monde. Pour être bien comprises, les idées majeures qu'elle développe doivent être situées dans leur contexte originel. En l'occurrence, le bannissement de la poésie s'inscrit dans le projet philosophico-politique de Platon. Il se situe à un moment donné de l'itinéraire intellectuel du philosophe. Conformément aux exigences de l'éducation de son époque, celui-ci s'est abreuvé très tôt entre autres à la poésie d'Homère. Il en a été marqué peut-être au point qu'à la suite des succès d'Euripide et d'Agathon, i] a fait lui aussi oeuvre de poète. Mais sa rencontre avec Socrate conféra à sa vie un sens inattendu. Avec un courage remarquable, il sacrifia la poésie sur l'autel de la

philosophie. La suite, on la connaît. Socrate, homme vertueux, s'il en est, fut condamné à mort principalement à l'instigation de Mèlétos. Ce poète de mauvais aloi lui faisait grief de croire aux démons et non aux dieux de la cité. Bien que ce chef d'accusation ne résiste pas à l'analyse, il a été déterminant pour le verdict des juges.

On peut faire une double lecture de la mort de Socrate. Sur le plan de l'affectivité, cet événement a certainement traumatisé Platon. Au niveau théorique, le mensonge a triomphé de la vérité et l'injustice de la justice. Ce qui prouve bien que la poésie est comme la sophistique une valorisation de l'apparence. Elle repose en un sens sur le mensonge et conduit inéluctablement au désordre et à la violence. Dès lors, pour le fondateur de l'Académie, le salut de l'individu passe forcément par une refonte de la poésie et de toutes les autres disciplines qui constituent la matière de l'éducation nationale. Son ambition ultime est de construire une cité idéale sur les cendres de l'ancien monde où tout est sens dessus dessous.

Des philosophes dignes de ce nom doivent présider aux destinées d'une telle communauté. C'est la condition sine qua non pour que la justice se substitue définitivement à l'injustice. Si pour Aristote, la justice est commutative, distributive et répressive, pour Platon, cette vertu se situe à deux niveaux. A l'échelle de l'Etat, elle se définit comme une division rigoureuse des tâches assignées à chaque classe - chefs, soldats, artisans et hommes de négoce - en fonction de ses aptitudes naturelles. Pour l'individu, elle consiste à ce que chaque partie de l'âme - raison, courage, et appétit sensuel - assume exclusivement son rôle. Dans les deux cas, la justice est l'expression de l'harmonie, de l'ordre et de la rationalité. C'est la condition de possibilité de la sagesse, du courage et de la tempérance c'est-à-dire des autres vertus cardinales. La sagesse est l'apanage des chefs. Le courage a son siège dans la classe des soldats. Quant à la tempérance, on la retrouve dans toutes les classes de la société.

Dans la cité parfaite, la pratique de la vertu demeure la voie royale du bonheur. C'est pourquoi le souci permanent de Platon est de créer un environnement mental et politique de nature à rendre l'indivi-

du vertueux. Toutefois, il se trouve que la poésie est pour l'essentiel incompatible avec la réalisation de cet objectif primordial. Aux livres II, III et X de La République, Platon explicite cette thèse en faisant une étude critique de plusieurs passages des oeuvres d'Homère, d'Hésiode et d'Eschyle. Son argumentation comprend deux volets.

Le premier met en relief les limites de la poésie dans l'acquisition et la pratique de la vertu. Il détermine l'influence des dieux et des héros sur le comportement humain. Dans une certaine mesure, l'individu a la possibilité de devenir vertueux si au préalable il saisit parfaitement la nature des divinités. Celles-ci ont des attributs essentiels: elles sont immuables, étrangères au mensonge et exemptes de tout mal et de toute faiblesse.[3] Eu égard à leur nature, on est tenu de les honorer. Dans la vie quotidienne, elles constituent des modèles qui doivent inspirer le comportement du citoyen nouveau. Mais la poésie, sans doute sous le poids de la tradition, les présente sous un jour faux sous tous les rapports. Elle leur attribue des défauts spécifiquement humains: le vol, l'adultère, le mensonge, le mal... En donnant ainsi des informations absolument fausses sur la nature divine et, comme nous le remarquons un peu plus loin dans La République, sur les héros, elle détruit eo ipso les modèles et, en dernière analyse, l'échelle des valeurs. Ce faisant, elle légitime par avance n'importe quelle mauvaise action. En somme, si les dieux et, à un degré moindre, les héros font n'importe quoi, l'individu aura bonne conscience s'il commet un acte contraire à la vertu. Vu sous cet angle, la poésie ne peut avoir qu'une influence pernicieuse sur la jeunesse .

Le même constat s'impose lorsqu'on analyse le discours des poètes à l'égard des hommes. Dans l'ensemble, ce discours est mensonger. «... les poètes et les faiseurs de fables commettent les plus grandes erreurs à propos des hommes, quand ils prétendent que beaucoup d'injustes sont heureux, alors que les justes sont malheureux; que l'injustice profite si elle demeure cachée; que la justice est un bien pour autrui, mais pour soi-même un dommage".[4] Chez Platon, on l'a déjà indiqué, la justice est la vertu suprême. Elle conditionne l'existence des autres vertus cardinales. Si elle fait défaut, le bonheur devient inacces-

sible à la communauté et à l'individu. Par conséquent, si la poésie fait le panégyrique de l'injustice, elle est éminemment impropre à l'éducation. Elle n'en reste pas moins dangereuse quand elle attribue des lamentations et des plaintes excessives aux grands hommes parce qu'elle dispose par le fait même les guerriers dont la vertu principale est normalement le courage à la lâcheté, voire à la crainte de la mort. Or, la mort, en tant qu'elle libère la partie divine de l'homme - l'âme - de la prison corporelle, est un bien. Elle ne saurait être l'objet d'une crainte quelconque. Sur ce point, l'attitude de Socrate avant sa mort est édifiante.

Ainsi, il apparait clairement que le contenu de la poésie ne coïncide pas grosso modo avec la vocation morale et pratique de la cité. Il en est de même pour la forme, du moins, abstraction faite d'une seule dimension. Pour s'en convaincre, il faut faire brièvement un distinguo entre les différents genres poétiques et cerner les conséquences inhérentes à leurs méthodes. La poésie est narrative, dramatique ou à la fois narrative et dramatique. La première ou le poète rapporte simplement les gestes et les paroles des héros a une valeur éducative. Les deux autres qui désignent respectivement la tragédie, la comédie d'une part, et d'autre part l'épopée, sont sujettes à caution. Elles utilisent l'imitation qui comporte un risque certain pour la jeunesse. A long terme, celle-ci finira par prendre les travers et les vices des individus que les acteurs imitent.

La forme des poèmes débouche nécessairement sur l'étude du rythme. De même que les lamentations et les plaintes sont exclues des oeuvres des poètes, les chants plaintifs sont proscrits. Ce qui revient à dire que l'harmonie lydienne et l'ionienne qui sont capables de conduire les gardiens à l'ivresse, à la mollesse et à l'indolence ne doivent pas avoir droit de cité.[5]

En définitive, le réquisitoire contre la poésie repose sur des raisons pratiques. Celles-ci peuvent sembler relativement sommaires. Il importe maintenant de les consolider sur le plan théorique. Le poète est le champion de l'apparence. A proprement parler, il a une méconnaissance de l'être ou de la réalité. En cela, il ressemble au peintre. Dans

La République, il y a une hiérarchie rigoureuse entre la Forme, sa copie imparfaite et la copie de sa copie. La Forme est immuable et éternelle. La réalité, telle que nous l'entendons, est réductible au monde supra sensible. C'est l'univers des Formes qui la constitue. Voilà pourquoi le platonisme est un réalisme.

Si dans le monde sensible, le menuisier par exemple fabrique un lit, il ne faut pas perdre de vue qu'un tel lit n'est qu'une copie imparfaite de la Forme dont Dieu est le créateur. Or, nous savons que le peintre est un imitateur de cette copie qui est loin d'avoir l'éclat et la consistance de l'archétype. Le menuisier c'est-à-dire l'artisan de la pâle copie de la Forme étant en delà de l'être à un deuxième degré, le peintre qui imite son oeuvre reste forcément éloigné du réel à un troisième degré. Il ne connaît pas les qualités et les défauts des objets qu'il imite. Cette connaissance est du ressort de l'utilisateur. Compte tenu de son expérience, celui-ci peut donner des conseils utiles au fabricant. C'est donc lui qui possède la science.[6] En fin de compte, le peintre n'a sur les objets qu'il imite ni connaissance scientifique ni opinion droite. Il en est de même pour le poète."... le poète applique à chaque art des couleurs convenables, avec ses mots, et ses phrases, de telle sorte que, sans s'entendre lui-même à rien d'autre qu'à imiter, auprès de ceux qui, comme lui, ne voient que les choses d'après les mots, il passe quand il parle, en observant la mesure, le rythme et l'harmonie, soit de cordonnerie, soit d'art militaire, soit de tout autre objet -... pour parler fort bien, tant naturellement et par eux-mêmes ces ornements ont de charme !».[7] C'est un parfait imitateur. Même si en réalité, son expérience ne va pas au-delà de l'apparence, il apparaît comme un homme qui maîtrise tous les arts et les sujets qu'il traite. C'est un grand sophiste.

De l'analyse de ces raisons pratiques et théoriques, il ressort que le bannissement du poète est le corollaire de l'illusion qu'il cultive avec une habileté inégalable. Dans l'univers platonicien, il faut le souligner avec force, l'ignorance est la mère de tous les vices. Autrement dit, le mal en général et la violence politique en particulier sont la conséquence nécessaire de cette situation . Dans la mesure ou la nouvelle communauté doit promouvoir la justice et le bonheur, on doit

renvoyer les marchands d'illusion. Il y a, à cet égard, une convergence totale de vues entre les lecteurs de Platon. Ce qui les divise, par contre, c'est la question de savoir si celui-ci est un ennemi irréductible du poète ou, bien au contraire, un penseur qui, par-delà la condamnation de la poésie de son temps, réclame une nouvelle race de poètes à la mesure de la cité idéale.

Pour notre part, une réponse scientifique à cette question requiert une analyse minutieuse de l'argument essentiel qui est à l'origine de l'ostracisme. Si le poète n'a pas sa place dans la société, c'est parce qu'il se complaît dans le mensonge. Mais peut-on à bon droit tirer argument des limites de la poésie telle qu'elle existait dans l'Antiquité pour dire que la poésie est mensongère par essence? On ne doit pas éluder cette interrogation. Malgré le caractère acerbe de certains propos que Platon a tenus dans La République, sa pensée est bien nuancée. Il affirme que le poète a la capacité de dire la vérité, à condition qu'il soit sous l'influence du délire, de l'enthousiasme ou de l'inspiration divine. Cette thèse est du reste un lieu commun, comme le montrent la plupart des textes majeurs de l'Antiquité. Les premiers vers de l'Iliade et de l'Odyssée présentent en effet le poète comme le porte-parole de la Muse. Hésiode et Pindare partagent cette conception. Démocrite est, semble-t-il, le premier philosophe à l'avoir fait sienne. Le seul mérite de Platon est certainement de l'avoir approfondie. Dans le Phèdre, il distingue trois types de délire. Le premier inspire la prophétesse de Delphes et les prêtresses de Dodone. Le second, par le canal de certains individus, indique à l'humanité les prières et les cérémonies à faire pour mettre un terme à des calamités consécutives à des malédictions anciennes. Le troisième vient des Muses. "Quand il s'empare d'une âme tendre et pure, il l'éveille, la transporte, lui inspire des odes et des poèmes de toute sorte et, célébrant d'innombrables hauts faits des anciens, fait l'éducation de leurs descendants. Mais quiconque approche des portes de la poésie sans que les Muses lui aient soufflé le délire, persuadé que l'art suffit pour faire de lui un bon poète, celui-là reste loin de la perfection, et la poésie du bon sens est éclipsée par la poésie de l'inspiration".[8] Dans cette perspective, le bon poète ressemble

au prophète ou au devin inspiré. S'il utilise uniquement ses facultés naturelles, la patrie de la vérité lui est inaccessible. En fait, il est, au sens étymologique du terme, le ministre de la Muse. Celle-ci le met en branle comme elle l'entend. Ce qui suppose une perte momentanée de la raison. Le poète est, comme on le voit, un possédé. Il n'a pas conscience de ce qu'il dit.

Cette théorie de l'inspiration dont l'esquisse était déjà dans l'Apologie de Socrate fera l'objet d'une longue discussion dans l'Ion. Dans ce dialogue, Ion qui est un rhapsode interprète Homère à la perfection. Mais dès que Socrate lui pose des questions relatives aux autres genres poétiques, il confesse ses limites. C'est dire que son savoir n'est pas scientifique. Le rhapsode, il est important de le signaler, est un détour dont se sert Platon pour démontrer que le poète, livré à lui-même, est incapable d'accéder au savoir scientifique. La preuve en est que dans les genres poétiques ou la Muse ne l'entraine pas, il ne peut rien réaliser. Pour étayer davantage cette idée, Socrate, l'interlocuteur d'Ion, donne un exemple irréfutable. Tynnichos de Chalcis, fait-il remarquer, n'a jamais fait de poème important dans le passé. Cependant, simplement parce que la Muse l'a voulu, il est parvenu à chanter le plus beau poème lyrique de son temps. A travers le poète, c'est la divinité qui s'exprime. Or, celle-ci, de par sa nature, est étrangère au mensonge.

Si dans certaines conditions, la vérité peut être accessible au poète, nous devons relativiser la position de Platon vis-à-vis de la poésie. Une chose est d'ailleurs de dire que le contenu de la tragédie, de la comédie et de l'épopée est illusoire à beaucoup d'égards - la précision est de taille - , une autre est d'affirmer que la poésie est mensongère en tant que telle.

La pensée de Platon se situe plutôt dans la première direction. Elle n'est pas pour lui rejet pur et simple de la poésie. Celle-ci peut aller de pair avec les impératifs de la cité nouvelle. La République, si souvent invoquée en faveur du bannissement systématique du poète, est on ne peut plus claire sur ce point. Au livre II de cette oeuvre, Platon note que la plupart des grandes fables qu'on raconte aux enfants sont fausses. Il importe par conséquent de retenir celles qui sont les plus

belles et les plus propres à les rendre vertueux.[9] La cité doit engager des mères et des nourrices pour modeler leur âme. Le philosophe grec insiste sur la qualité des fables qui constituent la matière de l'éducation première. Cette insistance est pleinement justifiée. La mission de l'éducateur devient pratiquement impossible si les premières acquisitions de l'enfant sont erronées. En reconnaissant la valeur éducative de quelques aspects de la poésie nationale, Platon ne fait nullement une concession de pure politesse au poète. La République, n'en déplaise aux lecteurs impatients et à ceux qui prétendent philosopher par ouï-dire, détermine clairement la nature de la poésie nouvelle. Qu'il nous suffise simplement d'en citer deux passages significatifs au plus haut point pour détruire peut-être définitivement la fable d'un Platon ennemi irréductible du poète. "Pour notre compte, visant à l'utilité, nous aurons recours au poète et au conteur austère et moins agréable qui imitera pour nous le ton de l'honnête homme et se conformera dans son langage aux règles que nous avons établies dès le début, lorsque nous entreprenions l'éducation des guerriers".[10] Quelques livres plus loin, nous lisons: "... qu'en fait de poésie, il ne faut admettre dans la cité que les hymnes en l'honneur des dieux et les éloges des gens de bien".[11] Ces deux passages se rejoignent. Ils montrent que toute forme de poésie n'est pas bonne pour la callipolis. La poésie digne d'intérêt est sans aucun doute celle qui peut faire aimer toutes les manifestations de la vertu. Elle doit exalter les dieux, les démons, les héros ou toute grande figure dont le comportement est exemplaire au niveau éthique.

Comme on le verra par la suite, la position de Platon ne variera pas fondamentalement. Dans Les Lois écrites au soir de sa vie, il se départit de certaines thèses développées dans La République: la communauté des femmes et des enfants, l'éducation commune donnée aux garçons et aux filles... Par contre, en ce qui concerne la poésie, on assiste à un approfondissement de ses vues antérieures. Plus précis que dans La République, il affirme que le paradigme à partir duquel doit se faire l'éducation de la Jeunesse ne doit pas être cherché bien loin. Ce paradigme existe déjà. Il s'agit évidemment des Lois. Ce texte a été élaboré non sans inspiration divine. Sa prose, ainsi que le dit Socrate,

avoisine tellement la poésie qu'il doit constituer pour le législateur et pour l'éducateur le modèle par excellence. L'idée de modèle implique par définition le rejet de toute forme de poésie qui s'en éloigne. Elle constitue un critère objectif à partir duquel se fait la discrimination entre les poésies formatrice et immorale. Dans la cité idéale, la censure est donc omniprésente. Le poète doit être surveillé de près. Il ne saurait en être autrement, du moins, si le législateur et l'éducateur veulent parvenir aux objectifs qu'ils se sont fixés. Malgré tout, dans le domaine de la poésie, il faut bien garder présent à l'esprit que le platonisme n'est pas une profession de foi d'intolérance. Tant s'en faut. Les Lois font obligation au législateur de considérer avec un regard très critique les oeuvres des poètes nationaux, les écrits en prose et d'écouter attentivement toute discussion portant sur l'éducation. La finalité d'une telle entreprise est la constitution d'un recueil de textes destiné à la formation de la jeunesse. Bien entendu, ce recueil comprend d'abord Les Lois et ensuite tout autre texte qui aura, en considération de sa conformité à ce paradigme, retenu l'attention du législateur. Le ministère l'imposera aux maîtres qui devront l'assimiler et en faire l'éloge. Autrement, ils n'auront pas qualité pour éduquer la jeunesse.

Ce qui est remarquable dans Les Lois qui constituent son chant du cygne, c'est la minutie avec laquelle Platon définit les critères concrets qui doivent présider à la sélection des poètes. "Comme poète on ne prendra pas le premier venu, mais quelqu'un d'au moins cinquante ans et non pas ceux qui ayant en eux la capacité poétique et musicale, n'ont jamais fait personnellement d'acte beau et remarquable. Tous ceux qui, étant en eux-mêmes gens de bien et notés comme tels dans la cité, sont auteurs de belles actions, c'est leurs poèmes qu'on chantera, fussent-ils musicalement défectueux. En seront juges l'éducateur et les autres gardiens des lois, qui leur accordent ce privilège de faire parler leur Muse en toute liberté, mais ne donnent aux autres nulle autre autorisation; à personne ne sera loisible cette audace de chanter aucune composition qui n'ait été approuvée, fut-elle plus suave que les hymnes de Thamyras et d'Orphée; seuls seront admis les poèmes qui auront été consacrés et réservés aux dieux, et ceux ou des gens de bien, décernant

la critique ou l'éloge seront reconnus l'avoir fait comme il faut".[12] Ce texte s'inscrit dans le sillage de La République. Il détermine le profil du nouveau poète par rapport à la fonction éthico-politique assignée à la poésie. Contrairement au poète des cités corrompues qui enseigne l'immoralisme, celui-ci doit être pieux. Dans son oeuvre, il est tenu de faire l'éloge des divinités. Sa pratique de la vertu doit être notoire. C'est à cette condition que son art peut former des citoyens qui considèrent la vertu comme une seconde nature. Le poète peut donc avoir sa place dans la société. Il lui suffit pour cela de s'astreindre à une discipline rigoureuse. «Que le poète ne compose rien qui puisse être contraire à ce que la cité regarde comme légal, comme juste, comme beau ou bon; que son poème fait, il lui soit interdit d'en donner connaissance à aucun particulier avant qu'il n'ait été lu et approuvé par les juges désignés à cet effet par les gardiens des lois".[13] Il doit absolument tenir compte de la législation nationale pour l'élaboration et la publication de ses oeuvres. Car désormais, c'est la cité, et non l'individu, qui est la mesure de toutes choses. Telle la production du poète est pour celle-ci, telle elle est pour tous les citoyens. Toutes les valeurs - juridiques, morales, littéraires, esthétiques - qui peuvent avoir une incidence quelconque sur la santé de la communauté deviennent automatiquement des valeurs politiques. Elles n'échappent pas à la censure.

La poésie qui est autorisée par la cité n'est pas foncièrement différente de la philosophie, du moins dans le domaine éducatif. Elle est d'essence philosophique en ce sens qu'elle est strictement l'expression des exigences définies par Les Lois qui sont au dire de Platon l'étalon à partir duquel on mesure l'authenticité ou la valeur de toute oeuvre de l'esprit. Dans la conscience du poète, la philosophie qui définit les critères de la poésie vraie apparaît incontestablement comme le parangon de la nouvelle poésie. Pour peu qu'on y prenne garde, on peut arriver à cette conclusion à travers le discours de l'Athénien. Comme celui-ci le dit sans ambages, le texte même des Lois constitue la substance de la nouvelle tragédie ou, ce qui revient au même, de la tragédie vraie. Les poètes tragiques dont les oeuvres ont été jusqu'à présent utilisées pour la formation de la jeunesse doivent s'établir ail-

leurs pour autant que la quasi-totalité de leur production est dérisoire au point de vue moral et politique. Si naguère, ils étaient la gloire de la cité, dans le nouveau contexte, ils sont, à vrai dire, devenus des étrangers. «Excellents étrangers,... auteurs de tragédie; nous-mêmes le sommes, et, autant que nous le pouvons, de la tragédie la plus authentique. Auteurs donc vous êtes, auteurs aussi nous sommes de la même tragédie, vos rivaux dans la fabrication et la représentation du drame le plus beau, que seule est naturellement apte à créer la loi véritable: telle est, du moins notre espérance".[14] Quant aux autres genres poétiques que l'Athénien a passés sous silence dans ce passage, ils seront - cela va sans dire - logés à la même enseigne que la tragédie du monde ancien. Leur modèle reste Les Lois.

Au total, dans une cité où l'injustice, l'instabilité et le mensonge sont pratiquement devenus des normes, la philosophie morale et politique de Platon est un cri de douleur d'un penseur épris de justice, d'ordre et de vérité. C'est cette lecture qui nous permet de comprendre la refonte de la cité qu'elle réclame. Si la communauté politique doit être repensée, la poésie qui occupait une place privilégiée dans le système d'éducation traditionnelle ne doit pas rester intacte. Il en est de même pour toutes les disciplines qui formaient la matière de l'éducation nationale. Car celui qui veut la fin doit vouloir les moyens ou, en tout cas, se les donner d'une manière ou d'une autre. On ne peut donc pas réformer la société en ne transformant pas au préalable le citoyen . Cette métamorphose passe absolument par l'éducation. Il s'agit assurément d'une éducation nouvelle à la mesure de la cité nouvelle. Ce qui implique le bannissement des différentes figures historiques de la poésie qui utilisent en général l'imitation et qui restent par voie de conséquence en delà de la vérité. Ne nous y méprenons pas cependant: si la poésie nationale a été presque vidée de sa substance, on en garde un petit noyau, en raison de sa valeur éducative. Ce noyau doit être entretenu pour le bonheur du citoyen. En d'autres termes, Platon n'évacue pas de la cité la poésie en tant que telle. Il est plutôt l'apologiste d'une nouvelle race de poètes capables d'instaurer sur le plan éthique une palingénésie. C'est de cette façon que la poésie se démarquera totalement de

la sophistique ou du monde des apparences ou l'ignorance conduit fatalement à la méchanceté. Sa vocation dans la nouvelle cité devient essentiellement moralisatrice et politique. Elle se réconcilie pour ainsi dire avec la philosophie. Le poète se soumet à l'autorité spirituelle du philosophe au point de perdre quasiment son identité. Le philosophe devient ipso facto un poète parce qu'il est le seul compétent pour définir les critères de la vraie poésie. Tout bien considéré, le platonisme est une philosophie de la renaissance à un double niveau: la renaissance de la poésie - et des autres moyens d'éducation - avec son corollaire c'est-à-dire la renaissance de la cité. La République et Les Lois qui sont les deux textes essentiels ou le problème de la place du poète dans la cité est posé explicitement ne disent pas le contraire. Dès lors, si nous admettons avec Ferdinand Alquié qu'"en philosophie comme en histoire de la philosophie, la référence ultime est toujours le "texte" du philosophe"15, nous pouvons estimer, sur la foi des textes de Platon, avoir contribué modestement à dissiper une apparence tenace qui tendait, aux yeux de certains lecteurs, à se substituer à la réalité. Nous aurons ainsi réparé une injustice à l'égard d'une philosophie qui est fondamentalement un refus total de l'apparence c'est-à-dire une quête permanente de l'être et de la vérité.

Notes

1 Cf. note 701, in La République, Garnier, Paris, 1966.
2 Aristote, Poétique, 6, 1449 b.
3 Baccou(r), Introduction à La République, Garnier, Paris, 1966, 24.
4 Platon, Idem, 143-144.
5 Platon, Idem, 150.
6 Platon, Idem, 366.
7 Platon. Idem, 365.
8 Platon, Le Banquet, Garnier, Paris, 1989, 123.
9 Platon, Idem, 126-127.
10 Platon, Idem, 149-150.
11 Platon, Idem, 372.
12 Platon, Les Lois VIII, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1976, 67.
13 Platon, Les Lois VII, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 30.
14 Platon, Idem, 53-54.
15 Alquié, F., Préface de L'histoire des philosophes illustrée par les textes, de Vergez, A., et Huisman, D., Nathan, Paris, 6.

Résumé

La politique coloniale et postcoloniale des pays occidentaux concernant les sociétés non-occidentales - souvent perçue de façon simpliste comme aide au developpement - est caractérisée par un point de vue exclusivement économique. Il n'y a pas de place pour d'autres aspects de l'existence, tels que les aspects sociaux et culturels. Si on leur prête attention c'est en tant que problèmes résiduels sans solution possible du fait même qu'ils sont posés en termes économiques qui leur sont essentiellement étrangers.

Ce point de vue, ainsi que la practique qui découle, mène à un dilemme de signification croissante. Vu ses effects il est jugé de moins en moins tentable, mais on ne le quitte pas à cause d'intérêts bien établis et du manque d'alternative applicable.

Il s'agit d'un problème mondial de changements culturels en de rencontre des cultures méconnu principalement par les pays occidentaux.

CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

ON THE PROSPECT OF PARADIGM CHANGE

C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze

> *... tout ne tourne plus autour de l'économie qui était pourtant le "mythe fondateur" de notre civilisation.*[1]

> *The point, after all, was not to understand the world but to change it, and for that one did not need to know what the Other felt but only who it was.*[2]

Development work is subject to fads and foibles. It has an innate restlessness suggesting failure to put its basic premisses into effect by a satisfactory combination of theory and practice.

At the time of its introduction, some 45 years ago, the concept of 'development' was a rallying cry of a primarily moral nature. Attempts to define it, in having to opt for a particular access, failed to account for its comprehensiveness. In tacit acceptance of this fundamental inadequacy, a conception in terms of economics has gained the upper hand. It reflects the predisposition of modern Westerners engaging upon development theory and practice rather than the need of development as experienced and perceived by those concerned.[3] In retrospect it turns out to be basically a reissue, in line with post-war restoration, of the colonial frame of mind, in which ethical commitment has dispensed with the assessment of the implications of decolonization.

Once things had come to this pass, corrective attempts have incessantly been made to render justice to the totality of the problem. As a result the established development paradigm consists of an economic core overgrown by a relentless upsurge of disparate concerns, many of which count as 'non-economic'. The majority of these are topical issues, picked by their proponents for reasons of alleged urgency rather than fundamental significance. They include the informal sector, woman's emancipation, urban problems, youth problems, basic human

rights, asylum seekers, calamity aid, and so forth. Many are Western concerns writ large. Their advocates tend to maintain themselves in vested interest syndicates. Altogether they make for a Western self-image as the recourse for the world's ills.

Objecting that there is more to development than its economics, some have persistently advocated countervailing attention to matters social or cultural. They have been marginalized by the dominant economic paradigm and by ever new preoccupations arising.

These days culture is no longer unmentionable in connection with development.[4] There is nagging concern about the net effects of development assistance, and culture is often made to carry the blame for disappointments. The conception of international relations in terms of aid inspires a dichotomic conception of the global scene which proves untenable. Culture, as the mainstay of collective self-reassertion, is one of the causes. On the other hand few questions are heard about culture as the determinant frame of the development paradigm. Still, phenomena of what is said to be culture crisis occur on either side of the developmental divide, affecting prospects.

This, then, seems to be the occasion for a reconsideration of the significance of culture to the understanding and practice of development. In venturing into it one will have to account for the reasons why attempts thus far have failed.

The Western perception of collective existence: economy or culture?

The conceptualization and practice of development are of Western pedigree. Their global application (imposition rather than relevance) is a matter of historical accident, namely Western expansiveness.

A discussion of 'culture and development' (or vice versa) will have to begin by the West, with a statement of fact that may surprise some. To the Westerner the notion of 'culture' has two meanings. One is segmental: culture is the icing on the cake of life. The other is com-

prehensive: culture is the framework of thought and conduct. In practice the former prevails, in a discourse inattentive to the need to properly distinguish them.

Culture in the limited sense is a distinct complex, a conceptual segment of reality. It is the total of material and spiritual achievements and activities deemed to bestow lustre upon life. Rephrased somewhat superciliously, it is that which is subsidized by a Ministry of Culture or by patronage: museums, orchestras, performing and creative artists, artisans, folklore, and so forth.

Behind culture as a distinct feature of existence hides comprehensive culture. It is the presupposed frame of reference of thought and practice, the conceptual and operational setting in which life is embedded. We are hardly aware of it: it is as the air we breathe. It is tacitly subsumed when we speak of community or society, state or economy. Unusual conditions are required to trigger awareness. This will arise either when something goes awry, or in an encounter with things or people foreign.

Two observations are due. Firstly, the contrast between the two notions seems more rigorous than it is to common Western experience. Conflict is unlikely, confusion all the more frequent.

The second observation refers to the cause of this conceptual duplication, peculiar to the modern West. The world view of modernity is economistic. Collective existence is primarily perceived in terms of economics; public affairs concern the management of the political economy. This pervasive, not to say compulsive,[5] thought pattern precludes the use of the notion 'culture' as a signifier of the fullness of life. It limits its scope to that segment of existence which resists reduction to terms economic. The implication is that inasmuch as it will not conform, culture in the segmental sense is marginal, problematic, potentially subversive by the prevailing standard. This awkward fact is revealed - rather than covered up as it is meant to be - by the system of subventions awarded by the state as the protagonist of the economistic order. It keeps culture alive so far as it is deemed indispensable whilst curbing its subversive potential. All the while, the fact

that economism is a specific variant of culture in the comprehensive sense eludes notice.

Culture: the catch in development?

Given this backdrop, it should come as no surprise that to the Western perception of a development situation, elements failing to respond to economic development policies will, in facile analogy to Western practice, be labelled 'cultural' - of course in the segmental Western sense of the word. Whether only part of the society concerned resists or indeed all of it is not usually asked. Culture in the comprehensive sense is taken for granted on the presumption that the totality of existence anywhere is amenable to the perception of reality which finds its practical expression in economic development policies. The split construct of the West is projected in unconcern as to relevance.

It is this ethnocentric reasoning which eventually causes the new concern about culture. It says that 'development' and 'economic development' should be synonymous but for the residual area where economics lack effect: the domain of the 'non-economic factors'. Among these, 'culture', in a categorical, abstract sense, is currently salient: failure of development policies to meet expectations will be attributed to 'culture'.

At this point a divergence of readings sets in. One proceeds to blame 'culture', then to dismiss the matter as a minor irregularity. The other, substituting the comprehensive notion of culture for the partial, turns around and proposes to redesign development policies in tune with 'culture'. In so doing it fails to specify which culture. It takes the term in the abstract sense, ignoring any questions as to the proper way to account for, indeed the true significance of, the specific culture at play. It is in avoiding the realities of culture that the two variants agree again.

This is a replay of the situation that has prevailed all these years. In spite of its claim to comprehensiveness the economic vision turns

out to be inadequate in an important regard. In escapist response, an interest in culture emerges. This however leads into the blind alley just described. Two options remain to choose from. One is to muddle through; the other is to ask how to break out of the cognitive strait jacket.

The current mood favours muddling through, regardless of mounting dissatisfaction among both donors and recipients of development aid. There is reason to prognosticate that this preference will shift as the established development paradigm will prove to be increasingly counterproductive.

This expectation is based on an analysis of the changing interplay between the forces at work: some maintaining the status quo, others threatening it. The forces making for the momentum of the prevailing pattern consist, basically, of economism and ethnocentrism welded together. Their institutionalization in multiple sociopolitical entities endures in relentless expansivity on a global scale. The interiorization of this cultural syndrome in the sociopolitical actors dispenses with critical reflection on premises. In the systemic latitude available for the purpose dissent is free. Inasmuch as anything outside of this cultural universe is unthinkable, it will concern non-essentials.

Unless, that is, strange things happen: such as, as already observed, an inner breakdown or an upsetting encounter with people and things alien. Then, the unthinkable takes shape as disruptive forces. The self-contained and self-perpetuating cultural universe stands exposed as neither unshakable nor truly global. Western modernity hurts itself against the adverse fall-out from its relentless progress: environmental hazards, multidimensional disruption of sociocultural patterns, tampering with biological processes in man. Man's domination over reality culminates in the alienating confrontation with himself. Non-Western civilizations such as the Muslim and the Japanese challenge that of the West. This is what postmodernity is about. It is an interim marked by suspense. The insustainability of one paradigm, Western modernity, is coupled to the unforeseeability of its successor.

In this perspective the future prospect of the standing development paradigm is grim. Its cognitive base, Western modernity, is no longer firm, its effectuation no longer self-evident. The basic claim to universal validity fails to be vindicated both as regards application and as regards reception. The application hurts itself against sociocultural specificity, the reception against the constraints of cross-cultural understanding. Such interaction as occurs is marked by reciprocal ambiguity in the way each side perceives the other. In failing to consummate irreversible decolonization as separation, development becomes a source of unending frustration. This is why a prognosis of ineluctable paradigm change makes sense.[6] It cannot be limited to development; it is bound to concern the West and its role in the world.

Towards innovative problem identification

All this leads back to the cultural problem hesitantly and as yet ineffectively identified by those probing into the causes of frustration in development work. Why is this problem identification a dead alley?

It tacitly identifies the cultural catch with the non-Western side: it is 'their' culture which is judged to be, as yet, incompatible with development. This verdict has two curious features. Firstly, it is negligent in two regards: it assumes 'development' to be a self-evident and apposite proposition; it fails to come to terms with the 'recipient' culture in a way that might warrant a judgment as to what is wrong about it. The other feature, prefigured in the assumption as to 'development', is the tacit postulate that Western modernity is the (only, true) frame for thought and action. In setting out from the West in the exercise of problem identification one exempts it from inspection, and tacitly vindicates the modern-Western self-view along with its ethnocentric implications. The ulterior question, whether for the purpose of a problem identification involving culture the economistic approach along with its modern-Western cultural premises may need reconsideration, remains

below the horizon. This is how the development agent's claim to normative and operational dominance has eluded challenge for so long.

The prospect changes decisively once the Western condition is taken into consideration, as it is bound to be under present circumstances. The advent of postmodernity entails the ineluctability of paradigm change in the matter of development.

Westerners are being forced into taking mental distance from the modern world view. Self-vindicating normativity, self-reinforcing domination, self-propelling expansivity are liable to cave in as the effect of their hidden ambiguities (betraying the ethnocentric refusal to account for the interactive aspect of unchecked self-assertion) becomes erosive rather than creative. The provisional result is an awareness of spatiotemporal as well as operational constraints, necessitating a reassessment of significances. For one thing, the economistic vision, rather than being a valid reason for residualizing culture, turns out to be the expression of one phase of one civilization, and an outgoing one at that. The economy and economics need rethinking free from the ideological connotations superimposed by modernity.

A void seems to open up. It offers latitude to the countervailing aspect of the near-global impact of Western modernity: the irreversible emergence of multiculturality in close interaction and interdependence. It awaits due conceptualization and operationalization. This is the other face of the coin named postmodernity. It is being perceived with trepidation if at all.

A prospect

The continuation of this argument is inevitably a matter of probability, inviting speculation; but this is not the point to break it off. It will address two issues. One refers to the development paradigm and its enactment, the other to culture as the key of a new approach.

The wear and tear of the development paradigm reflects, as shown, the fate of modernity in the West. Its proper momentum under

post- or neo-colonialism, though evincing, to a limited extent, the vicissitudes of practice (notably in the growing concern about relevance), is inadequate to allow autonomous direction.

The Achilles heel of Western modernity is Promethean man. Modernity is the world view built upon the image of man in pursuit of total cognitive and practical domination (and exploitation) of the world, including fellow man, and regardless of the fact that he is part of it. Retreat from this demiurgical posture is increasingly seen to be ineluctable. The idea of the malleable, "make-able" world has had its day. The pathology of breaking out of the mould is aggravated for lack of a ready alternative. Postmodernity is a half-way house of indefinite duration.[7]

To the development paradigm this bodes the loss of its cornerstone: the development agent whose control over reality, by means of universally valid planning and plan implementation, has no limitations, whether in space or time, that he deigns to be aware of. Feed-back from his acts amounts to the requirement, as yet grudgingly heeded if at all, that he account for the specificity of the situation in which he is at work, and reciprocally for his own alienness and limitation. In turn, the development relationship stands devoid of the element of fundamental inequality anchored in Western aid and the Western example to follow. The westernized non-Western development expert is thrown back, in what turns out to be virtually total alienation, upon the sociocultural context of his origin. He is to confront the question as to the links, if any, between development and westernization, i.e., assimilation to Western modernity, now moribund.

Here again the call is for a fundamental revision of the development paradigm, starting with its key notion, development, with all its inevitably retrograde associations. Here again, it is one thing to stray, however far, from a paradigm in applying it and quite something else to abandon it. More so as, in the absence of a successor paradigm, this would be a wanton act of destruction. Here too, the condition of the half-way house.

Once more the temptation of prospective speculation about basics beckons, only to be resisted. It is preferable to stay the course in an attempt to sort out the quandary of development work which by now few are short-sighted enough to ignore. One has, however, to be clear about this decision. As a matter of principle the proper way of dealing with the development aid relationship as a provisional institutionalization of global interdependence should be the long overdue act of drastically cutting the umbilical cord. This is advocated time and again by non-Western intellectuals in moments of despair. To do so however would be at loggerheads with the post-World War II trend towards global interdependence.[8] On the other hand, muddling through threatens to be counterproductive. The one option left is purposive gradualism.

This begins by drawing the consequences from what has hitherto remained a matter of diplomatic verbiage, namely the alteration in development work from aid to co-operation. A matter of bringing the 'recipient' party into the equation in its own right, on a par with the hitherto dominant 'donor' side. The idea is not new. In practice it receives a modicum of tacit effectuation, but its recognition as a matter of principle lags behind.

Better than in more or less moralizing terms such as reciprocity or partnership,[9] this relationship can be expressed in the more recent notion of interaction. The intent with which these concepts are adopted is re-equilibration of the modern world view as manifest in the development paradigm. This is achieved by implicitly restoring man's awareness of being part of reality: perception virtually obliterated under the ipsocentrism of man the demiurge. The effect is to curb the excessive, not to say obsessive, ethnocentrism of modernity. It offers an opening towards a less absorbing identification with one's own civilization, and concomitantly to a less ambiguous perception of that of others.

Seen against this revised conceptual backdrop the notion of development, monument to man the demiurge, loses its fascination. Harking back to 'progress', it was inevitably obsolete in being resorted to, in the late 'forties, by those having to deal with the novel, ill understood,

condition in colonial territories immediately after World War II. Some forty-five years have been spent in bringing its meaning up to date, with perverse result. A summing-up in one word of all the claims of Western modernity, it can but prove elusive in postmodern times. The record of its use, remaining behind expectations, is neither glorious nor disastrous.

Once perceived in the perspective of the dynamics of a particular culture, development - or its approximative equivalent if available - is a variable epiphenomenon, with or without voluntaristic overtones, of 'accelerated over-all change'. Such recognizability, from one case to the next, as it will show follows from the circumstance that each case is a meeting of global and local trends. It is significant, but it does not make 'development' a universal category.

On the strength of experience gained it is now possible to let go, gradually, of the term and particularly of those of its connotations which are becoming counterproductive. This should free the way for needed new conceptualization.

Rethinking culture

The second item for consideration is culture as a conceivable key to a new approach. This sets out from the anticipation of dialogue (from a Western standpoint: between Western scholars and colleagues from particular culture areas, case by case) on the ways in which overall sociocultural change is to be understood with the - enduring - intent to influence it, in concerted intellectual-managerial effort, to the benefit of as large a public as possible. To this purpose the Western 'development expert' (in search of a more appropriate name) will have to make up his mind as to his own input. It will be more modest both in terms of division of roles and responsibilities and in terms of intellectual pretensions. This however should make it more rather than less valuable.

The major question is elsewhere. Setting out from the recognition that, due to the loss of the development paradigm as his magic key, he

does not have the answers in advance, indeed is not certain as to the questions, he has to chart a new course.

By critical reconsideration of some of the existing approaches a number of access roads is likely to open up, though at the peril of relapsing into the old rut.

Culture as an access is underemployed. Misdirected, it has prematurely disappointed. It deserves to be tried anew in the light of the reversal of accents in the nexus 'culture and development'. This implies that culture, seen as accelerated over-all sociocultural change, features, case by case, as the vector of a category of phenomena tendentiously named 'development' in the West. This new perception demands to be tested out for its implications. Besides, cultures are determinants of the global interaction between sociocultural collectivities by any name: states, economies, ethnic groups. The balance of this paper is given up to a reconnoitring of prospects in what appears to be a relatively new opening for academic effort: culture as a dynamic proposition and cultures as interactive propositions demanding a conceptualization in terms dynamic and interactive.

There is no ground for apprehension that this should substitute a 'soft' for a 'hard' approach. Provided it is taken in the comprehensive sense, as the parameter concomitant to social process, dynamic and specific, culture is not the elusive notion its polysemy may seem to suggest.[10] This is readily substantiated by consideration of four selected aspects of culture, namely: postulated universality, stability, historicity, specificity.

Universality: postulate of ethnocentrism

In considering culture as the frame of intra- and intercultural social process one faces the problem that the plurality of cultures is at odds with the fact that each culture is a universe to itself. This problem is compounded where the ulterior unity of mankind is experienced as its setting.

It has a cognitive and an operational aspect. Cognitively at issue is man's coming to terms with comprehensive reality, of which he finds

himself a distinct part.[11] Operationally, unity as the defining feature of mankind eludes man's grasp. He (person and collectivity interacting) responds to this challenge in an unwittingly idiosyncratic way, potentially different from that of others. To the extent these responses are cases of incipient civilization, this will imply the biblical "confusion" (in the sense of dispersion) of "tongues".

This leads to a paradox. Given culture's teleological reason (*causa finalis*) for existence, its significance to its bearers is that of cosmos and hence universe. A universe is singular; a plurality of universes is absurd; universes beside one's own are unimaginable. But mankind has many cultures. The essentially monadic self-view inherent in any culture is not borne out by the way the plurality of cultures will manifest itself. Reciprocal isolation is, now more than ever, unworkable. How will mutually exclusive identities coexist? The answer is ambiguous.

One option is to narrow down universality to unicity, vindicated in turn as superiority. Ethnocentrism is a natural phenomenon, reproachable only in case of excess, that is, of noxious disregard of the relevant other's inevitably ipso/ethnocentric integrity. Any residual problems are managed empirically, dispensing with further conceptual artifacts. Inequivalence is experienced as inequality and then dealt with as a matter of power. One's own culture is then the Procrustes bed to someone else's.

The alternative option shows in public preparedness to respect, at least outwardly and always presuming reciprocity, the ideas and conduct of the relevant other, as a way of bringing under control any problematic implications of non-equivalence. It shows, for example, in the Western formula of democracy; comparable guidelines, formal or informal, exist elsewhere.[12] This opens up vistas of interaction remaining for the most part to be reconnoitred. More on this later.

The two options are mutually exclusive yet simultaneously operational. Currently the problem is manifest on a scale and with an urgency unheard-of in history. Those reluctant to adopt a clear position cannot avoid becoming involved.

Stability

Culture in the comprehensive sense is, as observed, the frame of reference of man's thought and conduct. At a time of acute culture change such as the present, there is less experience of stability than when not much is noticeably happening.

Belongingness to a culture determines the - experienced and perceived - identity of a person or a community. It stylizes and limits the options for conduct and by implication those for inputs, including counsel, from outside. On the other hand, a frame of reference is no insulating straitjacket. The claims of fundamentalists of many feathers, to the effect that monadic rigidity is an indispensable feature of culture, are open to challenge.

Specificity

The disaffection with the established development paradigm is in the last resort culturally motivated. As argued, it is found to lag behind actual culture change in the West, and out of touch with the concerns emerging in cultural encounters, such as development work, in other culture areas. The gaze of economics, privileged instrument of the intellect according to the development paradigm, can but perceive an image of reality cast in the reductionist terms of economism.

The shift of focus from economy toward culture is meant to break the vicious circle of this reductionism. It seeks to regain intellectual and practical adequacy through more effective accounting for comprehensiveness seen as multidimensionality. To this purpose the liberation from economism by means of a shift of focus will have to be followed through by the critical reconsideration of its conceptual and methodological equipment: the abstracting generalization, the quantifying categorization.

Any fresh start is in peril of being marred by carry-overs remaining unnoticed. So long as culture is taken in a categorical sense nothing can prevent such a relapse. One is on safer ground - though in an apparently less attractive position - in accepting that living culture is inherently specific and accounting for its specificity case by case.

This realization is enhanced if the defiant non-Western resort to culture - in East-Asia, in the world of Islam, in parts of black Africa: to each its own - is taken into account. It is advocated by two kinds of élites. One is a resurgent, partly metamorphosed, traditional élite which has rejected or missed westernization. The other is a new, westernized and consequently alienated élite which eventually chooses to prefer tradition: partly to avoid falling between two stools and partly for reasons of populism. Both set out from the unwarranted presumption that, the occasion arising, one may freely resuscitate tradition and tie in with it; they are trapped by the time they realize this is an unworkable oversimplification. They reject the West wholesale, taking advantage of their own culture - the way they see it and try to impose it both internally and outwardly - as a defense mechanism.[13]

This obdurate position is contingent to lasting Western ascendancy. If this were to subside, the antagonistic reflex would dissipate. Unless Western predominance would be inopportunely replaced by other culture conflicts, this could provide latitude for reconsideration of the value, significance and potential of one's own - changing - cultural identity, by itself and in its global context. This is the predicament of the Western-trained non-Western intellectual, another instance of the half-way-house condition previously mentioned.

Historicity

The established development paradigm is, as argued, time and place conditioned: it is neither universal nor eternal. An exponent of Western modernity, it remains culture-specific even in addressing the non-West and pretending to operate over time. The belief in its universal validity and relevance is a case of Western ethnocentrism, and its practice one of cultural imperialism. That in their heyday these were the - ambiguous - expressions of cavalier naivety is nowadays hard to believe for many. In one way or another, all this is a matter of historicity.

A reshuffling of accents by which culture becomes the lead concept does not alter this; indeed it begs the question as to accounting for historicity. Culture is a historical phenomenon. To the extent it spells

out the implications of a vision of reality and of man therein, it is at the crossroads between a perspective of absoluteness and one of contingency. Its normativity is at once absolute and relative, categorical and casuistic. These and further complementarities amount to a historical field of tension, manifest primarily as the inherent dynamism of culture and again in intercultural interaction.

From recognizing historicity to accounting for it is not a small step. If and when culture is considered in a developmental perspective, these are not the prime concerns. The usual exercise is a matter of privative comparison. It sets out from eclectically distinguishing features allegedly causing Western civilization to be inherently development-inclined. In contrast, non-Western culture, regardless whether considered categorically or with regard to a specific case at hand, is judged to lack those same (abstract, static) features. At best (and with implicit rehistoricization of these same features), this ushers in a requirement of 'cultural development', meaning total westernization.

A genuine effort to achieve this amounts to brainwashing culminating into conversion of those to be westernized. Commonly labelled 'education', it is the overt or covert mainstay of all development assistance. It has hardly ever succeeded completely, that is to the extent of wiping out, in some person or group, one culture in favour of another. Indeed few would recognize this as a valid aim. More often than not westernizing education causes more problems than it solves, both locally in non-Western settings and internationally. The reasons are not far to seek.

For one thing, it begs the question as to what exactly is the Western civilization into which the non-Westerner is to be absorbed by interiorizing it. There is no answer to this question, and it is arguable that no Westerner is in a position to attempt one. For another matter, the brainwashing effort, even if met by readiness to accept, is hampered on both sides by the inherently ambiguous perception of the other culture as the benchmark of the operation. Otherness is the experience of fundamental alienness. It is the reciprocal problem, in

any educative setting, to account for the other side's specificity and historicity as the spatiotemporal manifestations of its inner dynamics, which also determine any responses to impulses from outside. (The recourse to alleged universals merely compounds the difficulty.)

Culture, taken in the sense admitting privative comparison between West and non-West, is, then, not a feasible target for development policy. Development co-operation is to be understood as an incidental case of or epiphenomenon to intercultural interaction. It is in this perspective that the historicity of culture will prove intelligible.

All this underscores the need to account for culture in its full spatiotemporal specificity. This requirement concerns the one whose culture it is equally much as, though in a different manner than, the outside observer. To the reorientation of development work, it constitutes a novel challenge.

Issues arising

A paradigm change as envisaged here is a phenomenon of great complexity and of limited accessibility to the observer. More so as the relationship between macro process and its micro understanding and influencing (not to speak of steering) is, contrary to the presumptions of modernity, not unilateral, let alone causal. The link is interactive, and this in a variously unbalanced way. Impulses from either side take turns; effects if any are unpredictable.

In postmodernity enough hubris remains intact to warrant a venture into an exercise of anticipation of selected features of the incipient transition. They include: the tools of the social sciences; relevance; the unit of development; unbalanced interaction.

The tools of the social sciences

The social sciences, intellectual warrantors of the development paradigm, are, intriguingly, not the prime movers in the rising demand for reconsideration. Particularly, the nexus 'culture and development', in

appearing as something déjà vu, is hardly exciting. This is not to say that the social sciences go untouched. Their certainties and their privileged role are being questioned. This is not so much a matter of direct attacks as, rather, of the erosion of the vision of reality they presuppose.

The link between Western scholarship and Western exploits abroad is old-standing and variegated: a matter of mutual support towards self-realization. The emergence of the social sciences has concurred with late and post- (or neo-) colonialism. Once development had become accepted as an overseas extension of socio-economic engineering they found some additional opportunity and legitimation in branching off into its conceptual-theoretical construction and practical effectuation. Their effort has provisionally culminated in the development paradigm; they stand identified with it.

This blissful picture is, alas, incomplete. It ignores the fact that in dealing with development the social sciences are at a handicap.

This is a matter of comprehensiveness unmatched. The force of colonial societies gaining their proper momentum in national liberation movements has proven to be overwhelming. The tragedy of colonialism has been the inherent inability of the colonial powers to come up with an adequate assessment of, let alone response to, the novel situation from which they found themselves virtually eliminated. Liberation having resulted in independent statehood, its impetus has been conveniently reconceived as a problem of development. The totalizing character of the drive towards liberation persists in the comprehensiveness of the development being expected.

The fate of the social sciences is that in their turn they are at a loss, namely with regard to comprehensiveness as the key feature of the development problem. This is hardy noteworthy to the extent comprehensive reality is the necessary context of any social sciences work. To a comprehensive challenge, no comprehensive response is possible by modern-Western standards. Given analysis - that is, preliminary conceptual segmentation of reality - as the prime tool of Western scholarship, the closest approximation to a proper way of addressing perceived

comprehensiveness is by harnessing an optimal number of segmentary perceptions (or causing or allowing them to accumulate) into one concerted approach. Current interest in holism is of as yet unproven relevance to the matter at hand. This raises the well-known issue of interdisciplinarity being precluded by the impossibility to harmonize or overrule the distinct autonomies besetting multidisciplinarity. So far so good. What makes development a special case is that comprehensiveness is stipulated to be not just a contextual matter but an intrinsic part of the problem to be dealt with. One cannot suffice with the customary ways of drawing the attention away from the non-comprehensiveness of what the social sciences can do. When it arose, technocratic talk about comprehensive planning has turned out to be a matter of self-defeating naivety. Nor has mutual attunement of disciplines ever been enforced, in the case study, by the hoped-for compelling effect of limited scope.

In consequence of this quandary, the characteristic social sciences approach to development consists of two elements: set problems being addressed by disciplines.

Each set problem reflects a topical concern meant to ascertain a measure of intelligibility and accessibility in a select instance of the comprehensive problem of development. As a first move this is acceptable; questions are bound to arise as to ulterior cumulative effect of plurality of issues randomly chosen. This opens the prospect of an endless and inconclusive 'more of the same'. Deceptively announced as professionalization, it builds up into the dead weight of vested interests.

The disciplines feature in the configurations referred to in the beginning of this paper. Of thoroughly economistic inspiration, they are marked by a fixed base and a variable superstructure. The basis consists of economics in the axiomatic position of dominance and control, surrounded by subservient disciplines. The superstructure consists of a variable configuration, never large, of disciplines admitted on account of usefulness. The major criterion is compatibility, whether spontaneous or contrived, with economism as a vision of reality. To the extent any discipline perceives 'its own' reality, some are less uncongenial than others. Sociology is for a number of reasons more serviceable than

anthropology. Political science, with its characteristic bias in merely observing power, plays an ultimately inconsequential role. The history of cultures does not fit and is readily dismissed as not being a social science. This elusive conglomerate deserves closer analysis than can here be given to it. The conclusion is beyond doubt: it is a clumsy and essentially inadequate tool for understanding, let alone for policy. This verdict reinforces the earlier one, to the effect that the economistic vision is by itself untenable. The reasons given bear repeating: the economy is part of culture rather than culture being an appendix to the economy; the validity of the modern vision of reality, attributing primacy and an overarching role to an economic fragment, belongs exclusively to Western modernity, now moribund.

It should be simplistic now to condemn development studies and leave it at that. What remains to be noted is that the quandary of development work exposes, thanks to the added intercultural dimension, the ailments of the Western social sciences as the instruments of Western modernity. It requires critical reconsideration of the premisses of the social sciences in general.

The liberating effect of a cultural approach stands to be hampered by the economists staying aloof. Many do so, but no longer all. As the dispute about the sociocultural cost of economic-technocratic wisdom becomes more polarizing because the rescue of economism demands ever greater sacrifices, those prepared to challenge the infallibility claims of economistic economics will gain in power of conviction.

Relevance

The word 'development' circulates in two circuits of Western society. Among intellectuals (not just academics) it is a macro-economic concept theoretically amenable to measurement and therefore usable in policy making and implementation. In popular use it is a part teleological part moral notion mostly used in propagandistic appeals for generosity. Neither variant succeeds in effectively conveying real phenomena. Between improvement in terms of macro-economic statistics and

the well-being of everyman the link is tenuous at best. The compassionate Western outcry for Third-World development is part of a vicious circle of Western image-making and finance. The media image of dire misery to be remedied at short notice is a mere instrument towards its maintenance. To inquire into the effects of development aid is deemed inopportune. At all levels of ideas and practices, efficacy, as the practice of relevance, is questionable.

These questions are exponents of the underlying intercultural problem. The perceptions of would-be benefactors and intended beneficiaries are worlds apart. In the West, 'development' reflects the modernistic pretence of human control over reality through scientific management. Injected into a different cultural context its significance is, as stated, anybody's guess. In this connection Western-trained autochthonous intellectuals along with their Western mentors stand on one side of a cultural divide, leaving the bulk of the autochthonous public on the other.

Provided it is recognized, this deadlock should be an eye-opener, raising the basic question as to betterment of living conditions in the prevailing situation. How is it perceived by those concerned, both in terms of conceivable goals and in terms of available instrumentalities? How to render justice intellectually, and to be relevant operationally, to the actual state of affairs? Development workers have often been tempted to overlook these questions in haste, assuming the answer to be clear, indeed confident to know it, in advance. This could but aggravate prevailing turbulence: a golden opportunity for those seeking power for power's sake.

It is never too late to raise the question again. At the present stage decolonization amounts - with a variant of the Canadian slogan concerning the constitution - to repatriation of development. Pointing to culture is a beginning. The effort has to address the real conditions one happens to be working in: specificity and historicity as determinant references. In an annex to this paper an attempt will be made to spell this out a little further in terms of research.

A question within the question is to whom exactly it addresses itself. To the development expert, whether autochthonous or parachuted from outside, the answer seems obvious. Alike his colonial predecessor, he cannot imagine himself out of the picture. The idea that he might be part of the problem rather than of the solution, is beyond his reach. To anybody else, it is a matter of determining the requirements for the role of development agent, not so much in terms of formal competence as in those of basic posture, reflecting world view, required: perhaps that of the gardener rather than that of the engineer.

Unit of development

Collectivities, Western and non-Western, are conglomerates of, once again, collectivities (a case of Chinese boxes or fractals); their manifestation is a matter of a "will to be" (or to keep) "together". They need, outwardly, a contrasting recognizability as the corollary to a self-view. To the extent decolonization means starting from a clean slate, the achievement of constitutional independence begs the question as to the shape, henceforth, of renewed collective existence.

The proper occasion to raise it came at the moment of discontinuity, the split second of constitutional vacuum, marked by the transfer of sovereignty. This has invariably been squandered in the understandable but pernicious dazzle of victory. The ultimate significance of revolutions is determined not so much by what they demolish as by what they leave intact. The 'national' liberation movements, once victorious, have adopted the 'modern' state as the indispensable complement to the presumed nation. With sovereignty bestowed upon it, the colonial territory metamorphosed into a state presumed to embody a nation, deemed in turn to embody a national culture. For this construct the colonizers' states, yesterday's instruments of oppression, stood model, rather than any revitalized pre-colonial structures. If these latter play a role it is, even in revivalisms, as a distracting memory. To the extent the adoption was adaptive (rather than explicitly under benefit of inventory), the adaptation was not seldom effectuated at the level of informal power structure and procedure.

The neo-modern sovereign state, poorly adjusted legacy of colonial days, rates as the natural framework of development. It is shored up by the exercises in nation-building and state-building of the fifties and sixties. Ever since it has depended on monoparties and movements imposed to galvanize public opinion in support of development and its self-proclaimedly indispensable agents, the powers that be. It is a manifestly provisional construct preoccupied with self-maintenance as the precondition to anything else.

One of its signal characteristics is the continuation of the relationship between colony and metropolitan country on a global scale, in the link between donor and recipient of aid. First versus Third World, North versus South. The interstatal development bond is a matter of fundamental inequality.[14] It is an ambiguous combination of adhesion and repulsion: the tragedy of an umbilical cord not severed in time. The experienced and observed identity of what is being born is in suspense; the relationship to the progenitor turns pathological. The global setting of this predicament - a world of states - is not conducive to its solution.

Unbalanced interaction

Interaction is the practice of identity as a plural phenomenon. That which distinguishes itself from some 'other' implicitly interacts with it. This applies within and between societies as embodiments of cultures.

This is a time of intensifying interaction and interdependence, affecting the very perception of 'the world' and 'mankind'. 'Mankind' was until recently an imaginary notion meant to transcend the specifics of one's own situation. Currently it is being imbued with a sense of reality. This is disconcerting in that it raises the question as to mankind's actual unity, independent of enlarging and idealizing projections of one's own collective existence.

It is also a sobering experience in that there is no denying that unity as the defining, constitutive feature of mankind is manifest only as a ubiquitous existential problem. It is a tacit presupposition, a permanent impetus, evidence of a constituent dynamism. The root issue is

the way in which man comes to terms with comprehensive reality, in the experience of which he finds himself a distinct part. Facing this challenge man (person and collectivity interacting) can but respond in a distinct, idiosyncratic way, inherently different from that of others. Incipient civilization implies, indeed appears as, "confusion" (in the sense of divergence) of "tongues".[15] Any culture will be its own frame of reference, its own universe. Still a culture is not a monad precisely as it is the specific manifestation of an underlying virtual universality.

Cultural encounter - indeed encounter between any sociocultural entities - is fundamentally an oxymoron. The natural expression of self-awareness in terms of universality is impeded by the manifest presence of sociocultural entities other than 'self'. In grudging acceptance of the plurality of entities, the experience of universality becomes a wishful claim to uniqueness, eventually upheld in a self-defensive postulate of exclusiveness. Its conceptual instrumentation is reciprocally determinant distinctness. This implies the recognition that a sociocultural entity is an open system in interaction with other systems. They are relevant to one another in a contradistinctive manner. Entity and interaction are concomitant phenomena; there is no primacy of the one over the other. So much then for the parameter of interaction.

At issue is the instrumentation of contradistinctiveness as mutual relevance.[16] This is bound to be partial and incidental, i.e., eclectically representative according to circumstances. Comprehensive culture features in segmentary references. Certain aspects or elements of the entity concerned are singled out as being instrumental in the encounter, i.e., the event of interaction.[16]

The eclectic facade, or representative derivative, by which one culture faces up to another is supplemented by a countervailing anticipatory image on the other side, conjured up there in view of the encounter. Projection of a self-image and invention of the other's image are mutually reinforcing procedures, making the encounter a two-pronged event on either side.

The symmetry marking the resulting construct is formal, not substantive. The constituent images, though corresponding or countervail-

ing to an extent, are independent variables at root. It seems hard to forecast whether the nature of the encounter, harmonious or conflictual, will depend on the match between the two sets of images, each consisting of a projected and an anticipated one. Incidences of mismatch are by no means rare. For example, a Western projective self-image focusing on the economic-technological facet may be responded to by a non-Western anticipatory image of the West singling out the facet of philosophy of liberation.

Tentative as it is, this theoretical approximation to goings-on between sociocultural entities exposes the inadequacy of the development paradigm due to its postulating an essentially unilateral relationship. The fixation upon progress/development connoting development aid as the backbone of a global system is an ethnocentric error. Underscoring previous observations, it is worth recalling that in interaction, someone's advantage is matched, seldom exactly, by the other's loss. Where joint survival is achieved it hinges on equilibrium. Imbalances are curbed partly by factors beyond human control and partly by culture: Jan Romein's Common Human Pattern.[18] The effect of culture however is ambiguous, particularly if magnified by technology. It can either check or aggravate imbalances. The aggravating effect, in deviation from the Common Human Pattern, is exemplified in the global upswing of the modern West. In world-historical retrospect modernity is now turning out to be a major case of deviation, greater in many regards than previous ones yet ultimately equally unsustainable. The search is on for a course enabling Western man to reintegrate with mankind at large, in a novel Common Human Pattern.[19] The type of interaction marked by development aid, even if labelled co-operation or restitution, is part of this quandary rather than a means to overcome it.

Rich-country ministries, agencies and movements for development propagation are so many cases of cultural lag. If the 'development industry'[20] is to secure a new lease of life it will have to move into the void they are about to leave. It will have to consummate the transition that failed to be achieved in the move from enlightened colonialism to developmentalism. To this purpose it may have to address, in novel

problem identification joining a trend in other fields, interaction, primarily cultural, as a strategic access to the realities of today and tomorrow. The concomitant vision of reality will have to be developed by a trial and error procedure in which policy and theory are joined. This procedure is part comprehensive process part human action, intellectual and operational.

The litmus test for the viability of this vision will be in the concentration of the leading discourse upon the question about the modus vivendi with ipso/ethnocentrism In this regard, West and non-West are in the same boat. Precisely in that it begs the question as to its sustainability, global interactive multiculturality can serve as the new problem identification replacing the noxious distinction between "first" and "third" worlds.

*****

ANNEX

The reorientation here advocated is a matter of research as much as of policy-making. Customarily the link between the two is seen as casting research in a role of subservience to policy. This assumes problem identification to have been taken care of in advance. This tacit assumption is now exposed as being unwarranted. A renewed challenge, problem identification is bound to be undertaken by research and policy-making jointly.

In this configuration research is at greater liberty. This enables it to adopt a cultural focus in systematic refocussing, wherever necessary, of work done hitherto.

This Annex offers a tentative gross listing of entries: topics to be studied in situ, as a rule by interdisciplinary teams primarily consisting of, or in close contact with, persons on the spot. (Their interdisciplinarity, by the way, requires fundamental reconsideration.) The aim is to sensitize development work (by whatever name) to the realities it is dealing with and to provide it with an ineluctable, growing and available body of valid interlocutors.

As it stands, this listing risks being exposed as yet another instance of Western ethnocentrism. It is up to those on the spot to verify its relevance and to amend it accordingly, prior to any effectuation. The listing does not repre-

sent a systematic order; for programming purposes some items may be selected or grouped together.

* Man as a distinct category of being; the relationship between man and the world, including fellow man: the range from primarily individualistic to primarily collectivistic perceptions; the conceptual pattern of its expression; the behavioral pattern of its maintenance.

* The perception of continuity versus discontinuity in existence, both in and around man. Ways of dealing with this phenomenal and existential ambiguity.

* The perception and effect of norms for thought and action; their institutionalization and maintenance. Individual and collective rights and duties; the identification of those having them versus those with regard to whom they apply. Patterns of expectations and of neglect or breach versus maintenance.

* The perception of wealth and power: phenomenal criteria of what constitutes them; the ways of loss or gain, moral criteria and limits applying thereto; inclusion in and exclusion from wealth and Dower networks.

* Patterns of social cohesion: terms in which it is conceived; notions of loyalty and survival; the conception of the nature of what ties humans together and of what this implies in terms of attitudes and conduct; variations of complexity and intensity; processes and means of intensification and relaxation.

* The realm of public opinion: channels of information and nature of information carried by each; modes of communication; the qualitative and quantitative crystallization of leading opinion and of dissent; relationships between leading opinion and instances of dissent.

* Processes and aims of collective decision-making for internal and external purposes.

* Collective self-perception and self-recognition; the crystallization of the self-image: occasions, means, criteria. The perception the relevant other collectivity: occasions, means, criteria. Interaction between self-image and classificatory image of Other: occasions, determinants, criteria. Upholding or accounting for universality or unicity claims in the encounter or interaction with Other. The tenability of inequality; the limits to relative advantage.

* Human effort towards the sustenance of individual and collective existence: the significance of work, whether as a distinct category or not; the reinforcement of effort by shifting it from the initiating human subject to fellow humans or to implements conceived and developed for the purpose; the signifi-

cance of work as compared to its pivotal stature in modern-western civilization; the significance of and limits to technology.

* Education: aims, ways, agents and institutionalization; plurality of and contrasts between perceptions and systems of education, and their effect upon the learners.

* Health: condition or aim; criteria; maintenance or recuperation; incidence and significance of disease; cosmic implications; medicine; the link between health and productive vigour.

* Science: reflection on, attribution of sense to experienced human existence. Substantive diversification, articulation, routinization, institutionalization. Differentiation of realms of perception and speculation: religion, philosophy, science.

* Art: man's re-creation of reality as one of his means to attribute significance and to gain mastery. The position, significance, impact and institutionalization of artisanal and artistic effort in the full round of collective existence.

Notes

The editorial assistance of Pim G.N.Peppelenbosch is gratefully recorded.

1 P. Drouin (Le Monde, 29.10.'93, p.32) quoting M. Maffesoli, La contemplation du monde, Paris: Grasset, 1993.

2 Tony Judt, Past Imperfect, French Intellectuals 1944-1956, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1992, p.54.

3 The intellectual predisposition will be discussed in this paper. It was greatly reinforced by the impetus of post-war restoration in Western Europe.

4 With a United Decade for Cultural Development half-way, Unesco has created a World Commission on Culture and Development. The European Union has been alerted to culture first by the Euro-Arab Dialogue and then by the Lomé accords with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. In official agencies both international and national, and professional organizations such as SID (Society for International Development) and EADI (European Association of Development Institutes) hesitant recognition of the need for new openings in accounting for culture is

obstructed by standing routines and vested interests. Everywhere it is a matter of uncertain first moves.

5 Ignacio Ramonet (Le Monde diplomatique, jan. 1995, p.1) speaks of "la pensée unique": "La répétition constante, dans tous les médias, de ce catéchisme par presque tous les hommes politiques, de droite comme de gauche, lui confère une telle force d'intimidation qu'elle étouffe toute tentative de réflection libre". In describing the compulsive pattern he puts the cart before the horse: "La traduction en termes idéologiques à prétention universelle des intérets d'un emsemble de forces économiques". The nexus meant is basically the one meant here.

6 The concept of paradigm change has drawn wide attention as presented in the propositions of Kuhn and the ensuing debate between Kuhn and Popper. Apart from the name and the treatment given, the topic was in the air. Koestler, for one, has dealt with innovation (in a manner that would now perhaps rate the label 'recombinant') and the resistance it incurs. Inspiring presentations of the struggle for new problem identification, its innovate effect and the resistance it evokes have been given recently in connection with the emergence of chaos theory, by Gleick and Kellert. Comp. Arthur Koestler, The Sleepwalkers, London: Hutchinson, 1959; id., The Act of Creation, London: Hutchinson, 1964; Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962; Imre Lakatos, Alan Musgrave., eds. Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1970; Gunnar Ansersson, Criticism and the History of Science, Leiden: Brill, 1994; James Gleick, Chaos, Making a New Science, New York: Viking Penguin, 1987; Stephen H. Kellert, In the Wake of Chaos, Unpredictable Order in Dynamical Systems, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

7 There exists a notable parallelism to Western secularization insofar as this results from the erosion of institutionalized Christianity. (Regardless, in other words, of its pagan antecedents.) The emergence and consolidation of Western modernity have never awaited the page to be turned so as to make room for a fresh start. Nonetheless what retrospectively characterizes the resulting half-way-house condition is only secularism, as a clear and exclusive premiss for modernity to build upon. In order to be interpreted in line with Toynbee's challenge-and-response model the challenge would then have to be seen randomly or at least eclectically

upsurging from a muddled condition. The lesson for today is that the decay rather than the demise (by no means consummated yet) of modernity will prove to be the breeding ground for whatever will, in future retrospect, turn out to mark the upcoming next phase of Western civilization.

8 Unless it were the first move in a pre-agreed sequence of collaborative policy measures. In the Indonesian-Dutch case the development aid relationship was abruptly terminated but parties have not meant this to be an opening for new construction of a tenable relationship.

9 Egbert de Vries, ed., Essays on Reciprocity, The Hague: Mouton, 1968; Lester B.Pearson, pres., Partners in Development, Report of the Commission on International Development, New York: Praeger, 1969.

10 A.L.Kroeber, C. Kluckhohn, Culture, A critical review of concepts and definitions, Papers of the Peabody Museum XLVII/I, Cambridge MA. Harvard University, 1952. The proliferation of definitions has not ended with the publication of this work.

11 Some brief remarks on the cognitive aspect. The unity of mankind is postulated, not observed. It is a conceptual device which allows a virtually comprehensive perception of experienced complexity by interpreting it as diffraction reconstituted. The diffraction, primary and pluridimensional (e.g., biological, sociocultural) remains predominant; the prospect of unity makes it intelligible.

In this perspective unity in the sense of virtual universality and unity in the sense of phenomenal specificity connoting plurality are complementary perceptions of one object. It is a matter of circumstances how this complementarity will be represented and which side accentuated for the purpose. If the biological unity of mankind becomes problematic it is mostly on account of the sociocultural interpretations given to its inherent diversification.

12 Note, however, the difference between existing provisions and ideas proposed. Some of these sound universal but have trouble hiding their Western pedigree. One example is civil society, notion reinvented to fill the power gap left by the collapse of East Bloc communism. Proposed for other areas without verification of compatibility with the prevailing political culture, it is a mere Western political scientist's dream. Comp. thematic issue "The Future of Civil Society in the Middle East", The

Middle East Journal 47/2, spring 1993; Augustus R.Norton, ed., Civil Society in the Middle East, Leiden: Brill, 1994.

13 In calling this fundamentalism one risks overextending the meaning of the term. Comp. Martin E.Marty, R.Scott Appleby, eds., Fudamentalisms Observed (= The Fundamentalism Project, Vol.I), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

14 The classical example is the debate following upon Columbus's discovery, on the natural condition of the autochthonous population, whether slaves to the Spaniards or not. Comp. A. Pagden, EuroDean Encounters with the New World, From Renaissance to Romanticism, New Haven: Yale U.P., 1993.

This attitude is not limited to intercultural settings such as colonialism and postcolonialism. In conducive conditions it will also occur within cultures. The motto above this paper has been taken from a book on post-war France. Tony Judt writes: "The imaginative exercise of empathy, the wish to understand the reasoning of those with whom one disagreed, was not widespread among French intellectuals in the aftermath of liberation. The point, after all, was not to understand the world but to change it, and for that one did not need to know what the Other felt or thought but only who it was."

15 A revival of this interest is signalled by some recent publications: Umberto Eco, La recherche de la langue parfaite dans la culture européenne, Paris: Seuil, 1994; Steven Pinker, The Language Instinct, The new science of language and mind, London: Allen Lane, Penguin, 1994.

16 The argument in this section is informed by the theory of symbolic interactionism developed by Mead and Blumer. (George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1934; Hans Joas, Praktische Intersubjektivitat, Die Entwicklung des Werkes von G.H.Mead, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1980, 5. Kapitel: "Die Entstehung des Konzepts symbolvermittelter Interaktion"; Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism, Perspective and Method, Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969.)

Further theoretical development has tended, in regard of the nexus identity-interaction, to concentrate on identity, mostly of individuals making up society, with role identity approximating the symbolic element. (Comp. George J.McCall and L.J.Simmons, Identities and Inter-

actions, An Examination of Human Associations in Everyday Life, New York: The Free Press, 1966.)

The attempt here accentuates the other aspect, considering symbolism as the vector of interaction between collectivitive identities.

17 The projective self-image is a tidied-up (streamlined, idealized) version, for outward-bound use, of 'self-narrative', the recurrent act of conscientization of self. The term 'self-narrative' stems from David Williams, Japan, Beyond the End of History, London: Routledge, 1994, as reviewed by Carol Gluck, The Times Literary Supplement 28.10.94, p.10.

18 J.Romein, "The Common Human Pattern, Origin and Scope of Historical Theories", Journal of World History 4/2, 1958, p.449 ff.

19 In his opening address at the Carrefour des littératures européennes de Strasbourg, Edouard Glissant offered a vision built upon une identité relation. "J'appelle chaos-monde le choc actuel de tant de cultures qui s'embrasent (sic), se repoussent, disparaissent, subsistent, s'endorment ou se transforment, lentement ou à vitesse foudroyante, ces éclats, ces éclatements dont nous n'avons pas commencé de saisir le principe ni l'économie." ("Le cri du monde", Le Monde, 5.11.93, p. 27.)

20 Term of G.Hancock, Lords of Poverty, London: Macmillan, 1989. This work contains a well documented inventory of symptoms of the basic attitude analyzed here, and presents it as an indictment. It belongs to the counter-literature that began with The Ugly American, and which, for lack of a valid riposte, is anathema to, and actively ignored by, the development profession.

Résumé

Bien que tout le monde soutienne l'idée de la liberté de la presse celle-ci fait cependant rarement l'objet d'un défi intellectuel. Ce n'est le plus souvent qu'avec d'insidipes clichés que l'on répond à la question de savoir pourquoi la presse doit être libre.

Cet article est une contribution au développement d'une justification rationelle de l'idée de la liberté d'expression des média. Il traite des média de l'information et débat à ce sujet des positions marxiste, libérales ainsi que d'autres positions normatives. La situation en Afrique du Sud sert d'example.

Au cours de l'argumentation il est surtout question de la fonction publique des média. C'est-à-dire, en premier lieu de leur fonction de lieu privilégié du débat public, auquel est lié le droit des citoyens de communiquer avec le publique tout entier. Deuxièmement de la fonction des média au coeur des recherches sur les affaires publiques, auquel est lié le droit des citoyens de "savoir", c'est-à-dire d'être tenu au courant des affaires publiques.

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA
A Philosophical Analysis

Seumas Miller

In many countries the freedom of the press is taken to be fundamental to the investigative and disseminating activities of the print and electronic media ((Mill, 1859) (Schauer, 1985) (Lichtenberg, 1990) (Rivers, 1988) (Olen, 1988)). But this is not so in all countries. Far from it. Freedom of the press does not exist in most of the third world. Freedom of the press is only beginning to emerge in what was the Soviet Union. And in South Africa freedom of the press has been under attack for long periods (Tyson, 1993). Indeed even in those countries such as the UK, the USA and so on, in which freedom of the press is held to be important, it is only imperfectly realised.

In South Africa under apartheid, by contrast with many other authoritarian states, violations of freedom of the press not only included illegal actions by security forces, they also very often proceeded in accordance with restrictive legislation, including emergency legislation (Grogan, 1989). Moreover many instances of these illegal, as well as legal, violations of press freedoms were in addition violations of other moral rights. The torturing and detaining without trail of (typically black) journalists were cases in point.

Violations of press freedoms often provoke forceful expressions of commitment to the freedom of the press especially by journalists and editors. But it is by no means clear that those condemning these violations always understand the rational grounds for their strong belief in the freedom of the press. In general there is an uncertain and muted response to the intellectual challenge to the freedom of the press. In response to the demand to know why there ought to be freedom of the press, we tend to find only cliches. We are told that the freedom of the press is based on the public's right to know. Right to know what? Instances of sex across the colour bar? Or it is earnestly proclaimed that the freedom of the press is fundamental to the democratic process. In what way? As a mouthpiece for particular powerful political interest groups? Clearly such responses to the intellectual challenge to the

freedom of the press are as they stand unsatisfactory. At best they are only the beginnings of an answer.

My aim in this paper is to contribute to the development of a rationally acceptable justification for the freedom of the press, or at least for the freedom of the media, and to try to determine what the implications are for freedom of the media thus rationally justified.

It should be noted that in what follows I am concerned with both the print and electronic mass media, but only with the role of the media in relation to so-called hard news, and comment and analysis of recent events and developments. I do not have the space here to deal with the role of the media in respect of fictional and entertainment programs, or even general educational material.

Freedom of the Media

The mass media is both a socio-political institution and an economic industry. Or more accurately, given the existence of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, and the various differences between the print and the electronic media, the mass media is a set of industries and institutions. By "industry" I mean that is an organisation (or set of organisations) with an economic function; and this is the case whether it is publicly or privately owned. As an industry in the private sector it produces saleable commodities (including advertisements) employs workers and managers, has investors and owners. It is simply another business or set of businesses within the market economy. Its function is economic; it exists to generate profits, to provide jobs and to satisfy consumer demand. As a public sector industry funded by government it also has an economic function; it employs workers and managers and is to a degree market orientated e.g. 'consumption' levels are of importance.1

The media is also an institution. By "institution" I mean that it is an organisation (or set of organisations) which has a particular

socio-political function in respect of public communication. Here a number of points need to be made.

Firstly, in distinguishing between the media as an industry and as an institution - between its economic and its socio-political function - I am not maintaining that the functions do not overlap and are not linked. Indeed it is a commonplace of political and social theory that economic functions intermesh with socio-political functions, and that political interests are served by particular economic arrangements and economic interests by political arrangements. This goes as much for the media as for any other major social institution. Notwithstanding their interdependence, there is an important distinction between the economic and the socio-political functions of the media. I am therefore resisting any conception which seeks to collapse the political and/or the social role of institutions, including the media, into their economic role or vice-versa. So I reject certain Marxist views which in effect occupy an apriori theoretical position according to which institutions such as governments, universities and the media, must be construed principally as agents of the ascendant economic classes. But equally I reject the view implicit in much of the rational choice theory deployed by 'liberal' economists, that the social functions of institutions are simply the logical product of the (unexplained) preferences of individual rational agents making choices in a (typically distorted) market economy.

Secondly, we need to distinguish between the de facto function(s) of the media and the function(s) it ought to have. Perhaps the chief function of the mainstream media in South Africa - as opposed to the so-called alternative press - has as a matter of fact been to buttress the capitalist system (Tomaselli, 1991). Whether or not this is so is an empirical question - albeit a very large empirical question - which I do not address here. My concern is with the normative theory of the media.2 That is, I wish to contribute to the general question of what the functions of the (news) media ought to be, and more specifically, to the question of what the justification of freedom of the media is, under some normative description of the institution of the media. Naturally a normative conception is not a fanciful conception. A normative concep-

tion of an institution is a conception of what realistically could be. Indeed normative issues, far from being the idealist distractions self--styled 'real world' advocates proclaim them to be, are in fact central and unavoidable in our common life. When at one level of theorising neo-marxists and others dismiss normative claims as mere ideology, at another level the very same theorists appeal - albeit implicitly - to their own unacknowledged set of normative commitments. The point is to argue for and against explicit normative standpoints, whether they be marxist or liberal or neither.

My own favoured normative standpoint is as follows. The (news) media as an institution - whether it is publicly or privately owned - has the general function of public communication in the public interest. In this the reference to public communication is self-explanatory. I take it that the institution of the (news) media is principally a vehicle of public communication. I say this notwithstanding the emergence of new communications technologies which may very well facilitate private interactive communication and do so to some extent at the expense of public, and 'one way', communication (Dizard, 1989).

My appeal to the public interest is much more problematic. Suffice it to say here that I reject attempts to explain away the notion of the public interest in terms of sectional or class interests. Nor do I accept the reduction of the notion of the public interest to sets of individual preference or desire. What is in fact in the public interest is not necessarily what the public wants to hear or 'consume', still less what will generate profits for the media industry. Naturally if the elements of the media in the private sector are to survive they will need to be commercially viable, and this will entail that what is communicated is to an extent what the public will 'consume'. But the point is that if the media is not discharging its obligations as an institution there is no great cause for concern if it does not survive. Normatively speaking, the (news) media - as I have defined it - is a business, but it is not principally a business; it has other and more important responsibilities than its purely economic ones. It exists to enable public communication in the public interest.

Public communication in the public interest involves at least the following subsidiary functions or roles. Firstly, the (news) media has the role of providing a forum for the public expression of diverse views (the media as public forum). Secondly, it has the task of unearthing and disseminating information vital to the public interest, especially in south Africa in relation to political issues (the media as investigator) (Meiklejohn, 1960). Thirdly, it has the role of providing comment and analysis on matters of public interest (the media as autonomous communicator).

Where in this (normative) account of the media is freedom of the media to be located? We need to mark off freedom of the media from a number of other related freedoms.3

Firstly, individual members of the public, organisations and groups, including members of the media are, at least in principle, free to communicate with other individuals, organisations and groups. But this freedom to communicate is freedom of expression; it is not freedom of the media. Freedom of the media is a freedom to communicate to the public, and to do so through the print and electronic media.

Secondly, individual members of the public, organisations and other interested parties, are, at least in principle, free to accept or reject information, comment and other 'messages' emanating from the media. This is not in itself economic freedom. I might buy a newspaper but reject the arguments contained in the editorial. Or I might buy a television set and choose not to switch it on. Rather this is in part the freedom to be an audience; the freedom to be, or not to be, communicated to. It is also in part intellectual freedom. The latter is the freedom of an audience - at the level of thought - to accept or reject what is already being communicated to that audience. But the freedom of the audience is not freedom of the media.

Thirdly, members of the media communicate in private to their friends and family. But freedom of the media is the freedom of members of the media to communicate in their capacity as members of the media, and not, for example, in their capacity as fathers or members of the local football team.

Fourthly, in South Africa there are - at least in theory - the various economic freedoms of owners, investors, managers, workers, and consumers, to set up a newspaper or radio or TV station, to invest in a such a 'business', to buy and sell its 'products', its capital and its labour. But economic freedom is not what is in question. Freedom of the media is not in itself a form of economic freedom. So any role of journalists as advertisers or as industrial relations spokespeople for the media workforce, is not in itself relevant to issues of freedom of the media. This is why interference with journalists as advertisers is not as such an attack on the freedom of the media. Again if a manager is restricted from communicating to a journalist in relation to the journalist's pay packet, or in relation to the price of the newspaper, this is not a restriction of the freedom of the media. For this is interference with a journalist in his capacity as a member of the media qua institution, as opposed to the media qua industry.

Freedom of the (news) media is a freedom members of the media have in their capacity as members of the media, which is to say in the performance of the constitutive roles of the institution of the (news) media. We have identified three such roles or functions; the media as forum, as investigator, and as autonomous communicator. Let us now turn to a consideration of the justification of the freedom of the media in relation to each of these functions.

Freedom of the Media and the Public Forum

The media provides a forum enabling individual members of the public and representatives of groups and organisations (including the government) to communicate to the public at large. In some of these instances of public communication there is a dispute, and it is in the public interest to be informed about this dispute. For example, the dispute between the Nationalists and the African National Congress in relation to the constitutional proposals. The dispute might have been about the truth of particular claims e.g. concerning an alleged 'third force', or about the

justice of particular policies e.g. affirmative action in universities. Here the role of the media is simply to provide a forum for the various disputing parties, and thereby enable them to communicate to the public at large.

Other cases in this category are ones involving basically the communication of information. For example, the government may wish to make known the details of its budget. Here the media provides a mechanism for communication by members of the public (individuals or groups or organisations (including the government)) to the public at large.

In relation to this first category, the freedom of the media is justified on the basis of the freedom to communicate of members of the public - whether they be interest groups or individuals or whether they be the government wishing to address the citizens or the citizens the government. Here the media simply provides the forum for communicators other than the media. Any interference with the media in relation to this function is either to be understood as an interference with the ordinary rights of citizens and governments to communicate with one another, or it is to be understood as an attack on the right of the media to provide such a forum. But the freedom of the media cannot be the freedom of members of the public to communicate with one another. So in these cases the freedom of the media must consist in its freedom to provide a forum for others to communicate, in which case it is not really a freedom of the media to communicate at all. Crucially, in these cases, the freedom of the media is derivative from the freedom of members of the public to communicate. In these cases, the central freedom is the freedom - and, indeed, right - of members of the public to communicate with the public at large.

It is often argued that the media can never be a mere forum since it necessarily distorts the communicative content of those who use it as a forum, and thereby seriously misleads the audience as to that content. Certainly the media mediates the communication of those who use it as a forum. Here there are important distinctions between print and electronic media, and between the various types of electronic media. How-

ever media of whatever type filter and structure the communications of those who use them. Typically a certain amount of what was said is edited out, and such editing reflects the judgment, and therefore the competence and values, of those doing the editing. Moreover the principal aims of the communicator are normally not those of the media. Further the very technology deployed presents, or at least emphasises, certain aspects of reality at the expense of others. And so it goes on. But there is a tendency to draw unwarranted conclusions from these kinds of points.

Firstly, from the fact that a set of communications is to some extent filtered and structured, it simply does not follow that the resultant communicative content is necessarily a misleading distortion of the original communications. For example, a telecast of de Klerk's address to parliament is filtered and structured by SABC TV. But it may nevertheless be a relatively accurate representation of the communicative content of his performance. He might in fact be quite happy with the accuracy of the media's representation of his speech.

Secondly, from the fact that some distortion is inevitable it does not follow that audiences are necessarily seriously misled. Here it is important to distinguish tendencies to distort which are inherent in the media as an institution and those flowing from possibly transient external influences on the media. No doubt as a matter of historical fact the media in South Africa, or at least the government controlled media, has systematically distorted so-called hard news as well as comment. But this distortion has been largely due to government control of the media. That is, the distortion is not attributable to an inherent property of the institution of the media. The same point can be made with respect to the undue influence exerted on the media by powerful economic interests, such as media owners and advertisers. Doubtless such interests will always influence to some degree media communication, given a private enterprise framework. But the shape of that framework is not inevitable or inviolate, nor does it wait upon some projected revolutionary overthrow of the whole system. What is called for are realistic

proposals for institutional design which conform to an acceptable normative theory of the media as an institution.

In short, the mediating role of the media inevitably leads to some distortion of the initial communications of those who use the media as a forum. Moreover it may even be that typically the media in South Africa and elsewhere significantly distorts such communications. However I maintain that substantial and ongoing distortion is not inevitable. The media, like any other institution, is necessarily imperfect, but the claim that it is necessarily and irretrievably fundamentally defective is an unsubstantiated fiction, and one which is a barrier to serious reform. At any rate the extent to which the media does in fact distort the message, and thereby mislead, is the extent to which it is no longer simply a mouthpiece or instrument by means of which others communicate. If there is substantial and ongoing distortion then the media is no longer functioning simply as a forum.

This entire first category in which the media functions as a forum, raises questions in relation to access to this forum. For not any member of the public at any time can have access. Here there are two distinct issues that need to be kept separate. The first issue concerns possession of the general right to access. The second issue is concerned with determining, on any particular occasion, who is to be allowed to exercise their general right to access.

Presumably any member of the public, including individual citizens, organisations, groups and the government, has a right to access. This right derives from the basic right of citizens to communicate to the community at large, taken in conjunction with the conception of the media as providing a forum for public communication in the public interest. But every citizen, or representative of citizens, cannot have as much access as they might want, decisions will have to be made in respect of who is to be allowed to exercise their right on a given occasion, and who is to determine who is to exercise that right. Is it the media that is to be the decision-maker here? I suggest - but cannot argue in detail here - that the media ought to be the decision-maker in relation to these matters. There is simply no other institution that could

be called upon to fulfil this role in an efficient and non-partisan manner. However it needs to be stressed that the media could only properly fulfil this role if the members of the media qua institution, and not the ownership of the media, were the decision makers. This presupposes a sharp distinction between owners on the one hand, and editors and journalists on the other, and a very considerable degree of autonomy for editors and journalists.

Media as Investigator

The second category of communications involves the media as an investigator. These are cases in which the media investigates matters of public interest, and unearths information that is of legitimate interest to the public. For example, sections of the press in South Africa, including notably the Weekly Mail, for many years brought to light various covert operations of the South African government and its security agencies (Mathews, 1978).

While this category of cases necessarily involves investigation, it also involves public communication; the journalist investigates in order to communicate his discovery to the public. A journalist is not simply a private detective unearthing information for a fee.

In this second category the freedom of the media is involved at two levels. There is the freedom of the media to conduct its investigations, and there is the freedom of the media to communicate the findings of those investigations to the public at large. The basis of the freedom of the media in this category is, then, the right or duty of the media to investigate and to communicate the resulting findings. But from what does this right or duty of the media to investigate and communicate, derive?

The right or duty of the media to investigate derives from its right or duty to communicate. The point of investigation is to find out, and the point of finding out is to communicate to the public. But what is the basis for this right or duty of the media to communicate its dis-

coveries? The basis is the public's right to know. Let us, then focus on the investigative activities of the media in relation to the public's interest in knowing.

The idea is that the media investigates and communicates its findings to the public in virtue of the public having an interest in these findings. But the notion of the public interest here deployed is crucially ambiguous. It could mean the legitimate interest of the public. Such an interest would enable the generation of a right of the public to know. Or it could mean merely that the public is interested in knowing. Clearly it is the former, and not the latter, notion that is in question. From the fact that the public is interested in, or would like to know about, some matter, it does not follow that the public ought to be informed about it, much less than it has a right to know about it. The public may wish to know about the private life of some individual; but perhaps the public has no right to know about that life.

The upshot of this discussion is that the role of the media as investigator is grounded in the public's right to know. So in this second category of cases the freedom of the media derives from the public's legitimate interest in knowing. (And now we need what cannot be provided here, namely, a (theoretical) specification of the notion of the public's legitimate interest in knowing.) But if the freedom of the media to investigate derives from the public interest in knowing then a number of things follow. Firstly, the media does not have a right to investigate and communicate its findings; it has a duty to do so. Secondly, the freedom of the media is a derivative value. Because the media has a duty to investigate and communicate, it ought not to be interfered with, which is to say it must be free to investigate and communicate.

The Media as Autonomous Communicator

In cases in which the media provides a forum, or finds out and communicates what the public has a right to know of, the media is not an autonomous communicator. Rather in these cases the media exists to

ensure that the rights to communicate and to know - are realised. So in speaking of an autonomous communicator I do not have in mind the following sorts of cases.

There are communications the truth of which is more or less beyond dispute, and in respect of which the public has a clear and legitimate interest. Here the media takes upon itself the role of the communicator. Members of the media decide what is to be communicated and communicate it to the public at large. In many of these cases it is evident that should the media fail to communicate the message, members of the public will communicate it. However the mass media is the most efficient means of communication. An example here is the media informing the public that de Klerk has been elected leader of the Nationalist Party of that there is to be a non-racial election in South Africa. In many such cases the media functions as a mouthpiece or forum and is therefore not acting as an autonomous communicator. However in many other cases the media is not simply providing a forum. In these cases the message will not be communicated unless the media communicates it, and the media makes a calculated decision to communicate the event or condition in question rather than some other event or condition. For example, certain sections of the press chose to provide detailed ongoing reports of forcible removals, other sections chose not to do so. But even in these cases the media is not functioning as an autonomous communicator in my sense of that term. For in these cases the decision of the media is (or ought to be) governed by what the public has a right to know. These cases essentially belong to our second category.

The category of cases in which the media acts as an autonomous public communicator comprises editorial comment, and more generally, comment and analysis provided by members of the print and electronic media itself, as opposed to comment and analysis in the media provided by academics, community leaders and others. Political information and comment is prominent in this category.

In this category the media has an active role as an independent communicator. The media is not simply a mouthpiece or the provider

of a forum, for other communicators, nor is it simply discharging its obligation to provide information which the public has a right to have. Rather in these cases the media is itself a genuine autonomous communicator. Does the existence of this category provide a basis for the freedom of the media?

If the media is a legitimate autonomous communicator then we can easily generate the freedom of the media. For now the media has a right to communicate in the same way that members of the public have a right to communicate. It follows that (other things being equal) any interference with that right is an infringement of their freedom. In short, if the media has a basic right to exist as an autonomous communicator, then the freedom of the media is (in part) just a special case of the freedom of individuals and organisations to communicate to the general public.

But we have not shown that the media is in fact a legitimate autonomous communicator. We have not demonstrated that the media ought to be regarded simply as another member of public with a right to communicate. For the media is not an individual person who has a right to communicate in virtue simply of being a citizen. Nor is the media an institution, such as the government, which has a right to communicate in virtue of having a rightful existence based on some function other than its role in public communication. The government is, or ought to be, set up (elected) by the people to ensure that there is law and order in the community; but if the government is to fulfil that role it will need to make public pronouncements from time to time.

Moreover the need to provide such a justification for the right of the media to exist as an autonomous public communicator is a particularly pressing one. For the media is not just another individual or organisation seeking to communicate to the public at large. In the modern state the mass media in effect constitutes the mechanism for public communication. The media is not simply another independent public voice whose right to exist is being questioned; it is in effect in a modern state, the voice.

There is a tendency at this point to try to ground the (alleged) right of the media to exist as an autonomous public communicator on the right to private property (Lichtenberg, 1990). Roughly, the idea is that if someone wants to use their own money to set up a newspaper or TV station - to set up, that is, a mechanism of public communication - in order to communicate their own views (or to enable editors and journalists to communicate the views of the editors and journalists) then they ought to be allowed to do so.

There are a number of problems with this line of argument. Firstly, it does not follow from the fact that I have a right to set up a mechanism of public communication - a newspaper or TV/radio station - that I have a right to use that mechanism to communicate to the public at large. The often heard claim that the one follows from the other is as it stands simply an unargued assertion.

Secondly, and more importantly, in fact everyone whether they be owners of TV stations or not, has a basic right to communicate to the public at large. Moreover this basic right does not derive from, and is not enlarged or extended by, property rights in general, and the right to set up a mechanism of public communication in particular. The right of a citizen to address the public at large is not somehow increased by virtue of the fact that that citizen has the right and the money to set up a newspaper or TV station. Indeed any such extension of the right of owners in particular (or their employees, including editors and journalists) to public communication, would constitute an infringement of the equal right of members of the public to communicate to the public at large. (This fundamental equality is not undermined by the fact that on particular issues it is more important that some members of the public be heard than others.)

There is another popular argument in favour of the right of the media to exist as an autonomous public communicator. This argument makes use of the above introduced notion of the public interest and the related notion of the public's right to know. We saw earlier that in relation to a range of matters the public has a right to know in virtue of having a legitimate interest in knowing. For example, if the government

is waging war in Angola then the public has a right to know this. In such cases the media in virtue of its role in communicating what is in the public interest, ought to ensure that the public's right to know is in fact exercised. However, as has often been pointed out, such a right is essentially incompatible with the notion of the media as an autonomous communicator. For if the public has a right to know and the media is the institution charged with ensuring that it does know, then the media does not have a right to communicate, rather it has a duty to communicate (Bok, 1985: 254). Here the public's right to know does not provide a basis for the (alleged) right of the media to exist as an autonomous communicator. If the public has a right to know some fact or proposition, it is not up to the media to decide whether or not to communicate the proposition in question; rather the media has a duty to communicate it. So this argument for the existence of the media as an autonomous communicator, fails.

From the fact that these two arguments for the right of the media to exist as an autonomous communicator fail it does not follow that the media has no such right. However the failure does tend to cast doubt on the existence of any such right. Here it is important to note that even if the media does not have such a right, there are a number of plausible arguments which support the contention that the media ought to exist as a autonomous communicator in so far as it provides high quality comment and analysis. That is, there are a number of pragmatic arguments for the existence of the media as an autonomous communicator (Lichtenberg, 1990). I simply note here that such arguments do not demonstrate a moral right to exist as an autonomous communicator.

Conclusion

I conclude, firstly, that the freedom of the media is justified in part because of its legitimate role as the provider of a forum for the members of the public (including individuals, groups and organisations, such as government) to communicate to the public at large.

Secondly, the freedom of the media is justified in part because of its legitimate role as an investigator and communicator of matters that the public has a right to know of.

Thirdly, the media does not have a fundamental right to exist as an autonomous communicator. (This does not exclude the possibility of pragmatic reasons for having a media which is in fact an autonomous communicator.)

Notes

1 Privatisation initiatives, including advertising, within the SABC and within overseas public broadcasters such as SBS in Australia, have muddied the distinction between public and commercial broadcasting.

2 The contrast here is between normative and empirical, not between theoretical and empirical. I take it that any interesting theoretical question in the social sciences will be (either directly or indirectly) empirically testable. Interesting theoretical claims in the social sciences are thus also empirical claims. Moreover on this view empirical claims are not restricted to so called observation statements.

3 In my discussion of particular freedoms I do not explicitly distinguish between so-called negative and positive freedoms because I do not believe the distinction is a particularly helpful one for my purposes. I certainly don't accept the view that liberalism is necessarily wedded to negative freedom only.

Bibliography

Bok, S. (1985): Secrecy (New York: Random House).

Dizard,W. (1989): The Coming Information Age: An Overview of Technology, Economics and Politics (Longman).

Grogan, J. (1989): Emergency Law: Judicial Control of Executive Power under the States of Emergency in South Africa (Grahamstown: Rhodes University).

Lichtenberg, J. (1990): Democracy and the Mass Media (Cambridge University Press).

Mathews, A.S. (1978): The Darker Reaches of Government (Cape Town: Juta).

Meiklejohn, A. (1960): Political Freedom (New York: Harper).

Mill, J.S. (1859): On Liberty

Olen, J. (1988): Ethics in Journalism (Prentice Hall).

Rivers, W.L. (1988): Ethics for the Media (Prentice Hall).

Schauer, F. (1985): Free Speech: A Philosophical Inquiry (Cambridge University Press).

Tomaselli, K. & Louw, P. (1991): The Alternative Press in South Africa (Belville: Anthropos).

Tyson, H. (1993): Editors Under Fire (Sandton: Random House).

Résumé

"The liberating message: a Christian Worldview for Africa" ("Le message de libération: une perspective universelle chrétienne pour l'Afrique") est la "prescription" de Professor Bennie van der Walt qui guérira les maux qui affectent le continent. Professor Bennie van der Walt se fait en particulier l'advocat de l'Eglise réformée comme "thérapie" optimale pour l'Afrique.

Ramose montre que cette prescription peut être mise en question d'un point de vue philosophique dans la perspective de l'histoire concurentielle de la colonisation et de la christianisation de l'Afrique. Il soumet l'attribution au dieu chrétien de toutes les qualités en termes superlatifs à l'analyse et conclut que le dieu chrétien est un hermaphrodite imparfait.

Sa thèse centrale est qu'avant de pouvoir prendre la "prescription" au sérieux il faudrait montrer qu'il y a une raison nécessaire et suffisante prouvant que le dieu chrétien doit être le seul et unique dieu absolu. L'incapacité de passer ce test signifiera que le dieu chrétien arrive trop tard dans les trois sens suivants: il 1) est mort, 2) en retard, 3) hors de propos comme cure pour les maux de l'Afrique.

GOD IS LATE
what next Prof. Van der Walt?

Mogobe B. Ramose

"The liberating message: a Christian world-view for Africa", Institute for Reformational Studies: Potchefstroom, South Africa 1994" is the six hundred and twenty-five page book written by Professor Bennie van der Walt. It is a rather thick book requiring a lot of time from its prospective readers. It demands even more time from the prospective reader intent on studying it. Yet, as the author admits, (p. 599) the book could have been shorter and, consequently the reader would have been saved the encounter with innumerable repetitions. In spite of this weakness, the book is admirably lucid. It is written with very few footnotes throughout. However, this procedure fails to conceal the author's great erudition. Like many other erudite works, the book is replete with puzzles, paradoxes and even contradictions. I should like to turn my attention to these features of the book in order to assess its principal aim, namely, to prescribe "a Christian world-view for Africa" as "the therapy" (p. 596) for Africa's diseases. It goes without saying that by employing this Western medical metaphor, the author has portrayed himself as the doctor and Africa as the patient.

There is a link between the title of the book, especially the subtitle, "A Christian world-view for Africa", and the Western medical metaphor. In this kind of relationship the doctor is regarded to be qualified and competent to prescribe specific medicines for the cure of the patient. It is simply inordinate, irregular and even unthinkable that the patient would suddenly decide to prescribe specific medicines for the doctor. The prevailing methodological assumption here is that, owing to lack of competence, the patient can hardly examine the doctor before taking the bold step of prescribing medicine. So this kind of relationship is like a one-way road. It is only the doctor who prescribes. Professor Bennie van der Walt stands in a similar relationship to his presumably ailing Africa. He has placed himself in the position of the doctor so that he can prescribe a religious "therapy" for

Africa. In order to be a credible prescriber, the helplessness as well as the incompetence of the patient -in this case ailing Africa - must be exposed and then be shown to be in need of a cure; a religious "therapy". Chapter one is devoted to this end. It is the search for a "solution" in the form of "a radical Christian world-view" after the "problem" has been identified. (p. 4) In this context it is stated that: "The basic need emerging from these ten cases is for an integral, encompassing and powerful Christian world-view, a Christian perspective on all the facets of man's life. Without such a vision Africa will perish." (p. 4)

Chapter two is an extension of this theme and pursues the aim, "to solve the crisis of the relevancy of Christianity for the *whole* life of the African, including his culture and even his personal identity." After a survey of some perspectives designed to deal with the problems facing Africa, Professor Bennie van der Walt argues that their common weakness lies in the fact that "they lack a world-view perspective." (p. 33) Christianity then comes in as a specific "improvement" on and a corrective of this deficiency. This is so because Christianity "penetrates deeper and also offers a wider perspective. In doing so it can really relate Christian faith to life. It is able to adequately and effectively address the African situation." (p. 33) In this connection, a Christian world-view is defined as "a way of seeing, understanding, interpreting and approaching the *totality* of human life from a Biblical perspective. It is an all-encompassing view. There is no vacuum or neutral area that cannot be touched by the Gospel. Every choice and every deed is subjected to God-given norms." (p. 33) This insight is repeated, in slightly different contexts, at pages, 8, 19, 33, 44, 46, 55, 66, 104 and 172. We shall revert to some of these in our endeavour to seek clarity on the puzzles, paradoxes and even contradictions contained in the text.

The author avers that the Christian world-view as defined, is coherent. It is has the capability to renew and transform Africa from within. As such it can even "solve the problem of the *African identity*." (p. 34) African identity, like any other human identity, must be defined

"in terms of the fact that we are created in God's image, that we live in a close relationship of obedience to Him and his laws. Such an identity given to us by God - restores human beings to real dignity. This is the reason why this book has the title *The liberating message.* A radical, integral Christian world-view can really liberate Africa!" (p. 34) This then is the major thesis, the motive force behind the whole book. We have the picture of someone having "Christianity" to offer to Africa. The question is whether or not the offer is an unsolicited donation, an express request or a prescription from someone purporting to possess either superior power or superior knowledge and most particularly, the religion of all religions. If the offer is not an express request then the question to be determined is, by what right or title has the assumed superiority of power, knowledge or religion been established?

One of the major puzzles concerning the author's prescription is that there is an important impediment to receiving "the therapy". The impediment is contained in his thesis that: "To convince someone of the spuriousness, the falsity of his faith is a superhuman task - God alone can do it." (p. 372) First, this thesis evidently rests on the presupposition that a distinction can be made between spurious and genuine religions. For this distinction to hold, it is necessary to recognise that the object of any and every religion is god, however this latter term is understood. (p. 346-347) Now, there is no science that can "study God scientifically. ... Furthermore I would hesitate to say that Theology studies God. God lies outside our cognitively apprehensible world (creation) and we can only get to know Him through revelation, that is, to the extent that He has revealed or made Himself known." (p. 577, 582) Here Bennie van der Walt reaffirms the famous thesis posited, among others, by Etienne Gilson, namely, that god is not a scientific probability but a metaphysical necessity. His, or shall we say her, in deference to our female counterparts, being "outside our cognitively apprehensible world" renders her unknowable. Accordingly, any purported relationship between religion and god must necessarily involve a leap into the unknowable. The cloud of unknowing is the sphere of religion proper. Consequently, there is no empirical possibil-

ity of verifying whether or not a particular religion is affiliated or associated to a genuine god who in that way confers genuineness to it. Similarly, a religion affiliated to a spurious god would by the very nature of that association also be a spurious religion. The fact remains though that a decision either way is purely aesthetic. In the domain of religion, what ultimately matters is the reality of the cathartic effect produced by the object of religion rather than the reality of the object itself. A religious decision one way or the other can neither be positive nor negative since god is in principle unknowable and empirically unverifiable. It is no defence but idle sophistry to argue that the verification principle itself requires verification, or even falsification. The appeal to "revelation" is neither convincing nor conclusive. This is so because once it is subjected to the Cartesian methodic doubt, it soon becomes apparent that god is always posited and, even more strongly, invented if and only when knowledge gives way to faith. Ultimately, therefore, the individual chooses its own god on the ground of faith, at times assisted by reason. This is so despite Bennie van der Walt's claim that the Christian world-view is based upon "God's infallible revelation". (p. 45)

This theme is developed in chapter 4, "God's revelation: the foundation of a Christian world-view". In this chapter we read that scripture is unique in terms of "the character of its message and its unique function". (p. 64) The message is unique because "it is inspired by God Himself". (p. 64) Since this "inspiration" was a private and individual communication between God and the inspired one, what reason do we have for accepting the message as true, more especially because there is no empirical possibility for determining the veracity of the message? Are we precluded from concluding that the inspired one was simply acting from the experience of a powerful dream? It seems we could also reject the purported function of this powerful dream, namely, the communication that we "human beings, already from before the fall, have had a special covenant relationship with God." (p. 64) If we human beings really have freedom of the will, and the Christian God seems to recognise this not only through the precedent created by Luci-

fer, (p. 345) but also through his respect for our choice to face the eternal fire of hell or enjoy the beatific vision eternally, then there is no reason why we should not choose to ignore "God's infallible revelation". If we choose to ignore "God's infallible revelation" does it therefore follow that our faith is "spurious"? After all, we could hardly proffer empirically conclusive evidence on the supposed infallibility of "God's revelation" because the metaphysical sphere is by definition empirically inaccessible.

The same observation can be made with regard to the author's guide to reading "the Bible correctly". Under the rubric of "presuppositions", it is averred that "One has to accept in faith that the Bible as a whole is the reliable and trustworthy Word of the living God in spite of the fact that it is given in the words of men." (p. 85) If we are directed to understand the "has" in this citation in the jussive sense precluding the exercise of our choice then the better for all of us since "God" would then have no choice but to admit us all in heaven! However, if the "has" does not detract from our freedom of the will then we surely can choose to reject the Bible. This latter choice would simply mean that we have no faith in this particular "God". It certainly cannot be construed to mean that we are completely without faith in god. What is clear from this quotation is that "faith" assumes primacy over reason whenever we are faced with a choice for a god. This is what philosophers of religion call the fundamental option. It forms the basis for convictional language in which our author is so very deeply involved. In this linguistic sphere, especially in the domain of religion, it is indeed "a superhuman task to convince someone" not only of the supposed spuriousness of their religion but also of the imagined genuineness of their religion.

We have dealt with the question of the fundamental option as if there are no philosophical problems pertaining to the idea of human freedom. We have in mind here all variations of determinism which either deny human freedom completely or regard it as a necessary illusion. Translated into theological terms, this issue may be said to be the intractable problem of predestination. To reject or deny predestina-

tion is to reaffirm and defend human freedom. The Christian religion is evidently for the latter course. Otherwise, its "God" would be an unmerciful sadist revelling in the eternal affliction of those condemned even before they were born. In upholding human freedom the Christian religion exonerates "God" from sadism. It also preserves the "divine comedy" but in the modified form of a tragi-comedy. In other words, it is just difficult to appreciate that "God" brings human beings into existence with the burdensome gift of freedom just in order to finally satisfy herself that it is the "creature" itself which has chosen either heaven or hell. Could "God" not have been pleased to bring human beings into existence but having no freedom of the will? Some would reply that if "God" were to deprive human beings of freedom of the will then she would be a tyrant. The ten commandments being "God's" law would consequently be superfluous for human beings would have no option but to obey them. Accordingly, so the response would continue, "God" would also be unjust since justice without freedom is tantamount to slavery. This reply is certainly interesting. However, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient reason justifying "God's" gift of freedom of the will to human beings.

Although human freedom appears to be central to Christianity for the reasons already mentioned, the idea that "faith in God" is a gift continues, in practice to undermine, the Christian religion. This means that Christianity holds the view that it is justified to undermine human freedom in order to compel others to receive the gift of "faith in God". Yet, a gift by its very nature is subject to acceptance or rejection by the donee. If the integrity of the idea of human freedom must be preserved, also, in order to refute predestination, then it is difficult to understand why human beings should be coerced to accept the gift of "faith" and become Christians. The putative obligation to make others become Christians is believed to rest on the Petrine commission. "Thou art Peter ..."

> "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

> Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt.28:16)
>
> "And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:14)

This has been interpreted as Christ's explicit mandate authorising his church to go and teach all the world. It may also be regarded as the foundation of the Christian religion's aggressive missionarism. Upon these same bases, the Christian religion perceived itself as having the exclusive and absolute right and authority to define the meaning and significance of reality and human knowledge; "At the dawn of Europe's age of expansion beyond the Mediterranean world, Western legal thought had legitimated a discursive foundation for Europe's will to empire. Conquest of infidel peoples and their lands could proceed according to a rule of law that recognized the right of non-Christian people to act according to the European's totalizing normative vision of the world or to risk conquest and subjugation for violations of this Eurocentrically understood natural law." (Williams, R.A., *The American Indian in western legal thought*, p. 67, 15, 49, 72)

Christianity also considered itself to have the right to establish itself as the one and only true religion in the whole world, indeed, in the whole universe. To this end, it also regarded itself as having the right to proceed by way of persuasion in its mission to convert people of other religions, ("pagans") but reserving its supposed right to coerce or even to kill them if they refused to be converted. This has led to the depiction of Christianity in militaristic terms.

In practice this depiction has meant that Christianity is an aggressive and militant religion inspired by the Petrine commission. Speaking of Christianity with regard to its militancy and aggressive mission in relation to Africa, Mudimbe has argued that:

> "The more carefully one studies the history of mission in Africa, the more difficult it becomes not to identify it with cultural

> propaganda, patriotic motivations, and commercial interests, since the missions's program is indeed more complex than the simple transmission of the Christian faith. From the sixteenth century to the eighteenth, missionaries were, through all the 'new worlds', part of the political process of creating and extending the right of European sovereignty over 'newly discovered' lands. In doing so, they obeyed the 'sacred instructions' of Pope Alexander VI in his bull *Inter Caetera* (1493): to overthrow paganism and establish the Christian faith in all barbarous nations. The bulls of Nicolas V - *Dum Diversas* (1452) and *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) -had indeed already given the kings of Portugal the right to dispossess and eternally enslave Mohammedans, pagans, and black peoples in general. *Dum Diversas* clearly stipulates this right to invade, conquer, expel, and fight (*invadendi, conquirendi, expugnandi, debellandi*) Muslims, pagans and other enemies of Christ (*saracenos ac paganos, aliosque Christi inimicos*) wherever they may be. Christian kings, following the Pope's decisions, could occupy pagan kingdoms, principalities, lordships, possessions (*regna, principatus, Dominia, possessiones*) and dispossess them of their personal property, land, and whatever they might have (*et mobilia et immobilia bona quaecumque per eos detenta ac possessa*). The king and his successors have the power and right to put these peoples into perpetual slavery (*subjugandi illorumque personas in perpetuam servitutem*)." (Mudimbe V.Y., *The invention of Africa*, p. 45: "*African gnosis, philosophy and the order of knowledge: an introduction*", African Studies Review, vol. 28, nos. 2/3 JUN/SEP 1985. p. 151-53)

These papal bulls reaffirm the depiction of Christianity as a militant religion. Christianity is described not only as the symbol but also as the reality of violent conquest. This vision of Christianity is confirmed more than once in the text of Professor Bennie van der Walt. For example, in the discussion on the manner in which Christianity was

introduced to Africa and the consequences of such an introduction, Professor Bennie van der Walt states that: "The gun was accompanied by the cross!" (p. 13) Similarly, in his discussion of secularism as the mother of ideologies, our author avers that: "Instead of the Christian conquering the world, the world has conquered the Christian...." (p. 367) Thus, like the soldier, Christianity must take up arms with the aim of "conquering the world." Still farther on within the same context, our author extols the militarism of Christianity in these terms. "If we do this, we underestimate the conquering power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If His Spirit pervades the world, it can blow away the ashes of Christianity and enliven the smouldering coals again. I am convinced that only a radical, total, integral Christian world-view will be able to break the formidable power of secularism - not only in theory but concretely: in family life, in education, in politics, in the world of commerce and labour and even in the church." (p. 375)

In the significant subtitle, "The church: the arsenal of the kingdom", he states. "The church is the recruiting office, the mobilisation field, the preparation centre for the training of the warriors of God, who have to fight for the good at all the frontiers of the world. The worship service held on Sunday is intended for the work to be done on Monday. The service on Sunday is not supposed to be a flight or a retreat from the world. Sunday is the first day of the coming week! In the worship service the faithful can gird themselves, so that their whole life may become a life of service to God, enabling them to fight for the good cause with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God." (p. 452) These latter are referred to significantly in the text as "pagans".

The significance lies in the fact that Professor Bennie van der Walt's use of the term is conceptually akin to that found in the three Papal bulls referred to above and, its practical consequences are also similar to those envisaged by the Papal bulls. The use of the term "pagan" occurs already at pages 109, 110, 111, 114, 166, 296, 345, 401 and 456. At page 114 where the term is used four times in one paragraph, the author also introduces the term the "gentiles". Again this is

to preserve the distinction between the Christian and the "non-Christians". This latter term is used at page 263 whereas at page 286 the term "heathen" is used for the same reason. It is curious that in all these usages the author does not expressly make his position clear. It would seem that - apart from clarifying the historical context of "pagan", "heathen" "gentile" and "non-Christian" - he proceeds on the assumption that even in our time the meaning of these terms is uncontested. From the point of view of philosophy of religion and in the light of the philosophy underlying ecumenism, this assumption is not necessarily valid.

Paradoxically, in his discussion of "structural and confessional pluralism", Professor Bennie van der Walt appears to argue in defence of human dignity, human freedom and mutual respect in these terms: "No societal structure may dominate another, and/or use its authority or power to the detriment of another. ... Confessional pluralism, however, does not plead for sectarianism or religious intolerance. The right that we would like to grant to Christians, for example, should also be given to other faiths." (p. 281) He defines human dignity thus. "Because people owe their existence (and believers also their redemption) to God, they are not only equal in principle, but also in dignity. God grants this dignity to man by among other things having created her as the crown of creation and also by appointing mankind as stewards of creation, to control, nurture and preserve creation. The dignity that man has is thus not his by virtue of himself, but by virtue of that which God grants him. This is the most profound basis of human dignity, and for this reason cannot be dissolved by other people." (p. 394) Our equality in principle entails our freedom to choose, among others, our religious belief freely. And our dignity requires that our choice should at least be respected. Professor Bennie van der Walt appears to recognise this. For example, he suggests that: "The concept of pluralism also, however, includes confessional pluralism. We do not only advocate the right of a diversity of societal relationships, but also advocate the rights and liberties of a diversity of religious convictions. ...

respect for other people's religions does not imply the acceptance of their viewpoints. ..." (p. 281)

However, under the rubric of "problems and threats to Christianity", he seems set to contradict this recognition. He identifies the "traditional religions" of Africa and Islam as threats to the Christian religion. (p. 543) "Against the all-encompassing traditional African world-views, totalitarian Islam and all kinds of secular ideologies which do offer Africa a politico-economic world-view, Christianity only has a chance if it should propose and practice a total, radical and integral world-view and way of life." (p. 547-48) If we are all equal in principle and dignity, why should the fact that some people are "pagans" lead to the abrogation of the principle of equality by the Christians and the derogation of the "pagan's" dignity? To the extent that the distinction between "Christian" and "pagan" is assumed to be valid or uncontested, it is a methodological necessity for the author because without it the Christian soldier will have no enemy to fight against nor even anyone to "teach the gospel".

The individual right to freedom of religion is apparently consistent with the Christian idea that "God's" "revelation" and "redemption" opening up the path towards individual "salvation" is a reaffirmation and not a negation of human freedom. The basic question to be determined then is: does Christianity affirm or negate human freedom in its mission to "teach the gospel" to "the pagans"? Since in its pursuit of teaching the gospel Christianity justified even the conquest of "the pagan nations", without having suffered prior injury in either of the two ways mentioned above and at the hands of "the pagan nations", then Christianity was clearly engaged in aggressive militarism. Nowadays Christianity tends to prefer persuasion to coercion. But the objective is the same, namely, that "the pagan nations" will ultimately renounce their religions. Thus even without recourse to coercive measures, Christianity still poses itself as a threat to those whose equality, freedom, dignity and pride have been and would be trampled on by the "warriors of God" armed "with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God". Accordingly, the Christian religion may be understood to be essentially

absolutist and dogmatic; expansionist, aggressive, universalist, lethal, exclusivist and intolerant.

In view of the aggressive militarism of the Christian religion in both theory and practice, it is difficult to understand why Christian theology, in contrast to Christian religion, tends to the position that Christianity is, in principle, opposed to the use of armed force or violence for the attainment of whatever good. We shall examine Professor van der Walt's ideas on Christianity and violence in the light of our thesis that to the extent that the Christian religion wants to remain faithful and committed to the Petrine commission which includes its "divine" mandate to go and teach the gospel to all nations, in that much the Christian religion is inherently aggressive and militaristic. Consequently, the Christian religion must necessarily uphold in principle, the permissibility of resort to the use of armed force or violence for the attainment of some putative good. An integral corollary to this thesis is that the politico-economic structures and systems inspired by the Christian religion have embraced the principle of recourse to violence as the *ultima ratio* and they pursue universalistic and world hegemonistic policies based upon their purported right to threaten the use of and the actual application of violence for the attainment of political objectives. Again, where the use of armed force and, indeed psychological force is at issue there the question of the affirmation or negation of human freedom looms large.

Our author defines violence as "the unnecessary, illegal, excessive and even damaging abuse of power." (p. 285). At page 292 power is defined as "the ability to do something. Power as such is therefore not wrong - if it is not abused. It is wrong if it is obtained through physical power or through some or other form of violence. For Professor Bennie van der Walt, the moral dimension of power means on the one hand that; "There is also such a thing as structural evil in social structures" (p. 237), "institutionalised injustices" (p. 304) and "structural violence" (p. 305) on the other. The moral fight against "structural evil" and "structural violence" must be waged at the levels of both the individual

and society. So far one may conclude that Christianity is not, in principle, opposed to the use of violence.

In his discussion of "Romans 13:1-7 about government and citizens" Professor Bennie van der Walt would endorse this conclusion in these terms. "The authorities have been vested with the sword, as the symbol of their right to dispose of life and death. This indicates the power of the authorities to act even with violence, and would therefore also include lesser punishments. In this too lies an indication of the task of the state: it has not only the right but also the duty to punish by means of the sword in some cases. Capital punishment and war are examples of this. The state is the only societal relationship which has received the right from God to impose its authority by this means. A gang of highwaymen will wield the sword unlawfully." (p. 493) Paradoxically, this conclusion is vitiated by the following. Under the subtitle, "Christ and the sword" the author deals, among others, with "the impetuous Peter" handling of the sword. Christ's rebuke to him to put back his sword and the reminder that he who takes the sword will die by the sword, is seen as "a great truth". It means that "violent action only beget[s] more violent action, revolution cannot bring peace - it only begets more revolution." (p. 473)

This paradox becomes weakened by the author's claim that prayer is the standard response of "the Church" to violence. (p. 496-497) This is a far cry from the idea of "the warriors of God with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God." The vitiation becomes even more pronounced in the author's misleading exposition of the position of the "partial militarists" with regard to the theory of the just war. In summing up this elliptical exposition, Professor Bennie van der Walt suggests that: "One could call this the dominant trend within Christianity from Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, the sixteenth-century reformers up to today. It is clear, however, that this viewpoint can no longer be fully justified by the Bible." (p. 498) Yes, even "today" this "dominant trend" has been upheld by prominent Christians in Great Britain during the Falklands or the Malvinas war with Argentina. It is far from convincing to suggest that this "dominant trend" is on the wane. Further-

more, since "fully" suggests some degree or extent, the question then is to what degree of fullness can the Bible justify "this viewpoint"? A related question is: would the process of justification include or exclude the Petrine commission, the Christian's "divine" mandate found in the same Bible to go and teach the gospel to all nations? We suggest that in order to maintain coherence and consistency the answer to these questions must finally be that consonant with its fidelity and commitment to the Petrine commission the Christian religion is inherently aggressive and militaristic despite the sophistry of Christian theology to the contrary. If this were to be rejected as the answer in the final analysis, then we should seek an explanation elsewhere for Professor Bennie van der Walt's depiction of Christianity in militaristic, sabre rattling terms. His predilection for the "reformational model for social renewal" predicated by the assertion that "reformation never means something totally new - it is only God who can create something absolutely new. ... Reformation ... does not believe in violence as a method of renewal." (p. 319) is again paradoxical. If government is vested with the "divine right of the sword" does the exercise of this right not bring about "something absolutely new" when someone loses their life as a result of capital punishment sanctioned by the government? Or, does the Christian "God" in cases like this perhaps abandon her style of shaping human history through the actions of human beings? A "God" who is either so confusing or is herself confused can hardly serve as the "prescription" and the "therapy" for the ills affecting Africa.

In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that Professor Bennie van der Walt's "prescription" is problematical. The ills affecting Africa today do to a very large extent arise from the dual "prescription" to "civilize" and to "Christianize" Africa. Accordingly, Christianity is to a very large extent part of the problem rather than part of the solution to the problems of Africa today. A "prescription" which for centuries has contributed to the worsening of the health condition of Africa can hardly make a credible claim that it can now provide the "therapy" to Africa's ill-health. To extend the medical metaphor; for more than three centuries Christianity has penetrated Africa like the AIDS virus. It is

continually and relentlessly gnawing at Africa's immune system and, in the long run Africa will die at the hands of Christianity. From the point of view of philosophy of religion it is idle speculation to posit and "prescribe" the Christian "God" as the liberator of Africa. The speculation is not only idle but deadly since it is tantamount to the deposition as well as the decapitation of the gods of Africa. From the moral point of view, and considering the claim that Christianity is the "only" positive religion being "total, radical, central and integral" (p. 104), Professor Bennie van der Walt's "prescription" would not only violate the principle of human equality and the right to choose one's religion freely but it would also demand the desecration of the gods of Africa most of whom have never received a funeral oration since Christianity buried them secretly in unknown graves. Surely, such profanation of the gods of Africa is an injury to the religious honour and pride of Africa. We make this criticism aware of the author's observation that: "the crisis of African Christianity is basically a world-view crisis. And what is the basic reason for this? The reason is that most Western missionaries - and also some Africans who embraced Christianity - did not take the world-view and the religion of the African people seriously, because they regard it as ridiculous, primitive superstition. If they took it seriously, they reasoned, it would weaken the Gospel. But it is precisely because they did not take it seriously that the impact of Christianity on the African was weakened!" (p. 16) At issue then is an epistemological problem namely: by what right may the Christian missionary and all the other inventors of Africa define the meaning of experience, knowledge and truth for the Africans? This question remains crucial even for those Africans who have embraced Christianity. Archbishop Milingo acknowledges the "kingship" of Christ in these terms: "If our people can turn with their problems to the ancestral spirits, must we go and smash their effigies to make them turn to the great, true and living ancestor, Jesus Christ? ... The Nshila gods are gone and their importance has vanished too. Yes, we are living in the era of Jesus. He has replaced the ancient gods and their priests. He has neutralised their power, unless they work with him. None of the gods,

not even those of my clan, can make themselves the end of any people's worship. All now must channel their worship to God through Jesus Christ. Let us prove it by confidently calling on Jesus as we introduce the people to Him. ... The living-dead ancestors are cultured and well-mannered people. They will give way when Jesus comes in, provided that Jesus guarantees protection and guardianship to the living members of the clans and tribes." (Milingo, E., *The world in between*, p. 82 and 87) Despite his openness to and acceptance of the "kingship" of Jesus Christ, Archbishop Milingo underlines the epistemological conflict in these terms. "How patient Africa is, she has been patient from the day my own ancestors stepped on her till now. My own mother grew up in her African tradition and she never has an ambition to be a European. Neither did she feel that by leading an African life she missed something. To convince me that I can only be a full Christian when I shall be well brought up in European civilisation and culture is to force me to change my nature. If God made a mistake by creating me an African it is not yet evident. ... [Although the Christianising and 'civilising' West Europeans have not yet proved nor are they likely to prove that God made a mistake in creating other human beings African, the same West Europeans nevertheless] accept the importance of the fact that I am an African, but they value me much more as the instrument to bring a change to African attitudes and culture according to their wishes. They are shaping me as one shapes an ordinary blunt blade into a slasher." (Milingo, p. 74) So far this epistemological conflict has been resolved in favour of the Christian missionaries and all the inventors of Africa. However, the resolution is certainly against the will of the Africans at best and, at worst, it has been arrived at with the willing reluctance of the Africans. To speak of "therapy" in these circumstances is to add insult to injury.

The ills affecting Africa since colonisation are unlikely to be cured by a focus upon "spurious" and "genuine" faith in the "one and only true God." Although divine grace was never slow, surely the persistent quest for "therapy" in Africa means that the Christian "God" has out lived his usefulness as the "prescription" for Africa's ills. To

invoke "God" in the search for the cure to Africa's ills entails the danger that Africa's ills may be construed as arising from "God" and therefore beyond the reach of human beings. But the truth is that the ills of Africa are visibly the result of human interaction. They have everything to do with how human beings view one another and decide to treat one another than with a problematical, elusive and metaphysical "God" somewhere. A human cure to these ills is therefore preferable to a "divine" remedy. The Christian "God" is late in the sense that she is dead. Professor Bennie van der Walt deals with this thesis in his exposition of some aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy. (p. 368-370)

It is widely held that the central message of Christianity is love of "God" and love of one another as we love ourselves. The incarnation, the crucifixion and the resurrection constitute the three basic and inseparable events in terms of which the concept of love or "*agape*" is explained in Christian theology. Despite the unity of faith in Christ, Christian theology is characterised not only by a diversity of conceptions of love but also by continuing controversy over the meaning of the word, "*agape*". Although Jesus is said to have descended from heaven in order to come and teach us the meaning of love from the point of view of human experience, that is, in anthropomorphic terms, it is strange that the Bible seems to be either silent or recondite over whether or not Jesus did fall in love with someone. In other words, beginning from the incarnation through to the resurrection, Jesus is supposed to have shown concretely and within the framework of human experience what it means to love "God" and one's neighbour as one loves oneself. Indeed, the gospel of Saint John, especially the statement that to offer and lose one's own life for the sake of one's friends is the ultimate form of love (martyrdom), is taken as an example of Christian love. In his *Spirituality of liberation* and *The true church and the poor*, Jon Sobrino provides one of the most profound and admirable Christian theological analyses of love and martyrdom. Yet, it is worth pondering what Sobrino's analysis would have been like if Jesus Christ were known to have actually fallen in love with either a woman or a man. This line of enquiry is far from spurious

considering that there is such a thing as the "Christian perspective" to friendship, marriage and the family. (p. 400-423) Why did Jesus Christ prefer not to give us a living example by being himself a married family husband? Was he perhaps married, only that we do not know? Surely, heuristic coherence and consistency require that Jesus Christ should have married and established his own family in order to give substance to his central message of love of one another as we love ourselves. Predictably, many Christians will find this somewhat childish and even a misunderstanding of the "divine hypostatic nature" of Jesus Christ. According to this view, "God" in the "Person" of Jesus Christ would not be in need of "human love". Well, then why was the same "God" in need of the human womb of "the virgin Mary"? Furthermore, the adherents to the view that "God" in the "Person" of Jesus Christ would, not under any circumstances, be in need of "human love" also argue that such imputed need would be contrary to the conception of "God" as the most "Perfect" being. The question here is the following. Is "God" like a hermaphrodite? The reasoning behind this question is that since the hermaphrodite combines both male and female reproductive organs in one and the same body, it could be seen as the most perfect being in the sense that it cannot experience the need for an external partner, male or female. On this reasoning, not being a hermaphrodite would represent an imperfection in the sense that in order to experience perfection those who are either male or female would experience the need to have an external partner of the opposite sex. Accordingly, our question; is "God" like a hermaphrodite means that in terms of human experience, hermaphrodites seem to be in need of an external partner despite the dual nature of their sex. This undermines the view that a hermaphrodite is a perfect being. If "God" is a hermaphrodite in this sense then she is imperfect. This conclusion conflicts with the conception of "God" as the most "perfect" being. It is strange that Jesus Christ seems to have preferred to uphold the notion of "God" as the most "perfect" being through his apparent decline of "human love". This preference has left a crucial vacuum in the meaning of love as the central message of Jesus Christ.

We have no better guide than our own ordinary human experience of what it means to love one another. Whatever and however the abstruse controversy over the meaning of "*agape*" may finally be resolved - if at all - it seems fair to surmise, at least from the point of view of human experience, that love entails concern about the others; care for others and sharing with others: all from the point of view of mutual respect. Professor Bennie van der Walt acknowledges that love in this sense predates the Christianisation of Africa. "Traditional Africans did not separate the sacred from the profane. All the authorities confirm that the well-known Western division between religious and worldly, sacred and secular and supernatural and natural simply does not occur. Before this Western dualism had been transferred to African soil, their religion permeated *the whole* of their daily lives. The religious awareness of the Africans was as much part of their daily life as eating, drinking, sowing, harvesting, warring and procreating. Their lives as such were religion." (p. 8) This situation of precolonial Africa attracts comparison with the reformational brand of Christianity which Professor Bennie van der Walt prescribes to Africa. Owing to the limitations of space we shall avoid a detailed critical comparison of the two passages. According to our author, "We have to serve God *in* His creation! ... For that reason the core of the reformational world-view is simple: our whole life is religion, service to God. We believe that man's religious relation to God is *total*: it permeates everything that one does; it is *radical*: from a heartfelt commitment it offers security to one's entire existence; it is *central*: it offers direction and purposefulness to one's whole life; it is *integral*: it binds together everything that one does into a meaningful whole." (p. 104) Any comparison between the two passages is unlikely to miss the point that both traditional African religion and the Christian reformation world-view share the view that religion is about "the whole" of an individual's life. Admittedly, this view may be filled in by similar or even different substantive elements having a direct bearing on how one practises one's religion. Again, Professor Bennie van der Walt acknowledges this in these terms. "In as far as I understand traditional African religion, it too is

holistic. In this regard Christian religion is therefore nothing new for the African. What is new is the fact that man in his religious life lives *directly* in the face of God. The God of the Bible is a personal God and not the distant, uninvolved divine being of traditional Africa, who does not demand of man direct accounting for all he does." (p. 172) In view of our above discussion of the fundamental option, it is unnecessary to argue the point that Professor Bennie van der Walt's prescription of "a personal God" for Africa is an unjustified imposition. That this is an unjustified imposition may be illustrated by reference to Professor Bennie van der Walt's evaluation of "pluralism". He avers that: "If present-day pluralism is only understood in a *complementary* fashion, that is, as a means to indicate that one can also be enriched through perspectives from different cultures, religions and world-views, I would like to evaluate it positively. If, however, the emphasis should be on the *equality* in principle of different faiths, world-views and philosophies, it is dangerous, because then it means radical relativism. By the way: the relativist either has to be consistent and admit that his dogma, viz. that all truth is relative, is also relative - and so become the victim of his own doctrine - or, as is usually the case, be inconsistent and proclaim that all dogmas *except his own* have relative value." (p. 574) It is one thing to caution against danger and quite another to reject the position that all faiths, world-views and philosophies are equal in principle. To reject this position merely on the ground that it is "radical relativism" is purely tautologous. The tautology is a means to establish the dogma that there is only one faith, world-view or philosophy which ought to be accorded anterior primacy and, therefore, superiority over all the others. This is exactly what Professor Bennie van der Walt does not only in his already cited claim that Christianity is the only positive religion but in similar claims found at pages 40, 41, 45, 281, 298) In this regard our author can afford the inconsistency and declare that "all dogmas *except his own* have relative value."

What we should like to stress - also in the light of our author's misleading discussion of African communalism (p. 209-219) and humanism (p. 237-246) - though is the point that the Christian religion

is indeed "nothing new for the African" not only with regard to its holistic character but most importantly, with regard to the fact that traditional African praxis was underlined by concern about others; care for others and sharing with others on the basis of mutual respect. In short, precolonial traditional Africa knew and practised love. Accordingly, love as the central message of Jesus Christ was "nothing new" at the time it was initially introduced to Africa. This central message of the Christian religion is a qualitative superfluity even for contemporary Africa. Therefore, the message of Jesus Christ is rather late since precolonial Africa experienced and knew love even before the Christianisation of the continent. In this sense, the God of Christianity is also late.

* *This text was shortened by the editors*

THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF AFRICAN FOLK-PHILOSOPHY

Chukwudum Okolo

Introduction

We should all be happier for it now that the great debate on whether or not such thing as African philosophy ever existed, has finally settled among African philosophers. The debate indeed raged fearcely in this part of Africa (Nigeria) from the early to mid seventies[1]. However, like all philosophical problems, it is not expected to be a dead issue completely. For occasionally, its ghost, so to speak, keeps haunting one or the other aspect of inquiry in African philosophy. Directly or indirectly, the debate is very likely to appear in this paper on the status of African folk-philosophy.

In its full stretch, the direct focus is on whether or not there was any 'philosophy' in traditional or pre-modern Africa and if affirmative, what type of philosophy was it and how does it relate to scientific or strictly academic African philosophy in vogue of nearly all the academic institutions of higher learning in Africa and in many other foreign nations as well? We begin first of all with the concept and definition of African folk-philosophy.

Concept and definition

However vague, at times, unstable, the word 'philosophy' appears to be in vocabulary of every day language these days, one must admit that its usage has mainly two dominant rings, namely, an ordinary everyday meaning and its strictly academic usage. The common usage covers a multitude of meanings ranging from a principle which guides one's life such as: "I simply do not like your philosophy of life", to a people's world view, collective ideas, collective wisdom etc, such as the philosophy of the Igbo (Igbo people). It also covers a manner of

enduring unpleasant memories such as: "Try to put up with that misfortune philosophically".

All these meanings are far removed from the academic or scientific meaning of philosophy. For in the academic sense, it is simply not enough to merely possess ideas of or outlook on reality. One must critically reflect on reality, events etc. rationally, that is to say, with *pure* reason as a tool to qualify as philosophy. In this sense, philosophy subjects human experience, indeed, everything to strictly critical inquiry, again, with reason as the tool. Likewise, in its academic or professional meaning, African philosophy, in its working definition, is critical thinking on African experience or any aspect of it; on the African himself, his role and prospects in the African world.

In this meaning of African philosophy or mode of philosophising in the African context it is of recent origin: the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, being the very first indigenous University to mount courses in African philosophy in its Curriculum in the early seventies. "Philosophy as an academic discipline is relatively new in African countries"[2], is the way Professor Bodunrin expresses the recent origin of African philosophy as an academic inquiry. A similar opinion has Prof. J.E. Wiredu[3]. Professor C.S. Momoh expresses his own glee at the recent beginning of this sort of philosophical inquiry in Africa, that is tot say, African philosophy in the academic sense:

> "Fortunately African philosophy has arrived,
> Because African philosophy has arrived, the
> African has arrived. African philosophy has
> been the missing link in the long awaited arrival
> of the African"[4].

This sort of philosophy or search for wisdom which is critical, systematic and purposeful, in Aristotle's words, "the love of exercising one's curiosity and intelligence", did not exist in traditional or premodern Africa. Its very beginnings, the very first 'raw' useful efforts to philosophise in the African context in some more systematic coherent manner, appeared in modern times in Placide Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* in the late fifties[5].

But what did clearly exist in pre-modern Africa (as now) was philosophy in the loose, ordinary or folk meaning of the word. In this sense, we can speak of the philosophy of the traditional African people, the philosophy of the Igbo, the philosophy of the Yorubas, for example; meaning thereby the sum of total of the beliefs, the world-view, the principles which keep the people in question together; around which their lives, single or collective, revolve. For there could not be a community or a cultural group of any type of group without the same kind of common beliefs and *common* outlook on life, a *common* philosophy of life. "Philosophy of some kind is behind the thought and action of every people", Professor Kwame Kyekye of Ghana says, "it constitutes the intellectual sheet anchor of their life in its totality"[6].

African philosophy in this loose or broad sense has indeed been tagged different names by different scholars. Some call it 'ethno-philosophy'[7]; others 'folk-philosophy'; others still describe such philosophies simply as 'traditional thoughts of African people' or simply as 'traditional philosophy'. Folk or ethno-philosophy can be briefly defined as the collective, uncritical view or views of a people, their traditional world-view or outlook in life. This type of philosophy has always existed and, for that matter, will always exist in Africa as in other nations of the world.

Characteristics of folk-philosophy

We have sufficiently delineated through definition and explanation the essential horizon of folk or traditional African philosophy. We next consider some of its essential characteristics. First of all, folk-philosophy, African or otherwise, is essential *communal*. It is a collective and universalistic philosophy in the sense that it is usually the product of communal thinking, communal living and above all, collective insight through an appeal, for instance, to collective authority, that is to say, collective consensus of the elders or to tradition. Personal critical insight is usually secondary and plays a minimal role.

In this sense too, and as another dominant characteristic of folk-thinking or philosophy, it is *largely dogmatic* and *non-critical*. It accepts the world, reality as 'given' and consequently as 'unquestioned', indeed unquestionable. In this sense, the African view of life, because of its dogmatic beliefs and assumptions about reality, as well as the role and the place of the individual in it, can be said to be holistic. "What then are the distinguishing features of African thought that emerge from the above analysis of African philosophical tradition?" Lancinay Keita asked. "African thought is essentially holistic in the sense that it accepts the material world as given thus making possible empirical science"[8].

African thought of course is holistic in another sense in that the African sees and even interprets things as a whole in their vertical and horizontal connectedness, and not atomistic or as isolated as some systems of thought view them.

Also it must be said that folk-thinking tends to be and often is *mythical* as opposed to scientific and critical. Myth simply as an unscientific mode of explaining or understanding reality indeed pervades the traditional world of the African as other people's world, too. Myths as a whole do not explain everything about the cause or causes of things, definitely not scientifically in the sense of rational, critical explanation or even explication of things, but as Nwala truly says:

> "They embody certain central ideas and beliefs as
> ideological forces which influence the action and
> life of the people and provide the intellectual
> and moral climate in which people think and act"[9].

The last major and perhaps the most important characteristic of folk- or ethno-philosophy is *wisdom*. "man by nature wants to know", Aristotle tells us in the opening page of his *Metaphysics*. Curiosity to understand and live in harmony with the world or human environment is equally natural to man as "a thinking being" as Descartes defines him. Myhts as modes of knowing and explaining reality no matter how naive and far removed from scientific explanations, embody wisdom. They mark an advance from the state of brute, raw ignorance to ulti-

mately real knowlegde. On this account, Aristotle praises a lover of myth as "a lover of wisdom"[10] for acccording to him it contains "wonders"; and as clearly articulated by Plato, Aristotle and other great thinkers, 'wonder' is the *arché* or original principle of philosophy. So even philosophy in the loose sense which Nwoko calls "pre-scientific philosophy"[11] conveys some knowlegde as wisdom. "It presents", he says, "the *unmethodic* and 'unorganized' but rational world-view of man about the real world he encounters in his life"[12].

The ontological status

What still stares at us as the next object of inquiry is the ontological status of folk-philosophy. We have seen that it is philosophy of some type, a popular philosophy, one in the loose sense of the word. But what type of status does it enjoy? This is where and how it forms part and parcel of the 'great debate' and has remained so to the present day.

Many such thinkers as Oldea, Lancinary Keita, C.S. Momoh. Onyewuenyi, etc. stretched the actual existence of African philosophy back to the period of ancient Egypt. Other Scholars such as Wiredu, Hountondji, Oruka, Bodunrin, myself etc. with our own definition and conception of 'philosophy' as strictly critical have advanced only a recent origin.

Professor Odera Oruka of Kenya calls philosophy in traditional Africa "philosophy in a debased sense" of the word. To Hountondji, folk or ethnophilosophy is "a prephilosophy mistaken itself for a metaphilosophy, a philosophy which, instead of presenting its own rational justification, shelters lazily behind the authority of a tradition and projects its own theses and beliefs on that tradition"[13]. Together with other scholars such as Bodunrin and Wiredu etc., I certainly distinguish African philosophy in the loose sense and in the strictly academic, scientific sense. The latter is only of recent origin; the former is co-eval with the African himself. For, since this folk-philosophy is

usually a by-product of uncritical collective or communal views of the people, it cannot pass as a professional or academic philosophy characterized by criticism. Ultimately it is the result of personal, not collective or universalist insight. In this sense, I whole-heartedly agree with Abraham Kaplan in his strident attack on universalism as a mark of philosophy. He writes:

> "Universalism, in my opinion, betrays a radical misunderstanding of philosophy. Like language religion and art, philosophy has its roots deeply anchored in the culture of which it is a part and product. Just as there cannot be a universal language, unless and until there is a universal community; so also is the situation with respect to philosophy"[14].

Likewise, to call the ideas or views which, for example, the pre-modern Africans had about their world and which, in most cases, were at a collective level, mythical, dogmatic, and characterized by unquestioned assumptions 'philosophy' strictly speaking, as many modern African philosophers do, is indeed to betray, in Kaplan's words, "a radical misunderstanding of philosophy". It boils down to conferring a different ontological status to something of a different status altogether. This is to commit a "category error", a "category mistake", in Gilbert Ryle's famous phrase. For 'philosophy' in the loose, popular meaning is of a different status from the academic philosophy, the fruit of trained reflection and of pure rational thought.

African folk philosophy, as any other folk- or traditional philosophy for that matter, has its own ontological status and is not 'debased' in any sense of the word. It has its own logic, meaning, and coherence but of course, it is largely non-critical and is neither the fruit of *pure* rationality nor that of a personal endeavour.

Folk-philosophy as materials for critical philosophy

We strongly stress that African folk-philosophy much like any other folk- or ethno-philosophy enjoys its own distinctive ontological status and essential characteristics. Since folk-philosophy is closely tied to and directly springs from and is actually part of people's culture, its relationship to critical philosophy or critical thinking becomes clear. For philosophy as a reasoned, critical discourse does not take place in a vacuum but is animated and shaped by the own soul of the one philosophizing. Indeed every philosphy at bottom, is inseparable from people's world or culture and their perception of it. Fichte thus clearly remarks in this connection:

> "What kind of a philosophy one chooses depends consequently upon what kind of man one is, for a philosophical system is not a piece of dead household furniture which one can use or lay aside at pleasure but is animated by the soul [culture] of the man who has it"[15].

It means that every philosophy or philosophical system has a cultural base from where it springs or originates, and which shapes and conditions its development. One certainly cannot think, for instance, of Greek (Western) philosophy, its origin, development, content, etc. without the fables and myths of Hesiod and Homer, Greek festivals, songs, religious beliefs, rites, dances, the precision, loftiness and above all, richness of the Greek language. Greek philosophy is truly inseparable from Greek culture.

Likewise, critical African philosophy is closely tied to the African culture, its myths, folklore, dances, works of art etc., that is to say, to folk-philosophy or wisdom. Professor Wiredu, for instance, in his distinction between the two types of philosophy: critical, academic philosophy and folk-philosophy or as he labels them, "narrow" and "broad", defines the one as " a technical discipline in which our (the human) world-outlook is subjected to systematic scrutiny by vigorous ratiocinative methods"[16]. He defines the other, folk- or philosophy in the broad

sense as "that way of viewing man and the world which results in a world-outlook[17].

On their distance and relation, Wiredu states that scientific philosophy is a second-order enterprise or activity, "for it is a reflection on philosophy in the second sense"[18]. On his part, Ofoegbu states the relationship between the two types of philosophies thus:

> "Ethnophilosophy now serves as a spring board or *terminus a quo* for real philosophizing. In effect ethnophilosophy is meant to feed us with the data for real intellectual exercise... They serve as a base for such serious philosophical endeavour. There has never been any philosophy without a cultural base"[19].

Folk-philosophy can not be the limit of African philosophy: Concluding Reflections

The horizon of traditional experience is not all there is to say about African philosophy. Perhaps in the attempt to remain relevant and concrete in their philosophizing endeavours, many modern African philosophers appear to concentrate their efforts on traditional thought, the raw experiences of the African people, and worse still, many of them, perhaps unintentionally, give the impression that there is nothing more than the traditional experience to philosophize on. This would certainly be to sell the discipline short. For Wiredu, this would be a reactionary option, which in his view, can only keep Africa far behind in her onward march in philosophical insight and discoveries.

African philosophy as 'the traditional experience of the African' is only a part, basic in all respects, of the total African experience. For we certainly know from history that the experience of the traditional African did not remain self-enclosed for ever. The African and his world at a point of time became colonised by a totally alien other, that is to say, the white man with his alien culture and values and as a result, the traditional, self enclosed world of the African was broken

into. With literacy, western science and technology, too, a new age dawned on the African. He became 'modern' with modern outlook on reality and with gradual systematic changes in his world view.

It does further mean that this modern age in which the African has increasingly found himself is a continuous, systematic widening of his *experience*, namely, an increasing accumulation of new knowledge, new values, new beliefs, new cultural modes of being-in-the-world, etc., at times, at the loss of many of his traditional values. In effect, what is being stressed here, the summary point of it all, is that African philosophy which is a critical reflection on African experience, must be a *totality* of African experience including the present and the future, not just the past or the traditional ideas of the African. For experience like culture, even man himself is fully dynamic and historical. Consequently, reflecting on African experience or philosophizing in the African context must likewise be dynamical and historical, which, in effect, must mean that traditional experience or world view, what folk-philosophy is all about, can neither be the limit nor the totality of African philosophy.

Notes

1 In Nigeria for instance, at this period, *Second Order*, then a University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) departmental journal of philosophy, pioneered publications in African philosophy in the early seventies. It contained these articles on the 'great debate' in its early editions; W. Odera Oruka, "The Fundamental Principles in the Question of African Philosophy" Second Order (Vol. IV No. 1. Jan. 1975); Robin Horton "Traditional Thought and the Emerging African philosophy department: "A comment on the Current Debate" Second Order (Vol. VI, No. 1. Jan. 1977); Ruch, "Is there an African Philosophy?" Second Order (Vol. III, No. 2. July 1972); etc.

2 Peter O. Bodunrin, "Philosophy in Africa, the challenge of Relevance and Commitment", in Postkoloniales Philosophieren: Afrika ed. F.Wimmer (Wien, München: R. Oldenburg, 1992), p.16.

3 Kwasi Wiredu, "On defining African Philosophy", in Postkoloniales Philosophieren: Afrika, p. 40.

4 C.S. Momoh, "African Philosophy: Past, Present and Future" (Paper presented at the International Workshop on William Amo. Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. June 14-16, 1990), p.1.

5 Placide Tempels, Bantu Philosophy (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959).

6 Kwame Gyekye, "The Akan Concept of a Person", International Philosophical Quarterly, (Vol.VIII No. 3, 1978), p. 278.

7 The phrase 'ethno-philosophy', 'ethno-philosophers' appears to have gained currency with the appearance of Paulin Hountandji's African Philosophy: Myth and Reality (London: Hutchinson University Library for Africa, 1983). Jon Ofoegbu defines 'ethno-philosophy' simply as the "philosophy of a race or nation" (African philosophy, Cultural Roots of Ethnophilosophy", Thinker MAY -DEC. 1992, Maiden Edition), p. 22.

8 Lancinay Keita, "The African philosophical Tradition", in Richard A. Wright (ed) African Philosophy An Introduction, Third Edition (Lanham, Maryland; University Press of America, 1984), p. 72.

9 T. Uzodimna Nwala, Igbo Philosophy, (Ikeja, Lagos: Literamed Publications Limited, 1985), p. 7.

10 Aristotle, Metaphysics, 982b- 18 19 (R, Mckeon, ed. The Basic Works of Aristotle, New York: Random House 1941).

11 Matthew 1. Nwoko, Philosophy of Technology and Nigeria, Nekede Owerri: Clarentian Institute of Philosophy Publications, 1982), p. 9.

12 Ibid.

13 P.I. Hountondji. African Philosophy Myth and Reality (London: Hutchinson University Library for Africa, 1983), p. 63.

14 Abraham Kaplan, The New World of Philosophy (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 206.

15 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, First Introduction Into the Science of Knowledge quoted by Rand, Modern Classical Philosophers (Boston, 1936), p. 496.

16 Kwasi Wiredu, "On defining African Philosophy", Ibid., p. 40.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Jon Ofoegbu "African Philosophy, Cultural Roots of Ethno-philosophy" (Thinker, I C Enugu) May - Dec. 1992), p. 25.

** This article was slightly shortened by the editors*

ON ETHICS AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH: A NOTE

Lansana Keita

In principle the purpose of scientific research is to explain phenomena in the world that do not yield easy and apparent understanding. But such has been the growth of scientific research that it is believed by many that any topic is a fit item for scientific analysis. Yet if we consider the fact matters concerning human beings are strongly colored by ethical considerations if the becomes obvious that scientific research must first deal with ceratin ethical questions before embarking on research dealing with human beings.

Consider first of all that it is generally assumed in modern society that human beings qua human beings are endowed deontologically with certain attributes regarded as rights. And such rights are usually encoded in modern society's legal structures. There are many human rights but it is instructive for the purpose of this paper to state a few. Individuals are generally assumed to have a right to life, a right to dignity as befitting a human being, a right to autonomy in matters such as privacy, personal items, personal security, etc.. In general, the individual has the right not to be subjected to practices according to which he or she is to be treated as a means towards some end other than himself or herself.

In fact despite whatever differences that might exist between proponents of teleological and deontological ethics there is indeed a broad area of consensus concerning ethical and other regarding behaviour. One might compare in this respect the ethical theories of a Mill, say, and Kant. The rights issue as it applies to general ethical theory is resolved on the principle that individuals ought not to be subjected without cause to practices that are actually and potentially harmful. It follows, therefore, that scientific research involving human subjects in which the individual's psychological and physical well-being is threatened is deemed socially unacceptable.

Thus quite clearly the issue concerning scientific knowledge is that in those areas where it applies to human agents it is constricted by ethical issues involving the rights of individuals. And herein lies the problem: I want to believe that any object or event is a fit topic for

scientific analysis given the nature of human curiosity in terms of an assumed human desire to know. It is indeed a fact that human beings desire to know but does it follow that we should actually attempt to know everything about anything? Should any truly curious person have the right to know everything he or she wants to know about his or her neighbour? The answer to this question would be negative unless the knowledge of everything one wants to know about someone would enhance or improve that individuals well-being. The basis for this the fact that individuals have rights - which normally are welfare protecting or enhancing. My thinking here is purely intuitive.

I believe that this kind of intuitive thinking is just adequate for the resolution of the issue of **forbidden knowledge** and scientific research. As mentioned above it is impossible to operate within the framework of human society without making value assumptions about human behaviour. It is on the basis of the qualitative distinction between human society as interpretable in terms of values, and non-human society that the issue of rights attains significance.

I argue now that science should explore areas of **forbidden knowledge** only if such knowledge is to be applied to the enhancement of the welfare and well-being of the individuals involved. The enhancement of the welfare of individuals should lead to the preservation of the dignity of the individuals in question, and enhancement in those areas relevant to welfare and individual satisfaction. Yet a sceptic might not be satisfied with the answer. Perhaps the most effective response to any philosophical scepticism in this instance would be to inquire whether scientific research that involved the abuse of rights of individuals and that led to their physical and psychological harm should be endorse or permitted.

Consider the case of supposedly scientific research in the area of group differences in intelligence. This area of research is often regarded as controversial and could thus be considered an instance of **forbidden knowledge**. Some authors who believe that the question of possible differences in the supposedly innate intellectual endowments of the so-called races is a fit and important subject for scientific investigation,

claim that research in this area has been curtailed for political reasons. Political scientist Charles Murray and psychologist Richard Hernstein write in the preface to their recent and controversial; text The Bell Curve;

> This book is about differences in intellectual capacity among people and groups and what those differences mean for America's future. The relationships we will be discussing are among the most sensitive in contemporary America - so sensitive that hardly anyone writes or talks about them in public. It is not for lack of information, as you will see. People have shied away from the topic for many reasons. Some think that the concept of intelligence has been proved a fraud. Others recall totalitarian eugenic schemes based on I.Q. scores or worry about such schemes arising once the subject breaks into the open. Many fear that discussing intelligence will promote racism. [Murray and Hernstein (1994, p.xxi)]

This brings me to the question of whether research in controversial areas is really knowledge sought for its own sake or whether there are implicit ideological considerations at stake. Again with reference to the controversial issue of I.Q. testing the pertinent question is what scientific knowledge is actually being produced by this kind of research. I want to argue that if indeed it is a fact that there are average differences between I.Q. scores of the so-called races, and if this assumed to be problematic, then the applied science prescriptive would be to seek to establish egalitarian social practices that would seek to maximize the intellectual abilities of those naturally disadvantaged.

Granted that individuals are not responsible for whatever dispositions and characteristics they posses, they thus, cannot be blamed or punished for such unless their behaviour posed a threat to society. The pyromaniac may not be responsible for his or her own behaviour but his or her actions certainly pose a threat to society. Yet in this case and that involving human intellectual endowments society would indeed

benefit from policies which sought to maximize the intellectual and human potential of those regarded as naturally less gifted - if such be the case. The point I make here could be understood as a kind of variant of Rawls' difference principle. Society in general would benefit from maximizing the utility functions of the least advantaged. In fact the most successful societies of the contemporary world are just those that employ policies of general welfare enhancement by maximal investments for all sectors of society.

If one views scientific research as an important aspect of technology then the above argument becomes easily understood. The function of technology has been traditionally one of complementing human efforts to come to terms with the environment for the purpose of maximizing human welfare. And even when technology that is potentially destructive to humankind has been developed, those who threaten to deploy such never intentionally desire that its effects would reach them. One might consider the case of technology employed to develop nuclear weapons and biological instruments of mass destruction. Those who manufacture such weapons always threaten to use them against others. But because of the fact that each player in this game would hope to maximize his or her own position one has witnessed great competition from certain national quarters to seek advantage in terms of these kinds of technology. This explains the nuclear and biological arms race (albeit surreptitiously) still ongoing in the world today.

Yet the implications of this kind of technological competition in terms of its significance for human welfare is such that there are strong claims in some quarters that research in nuclear and biological warfare be regarded as a species of **forbidden knowledge**. The basis for this approach again derives from the idea that scientific research that threatens human welfare (hence human rights) ought not to be carried out. I have made similar arguments with regard to the controversial question of human intelligence.

I have argued in this short paper that in principle and ideally there should be no restrictions to inquiries about any existing phenomenon.

Curiosity about the nature of things in general seems to be a feature of human behaviour. Yet on account of the fact that human society is ordered according to moral principles and dictates, restrictive rules have been established as to how humans ought to interact with each other. An important aspect of human moral principles is that these principles necessarily include rules and regulations concerning the rights of individuals. I believe that this springs from the self-conscious and reflective nature of human thought and the fact that human beings are highly conscious choice making animals.

The creation of rights in society can thus be seen to regulate the behaviour of individuals. And as human society acquired more empirical and technological knowledge the idea that all individuals have equal rights as human beings has been slowly gaining acceptability. This the idea of rights in the contemporary world entails the protection of the welfare of individuals both physical and psychological. Thus it follows logically that scientific research that justifies or promotes the non-welfare of individuals is in necessary conflict with the idea of human beings as necessarily possessing certain rights peculiar to being human. The conclusion I arrive at is that there should be no restrictions on research to promote or endorse a diminished welfare of others - whether psychological (involving for example, a loss of dignity or personal integrity for individuals) or physical.

Bibliography

Murray, C. and Hernstein, R
1994 The Bell Curve, New York, The Free Press.

COLONIAL LEGACY AND THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN CAMEROON: A REPLY TO DISSENTING VOICES[1]

Godfrey Tangwa

Two articles in the most recent issue of QUEST: Philosophical Discussions (Vol. VIII, No 2, December 1994) have taken issue with an earlier article of mine - "Colonial Legacy and the Language Situation in Cameroon" (QUEST, Vol. VI, No 2, December 1992). The two articles in question are by Bongasu Tanla Kishani ("Language Problems in Anglophone Cameroon: Present Writers and Future Readers") and by Chris Uroh ("Colonialism and the Language Question: A Reply to Godfrey Tangwa"). The editors of QUEST had sent me the preversions of the above articles requesting my response so that it could be published together with the articles, but their request reached me too late.

Bongasu Tanla Kishani's article appears to me like a reconsideration and restatement of his position on the language issue in Cameroon in the light of the tangential criticism in my 1992 article. There is much we would be agreed on in his present article. But there remain areas where we would disagree and areas where I simply fail to understand him. Further dialogue is thus called for.

Chris Uroh's own article, whether deliberately or unconsciously, amazingly distorts some of my statements, leaving out my caveats and qualifications, and generally abandoning the substance to belabour the accidents. Interestingly enough, for someone who sets out with the thesis that my suggestions, if heeded, would worsen the identity crisis of African countries, Uroh concludes his article with the frank admission that he himself has not even a vague idea of how the crises in question are to be resolved. On the basis of that alone, I should be entitled to ask Chris Uroh to wait until he really has something to say before I answer him.

Bongasu Tanla Kishani and I would be agreed that Cameroon's linguistic diversity constitutes a real source of wealth and that the colonial policies which marginalized Cameroon's indigenous languages should be reversed. We would also be agreed, I believe, that the colonially-imposed European languages have a place and a role to play and that there is no question of simply throwing them out forthwith.

But we are not yet in agreement as to how these aims are to be achieved, as to the procedure to be followed so that Cameroon can eventually achieve a linguistically satisfactory situation. We are both against ethnofascists who may dream of imposing their own mother language as the national language in Cameroon. We also both believe that in this matter cowardice must be kept at bay. I will not dwell on issues on which I believe we would agree. I will concentrate on what still divides us and on areas where I fail to understand him.

In the summary of his article Kinshani states: "Au niveau pratique comme théorique on constate que l'écrivain anglophone camerounais ne fait montre ni de l'écriture ni de l'élocution de l'anglais des anglais." This I can translate as follows: "At the practical no less than the theoretical level, Cameroonian writers of English expression neither speak nor write English English". Even after I have finished reading through his paper, I am still unsure whether this remark is meant to be reproachful or laudatory. And, in any case, what is the reason for this, given that it is true? Is it that Cameroon writers like their fellow Africans are incapable of speaking and writing English English (whatever that is) or that they have deliberately chosen not to speak or write English English? If the latter be the case, then there must be a sufficient reason for such a choice; if the former, then it would seem impossible for one of them (Tanla Kishani himself, for instance) to recognize English English to the extent of knowing what is and what is not English English. But, in any case, why would a Cameroonian or any other African want to speak or write English English? The position argued in my own paper is that Cameroonians need English (and French) for communicating among themselves and for global dialogue. English English is not required for either of these two purposes.

But Kishani pursues this point in his opening paragraph in a way that leaves me a bit confused with the rest of his paper:

> What persistently worries me in Cameroon anglophone writings...is the somehow preferential use and the resultant, somehow contradictory, role of the English language. In Cameroon, English language writings reveal a divided English Language

> whose vitality is constantly marked by the silent encroachments of other languages such as the Pidgin English, French and numerous Cameroonian languages. In other words, the practice of Cameroon anglophone writings is evidently not as pure as it might appear either to the neophyte or to the non-English speaking outsider. For, to judge from the works of many outstanding Cameroonian authors, both English and French have visibly manifested in their initial stages the symptoms of their incipient deviation from their respective models in British anglophone and French francophone writings. (p. 101)

Well, I see no reason why any Cameroon anglophone writer or speaker should be concerned about the "purity" of the English s/he uses. S/he should be concerned about intelligibility and the ability to communicate with whoever it is s/he wants to communicate with. What Kishani here calls "silent encroachments" are part of what, in my paper, I described as a process of domestication of the colonially imposed languages. But, again, Kishani is not in favour of a domesticated variant of the English language in Cameroon. He prefers "the emergence of our linguistic independence" (p. 113) which he sees as possible only through Cameroonian indigenous languages which, in his opinion, should be reinstated "once and for all" (p. 117).

Kishani goes on to express amazement at "the fact that even most Cameroonian teachers offer their courses in English to the very students with whom they prefer to converse in Pidgin English to show intimacy or when it comes to using a certain lingua franca à la Camerounaise to express mutual affection". There is nothing amazing in this. He himself has stated the necessary and sufficient reasons for the practice. Some people decry the fact that in some secondary schools in Cameroon pupils are forbidden from speaking Pidgin English and "countri talk" in the school compound. But such a proscription is pedagogically sound as long as Pidgin English and countri talk are not the medium of instruction. Whether they should be the medium of instruction is a different issue. If one wants to learn a language, any language at all, one should learn it well. That is a duty owed to the

language itself. And one has learnt a language well when one can effortlessly and fluently communicate with it. Generally, Cameroonian secondary school pupils don't require any extra incentives to master Pidgin English or their own respective indigenous languages since these are usually the everyday languages of the street and the home. Thus it makes sense, in the interest of helping them to master English and/or French to encourage them to practice speaking within the context of the school.

It is concern with the importance of learning any language well that led me in my paper to attempt suggesting what should be considered the irreducible minimum unchanging elements in the domestication of any language. Such irreducible elements are what would ensure international intelligibility of the language. The requirement has got nothing to do with "purity" of the language or with respecting its ancestral origins.

It is an empirical fact that people are capable of mastering several languages at the same time. And mastering a language is always equivalent to acquiring a power. If I master "your" language whereas you do not master "mine" you should justifiably feel unequal to and overpowered by me in that respect. Kishani once proudly told me a story of how, at Kitiwum, he once did spontaneous interpretation from German into Lamnso and Lamnso into German for a team of visiting Germans and a crowd of villagers. Both the Germans and the villagers greatly admired and envied him for his aptitude. They were quite right in doing so. There is nothing more irksome than the necessity combined with the inability to communicate in any language. I once met an African francophone in London who was having a hell of problems but could not communicate in English. Because I could manage French fairly well, we nearly became "twin brothers" in London. Let those who continue complaining that they are haunted by psychological problems or that they feel shame and guilt when they use the language of former colonial masters think again whether they really have any good reason for such feelings. In any case, they should not assume that every African has the same feelings, much less that every African ought to

experience such psychological problems and feelings of shame and/or guilt in using these languages.

There are an increasing number of Cameroonians whose first language, for varied reasons, is English or French. In some families, English or French is the only language that is mutually comprehensible to both parents and the children. Should we then call English or French the mother-tongue (or father-mother-child language - to use Kishani's rather cumbersome suggestion) of such children? I don't think we should. My own suggestion is that we should retain the two terms first language and mother language - to depict, respectively, that language which a person first learns and that language which s/he considers her/his indigenous, native or domestic language to which s/he feels emotionally attached. That way, the statement: "My first language is not my mother language" is perfectly meaningful. In this sense, one could, at least theoretically, have twin or triple first languages (just as one could have twins or triplets!) but one can only have one mother language. And it would be, by definition, impossible for anyone to have a mother language that s/he doesn't consider or recognize as such.

In my article, I had mentioned a Bali woman known to me who has a perfect command of Lamnso. Now this lady is married to a Nso man and her children speak, perfectly, Lamnso, Mungaka and English because her practice has always been to communicate with them indifferently at will in either Lamnso or Mungaka while they learned English in school. It is quite possible that among these children some would consider Lamnso while others consider Mungaka as their mother language depending very much on personal feelings and the individual experiences that have helped to create and/or sustain and reinforce such feelings.

Kishani has clearly demonstrated that "the entire corpus of Cameroon anglophone writings manifests rather than hides the legitimate vitality of Cameroonian languages" (p. 107). But it is not quite clear to me what conclusions are deducible from this fact. One consequence Kishani draws is that "Cameroonian language writings will eventually win the tug of war between European and Cameroonian

languages" (p.108). But there is evidently no tug of war as yet until the volume of writings and practice of reading in the indigenous languages considerably increases. Kishani relates with a celebratory air the story of one of his poems Nsùyri Lam - In Praise of Language - which was "written directly in Lamnso in 1985 for a language Documentary Film on the Nso" (p.122). But can a primary school Reader or Curriculum be constructed with a single poem?

Which brings me to Kishani's main suggestion which should have been the most important part of his article were it not so vague. He makes a distinction between what he terms "individual language policies" and "generalized or ethnic (state) language policies" and urges the Government to be concerned about the latter. This is really where detail and clarity were called for. Kishani needs to spell out in more concrete terms what this would mean vis-a-vis the educational system as it presently operates.

In 1963 Bernard Fonlon assumed (wrongly) that no Cameroonian would be mad enough to riot in defence of one of our colonial languages. But by 1993, merely three decades later, the anglophone community in Cameroon was forced to be doing exactly that to prevent the government from destroying the entire anglophone educational system so that a covert policy of assimilating anglophone Cameroon into the Francophonie could be accelerated. On October 12th 1993, anglophone parents, teachers and workers defied water canon, tear gas and truncheons to demonstrate in Yaounde and other big towns for the anglophone G.C.E. Board. They were demonstrating for the survival and integrity of that system of education, dispensed through the medium of the English language, in such famous institutions as Sasse, Bali, Mankon, Okoyong etc. - an educational system that is a colonial legacy with weaknesses that should be progressively eliminated but, nevertheless, a system perceived as a thing of great value for which it was justifiable to risk life and limb to preserve.

The point of Kishani's very interesting story about the Philips Tape Recorder, which he brought home from Europe in 1973 as one of "about three such tape-recorders at the time in the whole of Kimbo'

central area" (?) and which Móosér Kishaàni Yeèkpu-Kongnyùy "creatively named...in Láamnso as Yúlèm" (p. I 14), is completely lost on me. Yulem is a quite common Lamnso name so I don't see why Kishani calls it a "neologism" with regard to its application to a tape-recorder. And if neologism it is, then it is a neologism in Lamnso and not in English. So why would "Our consumer's uses of the European languages we speak inhibit our potentials for linguistic creativity, thereby preventing any neologisms like Yúlèm from emerging or obliging such neologisms to undergo the scrutiny of European censorship." (ibid)?

Lastly, Kishani states that I attacked him and Professor Abimbola "for using English to condemn English" (p.123). He should reread the relevant section of my article. I did not attack them for using English to condemn English. There is nothing wrong with that. My point, which many other people have mistaken for an argumentum ad hominem was (is) that if they considered the compelling reasons why Abimbola wrote and delivered his address in English and Kishani wrote Konglanjo in English, whereas both of them could easily have used Yoruba and Lamnso, respectively, they would easily understand some of the compelling reasons for using English. I would make a similar point about Ngugi wa Thiong'o towards the end of this response which I hope no one will mistake for an ad hominem.

The three-pronged thrust of my argument in my article is clearly stated in the abstract accompanying the article as follows:

> (a) Although the foreign European languages which came with colonialism overshadowed the indigenous languages, there is no cause, all things considered, to bemoan this fact.
>
> (b) The foreign languages imposed on us by irreversible historical circumstances can, if properly domesticated, be used to great advantage as vehicles of national unity, integration, development and for global dialogue.
>
> (c) The emotionally very attractive idea of an indigenous national language and the efforts currently being made to bring it about is, for the time being, unnecessary and politically dangerous.

But Chris Uroh proceeded to drop all the important qualifiers and nuances from the above statement, thereby obtaining naively categoric assertions, and then launched a furious attack against them.

He counterpoises my "instrumentalist conception of language" (p. 130) with that of Stalin which he quotes with an air of finality, completely ignoring the fact that the two conceptions are perfectly compatible. Is the history of Africa not inseparably linked with such languages as English, French, Portuguese etc. and do Africans not create their own unique versions of these? No wonder, he refers to Pidgin English as spoken in the former mid-Western region of Nigeria as an "adulterated foreign language" (p. 132). "Adulterated" from whose point of view? It doesn't occur to Uroh that Mid-Western Nigerian Pidgin is a unique and very creative product of the people of that part of Nigeria. Very much like in Cameroon, such a medium of every day communication is a pragmatic desideratum in view of the great number of indigenous languages. Do the people of Mid-Western Nigeria lose anything by communicating with one another in Pidgin English while preserving their various indigenous languages? No. On the contrary, they enjoy the advantage of easy communication with Nigerians and other people with whom they cannot communicate in their indigenous language and the broad-mindedness that this type of intercourse always instills. As a matter of fact, the Mid-Western region is that part of Nigeria where the foreigner feels most at ease and where tribal chauvinism is not so evident as in other parts of Nigeria.

Nowhere in my article do I state or imply that abstract entities such as liberty, equality and fraternity were unknown to pre-colonial Africans. But this writer manages to make such a deduction on my behalf which then helps him to carry out a demonstration that Africans had resisted colonial invasion even before acquiring western education and that abstract entities "like freedom and equality were present in pre-colonial Africa" (p.134). This amounts to proving what was never in dispute.

In my article I stated that it is significant that nationalism which eventually led to political independence, was initiated and led by the

beneficiaries of colonial education etc. I didn't say that "only those African beneficiaries of western education" did this. And there I was talking about nationalism which led to political independence. In other words, within the Nigerian context, I was talking of Nigerian as opposed to Igbo, Efik, Edo, Yoruba etc. nationalism, which was initiated and led by such people like Azikiwe, Awolowo, Bello, Balewa, Enahoro, Osadebay, Mbadiwe etc. This was, of course, only a part of the anti-colonial struggle in general, but it was the part which focused on the concept of Nigeria as we know it today.

I would like to end this response by confessing that, when I wrote my article on Colonial Legacy and the Language Situation in Cameroon, I had never read Ngugi wa Thiong'o's views on the subject, owing to the Book drought in my part of Africa. As a matter of fact, I read Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature only a few weeks ago. No one has put the case against the colonial European languages better than Ngugi. His views are clear, consistent and very well articulated. His linguistic theory is, however, based on a linguistic philosophy that is erroneous in its exaggeration. Language is certainly very important, but language is not as determinant of human thought and behaviour as Ngugi makes it. Reality is quite different from the language with which we attempt to describe it. All forms of linguistic philosophy (as distinguished from philosophy of language) which attempt to reduce all our problems to problems of language or which confuse reality or facts with the language with which they are described, are patently false. Ngugi also seems to have matched his burning convictions with appropriate action, at least some of the way. I believe that the best way to know what a person truly believes is to observe if and to what extent s/he matches professed beliefs with appropriate action. Some people are more dramatic in the way they act than others. That is an understandable matter of temperament. But sometimes, with some people, the drama is all there is to it, just faking.

In a statement reproduced in the edition of Decolonising the Mind before me, Ngugi solemnly avows that in 1977 with Petals of Blood he

"said farewell to the English language as a vehicle of my writing of plays, novels and short stories" and that with Decolonising the Mind in 1981 he bade "farewell to English as a vehicle for any of my writings". That certainly is matching conviction and profession with appropriate action. Ngugi has also very patiently suffered for his views and convictions.

But has Ngugi backslided? To what extent has he succeeded in saying farewell to the English language as a vehicle of all of his writings? A few days ago, I happened to ask an Africanist Professor here in Bayreuth where Ngugi was at present and what he may be doing. He informed me (not without considerable surprise on my part) that Ngugi was here in Bayreuth some years earlier and that, to the best of his knowledge, he is presently a Professor at the City University of New York. So after decolonising his mind and warning all of us about the theft of the treasures of our minds, he himself has given away his so freely to the same stealers? Is it Kikuyu he teaches in Kikuyu at the City University of New York? Would a naive disciple not take his gospel too seriously and use it, like okra soup, to swallow a cockroach whereas he himself is savouring bush meat somewhere else?

As long as African intellectuals continue urging us to abandon western languages, culture, and ways of life from their professorial chairs in western Universities, through the glossy journals and magazines of western scholarship and through their hardbound "bestsellers" in the western book industry, for so long should we feel justified in suspecting them of needless hypocrisy. Let reason determine for us what we should believe, then we can freely preach what we believe, but, above all, let us practice what we preach.

** I would like to thank the Alexander von Humbolt-Stiftung for an ungoing fellowship which has greatly facilitated my academic work.*

LA TRIBU CONTRE L'ETAT EN AFRIQUE
A reply to Charles Dimi

Lansana Keita

Charles Dimi's essay "La Tribu contre l'Etat en Afrique" [Dimi (1994, pp.45-57)], in an attempt to comment on the political phenomenon of the post colonial African state and its constituent sub-nations or ethnic groups, makes a number of controversial points that require response. In general, Dimi's thesis on the problem of the African state is somewhat shallow and often couched in language that is patently colonialist, reflecting all the deficiencies of an undynamic and ahistorical view of African affairs.

The central point of Dimi's argument is that the idea of the state is alien to Africa and that the ethnic groups (Dimi resorts to an unfortunate usage of that value-laden term "tribe" to refer to Africa's precolonial regional os linguistic social groups) on which the post-colonial state is imposed, are incapable of coming to terms with the idea of the state itself.

According to Dimi the state is "an organized society" possessing "independent, political, administrative and legal structures" that are quite distinct from the personal and social links characteristic of ethnic society. Matters are compounded by the fact that the idea of the modern state was not introduced to Africa under neutral conditions. As Dimi himself remarks the state is a sequence of the "traite des Noirs - le commerce triangulaire - et à la défaite des peuples africains face a la puissance de feu étonnante des Europeans - les guerres de conquête coloniales" [Dimi (1994, p.47)]. In this brief comment I want to raise questions about Dimi's careless use of language and his basically a-historical approach in his analysis of contemporary African society.

Dimi's "Tribes"

Dimi defines a "tribe" as a

> group of men having a language, customs and a social organisation having the same origin and a common ancestor whether real or mythical. The relationships between individual members of a particular tribe are based on linguistic and

> sociocultural affinities. In extreme cases these relationships are founded on kinship. The tribe is the to be understood as a homogeneous group enjoying a political and social autonomy and occupying a defined area and generally composed of smaller groups such as clans. [Dimi (1994, p.45); my translation]

Yet this definition could fit any number of modern states such as Sweden, Norway, Ireland, and Israel. And again most of African's ethnic groups would not fit Dimi's definition of what he defines as a "tribe". The fact is that most African peoples have no idea as who their real or mythical ancestor is, and in many cases the ethnic group is so large or is extended over such a wide area that regional dialects have developed. Obvious examples are the Hausa, Foulah, Malinke, and Yoruba peoples of West Africa. I would imagine too that the Swahili speaking peoples of East Africa conform to the sane principle.

In fact the best example of what might constitute a tribe according to Dimi's definition is the Jewish community throughout the world. This is a society fully cognizant of its origins (real or imagined) and founding ancestor (real or imagined), and fully concerned to practice its rituals and modes of religious worship wherever its members reside despite sufficient conditions for social assimilation.

Dimi is clearly ignorant of African history when he states that the only form of social organisation known in Africa is that of the "tribe" and that African social; existence is ahistorical [Dimi (1994, p.55)]. It has always been recognized by sober-minded researchers in African history that the historical societies of ancient Egypt, Nubia, Axum, Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Kanem-Bornu, Hausaland, Yorubaland, etc., are to be regarded as states by any definition of that term. In fact, Dimi's analysis of African society would seem to be most inappropriate for Africa north of the equator, and even for Africa south of the equator the fluid movements and migrations of people leading to the creation of dialects, the merging of peoples as in the case of Hutus and Tutsis of Rwanda-Burundi (a merger brutally disrupted by the European coloniser) belie the simple stereotype formulated by Dimi.

Dimi's ahistorical analysis is also evidenced by his nonrecognition of the fact that the modern European state is a fairly recent phenomenon and that the peoples of Europe for most of their historic belong to subnational communities each with its own specific language. Surely, Dimi must be aware of the relatively recent unification of Italy and Germany. Or should we not recognize the fact that the ancestors of all living Europeans spoke languages quite different from those spoken today? Are we to conclude then that the modern European is an alienated being having lost his or her "tribal" identity.

Of course, the importance of the particularity of language in shaping an individual's identity is not to be underestimated. But what is one to make of the fact that the languages of Europe such as Breton and Gaelic are becoming extinct in much the same way that Latin, Saxon, Pict, Vandal and Viking did? Or consider the fact that the majority of individuals living in settlement nations such as the United States and Brazil speak languages quite different from those of their ancestors. Again I make reference to the Jewish people who have not only adopted the languages of all the peoples among whom they lived but have also developed a ghetto dialect of German known as Yiddish. Are we to argue, therefore, that those Jewish communities where Hebrew is not spoken all consist of alienated deracinated individuals?

Yet again linguists of African languages inform us that in Africa itself many languages have been displaced by others without any evident impact on the relevant populations. I have in mind the widespread influence of Swahili in East Africa, especially Tanzania. Consider too the case of the spread of Hausa in West Africa - where distinctions are becoming increasingly blurred between the Hausa themselves and Hausa speakers. A similar situation has occurred in North Africa where Arabic has replaced all the traditional languages there with the exception of Berber.

Ethnic groups and the state

The upshot of the above discussion is that the conflict between ethnic groups and the state that Dimi describes for Africa is an ongoing one

in all parts of the world including Europe. The cases of Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Greece, Russia, etcetera testify to this phenomenon. If one may borrow Dimi's outdated and value-laden language the "tribes" of Europe have either been absorbed by the state or have engaged in a "lutte à mort" against each other. Yet with the advent of the market economy and the culture of capitalism many of the disparate peoples of Europe have been able to make the transition to nationhood. This is what is now ongoing in Africa with ethnic lines being blurred by ongoing intermarriage and social mobility brought by economic and sociological forces.

But there is a crucial distinction between the creation of the modern state in Europe and the similar event in Africa. With the exception of some of the states of Eastern Europe the modern state in Europe resulted from forces internal to a particular region; in Africa the modern state (in contradistinction to the large precolonial African state) was imposed by external forces for the sole purpose of harnessing large amounts of resources under one centralized unit. On account of the new economic and social forces introduced during colonial era and before, Africa's ethnic groups (as elsewhere in the world) have been undergoing dynamic charge as individuals and groups struggle to come to terms with an ever changing and increasingly hostile post-colonial environment. Against this background Dimi's analysis is to be seen as overly simplistic in its essentialist and false vision of Africa's ethnic groups.

The illogic of the African state

Given the manner in which the African state was created, as a kind of whimsically but violently imposed colonial territorial imperative, one would expect a certain amount of hostility to the state not only on the part of the enlightened and conscious African intelligentsia, but also on the part of those who are oppressed by the new mutant version of the colonial state, the neocolonial state, often accompanied by a comical caricature of some European military personnel performing as "head of state". But Dimi's analysis is quite unacceptable when he writes that:

> The African is in many ways hostile to the state as he is to genuine modernity. The hostility consists of his total rejection of any identification with the idea of citizenship, which brings with it the ideas of rights and obligations defined by a set of laws having an objective universal value. He considers the power of the state as depersonalizing, while the tribe assures security, since it forbids the defining of the other in a reciprocal relationship. [Dimi (1994, p.51); my translation]

The above demonstrates that Dimi has little knowledge of the dynamics of contemporary life - given the pragmatic reciprocity that one observes among individuals of different ethnic groups in Africa's urban areas. Dimi seems to pay little attention to the impact of commerce, cultural links by way of Islam, and general intermingling that encourages reciprocal obligations between individuals. And where ethnic considerations do play a deciding role in terms of reciprocal relations, this can be traced to the Machiavellian machinations of the colonial powers which in some instances went so far as to create new "tribes" to serve their own ends.

But Dimi has absolutely no proof that Africans, in general, are apposed to modernity - whether on the technological or sociological levels. In fact, African themselves may often seem too enthusiastic about modernization given the importance they attach to the voting process as an integral part of democratic government. Sober analysis would inform us on the other hand that the extreme racism practised by European settlers in the Americas, South Africa, etcetera should be understood as being contemptuous and abusive of the idea of citizenship and its recognition of the rights of others. Again the massive corruption and crime that plague the so-called industrial democracies (the best example being Italy) have been obviously overlooked by Dimi in his analysis of the African ethnic group vis à vis the state.

Yet what is also lacking in Dimi's ahistorical analysis is his nonrecognition of the new class formations that have evolved out of the colonial impositions. These class formations are often structured on lines based on access to Western modes of education. Under those

circumstances ethnicity would appear to be of less significance than economic class affiliations. The point is that regardless of the ethnic background of the ruling political classes in Africa wealth acquired by its constituent members very rarely permeates to even a minority of the general ethnic population of these groups. Contracts are often made and awarded on a purely economic basis of assumed mutual reciprocity without regard to ethnic affiliations. In much, the same way that market capitalism with its twin principles of personal gain and individualism broke down regional and feudal affiliations in Europe, so too the statist capitalism of the neocolonial African state is in the process of transforming the social ethnic and identities of Africa's ethnic groups.

The state as we know it is a modern phenomenon representative of the formal and legalistic side of the nation. The nation in turn is to be understood as the welding together of different ethnic and cultural groups under the political hegenomy of the state apparatus. And what prevents the bursting asunder of the state - given its disparate elements - is the homogenizing and urbanizing power of market capitalism and the strong tendency of the latter to encourage individualistic utility maximizing behaviour. The logic of the market dictates that ethnic and communal linkages will be frayed and broken in the process.

But the problem with the African state is that while most African economies (perhaps with the exception of South Africa) operate within the orbit of international capitalism these economies themselves are not genuinely capitalist. The relatively small amounts of liquid wealth (we understand here the so-called hard currencies of the West) that exist are concentrated in the state machinery. Thus on the one hand we have the individualist ethic of the market economy permeating the whole society while wealth is generated only in the state sector - hence the scramble to gain political office.

Contrary to what Dimi argues, the neocolonial state mechanism is manipulated by wealth seeking individuals who seek to exploit ethnic differences in order to garner votes or win influence. Individual citizens frequently (though not invariably) vote along ethnic lines only because they expect access to social goods on the basis of ethnic familiarity

(language, region or origin, etc.) with those who seek political office. This is a universal phenomenon: politicians in all societies are invariably assured of maximum support from their regions of origin.

Finally, one must take exception to Dimi's recommendation vis à vis the future of the African state. The solution is not to **normalize** the African state, the mischievously conceived product of the infamous Berlin Conference of 1885. The solution is to dissolve its boundaries with the intention of welding together its disparate representations into much larger economic and political units. With the increasing movement of peoples across large areas the idea of ethnicity would be of diminishing significance. The epistemological problem with Dimi's paper is that it is founded on the spurious notion that the sociology of African society is determined by some set of mysterious essences impermeable to influences from the material world.

One would have thought that this kind of simple-minded ideology fabricated for colonialist purposes no longer existed. While reading Dimi's essay I could not help but be reminded of that fantastically surrealistic and racist text written by the late Alberto Morovia *Which tribe do you belong to?*.

Bibliography

Dimi, C.
1994 "La Tribe Contre l'Etat en Afrique" in *Quest*, Vol.VIII, No.1.

ON A HISTORY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Review of a conference on "African Philosophy down the ages: The Problem of its History and Historiography", organised by the Department of Philosophy of the Seminar of SS Peter and Paul, Bodija, Ibadan, Nigeria and held at the Seminary between March 27 and 31, 1995.

By Olusegun Oladipo

Ordinarily, a gathering of philosophers is not one in which a consensus is easily struck on the issues of the day; philosophy being, to use an expression which has become a cliche, that discipline in which a constant debate on its nature is regarded as one of the reasons for its practice. When the issue in question is that of the history and historiography of African Philosophy, the level of controversy could only be high indeed. Why?

Two reasons readily come to mind. First, in African philosophy the issue on which there are identifiable schools of thought are few and far between. More than this, given the particularity of the circumstances in which a modern or post-colonial philosophical tradition is just emerging, the question of the existence of African philosophy has been one of the most contentious in the history of modern African philosophical practise. In this situation, talk of a history of African philosophy could not but be controversial.

But we need a history of African philosophy down the ages, the organisers of a recent conference on "African Philosophy: The Problem of its History and Historiography", insist. For Rev. Fr. (Dr) Francis Ogunmodede, the Chief Coordinator of the conference, such a history is important for a number of reasons. First, is the need to present a holistic picture of the nature of African philosophy as a philosophy with a history as long and respectable as the history of Western philosophy. Second, and related to this, is the need to correct a wrong impression of African philosophy created by its simple bifurcation into traditional and contemporary African philosophy. This is the impression that once we remove from the corpus of African philosophy the works

of contemporary African philosophers, all that remains are the undifferentiated thought systems of traditional Africans labelled as traditional African thought.

Generally, then, the aim of the conference was, as the organisers put it, to excavate, as it were, "the identity of great African thinkers and philosophers in the past together with their thoughts and thought systems". This is with a view to giving African philosophy its true image and identity.

There were quite a number of conference participants who were readily committed to the goals stated above. Among them are Dr. Ogunmodede, Professor Onyenwuenyi of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Dr. Marie Eboh of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port-Harcourt. These participants not only argued for the plausibility of the periodisation of African philosophy into the Ancient Period, Greek Period, Early Christian Period, Islamic African Period, Period of Early European Exploration and Contacts with Africa, Western Colonial Period and Contemporary Age, as suggested by the organisers of the conference, they also tried to demonstrate the Egyptian (African) origins of Greek philosophy and by extension, all of Western philosophy. For them, the history of African philosophy would be incomplete without a link with its ancient Egyptian origins.

A fine proposition no doubt, but one which is problematic as a number of conference participants were at pains to show. For those who are sceptical about the plausibility, and indeed the desirability of the above classification, for example Professor P.O. Bodunrin and Dr. A.G.A. Bello, both of the University of Ibadan, it is important to exercise some caution in the pursuit of the nationalistic agenda that this classification suggests. For these scholars the kind of historical reconstructions suggested above is bedeviled with some difficulties.

Among these are: the problem of identifying the key figures in the history of African Philosophy whose works can be used as touchstones for separating philosophers from non-philosophers; the difficulty of identifying traditions and influences that bind the works of African philosophers through the ages together; and the problem of defining

what is to count as philosophy as we try to demarcate certain key periods in the development of African philosophy.

The point of raising the above difficulties, according to Dr. Bello, is "to suggest that the question as to what periods will fit the history of African philosophy is an empirical question, to be settled only after considerable data has been accumulated on African philosophers, philosophical schools or traditions".

The conclusion to draw from all this is not that it is unnecessary to chronicle African philosophy, but that close attention should be paid to certain methodological issues, a proper understanding of which is required for an adequate construction of a history of African philosophy down the ages. Thus, while the attempt to chronicle African philosophy cannot be dismissed, as Chris Uroh does in his paper, as irrelevant, it is also clear that we need more than sheer intellectual will to do this in a credible manner.

The point requires stressing: cultural nationalism is not enough as the driving force of any effort to write the history of African philosophy down the ages. Much more important for a successful realisation of this goals are adequate skills and steady work. Without this the initiative that the conference exemplifies could only be a flash in the pan; it would not last.

Also, it is not enough to demonstrate that Greek philosophy, and by implication Western philosophy, has an African origin in ancient Egypt, as some of the conference participants tried to do. We need to move beyond this demonstration to show that there has been a kind of historical continuity between ancient Egyptian philosophy and African philosophy today. And if, as I suspect is the case, this continuity is lacking, we need to show why this is so.

A strategy we would do well to avoid in tackling the problem of lack of historical continuity between ancient Egyptian philosophy and African philosophy today is to attribute this problem to Western conspiracy. For apart from the fact that this conspiratorial theory is not usually supported with adequate evidence, it raises the further question: Why was Western conspiracy in this regard successful? In any case,

why and how has it been possible for the West to appropriate an African philosophical legacy in a way that Africans themselves have not been able to appropriate it? There is even a sense in which the idea of Egyptian (African) origin of Greek, and by extension Western philosophy could deny African philosophers the opportunity to engage the African condition today in a creative manner, with a view to providing the philosophical anchor which current efforts to rebuild the continent, feeble as they now seem to be, require. For to say that Greek (Western) philosophy has an African origin in Egyptian philosophy is to imply in a sense that Western philosophy is our philosophy. The question is: Would this in itself not amount to an abdication of our responsibility to develop a tradition of philosophy which, in the words of Professor Kwasi Wiredu, is rich in its variety and vital in its relevance to contemporary existence?

This question leads us to other issues which those who are interested in chronicling African philosophy down the ages need to consider. One of them is the question of how the historical construction they are attempting would enable Africans to grapple with the problems of today and design a desirable future for themselves?

Finally, it was clear from many of the papers and discussions at the conference that there are still many African philosophers who still believe that the answer to Africa's problems of identity in the contemporary world lies in rediscovering what we were previously and taking steps to be such again. This is in spite of the fact that 'all national cultures are now syncretist' and, to quote Professor William Abraham whose words I have just used again, "that this is an inescapable existential condition of modern vitality".

If Professor Abraham is correct, and there is much evidence to show that he is, then the only viable option Africans have in the search for solutions to their problem of self-identity in the contemporary world is that one suggested by him. This option, according to Professor Abraham, "requires an impulse forward from an idealized and static conception of traditions to the espousing of a vital syncretist heritage of elements derived from diverse sources, able to constitute for Africans a

total resource for living, and to offer non-Africans a familiar feeling".[1] Let the cultural nationalists step forward to show this option is unviable.

Note

1 See W. Emmanuel Abraham, "Prologue : Crisis in African Culture", in Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye (eds.) Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, 1 (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), p. 34.

Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning
by David Theo Goldberg. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, x + 313 pp.
Reviewed by Magobo B. More

Discourse on 'race' and 'racism' is a very scarce commodity in philosophical literature. This is even more so in South Africa than anywhere else; a country ironically plagued by the problem for many centuries. Besides the usual spurious claims - of course by representatives of certain philosophical tradition - that philosophy as a discipline is far too abstract, removed and universal to be concerned with so specific a phenomenon as racism, David Goldberg's book *Racist culture: philosophy and the politics of meaning* proffers a much more serious reason for this neglect.

Philosophy, just as much as any social sciences, according to Goldberg, is itself implicated and complicitous in racist articulations and practices. The claim is of course not new, it has in different forms been expressed before. What makes Goldberg's claim distinctive and important is that while the previous charges were targeted either exclusively at individual philosophers, (e.g. Kant, Hume, Hegel, Marx etc.)(1) or certain identifiable philosophical doctrines,(2) his charge, by its all inclusiveness, establishes a direct essential relation between a

philosopher's racist expressions and political or moral practices and his/her philosophical doctrine.

The introduction of the text periodizes the emergence, normalization and naturalization of racial difference and exclusion within modernity, "Racial definition and its attendant forms of racist articulation emerged only with the institution of modernity" (p.1). At the core of this process, the reader is told, is liberalism which as an ideology defining modernity's conception of itself and society, served to legitimize and "rationalize politico-economically prevailing sets of racialized conditions and racist exclusion" (p.1).

Liberalism, which is Goldberg's focal point of attack, conceptualizes 'race' as a "morally irrelevant category" that has been transcended or is on its deathbed. If this is the case, Goldberg asks, then what is it "about race that since the sixteenth century has both constituted its hold on social relations and prompted thinkers silently to frame their conceptions of morality, polity and legality in its terms?" (p.7). In response, he sets himself the difficult task of accounting for the resilience, continuity, reemergence, extension, (re)invention of racist culture and the discursive practices (expressions) such a culture supports. Culture, we are told, refers to the "totality of created knowledge" concerning race(s) that includes rules, conventions and racist actions. In short, his aim is to map out the contours and terrain internal to racist culture and then propose certain available possibilities for resistance and response.

Chapter two is philosophically interesting in many ways but mainly for the simple reason that philosophy is put on trial and its role in racist culture called into question. Goldberg charges western Philosophical traditions for inscribing racist expressions and promoting racist articulations and practices. He develops an argument intended to demonstrate rational morality's complicity in racist culture. Making a contestable distinction between unracialized pre-modern period and racialized modernity, Goldberg claims that certain traditions have their applicable contours delimited by the concept of 'race'. The reason is that these traditions were defined by certain moral concepts for their

self-conception or self-image. Aristotle's concept of virtue, for example, defined classical social identity; evil or sin defined exclusion in medieval Christianity of Augustine and Aquinas; the moral space of enlightenment has been defined by autonomy and obligation posited by Rousseau and Kant; Benthamean concept of utility, appropriated by both James and John Stuart Mill, defined nineteenth century bureaucratic technocracy; the Lockean "rights" talk defines contemporary individuals.

Goldberg's argument here, is briefly that the primary moral concepts inscribed in moral principles are fictitious because they claim theoretical neutrality and objectivity while in actual fact they "promote and sustain thinking in terms of exclusionary discrimination"(p.38). This fictive character serves to naturalize the concept of 'race'. Even if we were to accede to their neutrality claim, they would still be guilty as charged. For, since in general, principles of moral modernity fail in their objectivity to condemn or discourage racist expressions, they are therefore still guilty of extending "discriminatory racialized expression either indirectly and inadvertently by seeming to condone and approve what they do not explicitly disapprove"(p.39). Put differently, in relation to ascription of moral responsibility, "what the moral order fails explicitly to exclude, it implicitly authorizes"(p.39)

Because of Locke's influence on politics, slavery and philosophy, Goldberg endorses both Bracken's and Chomsky's arguments that classical empiricism does not only fail to offer conceptual barriers to racism but also facilitated racism's articulation (3). He refuses to let the matter rest at that, for he strongly challenges their further claim that rationalism, in contrast, does offer such barriers against the growth and proliferation of racist articulations. According to him, rationalism is equally - if not more - guilty of this failure. For example, Kant's criterion of morality as universalistic parades it as anti-racist. However, this principle is misleading for in actual fact Kant's moral philosophy justifies racism. The innatism of Leibniz's rationalism posits innate mental differences to explain disparities. This is reflected even by his statement that "the greater and better part of humanity gives testimony

to these instincts [of course]...one would have to be as brutish as the American savages to approve their customs which are more cruel than these wild animals" (p.28).

Chapter three examines the discourse of 'race' and racism and argues that the 'discursive field'(4) of racist expressions is wider than it is usually thought to be since it includes beliefs and verbal outbursts, their underlying 'preconceptual' structure, acts, principles on which racist institutions are based, the flourishing production of texts concerned with racist logic, etc.. Chapter four follows with the adoption of an anti-essentialist and anti-reductionist position pace biological conceptions such as those articulated by, for instance, Kwame Anthony Appiah, marxist class approach, Darwinism, Jensenism, etc., all of which supposedly narrow and limit the discursive field.

In an introductory essay to his earlier book, *The anatomy of racism* Goldberg states:

> [T]he underlying premises of scholarship on race and racism have been profoundly altered in the last two decades. Whereas once scholars assumed that racism is singular and monolithic ... an ahistorical unchanging social condition always presupposing claims about biological nature and inherent superiority or ability (1990:xi-xii)

now such assumptions are no longer entertained because untenable. Chapter five of *Racist culture* develops this critique of the underlying premises of contemporary articulation of racism. Goldberg rejects the reductionist conceptions that posit the unicity, singularity and alleged supersession of this racism, "There is no generic racism"; there are different racisms, "each with their sociotemporally specific cause...no single (set of) transcendental determinant(s) that inevitably causes the occurrence of racism - be it nature, or drive, or mode of production or class formation"(p.90). This is a definitive postmodern conception of racism(s), since it is a denial of a 'center' or a search for overarching theories about racism. Such metanarratives (e.g. Marxist view of racism) are passe; they are features of a declining Weltanschauung.

One of the themes underpinning Goldberg's writings on racism (5) is his belief in the rationality of racist discourse, practices and expressions. Chapter six constitutes a lengthy argument to demonstrate this rationality since it is rooted within modernity's belief in reason and science. Pace the widespread assumption of the inherent irrationality or racism, Goldberg argues that as a flexible, vicious concept able to adapt and reshape to functional and (normalized) ideological requirements throughout modernity, racism(s) must have rationality or rational character. The relationship between rationality and science - especially the social sciences - and racism is undertaken in chapter seven, where the ideological role of the sciences and scientific organizations such as the Human Science Research Council is revealed. According to Goldberg "the social sciences are important to the State both *functionally* and *ideologically*" (p.152) because they are crucial in the development and retention of the racialized other, for example, social science concepts such as *Primitive, Third World* and *Underclass*.

The importance of *Racist culture: philosophy and the politics of meaning* for South Africans lies in the fact that not only does the author draw on the South African experience for some empirical illustration - Goldberg is a South African living in exile - he also concludes with a lengthy argument for a neo-pragmatic "incorporationist" anti-racism which is contrasted to and juxtaposed against liberal nonracialism of the kind adopted by the ANC and its allies. While one may tend not to agree with Goldberg's "incorparationist" solution which in a certain significant sense smacks of assimilationism in cases where uneven power relations prevail, as in South Africa, his critique of nonracialism is persuasive except for a minor hitch; it ignores other important clauses in the Freedom Charter, namely, "All *national groups* shall have equal rights" and "shall be protected by law against insults to their *race* and national pride" and further, that "All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and develop their own folk culture and customs"(emphases added). Now, does this not constitute a recognition of group differences and cultural diversities? It seems, therefore, that Goldberg's claim that the ANC's Freedom Charter arti-

culates radical universalism (p.216-7) is a gross misunderstanding of the Charter or an exaggeration.

The irony in Goldberg's suggestion for eliminating racism is that while he claims, and rightly so, that a single approach method is not enough, that "a plurality of strategies may be required" (p.213) he however, rejects certain methods as a priori unacceptable. According to him, the possibility of a new racism "is contradictorily celebrated as multicultural diversity" (p.8). Such a blanket rejection of multiculturalism as serving the ends of liberalism - in the United States especially - is, I think, unwarranted. For, multiculturalism in the view of certain powerless black victims of racism (e.g. Britain and USA) may, indeed does function as a libratory weapon (6). Multiculturalism declares that there is no (European) center; it is a proclamation that there are no sets of universal standards that apply to everyone. In certain black politics, multiculturalism together with postmodernist narratives Goldberg seems to be articulating, are "complementary outgrowths of struggles by people of color as part of... decolonization and efforts to dismantle structures of white supremacy" (Collins, 1994: 52). Since "racism's adaptive resilience entails that we have to respond with a set of oppositions that are found in and through praxis to be appropriate to each form racism assumes" (p.213), multiculturalism may just be one such "appropriate oppositional praxis" in certain sets of circumstances.

Goldberg offers a definition of racism(s) which commits him to certain unintended difficult consequences he would probably rather not have. This emanates from his rather wide conception of racism(s); he offers this definition: "Racisms involve promoting exclusions, or the actual exclusions of people in virtue of their being deemed members of different racial groups, however racial groups are taken to be constituted" (p.98). In and by itself this definition may be read as inclusive of preferential treatment and affirmative action programs as racist. Since both these programs are predicated on inclusion and exclusion of people on the grounds, among others, of race, they fall within the definition of racist acts, and thus commit Goldberg to affirming them as

racism. Either he condemns and rejects affirmative action programs or justify or rationalize their applicability. He chooses the latter option. However, this does not let him off the hook, for to rationalize and justify one kind of racism and denounce another kind is not to deny that both are racisms. If this is the case, then certain kinds of racisms are accordingly not a priori morally wrong.

Finally, rationalism does not have its origin in modernity but goes back to early Greek philosophy. If, as Goldberg claims, rationalism is responsible for or encourages or provides no conceptual barrier for racism, then it could not have only started during modernity. If rationalism qua rationalism is racist in inclination, then it requires that it be so throughout its entire history and not at certain specified and isolated historical junctures only. This, therefore, calls into question Goldberg's claim that racism occurred within modernity. Further, if Enlightenment rationalism as Goldberg insists - pace Chomsky and Bracken - does not offer "a modest conceptual barrier to racism", it is precisely because rationalism qua rationalism and not rationalism qua Enlightenment rationalism fails to offer this conceptual obstacle. In fact, one may even advance the claim that the very notion of western rationality with its emphasis on laws of identity, contradiction and excluded middle as laws of thought provide the basis for discriminatory and racist practices. Fundamental to these laws are notions of 'identity', 'difference', particularity' or 'specificity' - ideas at the core of racism rather than universalism or sameness.

The shortfalls notwithstanding, *Racist culture: philosophy and the politics of meaning* is filled with profound insights into the perennial problem of racism. In the process it also raises a number of philosophically and politically important issues such as the question of conflict in rights application instances, affirmative action and the counter claim of reverse racism, freedom of expression, racial allocation of urban space, and so on. In fact one would be hard-pressed to mention a philosophical book, so far, which powerfully deals with the subject of 'race' and racism' as this text does. It certainly belongs to the genre of Sartre's *The portrait of the anti-Semite*. Social scientists,

intellectuals, philosophers and students, especially in a country with a long history of racism such as South Africa, and a world proliferated by the Jensens, Herrnsteins, Murrays and the "Bell Curves", should find much to learn from this important text.

Notes

1 Neugebauer, C. 1991. "Hegel and Kant - a refutation of their racism". Quest, 5 (1): 51-69; Popkin, R.H. 1977-78 "Hume's racism". The philosophical forum, 9 (2-3): 213--226; Immerwahr, J. 1992. "Hume's revised racism". Journal of the history of ideas, 53 (3): 481-486; Serequeberhan, T. 1989 "The idea of colonialism in Hegel's Philosophy of right". International philosphical quartely, 29 (3) Serequeberhan, T. 1990. "Kari Marx and African emancipatory thought: a critique of Marx's Euro--Centric metaphysics", Praxis international 10 (1/2); Moellendorf, D. 1992. "Racism and rationality in Hegel's Philosophy of subjective spirit". History of political thought, 8 (2):243-255; Klosko, G. 1991. "Racism in Plato's Republic". History of political thought, 7 (1):1-13; Ramose, M.B. 1991. "Hegel and universalism: an African perspective". Dialog and humanism. 1 (1): 75-87; Glausser, W. 1990. "Three approaches to Locke and the slave trade". Journal of the history of ideas, 51 (2): 199-216.

2 Philosophical doctrines that have been under the spotlight in recent years include empiricism, humanism, etc.. See for example, Bracken, H. 1978. "Philosophy and racism" Philosophia 8 (2-3): 241-259; Chomsky, N. 1975 Reflections on Language. New York: Pantheon, and Barker, M. 1983. "Empiricism and racism". Radical Philosophy, 33 (Spring): 6-15. For a defense of empiricism against charges of racism, see Squadrito, K. 1979. "Racism and empiricism". Behaviorism, 7: 105-115.

3 See Bracken and Chomsky, note 2 above.

4 For a wider and more precise use of this notion see Cornel West, 1982. Prophesy deliverance: an Afro-American revolutonary. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. pp. 105-350.

6 For a wide and lively debate concerning 'multiculturalism' see the special issue of The Black scholar. 23 (3&4), 1994.

References

1 Collins, P.H.1994."Setting our own agenda" The Black scholar 23 (3&4): 52-54.

2 Goldberg, D.T. ed. 1990. Anatomy of racism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Empowering People: Building Community, Civil Associations and Legality in Africa
edited by Sandbrook, Richard and Halfani, Mohamed, Center for Urban and Community Studies University of Toronto, 1993.
Reviewed by George Munda Carew

The statist approach to understanding and interpreting political processes in Africa failed to capture some of the most significant processes underlying the failure of the post colonial state. Neoliberal theorists have located the problem in the peculiar historical circumstances of post colonial civil society.

Post colonial civil society was the product of centuries of exploitation and cultural imperialism. As a consequence it is fragmented, powerless and ineffectual in sustaining democratic regimes. To reinvent civil society, neoliberal theorists advocate the building of institutional and organization linkages in civil society to serve as pillars fro democracy.

According to neoliberal theorists Western democracies actually evolved out of civil society and were organically linked to it. The crisis of the post colonial state derives from the fact that the state had not evolved out of civil society but was superimposed on it by the colonial powers. The corrective to the problem of the post colonial state is to be found in the empowerment of civil society as a condition for democracy and development.

It is for this reason that Empowering People is of particular significance. The editors have assembled a collection of articles which should give the reader good insights into present trends in the rebuilding and empowerment of civil society. The text represents the proceedings of an international conference of civil associations held in Arusha,

Tanzania in August 1991. While it may not lay claims to being an academic treatise, its value is certainly not diminished by this fact. Its emphasis in the reinvention of civil society offers a study in contrast to the elusive problem of state legitimacy.

The text is organized in five parts. Part one deals with the crucial problems and dilemmas of the post colonial state which Tanzania's former president Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere highlighted in his keynote address at the conference. In the subsequent interview Nyerere was confronted (as has happened many times in the past) with the question of the relevance of African socialism to the democratic processes on the continent. Nyerere's conceptualization of African socialism is notorious for concealing an ambiguity. To understand what Nyerere means by socialism one must first grasp his reasons for rejecting liberalism. Socialism was Nyerere's attempt to circumvent what he regarded to be the fatal flaws of liberalism: espousing self-seeking individualism and constraining the activity of the state to intervene on behalf of its oppressed citizens. He considers formal freedoms as empty without the necessary socio-economic means to realize them.

Nyerere is concerned that the adoption of liberalism and the institution of capitalist market economy in the newly emergent African states would lead once again to domination and oppression of the masses, a form of recolonialization perpetuated not by a foreign power but by one's own people. African socialism was conceived as the way out of a bankrupt ideology of self-seeking egotistical individualism. Socialism emphasized the welfare of all its citizens, the social interconnectedness of individuals and their duty to promote the good of society. Nyerere believed these sentiments had historical and cultural roots in African societies, he did not consider socialism a novel doctrine.

The state and the party became for Nyerere the embodiment of the people's will. However, the reification of the state failed to further the aims of preserving individual autonomy and equal opportunities for development. Instead, the state edged out civil society from the public domain and eclipsed individual autonomy. It would seem Nyerere's

theory had led to paradoxical results, creating precisely those conditions he was anxious to prevent and its major weakness does not lie in Nyerere's categorical opposition to liberalism but in his espousal of the autocratic state.

Since the statist approach (with which Nyerere is identified) has been unhelpful in preventing oppression and domination in society, the alternative approach of the empowerment of civil society may be the key to the solution Nyerere was seeking.

Mohamed Halfani in his essay "Constraints on Empowerment" makes reference to a number of problems: 1) external dependency, 2) the debt crisis, and 3) institutional and structural weaknesses All these exogenous issues impact developmental processes in emergent Third World states.

Part one closes with Akoto Ampaw's essay "Empowerment and the Limits of Political Liberalism". Ampaw. like Nyerere, draws attention to classical liberalism's failure to guarantee no more than formal rights. It will be interesting to note to what extent neoliberalism overcomes this particular problem in classical liberalism.

Part two through five feature the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGO's). The topics covered are: Bringing law to the people; building community and civil associations such as trade unions, women's associations and self-help rural associations; regenerating civil society through loosening constraints on civil associations, revitalizing local government and raising popular consciousness through popular theatre; creating conditions for democratic development by building solidarity and promoting democratic transitions.

All contributions to this text have intuitively adopted the neoliberal framework. Organizations committed to the eradication of social injustice stress the need to acquaint the public with the their civic right and whenever necessary they also provide legal aid for the self reliance by encouraging communities to pool resources and strengthen urban and rural worker's associations.

As all these issues dealing with the empowerment of civil society are construed as conditions for democracy their success hinges in my

view on the elimination of structures of oppression and domination in the polity. Oppression need not be limited to unlawful activities that constrain the liberties of people. Iris Marion Young in "Justice and the Politics of Difference" observes that oppression also possesses an institutional and structural dimension. She identifies at least five types of institutional oppression: Exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and systemic violence.
All forms of oppression lead to disempowerment, thus to empower people means to eliminate oppression in all its guises [Young (1990, 38)].

Where exploitation, marginalization and powerlessness involve to a large extent distributional issues, cultural imperialism and systemic violence make reference to a different aspect of oppression. Cultural imperialism names the process of treating the cultural experience of one's own group as expressive of objective reality. Consequently, the experiences of other ethnic groups are not only discounted but also viewed as inferior.

This dichotomized view of inter ethnic relations has often been the cause not only of ethnic distrust but also of ethnic hostility. Assuming the normality and universality of its own cultural experience and identity, each ethnic group views the difference which other groups exhibit as a lack and a negation. Systemic violence becomes the order when ethnic and racial hatred gets out of hand. Because the neoliberal approach to empowerment limits itself solely to distributional issues generated by oppression, it tends to provide solutions to only exploitation, marginalization and powerlessness, all of which it views as causally linked: exploitation produces powerlessness and marginalization.

Critical theorists might object to the liberal and neoliberal theories on several grounds. They charge both theories with overlooking two important forms of oppression, namely cultural imperialism and its by-product, systemic violence. Another objection to liberal and neoliberal theories is their view of oppression. Liberals do not consider oppression a structural or relational concept. They view oppression as either the wrongful interference of government with the liberties of its

citizens or, in neoliberal terms, the absence of opportunities for individual development and freedom. Critical theorists point out that the ability of oppressive structures like apartheid and the caste system to produce and reproduce oppressive conditions shows that measures to obtain socio-economic justice would be ineffective unless oppressive structures were first removed.

The third objection takes issues with the way liberals generally conceive of the distinction between public and private realms. The public, which symbolizes the political, is the unified, homogenous realm of universal humanity. Particularities and differences are all consigned to the private realm. The liberal politics of inclusion could be achieved only by overlooking difference and situated individualism.

It could be argued that the expulsion of ethnic group differences from the public realm, while retaining both individual and group diversity in the private realm, could promote not an inclusive public but an exclusive public from which some individuals and groups are excluded. The alternative to the liberal politics of inclusion lies in the construction of a public domain that requires the recognition of social group differences as a means of ensuring the participation of everyone. Where group differences are viewed positively rather than negatively, people learn to accept and value group differences as vital in promoting the general welfare of a heterogenous public.

A plural cultural democratic society would thus require a dual system of rights: A formal system of rights and an auxiliary system of group conscious policies and rights to ensure that oppressive policies and structures do not curtail the freedom of some citizens.

The issues that I raise do not detract form the value of this text, whose virtue lies in its rejection of the statist approach in favour of a neoliberal paradigm of political interpretation. This shift in focus is particularly relevant to current democratic trends on the African continent. Empowering People is to be recommended especially to those readers interested in democratic transition in Africa.

In the Tracks of African Predicament; Philosophy and Contemporary Socio-Economic and Political Problems of Africa
by Dipo Irele, Ibadan, Options Book and Information Services, 1993, pp.iii-98.
Reviewed by C. Amaechi Udefi.

The contemporary socio-economic and political predicament of Africa has been blamed on certain externally and internally generated forces. Whereas, the former issued from our encounter with the Europeans, and this encounter, whatever his merits, has far-reaching ramifications in the present day marginality of Africa, the latter emanated from the African leaders themselves who wrested power from the Europeans and turned the instrument of power against their people and their states. The question being asked in intellectual circles is:
How can Africa come out of its present economic and political logjam, that is, which way forward?

The basic thrust of Dr. Irele's book is that for Africa to develop economically, there is need for a rethinking of our political system, which, he argues, has to be put on democratic line with the masses participating fully in the governance of their countries. Again, the author does not content with X-raying the numerous problems of Africa, which is common with commentators on African affairs, but addresses the problems head-on by offering, in concrete terms, how the problems can be resolved.

The book is compact with eight chapters. The central issue in the first chapter is the attempts to show that our encounter with the Europeans brought in its wake certain ideological concepts like race, government and nation and brought the emergence of "those Africans who became literate in the European languages through western education produced a counter-thesis to the dominant colonial ideology" (p.1).
These African intellectuals demanded for a redefinition and retrieval of their traditional values and cultures which have been wantonly destroyed and distorted by the Europeans. Their strategy was to use certain concepts like justice, liberty and fair play, which the Europeans themselves used. But no sooner had the independence got through the

untiring struggles of the African nationalists, than they (nationalists) became Leviathan in Hobbes' idiom, and turned the instrument of state into oppression against their people.

The author, however, does not despair and thinks that the resolution of the problem lies in addressing certain structural defects in African social and political life. In chapter two, Dr. Irele takes up the issue of how philosophy is practised in Africa by African professional philosophers and argues that what has so far been posited as philosophy misses the mark as it fails to grapple with the perennial problems of Africa. In the alternative, he makes a case for a philosophy, pragmatic in content, which takes care of the substantive socio-economic and political issues of Africa.

But how can philosophy do this? Indeed, it is thought of as an anathema for philosophers to attempt to establish or disestablish substantive normative claims. Even though, some African philosophers, e.g. Wiredu and Bodunrin, attempt to establish a socially relevant philosophy, the fact that they tend to use the advances of analytic philosophy and adapt them to the general social and intellectual climate of Africa seems to diminish the full import of their espousals. (p.7).

Dr. Irele offers a solution and suggests a philosophy that will not only overcome the constraints of mainstream or traditional conception of philosophy, but will expose the illusions in the society by providing a critique of unsatisfactory social arrangements. (p.8) Philosophy, in this dispensation, becomes a social critique and rather than dwelling on such metaphysical notions as Aerobe concept of Obi, Mind/Body problem, and Akin concept of truth, will focus on issues such as ideology, democracy, education, dependency, ethnicity, modernity, development, racism, exploitation and imperialism. He envisions a kind of philosophy that will be non-discipline based and an historical social theory describing and explaining the peculiar experiences of a people. But what is the guarantee that philosophy will not degenerate into a myth or dogma in its critique of culture, society and ideology? He addresses this question by invoking the Rawlsian reflective equilibrium

which makes it possible for us to match, fit and test a theory to ensure conformity with our considered convictions. In other words, a theory can be discarded to the extent of its inconsistency with our entrenched beliefs.

Having made a case for philosophy to take interest in social and political issues of Africa, he then takes up the issues of the interrelated uses of development and ideology and several other issues in the following chapters.

He opts for a participatory democracy, even though this model fosters consensus and unanimity about certain social ends (p.93). It will not degenerate into one-partyism because of the in-built safeguards in the system viz. the acceptance and rejection of divergent views as they enhance or undermine the polity.

In order to ensure this, there is need to cultivate an attitude of tolerance in order to accommodate all shades of opinions and perspectives. Dr. Irele reinforces his claim for a babel of tongues in the democratization of African politics. The last chapter delineates the author's vision for African socio-economic and political environment. A kind of environment that empowers the people in deciding their fate and were resources are justly distributed to every Emeka, Tunde and Hassan in the case of Nigeria.

* This review has been shortened by the editors

Publications of Interest

Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy; Four Essays By Kwasi Wiredu
Selected and Introduced by Olusegun Oladipo
Hope Publications, Ibadan, Nigeria. ISBN 978-32037-3-8. pp.73

African Philosophy; Selected Readings
edited by Albert G. Mosley
Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632.
ISBN 0023841818. pp.438

Amuchma-Newsletter
African Mathematical Union, Commission on the History of Mathematics in Africa.
Instituto Superior Pedagógico (ISP). Contact Paulus Gerdes, P.O.Box 915, Maputo, Mozambique (fax 258-1-422113)

Les Cahiers Alternatives Sud
Centre Tricontinental, Avenue Sainte Gertrude 5, B-1348 Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgique. L'Harmattan, Paris.

Errata

In the December 1994 issue the Nigerian philosopher Chris Uroh was erronously mentioned as 'James' Uroh. Our apologies.

Notes on Contributors

Dr. George Munda Carew is professor at Spelman College, Atlanta. He is from Sierra Leone.

Dr. Gogoua Gnanagbe est docteur du 3ème cycle de Philosophie de Lyon; historien des idés politiques, département de philosophie, université nationale de Cote-D'Ivoire. Sa thèse de 3ème cycle porte sur "Les rapports du public et du Princé dans la pensée de Thomas Hobbes". Il est intéressé à la philosophie du droit et la problématique des droit de l'homme.

Prof. Lansana Kelta has published on a wide range of subjects. He taught philosophy at several American universities, but is based at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Dr. Seumas Miller is head of the Department of Philosophy at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia. He formerly lectured at Rhodes University and at the Universities of Canbarra. His publications are in the fields of philosophy of language, philosophy of the social sciences, and moral and political philosophy.

Mabogo P. More, is senior lecturer at the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa. Formerly he was lecturer at the University of the North. He published articles in *Orita*, and the *South African Journal of Philosophy*.

Prof. Dr. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze is Professor Emeritus of Sociology and past rector of the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. He taught at the University of California, Los Angeles, City University of New York, and at the University of Guelth, Ont. He published on islamology, sociology of the Middle East, sociology of development, and intercultural studies.

Dr. Chukwudum Barnabas Okolo is professor of African Philosophy at the University of Nsukka, Nigeria. His areas of interest are African Philosophy and Theology. His has published many papers and monographs, including *African Social and Political Philosophy; Selected Essays*, Nsukka, 1993.

Dr. Olusegun Oladipo is teaching at the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Dr. Mogobe Ramose has lectured in the K.U. of Leuven, Belgium, the University of Zimbabwe, visiting lectureship in the University of Transkei, South Africa and currently lectures in legal philosophy in the Katholieke Universiteit Brabant, (Tilburg University) in the Netherlands. He has published many articles in the field of social and political philosophy, philosophy of law and African philosophy.

Dr. Godfrey Tangwa teaches at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Yaounde. He is currently Alexander von Humboldt fellow at the University of Bayreuth, Germany

Prof. Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba is from Zaire, and professor in history at the University of Dar es Salam.

LES CAHIERS ALTERNATIVES SUD

Alternatives Sud est publié conjointement par le Centre Tricontinental de Louvain-la-Neuve et L'Harmattan de Paris. Son but est la diffusion de la pensée alternative élaborée dans les sociétés du Sud. Elle est réservée à des auteurs originaires et travaillant principalement en Afrique, Amérique latine, Asie et Pacifique.

REDACTION & ADMINISTRATION
CENTRE TRICONTINENTAL
Avenue Sainte Gertrude, 5
B-1348 Louvain-la-Neuve
Belgique

EDITIONS
CENTRE TRICONTINENTAL - Louvain-la-Neuve
L'HARMATTAN - Paris

Avec le soutien de l'Union Européenne

ISBN : 2-7384-3409-6

QUEST: Philosophical Discussions est un journal Africain de Philosophie. Il sert de voie d'expression aux penseurs d'Afrique, et il veut stimuler une discussion philosophique sur des problèmes qui surgissent des transformations radicales que l'Afrique et les Africains sont en train de subir.
QUEST contient des points de discussion actuels se rapportant à l'Afrique et des questions d'intérêt philosophique général, et s'adresse à un public international de philosophes professionels et d' intellectuels appartenant à d'autres disciplines ayant des intérêts philosophiques. Des articles originaux écrits en Anglais ou en Français seront publiés, avec un résumé dans l'autre langue.
QUEST paraît deux fois par an.

Contributions: Les articles ne devront pas dépasser normalement 6000 mots et devront être accompagnés d'un résumé d'un maximum de 200 mots. Le résumé devra être en Français de préférence si l'article est en Anglais, et vice-versa.

Abonnements: US$ 35.- (instit.); US$ 25.- (indiv.); Afrique: US$ 20.- (instit.); US$ 15.- (indiv.)
Quest, PO Box 9114, 9703 LC Groningen, Les Pays Bas

CONTENTS *Quest Vol. VIII No. 2 December 1994*