



QUEST

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# QUEST

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## EDITORIAL

This year, *QUEST* celebrates its fifth anniversary, which, considering current conditions, is already a respectable age for a journal in African Philosophy.

In the years to come, we hope to publish many more interesting issues of *QUEST*, that will present new points of view regarding philosophy and Africa, and that will stimulate discussion. Our goals for the coming five years are to underline the quality of *QUEST*, increase its circulation, and lift its 'voluntary exile' in Europe, of the past few years (i.e. publish the journal again in Africa).

We ask colleagues who submit articles for understanding for the fact that we often have to disappoint them, due to the steadily increasing number of incoming articles.

1991 is also the fifth year after Cheikh Anta Diop's death; Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba commemorates him in this issue. Mogobe Ramose offers a substantial contribution to the discussion regarding the future constitution of South Africa. Other articles deal with a wide range of academic issues that also express current concerns: Lansana Keita discusses relativism, Guillaume Bwele and Godfrey Tangwa touch on the issue of democracy, and Gatian Lungu discusses practical education.

### **Gift-subscriptions**

Several African Departments of Philosophy are facing serious financial problems and have not been able to subscribe to *QUEST*. We would like, therefore, to invite readers to pay gift-subscriptions to African departments and friends (US\$ 15.- each).

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## EDITORIAL

*QUEST* fête sa cinquième année d'existence; ce qui, malheureusement, est presque, déjà, un âge respectable pour une revue de philosophie africaine.

Nous sommes curieux de voir l'apport des années à venir, avec des contributions intéressantes et davantage de discussions. La quantité d'articles proposés nous oblige malheureusement de plus en plus souvent à refuser des articles; nous comptons sur votre compréhension. Dans les cinq années à venir, nous espérons surtout développer la qualité et la diffusion de *QUEST* et supprimer son "exil volontaire" en Europe.

Nous ne pouvons laisser s'achever 1991 sans rappeler que c'est le cinquième anniversaire de la mort de C.A. Diop, dans un article de E. Wamba-dia-Wamba. De même, l'évolution de la situation en Afrique du Sud ne peut passer inaperçue. M.B. Ramose donne une contribution substantielle à la réflexion sur l'avenir de l'Afrique du Sud. L'essentiel des autres se compose de problématiques philosophiques, mais l'on trouve parfois un appel indirect à la démocratisation, par exemple chez Bwele et Tangwa.

### *Les abonnements-cadeaux*

En raisons de sérieux problèmes financiers, plusieurs facultés de philosophie ne sont pas en mesure de souscrire à *Quest*. C'est pourquoi nous aimerions inviter nos lecteurs à financer des abonnements-cadeaux destinés aux facultés africaines. Au prix de US\$ 15.- par année vous pourriez faire en sorte que vos collègues africains puissent participer aux discussions soulevées à *Quest*. Veuillez nous renseigner quelle faculté vous souhaitez soutenir.

### *Résumé*

*Le droit à la vie fait fondamentalement partie des droits de l'homme. Il implique le droit à la nourriture, au travail, et à un logement adéquat. Le droit intégral à l'obstention comme à la propriété de ressources matérielles nécessaires à la réalisation du droit à la vie y est corrélatif.*

*Aussi la thèse centrale de cet article est-elle que la totalité indivisible des droits de l'homme doit être reconnue et que ces droits doivent être fixés dans la charte constitutionnelle à venir de l'Afrique du Sud. Ces droits doivent recevoir le statut de droits réellement exigibles devant les juges.*

*Ainsi, le principe de l'Etat social devient le complément naturel et nécessaire du principe de l'Etat de droit. Reconnaître et accepter cette thèse, c'est faire une promesse résolue et réaliste de paix et de sécurité durable pour tous dans une nouvelle Afrique du Sud.*

## IN SEARCH OF A WORKABLE AND LASTING CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA<sup>1</sup>

M.B. Ramose, T.G.T. Maphala, T.E. Makhabane

The prospect of negotiations for a new South Africa has already raised complex and intricate questions which continue to be the subject of widespread debate. However, some of the basic and vital questions pertinent to a negotiated constitutional dispensation in South Africa have either not been raised at all or they have been the object of superficial discussion. In this article we propose to discuss one of the very basic and vital questions relevant to any negotiated constitutional change in South Africa. This is the question of the '*Sozialstaatprinzip*'. We shall argue that it is necessary to adopt and recognise the *Sozialstaat* principle as a constitutional guarantee for the respect and protection of the fundamental right to subsistence. Without such recognition and adoption, we shall argue, the new constitution, purportedly based upon the *Rechtsstaat* principle, is unlikely to command widespread acceptance and will - as such - be based upon a fragile durability.

Our argument will proceed from the premise that there are two major parties to the prospective negotiations, namely, the indigenous conquered people of South Africa and the conqueror of European origin who now holds the position of power, control and dominance in all the vital sectors of life in South Africa. No doubt within each of these main categories there are groups and organisations which claim to respect the respective interests and rights of their peoples. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the claims to representation as well as the negotiating postures of the various groups and organisations which are likely to participate in the forthcoming negotiations.

The right to food must be regarded as an indispensable component of the inalienable human right to subsistence. It stands to reason that life without food is a biological contradiction in terms. On this basis we hold that the right to food is a primary fundamental human right. Thus any system of rights which purports to uphold the human right to life but denies the human right to food cannot have moral or legal justification short of manipulation or coercion. In this context, it is widely proposed from within the ranks of the conqueror that a Bill of Rights be included in the

negotiated constitutional dispensation. The proponents of this view argue, especially on juridical grounds, that the Bill of Rights envisaged may include "social and economic rights" provided it is agreed beforehand that such rights shall be unenforceable by law [Dugard (1990a, p.461)]. By way of simplification we suggest that the proposed proviso to be attached to the inclusion of "social and economic rights" in the negotiated constitution is tantamount to a denial of the human right to food. Our point of argument here is that it is politically and morally illicit to invite, not only the conquered people of South Africa but all the people of that country, to an appreciation and defence of the virtues of a state based upon the principle of the *Rechtsstaat* while remaining indifferent, at worst silent, to the equally important need to appreciate and defend the virtues of the principle of the *Sozialstaat*. In the context of human rights philosophy, the purpose and function of law is not only to recognise human rights but such rights must be protected and defended by any legal system which aims to preserve both its legitimacy and credibility. Our central thesis, therefore, is that the *Rechtsstaat* principle is both compatible with and complementary to the *Sozialstaat* principle.

In view of this, our contention will be that the conquered people of South Africa would have reasonable political, moral and juridical grounds upon which to reject the proposed Bill of Rights which purports to uphold and guarantee the human right to life while at the same time refusing to uphold and guarantee the human right to food. Our discussion in this context shall be from the standpoint of the philosophy of human rights. Accordingly, we shall proceed by way of identifying the philosophical foundations of human rights and show the significance of such rights in a political system. We shall then use the philosophico-political framework of human rights, in particular, the inalienable human right to subsistence, as the testing ground for the conqueror's juridical position that social and economic rights may not be justiciable in a future bill of rights for South Africa. To the extent that this position claims the primacy of law over human subsistence, thereby declaring that it is better to have good law and no food, it shall be contradicted by us.

### Philosophy and the Foundation of Human Rights

Our understanding of philosophy is that it is an intellectual discipline which appreciates the construction of theory on the basis of human experience and has the aim to apply theory to concrete practical situations as a means of shaping and changing reality [Nkrumah (1964, p.63)]. On this understanding the task of philosophy is not simply the



clarification of concepts. On the contrary, philosophy's characteristic search for the roots or foundations of reality cannot justifiably be terminated at the level of theory construction: it must, even if this may at times be in an indirect manner, finally justify its theories in the realm of human experience. Thus our proposed philosophical discussion about the foundations of human rights must be understood as applied political, social, moral and legal philosophy.

All theories of human rights regard the fact of being human - humanness - as their starting-point. Human rights theories then proceed to ascribe value to or determine the worth of the fact of being human. It is precisely at this level of valuation that disputes arise concerning the meaning of human rights. Accordingly, it is value orientation to humanness which constitutes the foundation of conflicting theories of human rights. Disputes about values belong primarily to the sphere of what ought to be (axiology) but the focus of what ought to be is ultimately the realm of the concrete everyday life. Thus positions that belong to the axiological sphere purport to have relevance and application to the concrete everyday life. This means that such positions hold that the concrete everyday reality must be guided and shaped according to the vision of reality corresponding to a particular axiological position. The basic claim here is that what ought to be can be translated into concrete reality [Goldman (1979, p.3-4)]. Clearly, this is not to say that "ought" is derived from "is". What we wish to underline, without digressing into the philosophically important discussion of the "is-ought" question, is that axiological positions which hold a specific vision of what concrete reality ought to be in the sphere of human relations are in essence decisions about the value to be attached to humanness [MacDonald (1984, p.34-35)]. In this sense human rights are definite axiological decisions with regard to the fact of being human.

Human relations is the major context as well as the primary focus of human rights understood as axiological positions and decisions on humanness. In spite of their differences in perspective and emphasis, all theories of human rights share one fundamental characteristic in common, that the fact of being-a-living-human being deserves recognition by all other human beings. Furthermore, this recognition must be understood to mean both respect for and protection of the fact of being-a-living-human being. In this sense, all theories of human rights are ultimately concerned with one fundamental basic human right, namely, the right to life. Ontologically, the human right to life is by no means an abstract right. It is not an empty shell. In its material aspect as well as existential mode this right involves the freedom or liberty of the individual human being to strive constantly towards its self-realisation. This fundamental freedom, ceases only upon the

death of the individual human being. In the narrow sense, the activity of human freedom in the strife towards the actualization of human life involves labour. This latter, must be understood as autopoiesis in the broad sense, and, more specifically, as the human right to work. Accordingly, by the inalienable right to human subsistence we understand a fundamental indivisible integral trilogy of rights, namely, the human rights to life, freedom and work. Because of their indivisible character these rights constitute a wholeness. For this reason a holistic approach to human rights is to be preferred. We stress that the right to life here means respect for and protection of humanness, that is, of the fact of being-a-living-human-being. It is important to stress this because there is a difference between being-a-living-human-being and living as a human being. In fact, it is this latter which is the basis of disputes among the contending theories of human rights. For the present we shall confine ourselves to the human right to life as already defined here.

### The Political Significance of the Human Right to Life

Our understanding of the human right to life as defined above is that in the political sphere a right is a principle of morality and justice, recognizing that each and every individual may engage in activity to acquire and own the necessities to stay alive by imposing limitations upon others in pursuit of such activity.

Rights do represent what those who propound them regard as the ineliminable core of self-interest in political morality: our rights are, in a sense, those of our individual interests which it would be wrong or unreasonable to require us to sacrifice for the greater good of others. Rights constitute for each agent the extent of the egoism he can proclaim against the community without moral embarrassment.[Waldron (1983, p.103)]

The primary and fundamental egoistic proclamation that each individual can make against the community without moral embarrassment is the assertion of the right to food [Donnelly (1985,p.13)]. This latter is a fundamental right which gives meaning and content to the right to life. Discourse on the right to life always presupposes and is linked to the right to food.

In the sphere of human relations, the imposition of restrictions on others in one's activity to acquire and own the necessities of staying alive must satisfy two criteria. First, it must accord with the community's or society's sense of what is good, that is, it must conform to the social

morality. Second, it must satisfy the demands of natural justice in general and in particular those of distributive justice. The demands of distributive justice must be satisfied on the understanding that this concept presupposes that: (i) human beings are of equal worth with regard to their humanness. In a fundamental sense, no single human being has a superior and exclusive right to life than all other human beings. Consequently, all human beings deserve equal concern even though they may receive unequal recognition because

What justice demands is the equality of concern: needs of all men deserve the earnest and rational attention of society. When it comes to the question of recognition of needs, a stratified society (marked by inequality) would be well-advised to accord priority to original needs (of food and house) over imitative needs (of a colour TV set) and to original needs of the worst-off group over better-off.[ Chattopadhyaya (1980,p.177)]

(ii) distributive justice presupposes also the relative scarcity of material resources that may be acquired and owned in order to actualise the human right to life. By itself, this presupposition cannot and does not annul the fundamental human right to food. However, the presupposition can function as an important guide to the manner and extent to which the fundamental human right to food may be restricted. On this understanding, the right to life is prior to the establishment of a community or society. However, in this sphere which precedes the construction of the polis questions of morality and justice do not arise. These two questions arise at the establishment of society [Lukacs (1980, p.22-23)]. Society comes into being as a result of (i) labour as a teleological positing, and (ii) the consent of its members to have their right to life exercised according to specific rules. When society comes into being, the prior right to life is neither annulled nor created by society. Instead, society recognises the right and proceeds to devise mechanisms for the protection and control of the right to life. In this sense the right to life is an exclusive entitlement [Donnelly (1985,p.3)]. It is a fact to which every individual can lay exclusive claim without prior permission of the others. Save by killing the individual, society can neither wish away (annul) nor create a fact that is already a fact, namely, the individual's humanness coupled indissolubly with the exclusive activity to acquire and own the necessities of staying alive.

Number (ii) above is the essence of the contractarian theory of the state [Neumann (1986,p.7-8)]. Considered in relation to labour as a teleological positing, the substance of the contract theory of the state is, in the first instance, the human right to life. The actualization of this right

means unimpeded access to food even though this may be subject to specific rules. It is hardly conceivable, therefore, that in assuming membership of a state human beings can willingly enter into a contract negating and abrogating their right to life in the sense of denying themselves the natural duty to acquire and own necessities of staying alive. There is no doubt, therefore, that:

All human life involves the use of material resources and some of the most profound disagreements among human beings and human civilizations concern the basic principles on which this is to be organized. The allocation of material resources, ..., is a primal and universal concern of human societies. [Waldron (1983, p.34)]

Seen from this perspective, the purpose of the state is to create and safeguard the conditions necessary for the peaceful exercise of the human right to life. The state is by no means the government. However, the government acting in the name of the state cannot validly confine itself to the maintenance of law and order, insisting upon formal equality before the law, and in the process disregard the human right to life. We contend that since no individual can reasonably be expected to abrogate their right to life then, provided the state is based upon the consent of its members, it is the duty of the government to ensure that the human right to life is exercised peaceably. This duty entails laying down clear and definite rules on the exercise of the human right to life. But rules alone are insufficient. Accordingly, the government is also duty-bound to ensure that the necessities to stay alive are available and within the reach of all members of the state. Our contention may, therefore, be understood as the thesis that the *Rechtsstaat* principle is the natural complement of the *Sozialstaat* principle. Consonant with this thesis we maintain that the right to food is a fundamental human right [Jansson (1984, p.24)]. All other traditional fundamental rights or basic liberties revolve around and derive their proper significance from the right to food. An integral part of our thesis is that the widespread tendency to classify and categorise human rights does not of necessity warrant a hierarchization of human rights. Underlying this tendency is the practice of absolutizing certain values on the one hand and a dogmatic unilinear conception of human history on the other. Here we discern not only an unswerving commitment to the illusion of eternal and immutable values but also the reluctance to acknowledge that even the most durable truths may in time have to be discarded as the history of knowledge (science) continues to unfold. Indeed authentic commitment to science (knowledge) cannot validly uphold methodological dogmatism and infallibility of scientific knowledge [Buchler (1955,p.56-57)]. To adhere to

such a position is to refuse to be open-minded and reasonable. It is to avoid confrontation with novelty arising from the continually unfolding character of reality. By so doing one also eschews the potential moral dilemma that the new reality might address to one's conscience. Such a position is clearly unacceptable to us [Perelman (1980, p.47-48)].

We propose to argue that juridical as well as social science opinion which maintains that the right to food, as defined here, is not a fundamental human right, is a flawed opinion. With particular reference to the position of the conqueror in South Africa on this matter, we submit that the opinion reveals an unwarranted commitment to a supposedly immutable tradition thereby elevating such tradition to the status of dogmatic truth. In addition, it is an unreasonable imperviousness to innovative thought and action aimed at changing long established ideas and institutions especially those which have historically served the interests of the conqueror in the country. This is exemplified by the claim from within the ranks of the conqueror that a bill of rights in South Africa must protect the interests of ethnic minorities in the country. The same claimant continues to declare that the changes envisaged for the country must facilitate South Africa's re-entry into her "natural" home, namely, "the Western world".

Dit is onteeseelik dat die regstaat waarin die mens as mens tot sy reg kom, die poort is waardeur ons sal moet gaan om in ons natuurlike tuiste, die Westerse wêreld, terug te kom.(emphasis added) [Hiemstra (1985, p.8)]

It is evident that Hiemstra's identification of South Africa with the Western world raises the question whether or not all South Africans, especially the indigenous conquered people of that country, would unreservedly support his claim that a true South African is one who is committed to the Western world and its values. This important question apart, Hiemstra's averment seems to be a revelation of the deepest sentiments and loyalty of many within the ranks of the conqueror.

### Food in the Human Rights System of the State

In the light of the foregoing, the following observations may be made. (i) The concept as well as the reality of a human right is closely linked to the reality and concept of community or state. In this view, the state is not an end in itself but a means to an end. As such the state is a voluntary (consensual) association of human beings constituted by the latter to fulfil, at least, two basic functions. First, the state is the repository of the fundamental human right to life and food as well as all the other human rights related thereto. At this level the state acts as the authoritative

guarantor of human rights by enforcing respect and protection of the rights of each individual human being. At another but interrelated level, the state acts as the facilitator of human rights by providing conditions that allow for the pursuit and fulfilment of individual human rights. Here the main thrust of state activity is to balance and harmonise the contending individual human rights claims especially the inalienable fundamental right to life and food. In order to pursue and fulfil the inalienable fundamental right to life and food it is necessary to recognise that: (a) the individual human being must be free to do so, that is, engage in such a pursuit, and that (b) doing so means autopoiesis in general and in particular, work in order to live. Accordingly, the human right to life is necessarily complemented by and always presupposes the human right to liberty or freedom and the human right to work. This trilogy of human rights together form the basis of the ontological structure of being-a-living-human-being. In other words, humanness means being alive in a situation in which food is the substance of life; freedom the substance, discernment and fulfilment of life, and; work is also the substance, pursuit and fulfilment of life. Seen from this ontological standpoint, this trilogy of human rights is at one and the same time complementary and contemporaneous in any concept of the right to life and food. Accordingly, complementarity and contemporaneity mean that these rights are the foundation of one another. They are mutually founded in the sense that for any one of these rights to exist in an authentic way the two others must be present in the same situation at one and the same time. For this reason, the right to freedom, for example, is defective and deformed ontologically if it is separated from the human right to life and food as well as the right to work. It is therefore essential to regard the living human being as a single indivisible wholeness ontologically vested with a trilogical indivisible wholeness of human rights. Accordingly, we prefer a holistic orientation towards understanding human rights.

Coupled with our ontological reasoning so far, the holistic orientation to human rights means that the state cannot and does not create this trilogy of rights in particular. Instead it assumes the role of recognising these rights. Recognition of these rights is the only ontological option that the state has. The state was not present at the coming-into-being of this trilogy of rights: it did not create or invent them. On this basis this trilogy of rights is non-derogable. Therefore, even within the context of the state, these rights may not be infringed. However, the state as a voluntary (consensual) association of human beings, is vested with the political competence to deal with these rights. Such political competence is the reason for the existence of the state. Thus conceived, the state is a voluntary and purposive human association constantly striving towards the

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balanced and harmonious realisation of the inalienable fundamental trilogy of human rights. Indeed a state could either be dissolved or disrupted as a result of failure to be the true guarantor and facilitator of this fundamental trilogy of rights. Conversely, the unity and cohesiveness of the state can be sustained if it remains the veritable guarantor and facilitator of the actualization of the inalienable fundamental trilogy of human rights. This purposive character of the state is ontologically true of any state be it capitalist, socialist or whatever else. However, the dominant view of so called basic human rights - civil rights - appears to be radically opposed to our understanding of the inalienable fundamental trilogy of human rights. In the first place, the dominant view is based upon the untenable presupposition that these latter rights are ontologically divisible. Secondly, the dominant view is based upon a false transposition of the basic elements of the experience of being-a-living-human-being. This false transposition occurs when: (a) the ontological primacy of being-a-living-human-being-in-the-world is replaced by the historical primacy of the state; (b) the ontological primacy of the inalienable fundamental trilogy of human rights is substituted with the political primacy of the so called basic civil rights. This latter transposition gives the erroneous impression that the state creates the inalienable fundamental trilogy of human rights. The correct ontologico-experiential view is that the state recognises this fundamental trilogy of rights. It is precisely on this basis that our understanding of the inalienable fundamental trilogy of human rights runs counter to the dominant so called traditional understanding of basic human rights. In particular the point of difference lies in the fact that this latter understanding does not explicitly recognise the right to food as well as the right to work as inalienable fundamental human rights [Alston (1984, p.165)]. Relegating these rights to the category of social and economic rights, the dominant so called traditional understanding of basic human rights then proceeds to claim that rights in the said category may not be legally enforceable [Dugard (1990b, p.378)]. On this view, the law may not be invoked to promote and protect the exercise of as well as the enjoyment of the right to food and the right to work. Since our submission is to the contrary, we hold that any authentic constitution purporting to guarantee and protect human rights, alongside the human right to life, must regard the right to food as well as the right to work as inalienable fundamental human rights enforceable by law.

Our thesis, based upon ontologico-experiential as well as ethical considerations, means that the human rights to life and food, freedom and work are fundamental, indivisible and non-derogable human rights.

Consequently, these rights must be deeply embedded in any constitution if it must be the authentic guarantor and defender of human rights. An indispensable corollary to this condition of an authentic constitution is the necessity to recognise and accept that these latter rights - the three rights - shall be legally enforceable. The state based upon such a constitution is a political entity that is pre-eminently teleological in character. Evidently, the state cannot fulfil its teleological task - the balancing and harmonisation of contending human rights claims - if its members do not recognise its legitimacy and authority. Thus the members of the state do, in principle, have the duty to obey the laws of the state. On the other hand, the state also has duties towards its subjects. Such duties pertain to the various rights claims of the individual members of the state. With particular reference to the right to food, three specific duties of the state may be distinguished, namely,

"(a) ... not to eliminate a person's only available means of subsistence - duties to avoid depriving.

(b) ... to protect people against deprivation of the only available means of subsistence by other people - duties to protect from deprivation.

(c) ... to provide for the subsistence of those unable to provide for their own - duties to aid the deprived." [Alston (1984,p.170)]

The above are, in our view, the basic and primary duties of the state with regard to the right to life and food. A future constitution or bill of rights for South Africa must include these duties and accept that they shall be enforceable by law. To argue otherwise is to cling to the unwholesome suggestion that the inalienable fundamental indivisible trilogy of human rights is ontologically divisible. Suffice it to note for the present that the weakness of this argument is that it not only confuses but it also dissolves ontologico-experiential indivisibility into political expediency and juridical divisibility.

Our second observation from the preceding section is that all individual human beings are equal by virtue of their humanness. There are no degrees as far as humanness is concerned. Thus we have the universal equality of all human beings. In the political context this is the norm of equality before the law. However, equality before the law, understood as equal treatment under the law, does not necessarily and always satisfy the demands of natural justice [Rescher (1966,p.75)].

Our third observation is that an authentic constitution or a bill of rights is not an unswerving fidelity to juridical positivism. Also, it is neither an enthusiastic emulation of other traditions nor is it an uncritical imitation



of what obtains elsewhere. Mimetic constitutionalism, is a recipe for the deepening of political conflict. In addition, an authentic constitution or a bill of rights is not the result of tenacious loyalty and commitment to an ideology, whatever its reasons or motivations. On the contrary, an authentic constitution or a bill of rights must satisfy the following criteria:

- (i) it must be deeply rooted in the historical experience of the people;
- (ii) it must have been examined honestly and objectively in the light of reason and conscience;
- (iii) the people concerned must be desirous of constructing a system of rights which would allow for the peaceful pursuit as well as realisation of their respective just and legitimate claims;
- (iv) the people must agree to invoke reasonableness as the foundation of constructing a mutually acceptable as well as a mutually beneficial system of rights;
- (v) the people must have given their consent especially to all the fundamental issues pertaining to the constitution or a bill of rights.

It goes without saying that consultation with and among all the interested parties is the essence of the five criteria mentioned above. It is suggested then that the five criteria mentioned above should be seen to be operative in the search for a new constitution or a bill of rights for South Africa. It is worthwhile to note in this connection the comment on the South African Law Commission's provisional report on group and human rights. According to Van Der Vyver,

... the draft put forward by the Commission, unfortunately, does not entirely address the de facto ills of the South African social, economic and juridical status quo (...) In my opinion, constitution-making ought to commence with an in-depth diagnosis of the causes of friction in the South African community... . A constitutional bill of rights ought then to include guarantees that would ensure the discontinuation and non-repetition of those basic and legitimate sources of strife, from which, ultimately, the need for a new dispensation derives. [van der Vyver (1989,p.539-540)]

Our concern is not only that the provisional report of the South African Law Commission "does not entirely address the de facto ills of the South African social, economic and juridical status quo" but also that some of the five criteria already mentioned are under serious threat of being violated. Moreover, this threat comes not only from the South African Law

Commission but also from a significant segment of juridical and social science opinion in South Africa. We now turn to a consideration of this opinion with particular reference to the right to food.

### Law Without Food: A Bill of Rights for South Africa

We shall isolate the right to food from the litany of rights contained in the category of social and economic rights. However, such isolation may not be understood to exclude the correlative right to shelter or housing. Respect for the human right to food implies the recognition that adequate provision must be made, in this case the provision of adequate shelter or housing, for the protection of human life. Without such provision human life is unlikely to survive the dangers emanating from physical external nature. Accordingly, our talk about the right to food must be understood to be a reference to the right to adequate shelter or housing. Similarly, our talk about the right to food must be understood to mean the right to adequate food. What we have in mind, therefore, is not mere freedom from hunger [Alston (1984, p.165)].

Our understanding of the human right to adequate food and adequate shelter or housing means that the state is under an obligation to fulfil the threefold duties we have already mentioned with regard to the human "right to subsistence." These duties are : (i) the avoidance of eliminating the only available means of another person's subsistence; (ii) protection of the individual's means of subsistence from violation by others, and; (iii) coming to the aid of those who are unable to provide for their own subsistence. All these are the indispensable duties of the state with regard to the human right to adequate food and shelter or, simply, the human right to subsistence.<sup>2</sup>

According to Locke, not only is government action constrained by special rights of private property, but those rights are themselves constrained by a deeper and, in the last resort, more powerful general right which each man has to the material necessities for his survival... . Because it constrains the rights which constrain the activities of governments, it could be argued that its effect is to extend the realm of legitimate state action and to provide a justifying ground for redistributive activism in the economic sphere ... Subsistence is the basis of a general right in Locke's theory, but subsistence organized on the basis of private ownership is not.[Waldron (1983, p.139)]

The following inferences may licitly be drawn from the foregoing: (a) The human right to subsistence is an inalienable fundamental right. As such it necessitates recognition in a constitutional bill of rights and shall be regarded as enforceable by law. (b) Two of the first mentioned duties of the state listed above must be understood to mean that (i) the human right to subsistence must be recognised and upheld under any type of property regime; (ii) that in its recognition and protection of the human right to subsistence, the state may institute a system of private property ownership. Thus construed, the right to private ownership must be included in a constitutional bill of rights and should be justiciable as well. (c) The third of the threefold duties of the state already mentioned, means that the state shall see to the welfare of all its members especially the welfare of those who are unable to provide for themselves. On this reasoning, the cumulative effect of the threefold duties of the state is that the new constitution of South Africa shall also be based upon the *Sozialstaat* principle.

A thorough exposition of the *Rechtsstaat* and the *Sozialstaat* principles clearly requires a separate and independent work. Since neither space nor time allows for such an exposition, we shall content ourselves with an outline presentation of the *Rechtsstaat* and *Sozialstaat* principles. The *Rechtsstaat* theory acknowledges the principle that law is the constitutive foundation of the state. This foundational conception of law in the state means that the members of the state recognise the necessity to have law in order to regulate and curtail excessive or arbitrary action against them arising especially from the organs of the executive as well as the legislature. Protection from the latter means that it is not sufficient for the legislature to exercise rule by law but it is also necessary to subject legislative enactments to the scrutiny of a fundamental law [van der Vyver (1986,p.111)]. Talk of fundamental law speaks to the desirability of agreeing to and establishing a constitution as a Grundnorm on the basis of which the constitutional validity or otherwise of subsequent legislation may be tested by a special and independent constitutional court. Independence here includes the freedom of Justices of the special constitutional court to organise and run their own budget without interference from the Ministry of Justice in particular. Contrary to the South African Law Commission's provisional report already referred to, we stand by the position that a special constitutional court is necessary in the new constitutional order for South Africa. Our option for a special constitutional court modelled along the lines of that of the former West Germany (FRG) does at the same time take into account the difference between the German idea of the

Rechtsstaat and the Anglo-Saxon notion of constitutionalism. Commenting on this aspect, Kommers has stated that:

The Rechtsstaat is doubtless an important element of constitutional government. Still, one might note the large gap separating the German idea of Rechtsstaat from the Anglo-American notion of constitutionalism. The German Rechtsstaat is largely neutral toward the political goals of the state or the specific institutional form that the state embodies. It does not, for example, presuppose parliamentary democracy, as in English theory, or juridical review, as in American theory. Nor does it exhaust the many classical ideas on justice to be found in Western political thought. In the Rechtsstaat, individual rights are secured by general laws elaborated in comprehensive codes that govern the conduct and mutual relations of citizens. [Kommers (1976,p.45)]

However, Kommers' observation must be read in the light of the fact that the evolution of German constitutionalism crystallised in the principle of **Parteienstaat** regarded as essential to democracy in former West Germany. As it is well-known, the principle of the *Parteienstaat* found robust and authoritative defence in Justice Leibholz, one of the first Justices of the Federal Constitutional Court established under the former West German Basic Law.

Our observation applies with equal force to Neumann's similar remark on the same point;

The essence of the Rechtsstaat consists in the divorce of the political structure of the state from its legal organisation, which alone, that is to say independently of the political structure, is to guarantee freedom and security. In this separation consists the difference between the German Rechtsstaat and the English doctrine of the relation between the supremacy of Parliament and the rule of law.

The Rechtsstaat is, therefore, **not** the specific legal form of democracy, but it is neutral as regards the political structure.(emphasis added) [Neumann (1986, p.180)]

It follows, therefore, that the Leibholzian thesis that the Federal Republic of Germany is a *Parteienstaat* relates specifically to the concept of former West Germany as a "democratic state". It is a matter of dispute, therefore, that since the coming into force of the Basic Law in former West Germany the neutrality of the Rechtsstaat principle has been tainted by the explicit

option for a "democratic state". In other words, the point of dispute is that it may no longer be assumed that the *Rechtsstaat* is not a synonym for the Rule of Law.

The *Rechtsstaat* theory also includes the principle that no one is above the law<sup>3</sup>. This is a necessary complement to the protection of citizens against arbitrary use of state power. The basic issue, therefore, addressed by the *Rechtsstaat* principle may be stated in terms of a fundamental option, namely, the choice between parliamentary sovereignty (legislative supremacy) which, among others, contains the danger of majority party dictatorship through the law or the restriction of parliamentary sovereignty by way of accepting the principle that whenever the occasion arises the constitutionality (material validity) and not the wisdom of legislative enactments shall be tested by a competent independent constitutional court [Neumann (1986, p.45)].

The central feature of the *Sozialstaat* principle is that the state is the primary guarantor and facilitator of the protection as well as the actualization of the human right to subsistence. In this sense the state acts as both the shield and the spear of individual security in society. This means then that the state is duty bound to respond actively to the basic demands of social justice. The basis of the obligation of the state in this context is the principle that the state is the repository of the totality of the ineliminable individual concern for personal security [Benda (1983, p.509-28) and Zacher (1987, p.1045-1111)]. Kommers makes a similar observation with regard to the principle of the *Sozialstaat* when he states that:

The first is the principle of the "social state" (*Sozialstaatprinzip*) which the Court derives from Article 20 of the Basic Law, declaring West Germany to be "a democratic and social federal state." Under this principle the state is bound by a rule of social responsibility; it cannot constitutionally ignore the demands of social justice when making law. [Kommers (1976,p.210)]

The "social state" therefore is one that assumes responsibility for individual personal security in the light of the demands of fundamental justice in the sphere of social relations. This is in line with our thesis that the *Sozialstaat* principle is the natural and necessary complement of the *Rechtsstaat* principle.

The German understanding that the state is duty bound to respond actively to the demands of social justice predates the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany under the Basic Law [Koch (1984, p.152)]. Together with the *Rechtsstaat* principle, the *Sozialstaat* forms the bedrock upon which the former West German state is built. Accordingly, both

principles are compatible and complementary. They contribute jointly to guarantee the orderliness, cohesiveness and durability of the state. Any proposition to the contrary, as we find in the dominant juridical and social science opinion in South Africa, is a prescription for future strife and conflict within the state. As already indicated, the conqueror's opinion in South Africa tends to the view that it is better to be ideologically committed to the *Rechtsstaat* and to be indifferent as well as much less enthusiastic about upholding the principle of the *Sozialstaat*. We maintain, to the contrary, that both the *Sozial-* and *Rechtsstaat* principles are to be the "linchpins" of the future South African state [Kommers (1976, p.210-11)].

In his highly laudatory but mildly critical comment on the provisional report of the South African Law Commission on Group and Human rights, Wiechers suggests that the right to private property ownership is a fundamental human right: it ought to be protected by the constitution. Furthermore, he holds that this right is compatible with the *Rechtsstaat* principle. Wiechers also argues that the principle of compensation, presumably whenever the right to private property ownership is violated, ought to be explicitly recognised in the new constitutional dispensation [Wiechers (1989, p.315-16)]. With particular reference to "economic and social rights" Wiechers' basic position is that such rights must of necessity assume a programmatic character and ought to be incorporated as intentions in the programme of the government. Consequently, such rights shall not be enforceable by law. The ground of Wiechers' position appears to be the claim that economic and social rights are the product of the modern welfare state. Since South Africa is, in his view, a developing state and thus not yet a modern welfare state, it follows that the claim to such rights is, in the circumstances, unsustainable and shall therefore not be legally enforceable as well. Wiechers' use of the term "modern state" is rather ambiguous. It is not certain from the text whether or not the word "modern" in particular, refers to the contemporary situation or to the period in history designated as such in the strict conventional historical sense. However, our understanding is that Wiechers appears to be using the term in the former sense. As Wiechers himself put it:

Ekonomiese en maatskaplike regte is die produk van die moderne welvaartstaat... . Vir die ontwikkelende staat moet hierdie aansprake dus noodwendig 'n meer programmatiese aard inneem en behoort hulle as doelstellings op die regeringsagenda ingeskryf te word [Wiechers (1989, p.317)].

It must be recalled that for our purposes here, "economic and social rights" refer specifically to the human right to subsistence and the correlative right to private property ownership. Wiechers' argument shall be considered in the light of this particular understanding of "economic and social rights".

Wiechers' claim that economic and social rights - the inalienable fundamental right to subsistence - are the product of the modern welfare state is philosophically unsound and historically unsustainable. Under the rubric of human rights and the *Rechtsstaat*, Wiechers makes the philosophically sound submission, with particular reference to "fundamental rights", that the state does not create human rights but simply recognises them. We have contended earlier that this is the only ontological option that the state has. This means then that "fundamental rights", and, more specifically, the inalienable fundamental human right to subsistence, precedes and is prior to the establishment of the state. Furthermore, this right would not cease to exist if the state were to be abolished. Consequently, there is no sound philosophical basis for Wiechers' claim that the inalienable fundamental right to subsistence is the "product" of the modern welfare state. From the fact that the state chooses, at a particular historical moment, to recognise this right it does not therefore follow of necessity that the state creates or produces the right thereby making it its "product".

Historically, the struggle for this right has been waged by many communities and peoples long before the rise of the modern welfare state [Schreiber (p.42-48, p.92-94)].

In his discussion of Eudaemonism and the Welfare State, Uppendahl points to the deep roots of the *Sozialstaat* idea. By specific reference to Pufendorf and Wolff respectively, he is also able to identify the juridical formulation of the basic principle underlying the *Sozialstaat* idea, namely, "Generalis lex summorum imperantium est haec: salus populi suprema lex est" and "Die gemeine Wohlfahrt demnach und Sicherheit is das höchste und letzte Gesetz im gemeinen Wesen." [Uppendahl (1978, p.206)] Although we do not agree with the basic conclusion in Van Themaat's argument, we nevertheless accept his presentation and assessment of the finding of the Constitutional Court of the former Federal Republic of Germany. Van Themaat's basic conclusion is the disputed one that the lesson South Africa should draw is that the human right to subsistence may not be constitutionally guaranteed. It may therefore not be legally enforceable. The finding revolves around the disputes between employers and employees organisations based upon constitutional property rights with particular reference to laws granting workers certain rights within the workplace. [Verloren van Themaat (1990, pp.56-59)] The

significance of the Constitutional Court's finding lies in the fact that both sides to the dispute do not question the validity of the philosophy of the *Sozialstaat* under which they are operating.

Wiechers' suggestion that the *Sozialstaat* principle be rendered inoperative until propitious economic conditions have been created cannot be sustained. For a people - those within the ranks of the conqueror - whose legal culture upholds the principle that poverty is no justification for non-payment of a debt, it should be easy, by parity of reasoning, to understand that the limited availability of material resources necessary for the sustenance of human life is no justification for denying and excluding the *Sozialstaat* principle in a future constitutional bill of rights for South Africa. The conqueror's refusal to uphold the principle of the *Sozialstaat* reveals their preference for the *Rechtsstaat* principle. However, even in our day, the conqueror's predilection for the *Rechtsstaat* principle at the expense of the *Sozialstaat* principle would appear to be unjustified. That this is so may be illustrated by the fact that at the unification of the two Germanies, the *Sozialstaat* principle was neither abandoned nor modified because of the status of former East Germany as a so called second world country. No doubt the economic consequences of the unification of the two Germanies are yet to be assessed. But it is beyond question that an essential and vital constitutional principle - the *Sozialstaat prinzip* - was accepted and protected even in the face of heavy and burdensome economic conditions and prospects. At the same time, the conqueror's reluctance to embrace the *Sozialstaat* principle reveals that at a much deeper level the conqueror proceeds from the standpoint that law is primarily an instrument of regulation. By contrast, the conquered people take the view that law must be a means towards achieving authentic liberation.[Rhodes (1986)] The conqueror's view may be characterised as law from the standpoint of a full stomach whereas that of the conquered people is a conception of law from the standpoint of an empty stomach.

Similarly, his claim that the right to subsistence should be derecognized in the sense of not being enforceable by law, is both unsound and unacceptable. Wiechers' submission here suffers from the following weaknesses. Firstly, it is based upon the untenable presupposition that human history is a hierocratic and unilinear process. Underlying such hierarchization and unilinearity, is a superiority complex characteristic of the well-known stereo-types of the so called Western civilization.[Ramosé (1991, pp.75-87)] Neither the former presupposition nor the latter supposed superiority of the so called Western civilization can be justified either on the grounds of philosophy of history or philosophical anthropology in particular as well as anthropology in general. Secondly, Wiechers' dogmatic



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understanding of human history in this way makes it apparently easy for him to accept without explicit reservation the concept of a developing state - "die ontwikkelende staat". On the one hand, such uncritical acceptance of this concept is a clear affirmation of the unilinear and hierocratic understanding of human history. On the other hand, in full agreement with Parkinson, that lurking behind the hierarchization of the world into first, second and third worlds - the developed and the developing world - is a deep-rooted racism which appears to be ineradicable from the Western mind [Parkinson (1977, pp.24-25)]. With a view to showing the untenability of this hierarchization, three points may be made. One is that it is far from clear as to what exactly is the content of the "developed" state. In other words, there is no agreement yet, among scholars, with regard to the precise meaning of "developed" with reference to the state. It is therefore desirable that Wiechers clarifies his position with regard to the concepts, "developing" and "developed" state. Our second point is that apart from this difficulty, a "developed" state, like any other developed entity, presupposes the idea of maturation or completeness: the state then is like a saturated organism. Accordingly, if states are "developed" then it is reasonable to infer that they are no longer capable of further growth. Degeneration, deterioration and, probably, a chaotic explosion are the only possibilities for "developed" states. In view of this, it is, to say the least, far-fetched to urge "developing" states to emulate the "developed" states. The "developed" states hold on to this position and persist in prescribing solutions to the problems that confront the "developing" states. This prescriptive paternalism is very much alive in present-day discussions on a new constitutional order for South Africa. For example, Carpenter in his discussion of the Namibian constitution clearly implies that South Africans should adopt an attitude similar to that of Namibians with particular reference to the inalienable fundamental human right to subsistence. Carpenter's argument is unacceptable for the same reasons that the argument of Wiechers cannot be accepted. The third reason which we shall furnish presently shall also apply to both arguments and will serve as the basis for their refutation. According to Carpenter:

The protection of second- and third generation rights is a thorny issue because of the technical difficulties involved, particularly in a country which is largely underdeveloped. It will be an onerous enough task for a newly-independent country to ensure a balance between the protection of traditional fundamental rights such as property rights and the right to equality of treatment and the demands of affirmative action for the disadvantaged without having to

deal with constitutionally enforceable claims for food, housing and shelter for the indigent, for example. Freedom from want and poverty is a praiseworthy ideal: as a constitutionally guaranteed right, it would place an intolerable strain on resources which are already limited. From a purely practical point of view, it is conceivable that the courts will be hard put to keep up with all the potential claims which could arise; ... it is important for the credibility of the system that priorities be carefully assessed. [Carpenter (1989/90, p.57)]

It is hardly necessary to comment on the condescending tone of Carpenter's argument including the cold sarcasm contained in the title of his essay. We propose to submit that "technical difficulties" can never be a necessary and sufficient ground for suspending certain human rights or even for refusing to grant them recognition. The extollation of "traditional fundamental rights" as well as the importance attached to maintaining the "credibility of the system" speak to methodological dogmatism and ideological commitment to which we already referred. Furthermore, Carpenter's conception of "freedom from want and poverty... as a constitutionally guaranteed right" fails to take serious issue of the fact that the human right to subsistence, as defined here, is an inalienable fundamental right. In addition, his claim that an unbearable strain will be brought to bear upon "resources which are already limited" is clearly a lack of profound appreciation of the fact that at the foundation of any state lies the question of the just distribution of resources necessary for the preservation of human life. This flaw in Carpenter's and Wiechers' arguments brings us to our third point, namely, their evident commitment to a specific economic system and the desirability to preserve the same through the instrumentality of the law. Thus their aversion of law intervening in the economic sphere is far from convincing. Commenting on the provisional report of the South African Law Commission on this point, Du Plessis has argued plausibly that:

While the law commission endorses the notion that a bill of rights ought to be formally neutral as between economic systems such as capitalism and socialism, articles 14 and 15 reveal a commitment to a rigid form of capitalism, which constitutes a serious stumbling block to the acceptance of the proposed bill of rights. These two articles also constitute an unjustifiable obstacle to a future government's freedom to choose and implement methods of socio-economic reform. [Du Plessis (1989, p.442)]

We therefore reiterate one of our basic submissions that the human right to subsistence is an inalienable fundamental human right which is relevant and applicable to any socio-economic system.

Another argument against the inclusion of a justiciable constitutional bill of rights with respect to the inalienable fundamental human right to subsistence pertains to the difficulties with which the judiciary shall be burdened if such an option were to be made. The basic reasoning here is that in order to avoid difficulties for the judiciary it is best to choose for a non-justiciable constitutional bill of rights.[Dugard (1990a, p.461), Van der Westhuizen (1989, pp.124-25) and Van Niekerk (1988, pp.7-8)] Here it must be recalled that our understanding of this right includes the right to private ownership of property in so far as this refers to the acquisition and ownership of the material resources necessary for the sustenance of human life. Although such property is neither inviolable nor beyond the reach of the government expropriating it in the name of the state [Mann (1959, p.189)], such expropriation may not - provided it satisfies contemporaneously the principles of justice in acquisition and justice in transfer [Waldron (1983, pp.257-59 and especially pp.267-68)] - be without fair, prompt and adequate compensation. Such is the rationale underlying our submission that the human right to subsistence is an inalienable fundamental human right. Consonant with the *Sozialstaat* principle, our rationale means that the right to private ownership of property must be a collective right in the sense that it will be subject to a social rule translated into a law that the use of material resources in particular cases must be determined by reference to the collective interests of society as a whole. Thus;

in principle, material resources are answerable to the needs and purposes of society as a whole, whatever they are however they may be determined, rather than to the needs and purposes of particular individuals considered on their own. No individual has such an intimate association with any object that he can make decisions about its use without reference to the interests of the collective.[Waldron (1983, p.40)]<sup>4</sup>

As such the human right to subsistence must find a place in and be legally enforceable in any future constitutional bill of rights for South Africa. The juridical arguments from within the ranks of the conqueror appear to be partly against this rationale and they also in part express the apprehension of the judiciary to deal with the "complex" issues that are likely to arise from this. [Verloren van Themaat (1990, pp.66-67)] With regard to this

latter, the argument is based upon the unfounded presupposition - almost a foregone conclusion - that the present judiciary shall remain in place after a negotiated constitutional change in South Africa. This unfounded presupposition, echoed obliquely by the provisional report of the South African Law Commission on Group and Human Rights rejection of a special Constitutional Court [Wiechers (1989, p.321)], is clearly at odds with the argument that the "all white" judiciary in South Africa

will inevitably reflect the racial attitudes of the white community... . Secondly, their performance in the interpretation of race and security laws suggests that by training and temperament they are not well suited to exercise the value oriented judicial role of judges empowered to review Acts of Parliament against the provisions of a bill of rights. [Dugard (1990b, p.382)]

These two contentions add more weight to our well-known submission with regard to the inalienable fundamental human right to subsistence. Furthermore, our submission as a whole with regard to this point edges towards supporting the view that;

a special constitutional court such as that of West Germany should be created consisting of those judges who are capable of exercising review powers in a value-oriented manner and other lawyers with a specialised knowledge of constitutional law and human rights law. [Dugard (1990b, p.382)]

Our support for this view is not based upon fear of the prospect of majority rule in South Africa. Such a fear is reminiscent of the transparent racism contained in the famous NIBMAR rule which was applied in the process towards independence in Zimbabwe. While the correct meaning of NIBMAR was - no independence before majority rule - it was anachronistically but quite significantly interpreted as "no independence before black majority rule" especially by those who had fears about the future of their deeply vested economic interests in former Rhodesia. Secondly, the basis of our support for the setting up of a special constitutional court is the protection and guaranteeing of individual human rights as opposed to so called minority group rights. Consequently, our position runs counter to the argument that:

In the long term, some form of majority rule appears to many thinking persons to be logical and inevitable. And in this context there is talk of a Bill of Rights, to be upheld by an independent judiciary and designed to ensure that,

inter alia, the rights of minority groups are protected.  
[Corbett (1979, p.196)]

The above is a presentation of the variety of arguments, from within the camp of the conqueror, whose invariable aim is to show that should the human right to subsistence ever be included in a future constitutional bill of rights for South Africa then such inclusion must be legally unenforceable. At best the inclusion must be construed as a guide to the interpretation of a constitutional bill of rights. [Dugard (1990a, p.461), Van der Westhuizen (1989, pp.124-25) and Van Niekerk (1988, pp.7-8)] Needless to state, our contention is to the contrary.

From within the camp of the conquered indigenous people of South Africa, we have not, to date, found an argument for the inclusion and enforceability of the inalienable fundamental human right to subsistence in the future constitutional bill of rights for South Africa. However, our argument is from within the camp of the conquered indigenous people of South Africa. It is an urgent plea for the inclusion and justiciability of this fundamental right in any constitutional bill of rights for the new South Africa. As such the plea is not only on behalf of the indigenous conquered people of South Africa but it is also for the sake of all South Africans regardless of their historical origin, race, colour, sex or creed. Our plea is based upon the conviction that all normal and mature South Africans will uphold the criterion of reasonableness in organising the affairs of the country in which we all would like to live in peace and security. It is also based on the hope that by adopting the criterion of reasonableness for the said purpose, the same South Africans will demonstrate their ability to match and harmonise the dictates of reason with those of conscience and morality.

It is fair to state that the now well-known constitutional guidelines of the ANC require urgent clarification and elaboration of a number of issues.[Corder and Davis (1989, p.641)] Of particular concern for us at this point is the urgent necessity not only for the ANC<sup>5</sup> but also for the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, AZAPO and its sister organisation, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania to clarify and define their position on the vital question of the place and role of the human right to subsistence in the future constitutional bill of rights for South Africa.

### Notes

1. This is a modified version of chapter two in the forthcoming book *Negotiating Change in South Africa* by M.B. Ramose.
2. The author repeats a similar argument in Waldron (1983, p.241).
3. It is advisable to read Beinart [1962, p.103] in conjunction with Beinart [1952, p.126].
4. see also Verloren van Themaat [1990, p.66], where his main submission does not, strangely, tie up neatly and logically his basic conclusion to which we have already referred. His submission is worth quoting here in full. "Should a future bill of rights in South Africa guarantee the right to property, it is submitted that at the least, this right should be qualified to achieve a social accommodation between the individual's interest and the larger interests of society. from the examples of the United States and the Federal republic of Germany it can be concluded that it is untenable for the judiciary to protect, as a matter of personal right, unfettered individual control over property. In many cases society will have a need for intervention to ensure the proper economic development both of the community and of the individual."
5. Neither the writings of Sachs [(1986, pp.205-10) and (1989, pp.13-44)] nor Masemola [1989, pp.45-47] available to us, deal specifically or satisfactorily with the issue.

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### *Résumé*

*L'instinct de survie ou de conservation est sans nul doute le plus fort des instincts humains. La recherche de la sécurité est l'une des voies par lesquelles cet instinct se manifeste. Apparemment, la critique crée le sentiment d'insécurité. Pour cette raison, ceux qui recherchent la sécurité, habituellement évitent la critique.*

*Cependant, paradoxalement, c'est la critique considérée dans son acception la plus large qui est la garantie la plus sûre de la survie. De la même manière, la complaisance ou l'absence de critique constitue le danger le plus grand pour la sécurité et éventuellement pour la survie.*

*Dans cette communication, je me suis servi de certaines idées de Popper pour soutenir cette thèse. J'aboutis à la conclusion, entre autres idées, que les ennemis les plus dangereux de tout système humain sont ceux qui le soutiennent avec complaisance et qui en font l'apologie alors que ses meilleurs alliés sont ses critiques les plus honnêtes.*

**CRITICISM AND SURVIVAL**  
**An interpretation of**  
**Popper's theory of evolution**

**Godfrey B. Tangwa**

The instinct for survival or self-preservation is unarguably the strongest of human instincts. The desire for security is one way in which this instinct manifests itself. Criticism apparently subverts the sense of security. For this reason those who desire security usually shun criticism. Paradoxically, however, it is criticism, considered in its broadest signification, that is the greatest guarantor of survival. Conversely, uncritical complacency is the greatest danger to security and eventually to survival. In this paper, I intend to make use of certain Popperian ideas to substantiate these claims.

The human desire for certainty would seem to have an innate psychological basis. However, human beings are fallible beings. As fallible beings we can learn in the world only through our mistakes. We cannot rely on induction as a guarantee of our knowledge because induction itself relies on experience and experience stands for ever correctable by further experience. In this way our knowledge of the world is necessarily negative in form: we may be certain of false views or claims once they have been falsified but we can never be sure that unfalsified views or claims will continue to be resilient to falsification.

We all have a strong feeling of certainty that the sun will rise tomorrow. But this belief, as David Hume so powerfully demonstrated, cannot be philosophically justified no matter how useful it might be practically. We therefore need to be weary of all our beliefs, including those about which we feel most certain. Failure to realize this can lead to disastrous consequences. A chicken, being fattened for the Christmas meal, runs out every time its master comes along with corn, in the strong belief that the master only wants to feed it. But on Christmas eve this strong belief is falsified with disastrous consequences for the chicken.

Once these epistemological truisms are realized, **criticism** shows itself as being vitally important, not only in the process of knowledge but in survival generally.

Criticism and the functions of language

Criticism is an aspect of the highest function of language, the **argumentative function**. There are three other distinctive functions of language, namely:

- (1) the descriptive function
- (2) the releasing or signalling function

(3) the expressive or symptomatic function  
in descending order.

The last two functions are common to both animal and human languages but the first two are exclusively human. Animals symptomize and signal and respond to both symptoms and signals; but they neither describe nor argue about descriptions.

We can illustrate the two lower functions of language common to both animals and human beings with the one-legged courtship dance of the cock and the typical reaction of the hen. The *symptomatic* expression of the cock always releases, evokes, stimulates or triggers an appropriate reaction from the hen which, by responding, turns the expression into a *signal*.

These non-verbal lower functions of language are always present whenever any of the (higher) exclusively human functions are operative. If a human being speaks at all s/he cannot help expressing her/himself and if another listens s/he cannot help reacting. The exclusively human functions of language, notably the **descriptive** and **argumentative** functions, are very important for the evolution of rationality which significantly distinguishes human beings from all other earthly creatures. The descriptive function of language is indispensable for science in the widest sense. The argumentative function of language is the highest function and the latest to have evolved. This function of language fosters a critical and rational attitude which has led to the growth not only of science but of human knowledge in general. The descriptive and argumentative uses of language have led to the evolution of certain ideal standards of control or *regulative ideals*, notably *truth* and *validity*. It is easy to see that the argumentative use of language must have emerged later in the evolutionary process than the descriptive use, since arguments are usually used in favor of or against some description or proposition.

Sir Karl Popper has drawn an analogy between the lower and higher functions of language and the evolution of *organs*, on the one hand, and *tools* or *machines*, on the other.

According to him,

Animal evolution proceeds largely ... by the modification of organs (or behaviour). Human evolution proceeds, largely, by developing new organs *outside our bodies* or persons: 'exosomatically' ... or 'extra-personally'. These new organs are tools or weapons, or machines, or houses [Popper (1972, p.238)].

Of course, the rudimentary beginnings of these aspects of human evolution are already present in animal evolution as can be seen from the case of birds' nests or lions' dens etc.. But it is only in man that the exosomatic line

of evolution is fully developed and still developing. Instead of, say, developing sharper eyes and ears man develops such things as spectacles, microscopes, telescopes, telephones, hearing aids etc. and instead of developing swifter legs he develops motor cars or airplanes. One aspect of this line of evolution, that Popper considers very important, is that instead of developing better brains and memories we develop paper, pens, pencils, typewriters, dictaphones, printing presses, libraries, computers, etc.. These add important new dimensions to the descriptive and argumentative functions of our language. According to Popper, the higher functions and dimensions of language have a kind of cybernetic *plastic control* over the lower ones. For instance, symptoms and expressions of excitement or joy at, say, a scientific conference, are directly related to and controlled by the *content* of the discussion:

and since this will be of a descriptive and argumentative nature, the lower functions will be controlled by the higher ones [Popper (1972, p.239)].

In this process, the idea of a good or sound argument is very important. Popper can thus say that such a discussion is "*controlled*, though plastically, by the regulative ideas of truth and validity" [Popper (1972, p.239)]. In such a discussion, it is thus clear that criticism, i.e., critical arguments are "*a means of control ... of eliminating errors, a means of selection.*" [Popper (1972, p.239)] Criticism acts as the sifter or winnowing fan for error-elimination from tentative proposed solutions to problems in the form of competing theories and hypotheses. The evolution of higher functions of language can thus be seen as the evolution of

new means of problem-solving, by new kinds of trials and by new methods of error-elimination; that is to say, new methods of controlling the trials [Popper (1972, p.240)].

Popper argues that the evolution of the higher levels of language is necessitated by two things: a need for a better control of our lower levels of language, and a need for a better control of our adaptation to the environment through the development of new tools as well as new theories.

This Popperian thesis must be seen within the context of his general theory of knowledge which is further harmonized into an over all theory of evolution. The main epistemological thesis underlying all of Popper's philosophy is that theories or hypotheses are prior to facts or observations. This thesis is antithetical to the widely accepted scientific or common sense theory of knowledge according to which all of our knowledge has its origin and foundation in observation and experience. But we can only observe against the background of some expectation or anticipation which can be formulated as a theory. There are no value - free

facts for us and we never start from innocent facts but always from **problems**. Therefore, we do not gain knowledge of the world by being instructed (inductively) but by being challenged (evocatively). The first thing a newly born baby does is to cry, indicating that an innate expectation has not been fulfilled. Our knowledge grows through anticipations, expectations, guesses, conjectures and tentative solutions to our problems. For man, these are regulated in the highest form by **rational criticism**. The mind at birth is, therefore, not a mere *tabula rasa in qua nihil est scriptum*, as empiricist epistemology would have us believe.

Popper applies this epistemological thesis not only to human knowledge but also to *animal knowledge* in general. The result is a theory of evolution that is most interesting in its details. Epistemologically, our starting point is always from problems preceded by means of tentative solutions or conjectures which are controlled by severe criticism or attempted refutations. Our conjectures may be refuted (falsified) by our tests, or they may survive these tests but they can never be positively justified or known to be certainly true. In the same manner, from an evolutionary perspective, we learn about our environment by being challenged by it. Our environment can evoke certain spontaneous expectations and anticipations in us which sometimes lead us to make mistakes, from which we, however, learn useful lessons.

### Genetic Dualism: Popper's Evolutionary Hypothesis

Karl Popper's theory of evolution, first elaborated in his Herbert Spencer Lecture (delivered in Oxford on 30th October 1961), is Darwinian in its inspiration and its foundation. It is thus, properly, a neo-Darwinian or *New Synthesis* theory of evolution, ostensibly formulated to solve "some of the classical difficulties under which this theory has laboured hitherto." [Popper (1972, p.256)]

Some of the most important of these difficulties have been articulated by the renowned geologist and paleontologist, Sir J. William Dawson, in his book Modern Ideas of Evolution. Here we can only mention two of the objections which Popper's theory has tried to accommodate.

(1) From a philosophical point of view, one of the more important consequences of Darwin's theory was thought to be that it dispensed with teleological notions, such as the ones typically implied in the biblical doctrine of special creation in its account of the origin and development of organisms on earth. After Darwin, teleology was considered to have become scientifically superfluous. The course of evolution, either in its specific or in its all-embracing character, as charted by Darwin had no need

for any transcendental purpose. What took place was due to the operation of natural, rather than supernatural factors. Darwin's theory also did not require any immanent purpose. Teleologists had often cited the adaptation of organisms to their environment as proof of an inner teleological agency. But, with Darwin, "No reference to inner purposes, conscious or unconscious, was needed" although the *appearance* of such teleology might be conceded. This exclusion of teleology had led those accustomed to think in teleological categories to raise the objection that Darwin's procedure made evolution blind and pointless or random in the sense of being without any goal or direction. This objection is question-begging if raised within a scientific framework. Science does not address itself to explanations others than those regarding causal relationships.

But philosophy can and must address itself to this question in so far as it is interested in a coherent overall view.

(2) The reasoning involved in the above considerations led to the more specific objection that even if it were conceded that Darwin's theory adequately accounted for the evolution of species already in existence, it did not account for the *origin* of species. For natural selection may be deemed to be an adequate explanation for the persistence of some variations and the disappearance of others, but it is not an explanation for the appearance of the variations themselves. Hence Dawson concluded:

The title Origin of Species was itself a misnomer as used by Darwin. The book treated not of the origin of species, but of transmutations of species already in existence.

From here it can then be argued that since natural selection is not in itself an adequate explanation of evolution, it is therefore reasonable or even necessary to suppose a purpose-oriented intelligence at work directing the process and giving it a definite course.

Popper's evolutionary hypothesis begins with the contention, deducible from his epistemological thesis, that the process by which we learn about the world is *evocative* rather than *instructive*. That is to say that "we learn about our environment not through being instructed by it, but through being challenged by it ...."[Popper (1972, p.266)] In other words, our environment evokes certain expectations, anticipations or conjectures in us and we learn from our mistakes by eliminating our unsuccessful responses to this environment. In Popper's view, however, such an evocative procedure "can imitate or simulate instructions"[Popper (1972, p.266)], in the sense that the fruit or result of such a process may deceptively look like we started from observation and proceeded through induction to formulate theories. Popper holds that Darwinism is a characteristic example of "an

evocative process of evolution *simulating* an instructive process." [Popper (1972, p.266)]

For Popper, one of the chief merits of Darwin's theory is that it attempts to explain the existence of design and purpose in the world in purely physical terms, thereby dispensing teleological considerations by showing that it is possible to "reduce teleology to causation." [Popper (1972, p.267)]

What Darwin showed us was that the mechanism of natural selection can, in principle, simulate the actions of the Creator, and His purpose and design, and that it can also simulate rational human action directed towards a purpose or aim [Popper (1972, p.267)].

The lesson we are to draw from this, according to Popper, is not that we should never again use teleological explanations but, on the contrary, that we are quite free to use them, provided we do so in full recognition of the fact that any teleological explanation is, in principle, reducible to a causal explanation and might one day be so reduced. So while teleology can in principle be reduced to causation, this can, in practice, be done only piecemeal. It cannot be done in one swoop without extrapolating indefensibly from what has been actually achieved. In this way, Popper seems to reconcile Darwinism and teleology quite satisfactorily.

For Popper, the main difficulty with Darwinism, considered as a generalized historical explanation, is that of:

explaining an evolution which, *prima facie*, may look *goal-directed* ... by an incredibly large number of very small steps ... each (of which) is the result of a purely accidental mutation [Popper (1972, p.267)].

In other words, the difficulty is to explain evolution ultimately as a result, contrary to appearance, of *accident* rather than *design*.

For Richard Spilbury [1974] any such explanation would amount to a belief in the absence of rationality from the process which brought the rational animal into being. For him, the fact that man is a product of evolution makes any non-teleological explanation of evolution inappropriate and unsatisfactory, that is, any explanation completely in terms of chance happenings. It is his opinion that this kind of explanation would amount to an attempt to confer:

miraculous powers on inappropriate agents ... an attempt to supernaturalise nature, to endow unthinking processes



with more-than-human powers - including the power of creating thinkers [Spilbury (1974, p.19)].

It might be objected that Spilbury's arguments are already based on teleological presuppositions. When he says that the belief that evolution can be explained in terms of chance without design is basically a postulate or decision "capable neither of proof nor disproof but subject to critical appraisal in the light of its theoretical successes and failures." [Spilbury (1974, p.19)] he makes a less controversial point. It is in the light of this kind of critical appraisal that Popper pitches camp with Darwinism and attempts to produce a theory that would be a better approximation to truth.

### Popper's Conjecture

Popper's central conjecture in his Herbert Spencer Lecture, which he describes as a 'generalised historical hypothesis' aims at solving the problem of "orthogenesis versus accidental and independent mutation" [Popper (1972, p.273)]. In other words, the problem mentioned above (the most important problem for traditional Darwinism) as to whether evolution is by design or accident. Or, in other words, the problem of explaining the apparent goal-directedness of evolution, especially in the case of complex organisms. For it does appear difficult to understand "how a complicated organ such as the eye, can ever result from the purely accidental co-operation of independent mutations" [Popper (1972, p.273)]. The Darwinian attempt to explain this and evolution generally by means of the concept of '*natural selection*' and the '*survival of the fittest*' is inadequate, although, still an important advance over the Lamarkian point of view, according to which changes in both genetic structure and learning are deemed to come about inductively via environmental conditions. There does not seem to be much explanatory difference between saying that 'those (mutations or organisms) that survive are the fittest' and saying that 'those that survive are those that survive'. In other words, the first statement is, from this point of view, practically tautologous, since no other criterion of fitness has been specified other than actual survival.

Popper explains such changes as arising from the organism itself and then being modified by the environment. More specifically, he proposes a distinction between two sets of genes, one controlling the preferences, aims, and skills of the organism and the other responsible for the shape and character of its organs.

... in many if not all of those organisms whose evolution gives rise to our problem ... we may distinguish more or less sharply at least *two distinct parts* ... a *behaviour-*

*controlling part* ... and an *executive part* [Popper (1972, p.273)].

The *behaviour-controlling part*, which we might also call the legislative arm refers to something like "the central nervous system of the higher animals" [Popper (1972, p.273)], while the *executive part* or the executive arm refers to things like "the sense organs and the limbs, together with the sustaining structures" [Popper (1972, p.273)]. It is thus basically a two-sided structure and mutational changes in either of the arms will usually "be independent of mutational changes in the other part" [Popper (1972, p.273)]. Popper [1972, p.273] then comes to the following important conclusions:

(i) ... if we start from a dualistic organism in which a controlling central propensity structure and a controlled executive structure are in exact balance, then mutations of the central propensity structure seem to be a little less likely to be lethal than mutations of the controlled executive organs (even potentially favourable ones).

(ii) ... once a new aim or tendency or disposition, or a new skill, or a new way of behaving, has evolved in the central propensity structure, this fact will influence the effects of natural selection in such a way that previously unfavourable (though potentially favourable) mutations become actually favourable if they support the newly established tendency. But this means that the evolution of the executive organs will become directed by that tendency or aim, and thus 'goal-directed'.

As in the traditional Darwinian model, mutational changes are still random but since the preference and skill level controls the selection of the changes at the anatomical level, this explains why the changes which do appear generally tend to serve the aims of the organism. Furthermore, this means that mutations of the *central propensity structure* are more important, more primary in the evolutionary process since,

only those mutations of the executive organs will be preserved which fit into the general tendencies previously established by the changes of the central structure [Popper (1972, pp.278-279)].

It is, therefore, plausible to suggest, for example, that the propensities and feeding habits of the giraffe must first have changed *before* the elongation of its neck which would otherwise "not have been of any survival value" [Popper (1972, p.279)]. Or, to consider the peculiar beak and tongue of the wood-pecker, this, according to Popper's theory, must have developed "by selection after it began to change its tastes and feeding habits" [Popper

(1972, p.279)]. Had things happened the other way around, Popper holds that the change would have been lethal as the wood-pecker "would not have known what to do with its new organs" [Popper (1972, p.279)].

Popper describes his hypothesis as *genetic dualism* in contrast with *genetic monism*, according to which "a favourable mutation of an organ ... will always be used favourably ... ." [Popper (1972, p.276)] With *genetic dualism*, on the other hand, "a favourable change of an organ would, in many cases, be only potentially favourable" [Popper (1972, p.274)]. To actualize this potential advantage, such a mutation would have to be used. So the *use* of any mutation is really the important thing. The idea of *use*, then, marks the difference between *genetic monism* and *genetic dualism* and constitutes, moreover, for Popper, the testing rod, as it were, for the latter. For the hypothesis would be proved false,

if our innate tendency to *use* our eyes, or our ears, hands, legs, and so on, is always transmitted by heredity in precisely the same way as our having eyes, ears, hands, legs, and so on [Popper (1972, p.274)].

In other words, Popper's hypothesis would be false if it were shown that the genes which control the development of any human organ, for instance, are identical with those which control the disposition or propensity to make use of such an organ. It would also be false if it were untenable to make any distinction between *possessing* an organ and *using* it, that is, if "possession and use were merely two different abstractions from what is biologically or genetically one and the same reality" [Popper (1972, p.274)].

Although Popper first described his hypothesis as *genetic dualism* because it is strongly reminiscent of the traditional philosophical mind-body dualism, he later thought that the appropriate description should have been *genetic pluralism* [Popper (1972, p.247)]. Popper does not explain why *genetic pluralism* rather than *genetic dualism* would have been a more appropriate title for his hypothesis. We can, however, surmise that he does not want to make the claim that every organism has only two types of genetic propensity. Rather, his claim is that every organism has *at least* these two parts.

Be that as it may, Popper views evolution generally as a "growing hierarchical system of plastic controls"[Popper (1972, p.242)]. He views organisms as incorporating in themselves such a growing hierarchical system of plastic controls. In the case of man this system evolves exosomatically, that is, outside our bodies. So Popper assumes Darwinism but also reshapes it appropriately. He reinterprets the idea of *mutations* to mean "more or less trial-and-error gambits" and *natural selection* as one way of controlling these mutations, by "error-elimination" [Popper (1972, p.242)].

The unique and innovative part of Popper's evolutionary theory revolves around the twin idea of *problem-solving* and *trial-and-error elimination*. For him, all organisms from the single celled amoeba to the exalted human being are, at all times, constantly involved in *problem-solving*. There is, of course, a difference between the amoeba and the human being in their respective attitudes towards their problems. Popper expresses this difference thus:

Einstein, unlike the amoeba, consciously tried his best whenever a new solution occurred to him to fault it and detect an error in it: he approached his own solutions critically [Popper (1972, p.247)].

So it is the consciously critical attitude that differentiates the human being from other animals. This critical attitude constitutes, for Popper, "the highest form, so far, of the rational attitude or of rationality" [Popper (1972, p.247)]. Where there is no critical attitude,

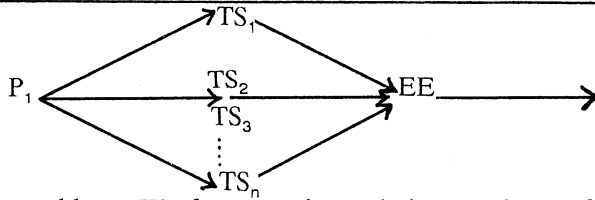
natural selection eliminates a mistaken hypothesis or expectation by eliminating those organisms which hold it, or believe in it. So we can say that the critical or rational method consists in letting our hypotheses die in our stead [Popper (1972, p.247)].

This fits in very well with Popper's other point that our hypotheses, theories, problems, etc., are instances of *exosomatic evolution*.

The problems involved in the idea of *problem-solving* are, therefore, to be understood in an *objective* sense; and they can only be clearly seen and reconstructed in retrospect. This has to be so because evolution is not a conscious process; we only know evolution from hindsight and "when we speak of a problem, we do so almost always from hindsight" [Popper (1972, p.246)]. *Objective problems* do not always have their conscious counterpart and when they do, the conscious problem is necessarily subjective and need not coincide with the objective problem. This is why people may not see their problem or solve a problem without realising it.

Now, problem-solving in Popper's view, always proceeds by means of tentative solutions which are controlled by *error-elimination*, that is, by the method of trial and error. This method leads either to the complete elimination of unsuccessful forms by means of natural selection or to "the evolution of controls which modify or suppress unsuccessful organs, or forms of behaviour, or hypotheses" [Popper (1972, p.242)].

Popper [1972, p.243] summarises all this in the following formula:



(P stands for problem, TS for tentative solution, and EE for error-elimination). The formula is in no way circular, for P2 is significantly different from P1 on account of the several tentative solutions which have been tried out and the error-elimination which controls them. Furthermore, as O’Hear puts it:

This is a Darwinian rather than a Lamarkian picture, because the competing tentative solutions do not arise through inductive instruction from the environment, but from the imagination of the problem-solver [O’Hear (1974, p.172)].

Popper’s set-up improves upon the usual Darwinian set-up in the following ways. In the normal Darwinian set-up there is just **one** problem, namely, survival. In Popper’s set-up there is a multiplicity of tentative solutions in the form of variations or mutations. But again, there is only one way of error-elimination, that is, the elimination of the organism. This is one reason that the difference between P1 and P2 is overlooked. In Popper’s own set-up, not all problems are survival problems although he concedes that the very earliest problems may have been sheer survival problems. He illustrates his own set-up with the following example:

... an early problem P1 may be reproduction. Its solution may lead to a new problem, P2, the problem of getting rid of, or of spreading, the offspring - the children which threaten to suffocate not only the parent organism but each other [Popper (1972, p.244)].

Thus Popper’s theory also distinguishes P2 from P1. P2 is always an advance on P1 on account of the fact that it benefits from the tentative solutions whether successful or not. Here mistakes are also important and advance our knowledge. For Popper, furthermore, the distinction between P1 and P2

shows that the problems (or the problem situations) which the organism is trying to deal with are often **new**, and arise themselves as products of the evolution [Popper (1972, p.244)].

Lastly, and most importantly, Popper’s theory makes room for the development of

error-eliminating controls ... that is, controls which can eliminate errors without killing the organism (thereby making it possible) ultimately for our hypotheses to die in our stead [Popper (1972, p.244)].

The greater explanatory power of Popper's hypothesis is apparent. It can accommodate not only Lamarkism but also vitalism and animism since these are *simulated* by his own theory. The former theories can be considered as *first approximations*. Popper's hypothesis thus allows us in principle, to explain the evolution of complex organs such as the eye by many steps leading in a definite direction (which) may, indeed, as the vitalists asserted, be determined by a mind-like tendency - by the aim-structure or skill-structure of the organism which may develop a tendency, or a wish, to use the eye, and a skill in interpreting the stimuli received from it [Popper (1972, p.279)].

It is in this way that Popper's evolutionary theory rescues Darwinism from its most difficult problem - that of explaining the apparent goal-directness in an evolutionary process posited as chiefly guided by chance mutations - by showing how Darwinism might *simulate* Lamarkism.

Popper does not, however, claim that his theory represents the truth of the matter. That would be contrary to his most basic epistemological postulate according to which we can never know any theory to be certainly true. In fact, Popper expresses the fear that his theory may "contain very little truth" and even though he hopes that it may "help us to get a little nearer to the truth", he categorically asserts that it contains "neither the final truth, nor the whole truth of the matter" [Popper 1972, p.257)]. But as long as the theory possesses greater explanatory power than its competitors, it is to be preferred.

For our purposes here, it is important to note that Popper's evolutionary theory leaves room for radical novelty or emergence. This implicit belief in emergentism implies the non-reducibility of life or the organic to the chemical or physical sciences. Biology cannot be completely reduced to chemistry neither can chemistry be completely reduced to physics. Similarly, psychology cannot be completely reduced to biology. A further consequence of Popper's theory is the rejection of determinism in the physical sciences. For although admitted biology cannot only work within the framework provided by chemistry and chemistry within the framework of physics, room must be left for the emergence of new unforeseeable properties. In this way, Popper's evolutionism goes hand in

hand with his indeterminism and both stand up against reductionism and determinism.

Belief in emergentism seems suggest metaphysical speculation. But this is not really the case, because no specification is given of what can emerge. If we could do this, we would have rendered the belief groundless. It is precisely our inability to extrapolate accurately from the present into the future that forces emergentism and indeterminism on us. If determinism were true then the whole future course of evolution would be predictable, at least in principle. But, for Popper, complete predictability is in principle impossible. We only know evolution from hindsight. Therefore, we must affirm indeterminism.

### Practical Implications

The practical implications of this Popperian epistemological orientation are most significant. Popper is well known for his criticism of historicism [Popper (1957) and Popper (1962)], particularly as exemplified in Plato, Hegel and Marx. This criticism cannot be fully appreciated without an understanding of his theories of Knowledge and Evolution elaborated above. Historicism can be understood as the doctrine that there are laws or principles of historical development mastery of which would enable us to predict the future course of human history in the same manner that astronomers can predict eclipses. But, from the Popperian viewpoint, the future course of human history necessarily depends on human decisions and actions which, in turn, depend on future human knowledge. But future human knowledge is one thing that cannot possibly be predicted by human beings. Consequently, deliberation, choice and responsibility remain desiderata for every situation, every age and every epoch. The future remains largely open and undetermined except in the case of well-isolated stationary and recurrent systems which are completely observable from the outside. Human society and the physical universe as a whole are not that kind of system and we can therefore never be able to say at any time that either must develop in such and such a way, whether human beings like it or not.

So in practical no less than in theoretical matters, we can never be absolutely certain that we have the right answers. We must therefore adopt the widest possible freedom to criticize and to experiment. This imposes democracy at the socio-political level. Democracy, in Popperian conception, is not to be understood merely as 'government of the people' but rather as a system under which rulers, whose attempted solutions to a society's problems no longer appear promising, can be replaced without bloodshed

or violence. The crucial question here is not who should wield power, but how the misuse of power, in the interests of an individual, clique of individuals or in the interest of some social or political dogma or slogan can be prevented.

All animals, including humans, make mistakes. This is a palpable truism observable in evolution. But, even though other animals are not completely lacking in this regard, only human beings have developed to a high degree the ability to anticipate, to recognize and to learn from their mistakes. Rather than wait for errors to surprise him with unpredictable consequences, the human being consciously and deliberately can seek them out by critically probing and putting to test his ideas, doctrines, proposals, inventions, etc.. In this way he can correct what is wrong with them.

The greatest danger to this critical attitude is the irrational desire for certainty and security which makes us ashamed of our mistakes and displeased with whatever or whoever exposes them.

Yet this attitude is completely out of place, since there is absolutely no way by which we can systematically avoid error in a continuously unfolding world. Thus to shy away from the possibility of making mistakes translates directly into the avoidance of new ideas and ventures and a distaste for any kind of firm and bold initiative.

Progress is only possible for us through a progressive correction of our errors; and to correct them we must first be prepared to make them. From this perspective, the important thing is to make our mistakes as quickly as possible. What should worry us are not mistakes as such but only those that we are powerless to correct. This means that from the outset we must dispense with ideas, proposals or projects which, if mistaken, cannot be corrected. We can advance in the world only by critically scrutinizing our projects and abandoning those that turn out to be mistaken. This, of course, is humbling and would be humiliating for those who find it hard humbleness to cultivate this virtue. But mistakes are important in our lives because, no matter what we do, there is no way to systematically avoid all of them. What we cannot afford, however, are incorrigible, irrevocable or uncontrollable errors. These endanger not only our security but also our survival. Here cure is better than prevention.

This way of looking at things can be fittingly described as *critical rationalism*. Sir Karl has beyond all other thinkers elaborated this point of view most completely and convincingly as an inescapable methodological desideratum. In this procedure, emphasis is shifted from the search for certainty and security to guess work controlled by criticism as being the way our knowledge grows. Popper expresses this by saying that our knowledge evolves through a sequence of *conjectures* and *refutations* of tentative



solutions to problems, controlled and checked by searching and uncompromising tests and criticisms. Critical argument is the only safe control that we have over our conjectures, over our meditations, ideas, proposals, dreams, etc..

In the political arena, it is particularly important not to run the risk of irrevocable or uncontrollable mistakes. These spell danger not only for a regime in power but for society as a whole. This is why democracy recommends itself as the best available and sanest form of political arrangement, and distinguishes itself by the safeguarding of freedom in its manifold forms.

All this further shows that the tendency for people in authority to frown on criticism complemented by the tendency of those under authority to flatter rather than criticize those in authority is most dangerous. People in authority are those who take decisions and launch projects which affect society as a whole or significant parts thereof. It therefore stands to reason to severely criticize their ideas, aims, projects, etc. for the survival and good of society. Uncritical praise-singers and apologists are therefore the most dangerous enemies of any system or regime. By the same token, its honest critics are its best allies. The manifest truth, however, is that, apart from rhetorics and slogans it is taboo to criticize the authorities in most socio-political systems authorities, and those who defy this taboo do so at considerable personal risk. Every system or regime that wants to survive must seek out and treasure its honest critics.

This, of course, is not easy but it is essential. Criticism permits survival by means of change and adaptation. The alternative is death.

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### *Summary*

*The take-off point for this reflection acknowledges the differences in the conceptualisation of time in Africa and the West, and seeks to establish that this present era, seen as modern, should lead to a great new synthesis under the imperatives of **openness** to the two cultures and civilisations that conduce to the instauration of new stabilizing factors, necessary for peoples and societies that have 'broken down' (en panne) on both sides and who should in any case, seek to avoid a certain 'radical emptiness' (depaysement radical).*

# AXES DU TEMPS EN AFRIQUE ET EN OCCIDENT<sup>1</sup>

Guillaume Bwele

## Différences schématiques

La pensée africaine, à en croire certains auteurs, conçoit le temps dans un sens pratiquement opposé à celui de la direction du temps dans la pensée occidentale ainsi que l'affirme John Mbiti:

La conséquence la plus significative de cette conception du temps, c'est que, selon les notions traditionnelles, le temps est un phénomène interrompu, avec un long passé, un présent et virtuellement aucun futur. Le concept linéaire du temps de la pensée occidentale, avec son passé indéfini, son présent et son futur infini est étranger à la pensée africaine ... Le temps réel est donc ce qui est présent et ce qui est passé. Le mouvement se dirige **en arrière** plutôt qu'en avant; les gens fixent leur esprit non pas sur les choses à venir mais sur les choses qui se sont passées.[Mbiti (1972, p.32)]

Sans négliger le passé et l'histoire qu'il s'agirait non pas tant de re-vivre que de reconstituer suivant les perspectives d'avenir, la pensée occidentale accorderait la primauté au futur en raison de la vision du temps qui a marqué cette culture: temps apocalyptique en devenir d'une fin, temps messianique annonciateur de changements, de bouleversements, de révolutions<sup>2</sup>. La pensée technicienne, depuis Descartes, serait perpétuellement en quête d'une victoire, d'une maîtrise sur la nature et le temps futur, conduisant ainsi au dépassement des contradictions du passé et du présent en exigeant par ailleurs que la totalité soit conçue pour ne pas dire donnée sur le plan de l'histoire afin que cette maîtrise puisse être pleinement assurée.

Tel serait l'espace culturel qui est à l'origine de la *dialectique temporelle* dont le constat des limites n'est pas allé sans susciter une crise de conscience en Occident ainsi que le reconnaît Jean Lacroix:

Il semble qu'une dialectique purement temporelle soit acculée à une contradiction interne: il faut lui donner comme but de l'histoire la fin de l'historicité, comme finalité temporelle l'arrêt de la dialectique.

La dialectique ne peut aboutir qu'à une course éperdue, une sorte de halètement après l'être, où l'avenir est toujours privilégié par

rapport au présent et surtout au passé; seule une eschatologie peut sauver intégralement tous les moments du temps et conférer à chacun sa plénitude<sup>3</sup>. [Lacroix (1971, pp.46-47)]

L'inquiétude ressentie en Occident dans ses aspirations souterraines à une eschatologie pourrait être confrontée à la pensée africaine qui accorderait la priorité au passé, à ce que John Mbiti appelle précisément le *maxi-temps*, le *Zamani* vers lequel se prolongerait sans cesse le présent qui est le *mini-temps*, le *Sasa*, le *point MAINTENANT* [Mbiti (1972, p.32)]:

La pensée africaine traditionnelle affirme John Mbiti, n'a pas le sens de l'histoire qui va 'en avant' dans le sens d'une progression vers le futur ou vers une fin du monde. Puisque l'avenir n'exite pas au-delà de quelques mois, on ne peut attendre qu'il débouche sur un âge d'or ou sur un état de chose totalement différent de celui qui caractérise le *Sasa* et le *Zamani*. Il n'y a pas place dans la perception traditionnelle de l'histoire pour la notion d'espérance messianique ou de destruction finale du monde. Les africains n'ont pas de *foi dans le progrès*, cette idée que le développement des activités et des réalisations humaines se fait selon une courbe ascensionnelle. Ils ne font pas plus de plans pour un avenir éloigné qu'ils ne *bâtissent de châteaux en Espagne*. Le centre de gravité de la pensée et des actions humaines est la période *Zamani* vers laquelle se dirige le *Sasa*, le 'maintenant'. Les hommes ont les yeux fixés sur le *Zamani*, car pour eux il n'y a pas de *monde à venir* comme c'est le cas pour les juifs et les chrétiens. [Mbiti (1972, p.32)]

Tout en précisant, à travers cette analyse schématique, qu'il s'agit là de caractéristiques propres à la perception du temps dans la société africaine traditionnelle, John Mbiti reconnaît simultanément la "découverte ou extension de la dimension future du temps en Afrique", qu'il rattache néanmoins aux effets de "l'éducation de type occidental sans compter les invasions de la technologie moderne" avec les conséquences plutôt néfastes qu'ils sont susceptibles d'entraîner comme source de l'instabilité des âmes et des États africains:

La découverte et l'extension de la dimension future du temps, ajoute John Mbiti, contiennent des possibilités importantes et de grandes promesses pour toute la vie des Africains. Si elles sont maîtrisées et canalisées à des fins créatrices et productrices, elles seront sans doute

bénéfiques, mais il se peut aussi qu'elles échappent au contrôle et qu'elles précipitent à la fois la tragédie et la désillusion.[Mbiti (1972, p.38)]

Et ce serait là la trace d'une violence sur le temps dit *traditionnel* qui pourtant est complexe et qui mérite d'être mieux placé face aux fins premières de l'homme<sup>4</sup>.

En effet, si *l'invisible futur* ferait pour ainsi dire du présent en Occident la porte du temps qui doit plutôt ouvrir sur des projets à venir en posant l'acquisition d'une méthode et d'un plan comme éléments essentiels et nécessaires pour la maîtrise du temps, *l'invisible passé* dans la pensée africaine ferait au contraire du présent l'autre face de la porte du temps qui ouvre la *memoire des vivants* sur l'espace central et ancestral où seraient appelés à être signifiés et vécus les événements de l'actualité tels que la naissance, la mort, les rites initiatiques qui ne sauraient avoir de valeur, être élevés à la hauteur de l'histoire qu'à travers la profondeur de la généalogie de la grande communauté des vivants et des morts avec les *symboles (qui) les perpétuent* comme l'affirme Pierre Kaufmann:

Car d'un pacte auquel les morts président, il n'est d'autre caution que la mémoire des vivants et les symboles qui les perpétuent.[Kaufmann (1974, p.191)]

En prolongeant l'analyse des oppositions schématiques, l'on pourrait dire que la recherche de la jouissance, de la vie et de la cohésion de la communauté dominerait dans la conception africaine traditionnelle du temps tandis que la spéculation et l'affinement rationnel de la méthode liée elle-même à une conquête technologique de la nature l'emporterait dans la pensée de l'Occident avec le *déchirement* que, dans la jouissance<sup>5</sup> au sein de la communauté *des vivants et des morts*, l'Afrique *subsumerait* au niveau de la *réconciliation* qu'appelle le culte des ancêtres.

La *négation* et le *déchirement* prendraient donc le pas en Occident sur *l'affirmation* en se donnant comme *négativité* c'est-à-dire comme pensée de la contradiction et de la quête perpétuelle de son dépassement dans le jugement et l'histoire. S'il s'agit davantage, en Afrique, de se mettre à *l'écoute du sens* qui vient de la profondeur terrienne de l'histoire des ancêtres comme gardiens des valeurs et garants du caractère sacré du trône des rois et des chefs, il serait davantage question, en Occident, de procéder à la *critique du sens* du passé et de l'histoire au sein d'une communauté ouverte au pluralisme et à l'individualisme.

### Différence de l'interprète du devenir et transcendance de l'altérité

Postuler cependant le présent comme *porte* soit du passé soit du futur pose nécessairement le problème de la place de l'*interprète* des événements relativement au devenir: c'est, entre autres, le guérisseur africain, le prêtre, l'historien ou l'homme politique<sup>6</sup>. 'Opérateur du visible et de l'invisible', l'interprète doit accorder les événements présents au centre qu'est le passé ou le futur dans le cadre d'un jeu qui rappelle celui de Nietzsche analysé par Gilles Deleuze:

Affirmer le devenir, affirmer l'être du devenir, sont deux temps d'un jeu, qui se composent avec un troisième terme, le joueur, l'artiste ou l'enfant. Le joueur artiste enfant, Zeus enfant [Deleuze (1962, p.28)].

Le Guérisseur africain, le joueur, l'artiste, l'opérateur du visible et de l'invisible, c'est pour ainsi dire l'abîme du devenir, c'est la différence comme jeu du verbe fait chair, comme jeu au sein de tout *logos* en référence à la totalité du passé ou du devenir: c'est par exemple, l'expression de toute la danse du guérisseur africain appelé à démasquer le phénomène de la violence qui agite la société globale. La révélation liée à la puissance de *vision* de l'opérateur ne repose pas moins sur une logique de la différence de celui-ci par rapport aux dimensions du temps au niveau de sa *jouissance au présent*: Jouissance du guérisseur, de l'homme politique, bref de l'interprète du devenir au sens où Gilles Deleuze affirme à propos de Nietzsche:

Le *oui* de Nietzsche s'oppose au non dialectique, l'affirmation à la négation dialectique; la différence à la contradiction dialectique; la joie, la jouissance au travail dialectique; la légèreté, la danse à la pesanteur dialectique ... . Le sentiment de la différence, bref la hiérarchie, violé le moteur essentiel du concept plus efficace et plus profond que toute pensée de la contradiction<sup>7</sup>. [Deleuze (1962, p.20)]

L'interprétation du devenir au niveau de toute vision du passé ou du futur est perpétuellement hantée par un jeu, par des manipulations *au présent* de l'interprète du devenir, par une *régression fondamentale* comme retour à une *différence originelle* vécue en la puissance de *vision* des hommes qui ont l'autorité ou qui se sont donnés le *pouvoir* d'interpréter ou de conduire les événements du présent. Il n'y a pas, il ne peut y avoir de progression susceptible d'être postulée comme dans un univers sans homme, sans l'homme qui *a une histoire*. Toute progression est liée à un espace éthique propre à la vision de l'interprète, de l'historien ou du guide dont le rapport

à la société peut être déterminé relativement à un jeu lui-même en passe de devenir celui d'un charlatan, ou celui de la fidélité à l'espace des valeurs affirmatives et reconnues par une communauté dans son histoire, et sans lesquelles le jeu de l'interprète ne saurait avoir de sens.

Ainsi tout système politique serait-il habité par la *différence* que constituent notamment la *personnalité*, la moralité et l'expérience du guide du peuple, dont le choix est et restera un problème politique essentiel à tout régime politique dans le mouvement afférent au renouvellement de toute société comme de toute communication humaine. Toute progression impliquerait en somme une *différence* comme *régression fondamentale* sans que cela recouvre nécessairement une contradiction ainsi que le laisserait croire le schéma dialectique et simpliste de l'histoire. Aussi Pierre Kaufmann réfère-t-il ces *différences* à l'*inconscient* vécu des *figures du politique* qu'il distingue par ailleurs à travers les styles artiste-hystérique, organisateur-obsessionnel, visionnaire paranoïaque [Kaufmann (1979, p.157)], styles au travers desquels se serait déployés les champs sociaux au cours du processus révolutionnaire pris comme exemple dans l'histoire de la Russie.

Reconnaître la réalité de la violence, de la domination, de l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme comme forces négatives dont l'élimination s'impose dans l'histoire, ne conduit pas nécessairement à la réduction au néant de la personnalité et du jeu des interprètes et des guides des peuples dans les sociétés dites révolutionnaires, libérales ou avancées, et surtout pas à la méconnaissance de l'affirmation préalable et primordiale de la communauté et des valeurs éthiques sans lesquelles la négation, la violence, la domination, l'aliénation et l'exploitation de l'homme seraient incompréhensibles: ce que la dialectique situerait à la fin de l'histoire comme reconnaissance de l'homme par l'homme, devrait être pour ainsi posé à l'origine comme fondement de l'histoire elle-même et comme son point de départ déductif.

C'est ainsi qu'au delà de la pensée de la contradiction, tout mouvement de fondation sociale impliquerait comme une *régression essentielle*, vers une affirmation primordiale des valeurs de la communauté de base, affirmation qui exige par ailleurs de placer tout homme relativement aux champs d'expériences communautaires ou d'individuelles qui constituent son héritage éthique. Si, dans l'optique freudienne, la progression vers l'âge adulte *implique* en quelque sorte un *retour* à l'enfance, l'on ne devrait pas seulement retenir de ce *retour* le caractère *négative* certes réel de la maladie de la personnalité atteinte de névrose ou de psychose (à l'instar de l'analyse marxiste qui ne retient comme essentielle que l'histoire de l'aliénation et de l'exploitation dans la

formation sociale) - mais aussi, sur le plan éthique, le rapport primordial de l'enfant à la première présence secourable comme un rapport différencié et complexe appelé à se déployer dans le sens d'une dialectique spécifique impliquant, pour utiliser le vocabulaire économique de François Perroux, des *conflits-coopérations* et des *concours-concurrents* dans le rapport original à *l'Autre*.

La formation de l'homme par l'homme serait alors à prendre dans son intégralité dès le berceau de l'homme au niveau de cette dimension économique originelle intimement imbriquée dans ce type de transcendance qui, pour reprendre l'expression de Jean Lacroix, "n'est pas un état, mais un mouvement vers" [Lacroix (1971)]: poser un mouvement originel vers l'Autre, un élan originel de communication avec l'Autre à partir de l'économique du désir impliqué dans la première présence secourable qu'est le parent pour l'enfant, c'est reconnaître une différence complexe au sein du désir même comme désir et de la *chose* et de *l'Autre*; c'est reconnaître la possibilité du déploiement de ce mouvement vers la *négation* de la *chose* et de *l'Autre* dans les interdits et les frustrations par exemple. C'est poser en tout cas une affirmation originelle fondamentale qui précède toute *négation* en ce mouvement de transcendance vers l'Autre, mouvement appelé à *signifier* au travers de l'axe des valeurs posées au présent et au passé et qui sont en droit de se constituer comme base de la *vision* du tribunal du futur et non inversement. D'où l'importance de la biographie des guides et des interprètes.

### Différence de la faculté de juger au présent

Les valeurs devraient alors être à la base du droit dans tous les systèmes politiques y compris ceux qui espèrent tout du futur: la *porte* que constitue le présent dans ces systèmes devient le centre de référence dans la mesure où ces systèmes reposent sur des espaces éthiques affirmatifs réels qui renvoient perpétuellement le passé et le futur à la périphérie au niveau des jugements de valeur.

La réduction, à une finalité économique, du mouvement de transcendance qu'implique le désir dans sa différence originelle, ne peut signifier autre chose qu'une dangereuse amputation de l'homme susceptible de conduire à la négation de l'Autre au présent, au sacrifice des libertés à l'autel du futur irréalisé. L'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme n'est pas seulement donnée dans la réduction de l'homme à l'outil, à l'esclavage au niveau des rapports de production: elle l'est fondamentalement dans toute expérience ou dialectique qui entend nier au présent, pour la renvoyer à la fin de l'histoire, la réalité de ce mouvement de transcendance et de



communication avec l'Autre dès le berceau, car ce *renvoi* peut sous-tendre l'*aliénation* de la liberté de juger au présent, le *rejet* des droits de l'homme au présent.

L'illusion du futur peut ainsi conduire à voiler la puissance de *régression* de tout homme et notamment des interprètes du devenir et des guides des peuples, vers ces espaces primaires originels et inconscients sus-évoqués, de manière à voiler ou justifier les crimes qui naissent des instincts de domination, des manipulations politiques despotiques de toutes sortes, du sacrifice des libertés à l'autel des dogmes abstraits.

Aussi les sociétés traditionnelles africaines en lutte contre la tyrannie et le despotisme avaient-elles su placer le pouvoir dans la sphère du sacré comme sphère de transcendance où les opérateurs n'étaient pas les seuls chefs, mais aussi les guérisseurs, les manipulateurs du visible et de l'invisible, autorités redoutées des détenteurs du pouvoir au sein de la société qui respectait la palabre et, dans bien des cas, le pluralisme des groupes<sup>8</sup> - pluralisme élevé par l'occident au niveau d'une méthode de résolution des problèmes du temps.

Ainsi apparaissait la différence positive au niveau de l'autorité elle-même à travers la diffusion du pouvoir et la recherche des équilibres originaux qui devait en tout cas sauvegarder la solidarité au sein de la communauté comme fondement de l'espace éthique affirmatif et primordial qui, pour être tel, n'avait pas besoin d'attendre la fin de l'histoire. Toute société en devenir appellerait alors à plusieurs niveaux le mouvement positif de la différence en vue de la maîtrise, au présent, de son destin à travers les mécanismes d'équilibre du pouvoir et la détermination des espaces appropriés de communication et de débat.

Si l'on ne peut aller jusqu'à dire que le futur n'est rien puisqu'il est au moins *imaginé*, serait-on en droit de dire qu'il n'a pas d'être en lui-même dans la *différence* postulée au présent par rapport aux valeurs du passé ou aux espérances du futur, différence qui se rapporte fondamentalement au jugement? Dans ce cas, la dialectique, quelle qu'elle soit, serait d'abord un problème de jugement: c'est pourquoi, comme tout jugement, elle est habituée par des erreurs de jugement et court perpétuellement le danger de substituer au *réel* du présent ou du passé des jugements susceptibles d'aller jusqu'au sacrifice de la vie ou des libertés au présent. C'est pourquoi il faut une confrontation des jugements pour maîtriser les problèmes du temps.

En ce sens, le dogmatisme et l'utopie constituent la *hantise* de la dialectique face au jugement comme expression plurielle et différenciée des valeurs. Aussi faut-il trouver le moyen de maîtriser pour ainsi dire le futur au présent, de sauvegarder à tout prix la liberté au présent, d'éviter de

projeter à l'avenir des solutions uniques, d'effecteur davantage des choix pluriels qui permettent d'affirmer la puissance de différence aujourd'hui, ici et maintenant, et d'ouvrir ainsi le temps à plus de transformations, à un renouveau plus riche de valeurs de liberté et de progrès.

La dialectique historique impliquant comme une violence sur le temps ne peut constituer une solution automatique et magique aux problèmes souvent imprévisibles du présent à partir de la postulation d'une humanité, d'une éthique de valeurs conçues pour ainsi dire au point zéro d'une révolution dont on sait qu'elle ne s'est pas réalisée en Occident, là où précisément la théorie avait prévu qu'elle se produirait. L'aliénation, c'est ici maintenant: il doit être de même de la liberté de jugement face aux divers choix de la société relativement à ses valeurs.

Aussi doit-on souligner la place que les sociétés traditionnelles africaines ont su donner au '*dialogue*' dans sa dimension sociale comme '*débat*' au niveau de la '*Palabre*' qui doit alors figurer en bonne place sur la table des valeurs africaines à conserver à tout prix face aux problèmes de la modernité et du quotidien.

### Du relativisme aux micro-temps intégrés

Les différences eschatologiques ont été souvent pensées dans le sens des théories relativistes de la culture telle que celle de Lewin, théorie qui considère les unes face aux autres les sociétés élémentaires ou celles-ci face aux sociétés développées: "cela implique, affirme Pierre Kaufmann, une définition relativiste des connexions ou distance, une hodologie, pour reprendre le langage de Lewin de même type que celle dont Evans-Pritchard a fait l'application à l'éthologie."<sup>9</sup>

Et c'est sur le terme de 'culture' que nous entendons porter notre attention et notamment sur le caractère *dualiste* qui souvent préside à la distribution du concept (sociétés élémentaires / sociétés développées) alors même que l'on est acquis à la différence en tant que *complexité* qui veut que l'espace culturel ouvert à la modernité soit, dans les divers champs sociaux actuels, un élément dont il faudrait tenir davantage compte. Et cela aux fins d'éviter de n'en référer qu'à l'ethnographie - le passé - en passant à côté des expressions modernes des fins dans leur dimension *synchronique* (archaïsme et modernité) et plurielle à caractère quasi universel.

C'est sur ce pluralisme ontologique et culturel intégrant des niveaux de *profondeurs* précédemment séparés qu'il serait peut être souhaitable de s'assigner une tâche d'investigation d'autant plus que Lewin, ainsi que rappelle Pierre Kaufmann, en donne pour ainsi dire l'esquisse en parlant des *unités de situation* (c'est ici l'idée de *microcosme* extensible)

qu'il faut concevoir comme dotées d'*extention* en ce qui concerne leurs dimensions de champs et leurs dimensions temporelles [Kaufmann (1974, pp.194-195)]:

Si je ne me trompe, écrit Lewin cité par Pierre Kaufmann, le problème des quanta d'espace-temps, si important en physique pour la théorie moderne des quanta, est parallèle méthodologiquement (bien qu'à un niveau évidemment plus avancé) au problème des unités de champs en psychologie.

L'espace-temps afférent aux diverses réalités sociales étant vécu sur le plan de l'axe latéral des champs sociaux qui ont chacune une *petite* histoire, c'est en comptant également sur l'*unité* de cette histoire et sur la quotidienneté, que pourraient se dégager les lignes-forces indicatrices d'un destin de l'homme en même temps que le sens qu'il donne à ses activités comme Existant.

Une telle recherche appelle une réflexion plus approfondie: il nous a semblé seulement opportun d'en souligner ici la nécessité conduisant à soumettre la réflexion à la situation actuelle de l'homme plutôt que celle-ci à nos *a priori*. Les fins de l'homme sont ainsi également à chercher dans la quotidienneté de sa vie et pas seulement dans les profondeurs du passé, ce qui expliquerait certes, en cette absence de distance, l'*opacité* à laquelle risque de s'assigner tout essai de leur détermination.

L'on pourrait ainsi être à même de découvrir des *unités* de temps apparemment séparables dans l'axe relativiste d'investigation, mais qui ici se trouvent intégrées au niveau d'un *logos*, comme *verbe* à pétitions et expressions multiples diversifiées: le même homme peut vivre des *unités* espace-temps différents et dans la même journée: le temps du village, le temps du bureau, de l'ordinateur ou de l'école, le temps du sport, le temps de la religion, le temps de l'amour, le temps du sommeil: ces unités correspondent à des *finalités* dont le moins qu'on puisse dire est qu'elles sont vécues **sans nécessairement** faire émerger au niveau de la conscience les contradictions qu'elles peuvent sous-tendre sur le plan de la logique relativiste ou dialectique et notamment dans l'axe de la diversité des champs de culture auxquels habituellement elles réfèrent. Et il s'agit bien d'*unités espaces-temps* intégrées<sup>10</sup>.

Ainsi peut-on être amené à penser que le pluralisme constitue un équilibre d'un nouveau type au sein d'un monde nouveau qui aura intégré plusieurs valeurs référées précédemment à des champs sociaux différents, équilibre opposable aux déchiements et aux duels dramatiques qu'auront soulignés les approches relativistes et dialectiques. Le pluralisme temporel

constituerait alors le lieu d'une NOUVELLE ET GRANDE SYNTHÈSE notamment au niveau des *micro-temps* intégrés, ce serait le nouvel élément 'cathartique' des civilisations *en panne* dans leur isolement ou leurs oppositions *schématiques*. Autrement dit, tout le monde aura des leçons à recevoir de et à donner à tout le monde pour la survie du Monde dans le Temps au niveau de la rencontre et du dialogue des civilisations sur l'espace planétaire<sup>11</sup>.

Dans un contexte où il s'agirait de savoir comment *imaginer le changement* en vue d'un meilleur avenir lorsque le concept du temps, **sans négation**, peut amener l'Africain à penser que "les temps d'avant sont toujours meilleurs que le temps actuel ou les temps futurs" [Ndaw (1983, p.133)], la référence aux ancêtres peut alors assigner à un *jugement* de valeur quasi automatique comme cette autre référence constante que font certaines personnes à la volonté de Dieu à propos de tout, référence constante qui, selon Spinoza, constitue *l'asile de l'ignorance*. C'est ici que se pose le problème de la *selection* dans le champ de ce qui est dit *valeur* du passé et qui n'est pas toujours positif - la sorcellerie par exemple.

Et il y a plus: la *sédimentation*, dans le même socle social, des *valeurs* et des *pseudo-valeurs* peut conduire, au-delà des risques de *destruction* des hommes et des valeurs<sup>12</sup>, à une *impasse* que l'on ne saurait surmonter que par l'accession des civilisations et des cultures à un stade supérieur d'intégration planétaire au travers de leur *ouverture* les unes aux autres dans le sens de leur enrichissement mutuel et de la constitution de nouvelles *synthèses* comme de nouveaux *équilibres*.

Il en est ainsi de l'intégration des entités régionales et nationales à multiples composantes, laquelle appelle *l'ouverture*, les unes aux autres, des *valeurs* économiques, sociales, culturelles et politiques en présence, valeurs susceptibles d'être alors infléchies sur un axe à même de favoriser davantage, pour une meilleure réponse aux fins de l'homme *angoissé*. L'émergence des nouveaux éléments et plans d'équilibre et de vitalité<sup>13</sup>.

## Conclusion

C'est dans la perspective de telles synthèses que Alain Toffler, dans Le choc du futur, après avoir fait le constat que "les habitants de la terre ne se différencient pas uniquement par leur race, leur patrie, leur religion ou leur idéologie, mais aussi dans un certain sens, par la façon dont ils se définissent par rapport au temps" [Toffler (1979, p.48)], distingue les "société fondées sur la permanence et celle qui se développe sous nos yeux et qui est basée sur l'éphémère" [Toffler (1979, p.62)], sur un déclin de l'attachement au "terroir" [Toffler (1979, p.100)], sur les "relations

contingentes, modulaires et à, tout point de vues, transitoires" [Toffler (1979, p.117)], sur la "crise de prise de décision avec l'accroissement de la quantité d'informations" à traiter [Toffler (1979, p.343)], sur "l'immédiatisme et la myopie des technocrates" [Toffler (1979, p.433)]. Et le désir de *changement* ne va pas sans *angoisse* et sans *relations d'incertitude* comme le souligne Georges Balandier dans Le Detour. [Balandier (1985, p.221)]

L'équilibre envisagé dans Le choc du futur réfère par exemple à la nécessité de considérer la famille comme *pare-choc*, comme *structure de stabilité* et *d'équilibre* contre la tourmente du changement [Toffler (1979, p.233)], car si "vivre c'est s'adapter" [Toffler (1979, p.328)], il y a néanmoins lieu de reconnaître que "l'homme est toujours, pour finir, ce qu'il était au commencement: un biosystème à la capacité de changement limité. Au-delà d'un certain seuil, il subit le choc du futur" [Toffler (1979, p.328)]. Aussi est-il nécessaire de disposer de "points de référence temporels stables" [Toffler (1979, p.375)], "d'arrêter les innovations désastreuses" [Toffler (1979, p.413)] allant dans le sens de ce que Jean Lacroix a signifié comme le perpétuel "*halètement après l'être* qui doit être donné et non préalablement *détruit*"<sup>14</sup> pour pouvoir accéder à un *mieux-être* ou à un *plus-être*".

Dans ce contexte, l'Afrique qui, avec ses traditions respectueuses de la vie et des valeurs *d'équilibre* léguées par le *passé*, devra accéder à cette *synthèse* que souligne Guy Sormann à propos des sociétés dites avancées et qui concernent la *continuité culturelle* [Sormann] comme *base* pour ne pas dire *secret* du progrès du Japon resté fidèle au "principe d'harmonie" [Sormann (p.163)] qui assure "l'alliance salvatrice de l'éthique et de la technique"<sup>15</sup>, *alliance* posés par ailleurs comme modèle pour l'Occident. La *continuité* est donc ici *synthèse* de *l'ancien* et du *nouveau*.

La recherche des instruments de *synthèse* impose de connaître le **prix du temps dans le travail et dans le progrès** qui doivent néanmoins assurer la *permanence* sinon la *promotion de l'être*: elle requiert la stimulation de l'imagination qui, pour éviter les solutions *d'enfermement* dans le futur à même de rendre la société victime de choix *maladroits* sinon *malheureux*, doit en appeler à la stratégie des alternatives et des alternances. Elle appelle l'établissement des plans *souples* et *indicatifs* conduisant à des mesures revêtant une *flexibilité* telle que l'homme puisse rester *enraciné* dans ses valeurs de communauté et de liberté sans devenir la *marionnette* d'une infinité de choix, ni le *prisonnier* de choix *désastreux*.

Tout cela nécessite la *clarification* des buts sociaux et la *démocratisation de la méthode* d'approche des solutions aux problèmes d'avenir, car la *démocratie* est une méthode qui précisément garantit le

succès des stratégies d'alternatives. Tout le Monde est concerné: "la démocratie n'est plus un luxe politique, mais une nécessité primordiale" [Toffler (1979, p.449)]. Il s'agit alors d'organiser les *espaces-temps* démocratiques dans la fidélité à nos *valeurs* et dans *l'ouverture* aux *valeurs* que véhiculent les sociétés qui désormais communiquent toutes entre elles au niveau planétaire. Ce qui ne dispense pas de choisir la *modernité* sans un *dépassement radical* au sein de sa propre communauté<sup>16</sup>.

### Notes

1. Cette article est aussi publiée dans Bwele [1990].
2. Cf. aussi Balandier [1985, p.197]: "Ce qui désoriente dans la modernité actuelle, c'est surtout l'effet accélérateur, affectant tout et tous."
3. Cf. aussi Balandier [1985, p.151] qui cite Tiryakam [1978, pp.125-153]: "Les conceptions du progrès et de l'eschaton (ou apocalypse) peuvent être vues comme les *mythes* majeurs et complémentaires du futur en Occident."
4. Le prince Dika Akwa dans sa thèse sur le Nyambeisme établit la *complexité* du *temps traditionnel*.
5. D'où la *valeur* toujours actuelle des fêtes, dans les *sociétés traditionnelles* et même dans celles dites de la *modernité*, fêtes conçues comme "réaffirmations ritualisées des rapports les plus fondamentaux" sur le plan social global. Cf. Balandier [1971, p.293] qui souligne néanmoins que les sociétés industrialisées moins armées du rite de l'outil et la puissance matérielle sont rivées à des révolutions culturelles avec de *fêtes* entraînant des adhésions *manipulées*.
6. Cf. Balandier [1971, p.200]: Il s'agit ici de cette *prêtrise du futur* revêtant plusieurs formes et instituées *dans toutes les sociétés*.
7. Rappelons qu'au niveau du vivant, il y a une hiérarchie des paliers d'intégration. Quant à la hiérarchie traditionnelle, Balandier [1971, p.90] souligne que le roi s'approprie la danse du pouvoir qui le manifeste en tant que foyer de forces".
8. Balandier [1985, pp.102-103] souligne que ces manipulations de *l'invisible* relevaient *parfois des contre-pouvoirs*. Dans Balandier [1971, p.32] il souligne que "dans les élaborations théoriques les plus récentes de l'anthropologie sociale, la considération du conflit a eu pour conséquence de ruiner la vieille image *unanimiste* des sociétés dites archaïques ou traditionnelles".

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9. Hodologie vient du grec 'Odos', qui veut dire chemin, route.
  10. Balandier [1985, p.174] souligne que la mise en relation, en communication généralisée, des sociétés et des cultures", affirmant: "pour la première fois dans l'histoire, elles sont désormais toutes communicantes".
  11. Il en a été ainsi du Temps du récent MUNDIALE d'Italie (juin-juillet 1990) alors vécu au niveau planétaire avec ses multiples zones (spatio-temporelles) de tensions-attractives face aux multiples styles footballistiques qui se sont rencontrés et affrontés une école pour tout le monde dans les micro-temps des télé des diverses maisons du monde en direct des terrains de football d'Italie.
  12. L'on peut dire que la guerre, le mauvais usage de la technique, la mauvaise organisation de l'espace et de l'environnement et la surestimation des valeurs chrématistiques assument la même fonction de destruction préalable sous tous les cieux. Et ce n'est pas par hasard que les dialecticiens modernes s'appuient davantage, au niveau du politique, sur la puissance militaire et industrielle que sur les problèmes de l'agriculture et de la liberté il s'agit de l'emporter en puissance sur les autres: dans l'espace et le temps.
  13. Tel serait aussi, dans une certaine mesure, le secret de l'économie de marché à partir de petites économies dispersées.
  14. Tel serait l'axe d'une logique dialectique.
  15. Pour la cohabitation de l'ancien et du nouveau au Japon. Cf. aussi Balandier [1971, p.94].
  16. S'il faut avec Balandier [1971, p.163] et à la suite de Reich [1971] parler d'une "sédimentation des niveaux de conscience" impliquant une "avancée dans l'indéchiffrable de la modernité", il y a lieu de souligner que le problème est de "ne pas laisser notre avenir nous devenir étranger", car "toute interrogation sur la modernité ... conduit à une mise en question de ce qui paraît être authentiquement nouveau, de ce par quoi les sociétés engendrent leur propre dépaysement" (ainsi que le souligne *Anthropo-logiques* de Balandier).

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# HOMAGE TO THE GREAT AFRICAN SAVANT CHEIKH ANTA DIOP<sup>1</sup>

Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba

The great African savant, Cheikh Anta Diop, died suddenly of a heart attack on February 7th 1986, only a few years after the publication of his *Civilisation ou Barbarie: Anthropologie sans Complaisance* (Civilisation or Barbarism: Anthropology without Compromise or Authentic Anthropology) which is the monumental culmination of thirty years of multi-disciplinary scholarship [Van Sertima (1986, p.146)]. Jean-Marc Ela, the well-known Cameroonian sociologist, says of Diop that he was "the unique and exceptional phenomenon (which) the Black continent has produced in the history of ideas" [Ela (1986, p.58)]. He incarnated *honneur de penser*: courage and will to truth and thought. As such, Cheikh Anta Diop is the historical and scientific consciousness of Africa." For about thirty years, he concentrated on the *humanity of the African as a subject of a scientific discourse*. Why has the Humanity of the Black African been denied, and how did he come to have such a low status in ideological thought in the world? As Cheikh Anta Diop put it: "I have devoted my life to redynamize culture in the most diverse domains, such as history, languages equally for the past, the present as well as the future"<sup>2</sup>. At the centre of Diop's concern, his '*will to truth*' where questions like: *What can be known absolutely about Black Africa today? How can we give a solid grounding to the history of Africa so that it ceases to appear suspended in air?* This is typically the concern of an organic intellectual doing scientific work within a background of a *humiliated Africa in search of freedom and unity*.

Cheikh Anta Diop was born on December 23, 1923 in the Western Senegalese town of Diourbel in a Muslim peasant family<sup>3</sup>. The town was a seat of a strong Muslim sect and brotherhood - the sect of the Mourides - in which collective activity is considered sacred. According to Diop, this Black African Muslim sect was the only one to have succeeded in acting independently of the rest of the Muslim world. He attended Koranic schools, but he pursued his studies in French colonial schools. He completed his first degree (BA) in Senegal before he went to Paris in 1946 for graduate studies.

While doing his Ph.D. research, Cheikh Anta Diop enrolled as a student at one of the elite schools (Ecole superieure) in mathematics. He later spent a great deal of time working and experimenting in the most advanced French laboratory at the nuclear research centre at Saclay. Diop involved himself in cultural activities, such as organizing an exhibition of African art, and became a leader of the student movement involved with the politics of african decolonisation. In 1953 for example,, Diop became Secretary-General of '*Etudiants pour le Rassemblement Démocratique*

*Africain'* - E.R.D.A. (Students for the African Democratic Assembly) and Diop later organized the first Pan-African Student Congress of English and French students.

In this period of debates about the constitution took place in the French Constituent Assembly. Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Madame Eugénie Eboue were members of the assembly and they were joined later on by Léon G. Damas from French Guinea. Césaire, Damas and Senghor were the founders of modern Negritude, the famous literary movement of the 1930's. Those debates constituted the preparation by the French imperial society for neocolonialism.

Cheikh Anta Diop, through African students politics, became involved with the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (R.D.A. - the African Democratic Assembly) which had been created in Bamako from Mali on October 18, 1946. This was the first international movement, in French West Africa, which laid the foundations for political unity among Africans under French colonialism. Ahmed Sekou Touré and Félix Houphouët-Biigny, among others, emerged as the major leaders of the two conflicting tendencies within this movement.

As part of the student leadership responsible for organizing a Pan-African political congress of students, Cheikh Anta Diop was in the mainstream of political activism in this period. The student political organization, the E.R.D.A., linking up with the R.D.A. had a journal called *La Voix de l'Afrique Noire* (The Voice of Black Africa). Diop was among the most active writers of this journal. He wrote a number of articles for it, of which two were exceptionally brilliant: "Vers une idéologie politique en Afrique Noire" (Towards a political ideology in Black Africa) published in the February issue of 1952, and "La Lutte en Afrique Noire" (The Struggle in Black Africa) in the 1953 issue. The first article raised the issue of national independence and the federation of future African states. Diop argued that political unity should be pursued in conjunction cultural unity. In fact, cultural unity was the scientific foundation upon which political unity would rest. In contrast with dogmatic Marxist African students who felt that politics could be derived from the laws governing current economic conditions in African colonies, Cheikh Anta Diop felt, even then, that the subjective element of African politics could only be arrived at and organized through historical analysis of the African cultural element - from the remote ancient times up to the present. This includes three factors: the psychic, the linguistic and the historical, which together constitute the cultural personality of a people. Even in the 1950's, Cheikh Anta Diop thought that genuine national independence for Black Africa required that Africa become a superpower i.e. a strong state. In 1960, he published his

program in his book, *Les Fondements Culturels, techniques et industriels d'un Futur Etat Federal d'Afrique Noire* (The Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State in Black Africa) - the English translation was published only in 1978, after 18 years! In the 1980's he was reported to have said: "... the existence of the states we find in Africa today has no justification in history other than as the effect of the arbitrary partition at the Berlin Conference, 1884-1885, where only European countries were represented" In other words, these states are nothing more than a colonial legacy. Much later on, Kwame Nkrumah and others took up the political and economic aspects of Cheikh Anta Diop's program of a Federated State. It remains to be seen whether or not neocolonialism can be eliminated in today's Africa without such a program.

As is clear from his early writings, such as "Origins of the Wolof Language and Race" in *Présence Africaine* (1948), "When do we speak of an African Renaissance?" in *Présence Africaine* (November 1948), and "*The living Museum*" (in which he discussed language, architecture, music and visual arts as useful evidences of civilization), the cultural element has always been central in Cheikh Anta Diop's intellectual and scientific efforts.

During this period of intense political activism, Diop was also doing research. He wrote *Nations Nègres et Culture: De l'Antiquité Nègre égyptienne aux problèmes culturels de l'Afrique Noire d'aujourd'hui* (Negro Nations and Culture: From Negro-Egyptian Antiquity to Cultural Problems of Black Africa Today), a work written as a Ph.D. dissertation. While working on this book, Diop arrived at some conclusions which continued to serve as themes for further research. He developed the conviction that to avoid a deformed African personality one must be conversant with the full range of one's ancestral past, not just to establish pride, but as the basis for constructing a modern civilization in the post-colonial and neocolonial era. The dissertation established the following thesis:

That Egypt was the node and the centre of a vast web linking the strands of Africa's main cultures and languages; that the light that crystallized at the centre of this early world had been energized by the cultural electricity streaming from the heartland of Africa; that the creators of classical Egyptian civilization, therefore were not the brown mediterranean caucasoids invented by Sergi, nor the equally mythical Hamites, nor Asiatic nomads and invaders, but indigenous black-skinned, woolly-haired Africans; that Greece, mother of the best in European civilization, was once a child suckled at the breast of Egypt

even as Egypt had been suckled at the breast of Ethiopia, which itself evolved from the complex interior womb of the African motherland.[Van Sertima (1986, p.8)]

This was a fundamental critique of the imperialist bourgeois cultural hegemony based on the idea that Africans were the infants of humanity - i.e., archaic savages, who needed to be brought up, in order to be civilized, and that the cultural foundation of world civilization, embodied by the imperialist bourgeoisie was the Greek miracle that had been buried during the Dark Middle Ages and revitalized by the bourgeois revolution of the Renaissance. This dissertation sees Ancient Black Africans as the founders of world civilization, of which the Greek contribution is only one of chain.

At its birth, in the 1820's, European Egyptology had insisted that ancient Egyptian civilization was not African. Even today some would-be specialists admit only that this civilization was African but not Black, as if this distinction were meaningful in ancient times.

It was necessary, as Cheikh Anta Diop said, for European imperialists to deny that the first civilization was developed by Black Africans.

The desire to legitimize colonization and the slave trade - in other words, the social condition of the Negro in the modern world - engendered an entire literature to describe the so-called inferior traits of the Blacks. The minds of several generations of Europeans would thus gradually indoctrinated, Western opinions would crystallize and instinctively accept the equation: Negro = inferior humanity as revealed truth. To crown this cynicism, colonization would depicted as a duty of humanity. They invoked 'the civilizing mission' of the West charged with the responsibility to raise the African to the level of other men. From then on, capitalism had clear sailing to practice the most ferocious exploitation under the cloak of moral pretexts.[Van Sertima (1986,p.97)]

Even the internal European critical current, rooted in the exploited working class and dominated by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, still believed that there were *civilizing nations* and *inferior nations* [Molnar (1975)]. They made no explicit critique of the most blatant anti-African philosophical views of Hegel. The whole theory of colonialism as a process of development of productive forces is but one variant of that approach. Because of the powerfully perverse cultural alienation experienced under colonialism, even many Black Africans are unable to perceive the significance of Cheikh Anta Diop's critique.

The jury of the University of Paris, of course, rejected Diop's dissertation and declared its thesis "unfounded". The thesis was contrary to all that had been taught in Europe for two centuries about the origins of civilization. What was said in the thesis, in substance, was not completely new. Ancient Greeks, such as Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus), who were in contact with Egyptians, would have agreed with Diop, and other Europeans (e.g. G. Massey, A.H.L. Heeren, Court C.G. Volney, Sir E.A. Wallis Budge, etc.) have said similar things. What was new was the formidable competency in many disciplines that Diop brought to bear to establish his thesis on solid and scientific grounds. C.A. Diop's methodological approach, starting from this work, has been remarkable and impeccable, as the Senegalese Egyptologist A.M. Lam says:

C.A. Diop's entire approach is based on a dual assumption - the African nature and Negritude of Egyptian civilization, a Negritude that only begins to alter with foreign invasions (during the Middle Kingdom) and the territorial expansions of Egypt to the New Kingdom. In order to evaluate the scientific validity of this assumption, which is, in fact, the crux of the great debate on Egyptian civilization, every responsible historian must first question the documents and vestiges the Ancient Egyptians left behind, the first hand accounts of travellers and ancient Greek and Roman scientists who knew the Egyptians, the actual civilizations which seem to resemble the civilization of Ancient Egypt the most. This is indeed what C.A. Diop did without exception during the course of his research. As far as methodology is concerned, his procedure is beyond reproach.[Van Sertima (1986, p.89)]

Despite its having been rejected by the examination jury, the dissertation was published under the title *Nations Nègres et Culture* (Negro Nations and Culture) in 1954, and it was internationally recognized as a major and provocative piece of work. Aimé Césaire, for example, wrote that the work was "the most daring book yet written by a Negro and which will without question play an important part in the awakening of Africa" [Césaire (1972, p.35)]. Western cultural imperialist domination of the African colonies and neo-colonies is so great that even today (1991) most Africans have not read the book.

This fact might to some degree explain why so many ideological works on so-called *African Socialism* have been without any real historical foundation. Reference to African traditional society, as in Nyerere's works, has hardly been localized, either historically or geographically, and

anthropological material is used as evidence without prior scientific critique. It is necessary to do so, especially if one agrees with C.A. Diop that history cannot be restricted by the limits of ethnic group, nation or culture. It is ridiculous to consider colonially created territories as absolute units of historical analysis. The other part of the explanation for the lack of attention in Africa for Diop's work is the absence of a true African national bourgeoisie capable of conceptualizing and implementing an anti-imperialist (anti-Eurocentric) African cultural hegemony.

During the ten years following the jury's rejection of his dissertation, Cheikh Anta Diop wrote two more dissertations - without any apparent concessions to the jury's wishes - before he was granted his doctorate. One has the impression that it was the jury that reformed or reversed its past stand. These last two works were also published, under the titles: *L'Unité Culturelle de l'Afrique Noire: Domaines du patriarcat et du matriarcat dans l'Antiquité Classique* (The Cultural Unity Of Black Africa: Matrilineal and Patrilineal domains in Classical Antiquity) in 1959 - and *L'Afrique noire précoloniale: étude comparée des systèmes politiques et sociaux de l'Europe et de l'Afrique noire, de l'Antiquité à la formation des états modernes* (Precolonial Black Africa: A comparative study of socio-political systems of Europe and Black Africa from antiquity to the formation of modern states) - in 1960. These two studies were crucial in refuting the imperialist thesis of Black Africans as the infants of humanity and to underline cultural differences, parallel developments and to underscore the originality of Black African cultures and civilizations before the European invasions. Neocolonial African nationalism mentions precolonial states, but it hardly shows concretely the specificity - in relation to European states. To silence the Hamitic speculative explanations, comparative analysis is necessary. It must also be said that to show that these precolonial states were also class oppressive instruments, as the Marxists do, is not enough; the concrete forms of class domination need to be established. In order to critique C.A. Diop's bourgeois analysis a similar Marxist comparative analysis is necessary.

After his studies and research, C.A. Diop returned to Senegal. His intensive scientific work continued to go hand in hand with his political activity. Although this activity, which was a necessary outcome of his scientific work and conclusions, came on the second place. In 1960, he created a political Party called *'Le Bloc Masses Senegalaises* (The Block of the Masses of Senegal), which was banned by the pro-French neocolonial regime of Senghor and led C.A. Diop to be arrested and imprisoned.

In 1964 , he created another political Party called *Front National*

*Senegalais* (Senegalese National Front). By this time, Senghor's regime was proving itself to be very anti-nationalist and unpatriotic. The Front was also declared illegal and Diop was again arrested. In 1976, he created a third political Party called *Rassemblement National Démocratique* (RND; The National Democratic Assembly) led by a small group of intellectuals around C.A. Diop. Despite the fact that this was during the period of the so-called 'democratic opening' (used by Senghor to get around the crisis of his regime), the RND ran into trouble for not conforming to Senghor's directives on party formation. The RND ultimately got one seat in the Senegalese National Assembly. C.A. Diop's role in Senegalese politics should be a topic for further study. His democratic, nationalist and patriotic bourgeois politics should not be dismissed beforehand, as self-styled socialists have done.

In 1985, C.A. Diop gave a summary of his political activity:

I am in the opposition party in Senegal. Senegal is perhaps one country where you can say there is a little more freedom than there is in other places. I can go from one place to another. But this is not a freedom we were given. This is a freedom we took. We paid for this freedom. For 30 years I have paid with my own self. I nearly died in prison, as you know. Things like these are no longer possible in Senegal. [Van Sertima (1986, p.10)]

Now there are about 15 parties in Senegal. Those who are fascinated by the mystique of a one party state system and who cannot appreciate the efforts and sacrifices made to achieve this political space where open debates are possible, should think about Diop's words on this topic.

Experience has overwhelmingly shown that the one-party system has failed to build the type of Africa we desire ... The building of Africa must be based on freedom of choice. Only what is built on the basis of freedom is durable. [Sertima (1986, p.11)]

In the name of 'revolutionary science', 'party form', 'development' and 'national unity', freedom of choice has often been rejected in Africa. One cannot but remember and sympathize with a Black worker in Chicago who asked: What is this science which is against our interests?

C.A. Diop's scientific experience at the French nuclear research centre proved very important for his historical work. Among other things, he developed a chemical process for testing the level of Melanin in the skin of Egyptian mummies, in order to establish their Black African ancestry. He also worked hard at founding the Radiocarbon Laboratory at the University of Dakar, and was its director during the last twenty years of his

career. After his death, the University of Dakar was named after him.

In short, Cheikh Anta Diop had a solid, diversified, and encyclopedic training. As an African Egyptologist, he had a profound knowledge of Antiquity: his third dissertation is a clear indication of that competence. He was a student of several eminent French professors, including André Aymard, Gaston Bachelard and André Leroi-Gourhan. His work at the nuclear research centre put him in contact with the most advanced developments in modern sciences. In addition to that, he was well versed in historical materialism. Although he never claimed to be a Marxist, as Sekou Traore correctly said, but he used the marxist dialectical method of investigation, together with a profound knowledge of Africa in its historical totality, in his work. It is thus understandable why Cheikh Anta Diop was so hostile to superficiality and dilettantism, while arguing for an Afrocentric point of view (a Black patriotism) as a way to deal with both anti-Black (African) bias (based on a profound ignorance and deliberate mystification of African reality) in bourgeois European dominated world civilization and the perverse cultural alienation of Africans. Diop believed that whatever one studies should be completely grasped in all its aspects and limitations so that one can go beyond it. He insisted that knowledge of Ancient Egypt is a prerequisite for a complete understanding of Black Africa; allowing one to go beyond the superficial diversity and see a profound macro-unity of Black Africa. Without a deep understanding of ancient Greece and Rome, one cannot grasp Western bourgeois civilization either. Without the understanding of ancient Egyptian civilization and its reproduction in African societies, the history of Africa is reduced to impacts of external invasions, dominations and influences. In other words, the type of history based on the hamitic myth, which reinforces both the myth of Black Africa as the infancy of humanity (a tabula rasa, culturally speaking) and the now dominant **social epistemology**, based on a process of acquisition of knowledge by imitation of the Centre.

Cheikh Anta Diop's intellectual work covers a vast terrain and deals with some of the most important problems faced by humanity. In that web of problems, he insists that the reality of Black Africa be seen through a scientific Afrocentric lens without mystification and naivety. It is my opinion that he was in the vanguard of the trend now agitating for a world global cultural history [Plott (1963)] recognizing both local individual people's inaugural cultural achievements and cultural developments and cross-cultural breedings simultaneously. In line with his conception of dialectics (totality/structure/history; beginning/basis/support/outcome; synchrony/diachrony/world totality etc.), C.A. Diop emphasizes the inaugural civilizational achievement of Black Africans. The Western neglect,



denial and ignorance of Black Africa is crucial in explaining the ills of Western bourgeois imperialist dominated world civilization. A civilization that refuses to recognize its very foundation (true beginning), and, with all its limitations and achievements, is an uprooted civilization. Black Africa is always singled out as the source of all kinds of evils (darkness, AIDS, etc.) but not as the origin of civilization and even humanity.

Martin Heidegger, who is said to be "the last philosopher universally recognized" [Badiou (1988, p.6)], maintains that the Greek inaugural interpretation of Being, which is the cornerstone of Western philosophy, is at the root of the crisis of Western civilization. He proposed the 'deconstruction' of metaphysics and a reversal of Greek orientation. Philosophies promoting the category of 'difference' (difference, discontinuity, the Other, etc.) as opposed to 'identity' (sameness) as central category of philosophy, are becoming more and more important in the West. We can only hope that this de-construction will also lead to a recognition of the positivity of the ancient Black Africans' civilizations. In this sense, C.A. Diop's work is part of the new advanced trends in human thought and as such, part of the world cultural revolution unfolding under our eyes. All the philosophies of 'identity' (including Marxism, Christianity, etc.) are being challenged in favour of a pluralism.

In conclusion, for anyone willing to think about Black Africa and its problematic position in the world history, Cheikh Anta Diop is a thinker to contend with. It is our opinion [Wamba-dia-Wamba (1988)] that Cheikh Anta Diop's theoretical work is a protracted research for the Afrocentric subject (maker of the history), the history of African emancipation which is also the condition for the emancipation of the whole world. Since Africa has fallen under Western domination, this subject is given nowhere empirically, but has to be discovered. In doing this, it is pointless to single out 'the working class', which, even in the West, has failed not only to emancipate itself, but also to recognize the humanity of its Black colleagues. Cheikh Anta Diop's tendency to inscribe the afrocentric subject into the formal structures of language, social organization, social psychology or physical appearances is not enough. The African subjective element will only be consolidated by identifying the plural subject throughout African history. This, in turn, will lead to the correct appreciation of the historicity of organisational forms, including the so-called vanguard party. If C.A. Diop is indeed our African equivalent of Hegel, we must thoroughly understand his work and critique it *en connaissance de cause* in order to come up with an Afrocentrically informed marxism. Perhaps.

Notes

1. This text is an adjusted version of an lecture given in the *History Evening Series* (Univ. of Dar-es-Salam) commemorating the second year of C.A. Diop's death.
2. quoted by Jean-Marc Ela (1986, p.43).
3. I derived most of the information from Van Sertima (1986).

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### **Résumé**

*Dans cet article, l'auteur décrit le développement du mouvement "enseignement et production" en Afrique et critique les hypothèses se trouvant à la base de ce mouvement.*

*L'auteur utilise la philosophie du pragmatisme comme point de référence. Il tente de démontrer que, s'il est justifié d'essayer de rattacher la formation et la production, mettre l'accent sur la production et la qualifier de finalité par l'enseignement recèle un grand danger pour l'enseignement sur le continent africain. Dans la plupart des pays africains, l'enseignement laisse à désirer; ce n'est pas en raison de sa prétendue non-pertinence dans la vie quotidienne, mais parce qu'il parvient mal à stimuler les habitudes et techniques de l'étude libre, à savoir la critique et la rationalité. C'est justement cette intelligence critique qui contribuera à une meilleure production dans le monde du travail.*

*Pour vaincre ces insuffisances, l'auteur suggère que les écoles doivent maintenir leur 'distance théorique' en tant que centres d'apprentissage indépendants. Elles peuvent ainsi mettre en lumière un monde beaucoup plus vaste que le monde existant. Les écoles ne doivent se rattacher à la production qu'indirectement. C'est un meilleur fonctionnement de l'industrie et de l'agriculture qui développera la productivité en Afrique. Des formations adéquates devront apporter leur contribution, mais il n'est pas nécessaire que les écoles produisent elles-mêmes.*

**PRAGMATISM OR CRUDE UTILITY ?**  
**A Critique of the**  
**Education with Production Movement**  
**in Contemporary Africa**

**Gatian F. Lungu**

The multiple crises that have beset educational systems of postindependent African countries have stirred considerable debate on the underlying concepts, content, and pedagogical strategies. The high enthusiasm which occasioned the phenomenal expansion of educational systems in the 1960s quickly subsided into disillusioned scepticism in the 1970s as schools, colleges, and universities began to manifest signs of gross imbalances. The somewhat overexpanded primary school sector led to an unprecedented dropout crisis with as many as 60 to 80 per cent of students unable to secure places in secondary schools [Lungu (1985) and World Bank (1987)]. The secondary school sector suffered less from the dropout crisis than from the unemployment of its certificate holders; while the tertiary sector generally, and universities in particular, were faulted more with exotic training than anything else. Policy makers, international donors, and educational critics were quick to catalogue shortcomings in the postindependence educational systems. First, schools were blamed for failing to equip students with skills necessary for personal survival. Instead, it was alleged, schools alienated students from their environments by preparing them for the fast shrinking white-collar job market at the expense of manual, especially agricultural, vocations suitable for rural areas. Second, it was also alleged that even when students successfully completed schooling, their performance in the world of work and life generally left much to be desired.

They scarcely exhibited creative and innovative skills expected of them by their societies. On the contrary, they seemed to acquiesce in the status of **spanner boys and girls** or, alternatively, they indulged in conspicuous consumption and misguided pedantry [Nyerere (1968), Curle (1973) and Lungu (1978)]. In short, educational systems were increasingly being perceived as national quagmires - claiming lion shares of national budgets, but contributing little in the way of helping resolve problems facing their societies.

Such an evaluation of education, rooted as it was in a predominantly utilitarian context, predictably elicited equally utilitarian prescriptions. By the mid-1970s critics and reformers were urging formal educational institutions to transcend textbook approaches and embrace learning through doing within the context of live problems of the larger

community. Educational doctrines that alluded to the notion of learning through doing, or education for practical uses were extensively quoted and misquoted to justify the shift towards the **new** vocationalism in African educational policies. The **pragmatic** approach to education was thus launched to scale down the walls of ivory towers:

We do not want arm-chair revolutionaries. We do not want abstract revolutionaries propounding their theories from the high ivory towers of academia ... . What this nation needs are committed practical scientists, engineers, architects, quantity surveyors, doctors, various technicians, physical planners, administrators, lawyers and writers and other patriotic workers imbued with Humanist Revolutionary spirit and committed to hard work in nation building ... . We want dedicated men and women ready to serve the cause of the masses, ready to produce this type of student in primary and secondary schools, colleges and the university [Kaunda (1975, p.27)].

Policy pronouncements like the one above became commonplace in the Africa of the 1970s, and in several instances, were supported by concerted effort to reform educational systems toward more practical concerns of society.

### Education and Pragmatism

This article has two basic tasks:

- (1) it describes some major ideals and operational modes of the education with production movement in contemporary Africa.
- (2) it critiques the philosophical soundness of the movement within the African context.

Some mention must be made here of the term 'pragmatism', for it appears in the title of this discussion for a special purpose, namely that of being a reference term for the paper. Pragmatism - both as a casual attitude and as a philosophy - is alluded to by several adherents of the education with production movement (henceforth to be referred to as 'productionists'). As a casual educational attitude pragmatism, is close to its Greek origin: *pragma*, a word standing for action, practice. In this casual sense pragmatism emphasizes schooling as a process of action-oriented learning, in which theory is made to directly bear upon practice. It is overconcerned with an education for practical living. Such concerns are not entirely absent in pragmatism as a philosophy. The relationship between ideas and action, between schooling and life is emphasized in the writings of pragmatic

philosophers. William James, one of the renowned American pragmatists, writes thus on the pragmatic method:

if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then as a programme for more work [James (1907, p.46)].

Prior to James' assertion, Charles Peirce, considered the father of American pragmatism had boldly declared that inquiry (that is, including learning) should be rooted in "real and living doubt, and without all this discussion is idle" [Wiener (1958, p.100)]. The phrase 'real and living doubt' alludes to the fact that problems for inquiry or learning must be rooted in practical contexts. However, to construe pragmatism largely or wholly in terms of practical usefulness of ideas or schooling is to seriously misunderstand this brand of philosophy. Commenting on the educational pragmatism of John Dewey, Scheffler cautions thus:

It is a crude mistake to take Dewey as advocating activity for its sake. The whole point of activity in his scheme is that it should, in so far as possible, be made educative through the guiding power of ideas and the critical assessment of consequences [Scheffler (1974, p.251)].

While taking sufficient cognizance of the importance of action, experience, facts and practice in education, pragmatic philosophers also value the role of theoretical distance from the real world in order that the inquirer or the learner may provide a richer meaning of it. Peirce, for example, had moderated his 'real and living doubt' stance by acknowledging that 'feigned doubt' also had a role to play in inquiry: "Feigned hesitancy, whether feigned for mere amusement or with a lofty purpose, plays a great part in the production of scientific inquiry" [Wiener (1958, p.119)]. From a philosophical viewpoint, therefore, pragmatic education extends beyond the practical concerns of life to include those that are seemingly feigned or esoteric (e.g., concerns arising from curiosity, playfulness, speculation, and so forth) which might ultimately lead to deeper human understanding of the practical world. As will be argued later in this article, productionists in Africa advocate pragmatic education in its casual, mundane sense, and this interpretation amounts to little more than crude utility. Such an attitude will not necessarily enhance the role of education in helping transform society, but may lead to further impairment of educational systems on the continent.

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The Education with Production Movement: an outline

The current education with production movement in Africa is a crystallisation of trends of educational thought and practice that extend back to the 19th century when Western formal education was introduced on the continent. Since then the persistent concern among educationists and policy makers has been how to make formal schooling relevant to the practical realities of African life. Early African educationists like James Africanus Horton (1835-1883), Edward W. Blyden (1832-1912), and J.E. Casley-Hayford (1866-1930) advocated for vocationally biased curricula to counterbalance liberal arts and religious studies then dominating colonial schools. Their model of education was derived from Black Industrial Schools in the Southern States of the United States of America - notably Hampton and Tuskegee - where they had either studied or visited [Spivey (1979)]. This challenge was taken up by christian missionaries between 1880 and 1925, some of whom built impressive industrial schools out of meagre resources. An example of such an institution was the Livingstonia Industrial School in Nyasaland (now Malawi). At a World Missionary Conference held in 1914, Jones, its presiding chairman, remarked that:

for the Negro race all education ought to have an industrial basis. It is noteworthy that all the most successful experiments in Negro education: e.g. South Africa and the Southern States of America have been based on the gospel of work in agriculture and handicrafts. Industrial education seems to have a special application to the education of the Child Race, whose *mental digestion* is weak, and who are more successful in getting knowledge than using it [Jones quoted in Berman (1971, pp.132-145)].

The racial overtones in the above statement notwithstanding, many missionaries were genuinely concerned about the relevance of curricula to African realities as they perceived them at the time. Shortly after the First World War, for example, christian missionaries invited the Phelps-Stoke Fund (a philanthropic organization founded in 1911 to advance Negro education in America and Africa) to help assess educational needs in African colonies. The subsequent reports made by the Fund formed the basis of the new educational policy for British Africa from 1925 onwards [Colonial Office (1925)]. By 1939 the industrial education movement had gained ground in colonial Africa. In the British dependencies of Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa the movement was epitomised by the proliferation of the famous *Jeans Schools* which taught agriculture, brickmaking, carpentry, and related handicrafts [Mwanakatwe (1968)].



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The industrial education movement met with first serious resistance after the Second World War. Postwar colonial societies grew complex and their demand for formal education became increasingly sophisticated. The rise of nationalist movements and the political struggles that ensued made it difficult for enlightened Africans to appreciate an educational model whose origins were associated with the racism of South Africa and Southern States of the United States of America. Moreover, the fact that industrial education was largely confined to primary schools at the time, and emphasized manual labour (manual labour was then associated with punishment in schools, and forced labour outside school) was increasingly being perceived by enlightened Africans as a deliberate move by their colonial masters to keep them in the position of perpetual peonage. Additionally, graduates of industrial or trade schools of the 1950s and 1960s were largely employed in low-paying jobs, whereas those from academically oriented or grammar schools were generally absorbed in more prestigious white-collar jobs. There was thus a shift in the perception of what constituted a vocationally relevant education. To many Africans, it was not the skills obtained from trade schools that mattered, but rather it was the prestige and employability associated with grammar schools that defined new parameters of educational relevance. Consequently, postwar educational systems witnessed a steady proliferation of grammar schools which in effect prepared students for university entry rather than for a practical living. It was this type of schooling that most African governments inherited at independence.

Two observations are worth noting here with regard to education with production in the pre-independence era. The first is that colonial educationists attempted to relate education to work through the vocationalization of the course content, and not directly to work itself. The second observation is that production was incorporated in school activities in the form of manual work at the end of classes in the afternoons and Saturdays, young farmers' clubs, and other associations, but these were not formally linked to classroom learning. Even in the heyday of grammar schools attempts were made to make the curriculum as comprehensive as possible. Thus the concept of schooling as a process of preparing the young for the world of work was not entirely absent in colonial education; but it was markedly different from the emphasis of the current education with production movement in that the latter takes production as dominant concern of schooling, and as a basic mode of pedagogy.

### Crystallisation, Ideals, and Strategies

Several influences combined to shape what is referred to here and the education with production movement in Africa. First, there was need to give education a new orientation in the postindependence era. Educational policy makers were dissatisfied with merely expanding educational systems they had inherited from their colonial masters; they wanted them to serve educational needs as they were redefined by newly independent African governments. Second, as it became progressively apparent that economic development was stagnating in most African countries, especially from the mid-1970s onwards, it became necessary to seriously re-examine the roles of educational institutions with the view of gearing them more towards productive work. The habits of hard work and commitment to duty, it was argued, ought to be inculcated in the youth through formal schooling. A third influence came from the examples of Cuba and China where ideological stipulations demanded close links between schooling and productive work. In the mid-1960s and early 1970s it was fashionable for African countries to profess the ideology of socialism, for example **Ujamaa** in Tanzania, **Harambee** in Kenya, and **Humanism** in Zambia. The impressive performance by Chinese workers in completing the Tanzania-Zambia Railway in the early 1970s reinforced African admiration for Chinese institutions, especially schooling. The close relationship emphasized by Chinese policy makers between schooling and productive work provided an obvious model for African policy makers. Similarly, Cuban literacy campaigns and the drastic reduction of illiteracy rates in that country attracted the attention of many African leaders. Consequently, Havana and Peking became Meccas for African educational pilgrims. The Tanzanian educational reforms of early 1970s were almost a replica of the Chinese model at the time. Similarly, the Zambian educational reforms announced in 1976 included a heavy dosage of the education with production model from China [Zambia (1976); Lungu (1985)].

A fourth and perhaps more sustained influence came from continental and regional conferences sponsored by UNESCO, the African Bureau of Educational Sciences (BASE), and other donors. Three conferences are worth mentioning here: the 1961 Addis Ababa Conference, the 1978 Brazzaville Conference, and the 1984 Lagos Conference. According to Mulopo [1984] the notion of education with production first came to light at the 1961 Addis Ababa Conference, gained foothold at the 1978 Brazzaville Conference, and was consolidated at the 1984 Lagos Conference. However, it was the 1978 Brazzaville Conference that provided

a clear rationale for the movement. Among other things, the Brazzaville Conference articulated the following:

- ( i ) education for production can aid development;
- ( ii ) there is need to bridge the gap between education and active life;
- ( iii ) there is need to break the colonial ideology according to which manual and intellectual work are separated;
- ( iv ) education for production can reduce the high dropout rate and general wastage and inequality in educational opportunity which is mainly due to socioeconomic factors;
- ( v ) productive work in school can/may help minimize rural exodus, illiteracy, delinquency, and the under-utilization of human resources [Mulopo (1984, p.3)].

The Lagos Conference of 1984 was essentially an evaluation of the ideals of the 1978 Brazzaville Conference, but it was also symbolic of the growth and development of the movement that had evolved over a period of twenty years after the attainment of political independence.

A final but continuing influence has been exerted by intellectuals in academia. Continued debate and theory refinement from the 1960s through the 1970s, to the 1980s culminated in the creation of the Foundation for Education with Production (FEP) in 1980 as a learned and professional society to address the concerns of the movement. Although international in its mission and membership, the FEP has emphasized African education as a major area of concern. The first (and current) headquarters were symbolically located in Africa - Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. There are several country chapters and affiliated associations in Africa, and to a lesser extent in Western Europe and America. The main role of the FEP was envisaged as that of providing for intellectual support of the movement through conferences and publication of research findings and reflections on the theme of education and production, and an academic journal Education with Production, which was launched in 1981. Perhaps nothing can sum up the movement's conceptual position better than the statement of the founding chairperson of FEP:

education must be conceived not only or even primarily as schooling; but broadly in terms of the whole range of social processes that shape the attitudes and social consciousness of society. The shaping of consciousness is not a purely isolated, individualized mental activity, because consciousness is a reflection in the mind of the social and material realities [Rensburg (1981, p.9)].

Rensburg further argues that production serves as a basis for skill acquisition, mental development, and concept formation, and that "the uses

of scientific principles in production provides a real base for their fuller assimilation in theory lessons" [Rensburg (1981, p.13)]. In this respect Rensburg is not only echoing Marxist conceptions of schooling but also the arguments of Dewey and other pragmatist philosophers. Consider, for instance, Rensburg's assertion that:

The assimilation of knowledge, especially science, and the ability to conceptualize, are in general the best served by the active linking of theory to practice, with the allocation of time to both as a means of systematically guiding the learners [Rensburg (1981, p.11)].

and compare it with Dewey's statement that:

All education forms character, mental and moral, but formation consists in the selection and coordination of native activities so that they may utilize the subject matter of the environment [Dewey (1916, p.72)].

so that:

Ideas are statements not of what is or has been but of acts to be performed ... intellectually ideas are worthless except as they pass into actions of which rearrange and reconstruct in some way, be it little or large, the world in which we live [Dewey (1916, p.138)].

Such assertions have provided the productionists with forceful ideas which are often argued out of proportion of their true worth.

There are three basic formats of education with production programmes. The first format encompasses the creation of production units and farms in schools, colleges, and universities. This approach has become increasingly popular in African countries including Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, not to mention the Marxist states of Angola and Mozambique. The second format involves the alternation between formal attendance of classes and practical experience in places of work outside schools. This approach, although articulated in the Zambian educational reforms introduced in 1976, has not met with much success, except in Tanzania where schoolleavers spend two years of on the job-experience in various settings before going in tertiary institutions. However, even there, the alternation between classes and work has not been implemented.

The third format has been the creation of special institutions for training youth in various vocational skills in order to prepare them for formal employment, or self-employment. This has been tried in many African countries, but Botswana appears to have taken the lead in this area. According to Rensburg the Botswana Brigades:

created a network of factories, farms, and workshops, educational and recreational facilities and quite substantial infrastructure including water supplies, electricity, and housing. A wide range of goods and services were produced in the projects and they were responsible for some significant technical and educational innovations besides educating and training as well as creating employment for many hundreds of people [Rensburg (1982, p.1)].

Within the African context Zambia furnishes an excellent example of formal policy formulation and reform with regard to education with production ideals; but it is Tanzania that has provided a vivid example of practical effort to realize these ideals in a broader context. According to Mugendi [1982] the Tanzanian version of education with production has the following elements:

- ( i ) the integration of schools and community, especially village life;
- ( ii ) the incorporation of the experience and folk wisdom of the elders;
- (iii) the incorporation of labour activities in schools as a means of raising productivity thereby reducing dependency on government funding;
- ( iv ) the emphasis on the critical role of education in the transforming the self and society;
- ( v ) the inculcation of African socialists values - cooperation, commitment, responsibility and self-confidence.

Since 1971 every village school in Tanzania has had a farm, and many make bricks, furniture and clothing for either sale or internal use. Students entering the university must serve for a minimum of two years in rural areas, factories, or government departments, and be subjected to rigorous evaluation by supervisors at places of work before gaining admission. (These same requirements were included in the Zambian reforms of 1976, but were not implemented due to objections raised by several groups that participated in the national debates in that same year).

When the 1984 Lagos Conference convened there were twelve countries represented, indicating that the movement had been making a headway, though slow, on the continent. Nonetheless, the Conference catalogued several problems in relation to the implementation of the ideas of education with production. Mulopo reports thus about observations made at this Conference:

there were immense problems standing in the way of those attempting to make education for production the essence of the art. A few schools in Nigeria reported satisfactory

results, but the majority of the countries represented still faced a lot of obstacles in their efforts to insert productive work in school [Mulopo (1984, p.7)].

In Zambia where the education with production ideals constituted the main substance of the 1976 reforms serious obstacles have stood in the way of realizing them. Production units were introduced in all schools, and by 1989 these were still operating but their operations bears little resemblance to the ideals stipulated in the Reform proposals of 1976. Achola and Kaluba in their extensive study of Zambian production units report that "It is not at all clear to the extent and in what ways schools integrated these activities with skill, theory, and with general education" [Achola and Kaluba (1986, p.9)]. This research suggests that the production units operate in a manner similar to the old younger farmers clubs, that is: as part-time, extra-school activities, undertaken mainly to address financial needs of the schools concerned. May be it is too early to realistically assess the experiments on education with production in Africa, but cursory reports from almost all African countries point more toward failure than success perhaps failure is less of a concern than the philosophical soundness of the assumptions underlying the movement, and it is to this that the discussion now turns.

### Education with Production: a critique

There is much in the ideals of education with production that sounds educationally plausible. There appears to be nothing intrinsically wrong with the introduction of production activities in schools with the view of making them economically viable, or indeed with the effort to relate techniques of analysis, practical diagnosis, and methods of criticism found in various disciplines to practical issues of the larger community. The problem arises from the extent to which such activities should be integrated with formal schooling, and whether or not such activities have significant educational value in addition to other ends which they might be geared to serve. The study by Achola and Kaluba [1986] suggests that production activities undertaken in schools in Africa have no formal relationship to the learning process taking place in the classrooms. Action, doing, or experience can have educational value in two senses - when it becomes instruction or the discovery of the connection of things, and when doing becomes trying or experimenting to find out what the facts or realities are like. The modern version of educational experience includes the systematic and controlled inquiry and observation, which amounts to the scientific method. Productionists allude to this type of experience, but it is scarcely realizable under present arrangements in African schools. The doing and

experience that occur in production units, for instance, are largely dispersive, and dissipating activities in a continuous flow of events which have little or no meaning besides the creation of goods and services. Even Rensburg's celebrated case of Botswana [Rensburg (1982)] cannot cite a single example of the educational innovations he alludes to. Such doing and experience are the very antithesis of linking theory to practice.

A second and related problem is centred on the assertion that the educational process is best served "by active linking of theory and practice" [Rensburg (1981, p.11)]. Such an assertion is only partially tenable, for learning cannot be adequately understood or realized merely by connecting theory to practice. The process of learning does not just consist of contact with phenonema, and perhaps a parallel process, that of theorizing, provides more accurate insights into what happens in the learning process:

The theorist is free to invent, simplify, postulate, categorize, extrapolate, idealize - he may need to back away from the detail of phenomenal change and practical urgency in order to strive to see through to underlying elements and patterns. Distance, in other words, is functional for the theorist, who strives for ever deeper insights and broader perspectives of nature. The value theoretical distance must be acknowledged in education, and distinguished from mere remoteness and pedantry. In opposing the latter, we must avoid destruction of the former [Scheffler (1974, p.251)].

Many adherents of the education with production movement have often engaged in virulent attacks on theoretical distancing, and uncritically confuse it with idle or arm-chair speculation. This failure to take adequate cognizance of the role of theoretical distance in either learning or research is a serious shortcoming in the arguments of the productionist, for both learning and research can also benefit from free speculation, playfulness, curiosity, and the need to express or create. Elsewhere this author belabours this point thus:

to argue that theory should exist solely to guide practice is to limit its growth, and to undermine its very capacity to guide and transform practice. Of what immediate practical use was Newton's contemplation of the force that compelled the apple to fall and land on his head? Yet who can doubt today about the utility of Newton's laws of motion? Theory building must be permitted to transcend practical problems so that it can expand its capacity to

explain and help resolve these problems [Lungu (1986, p.130)].

Equally unpersuasive is the argument that all theory and learning must originate with live problems of practice, for theorising and learning involve problem-finding as much as problem-solving, and a balanced curriculum must encourage the learner to seek, formulate and elaborate questions that have not yet intruded on practice. It follows from the above arguments that schools, while responding to and serving the immediate needs of society, should primarily be guardians of intrinsic values of education - intelligence, criticism, knowledge, and art - pursuits that have their own worth apart from their social utility. Schools, therefore, must strive to sustain sufficient autonomy and sufficient distance, in order to pursue their primary role, namely that of cultivating critical intelligence that is capable of illuminating a world that is even wider than the existing one. To argue that schools are primarily institutions of education is not to suggest that they are the only institutions that educate. Indeed, all social institutions have an educational side, no matter what their primary roles are, and in this regard productionists are right in observing that education should be perceived broadly in terms of the whole range of social processes. However, this does not mean that education is a primary responsibility of all social institutions. Churches, factories, farms, hospitals and a host of other social institutions may engage in educational activities or provide educational experiences, but everyone knows that the primary role of churches is to render religious services, factories to produce goods and services, farms to produce food, and hospitals to provide medical services, and so forth. Similarly, schools are **primarily** institutions of education, and cannot be the best instruments for raising national economic productivity directly. Factories and other places of work produce goods and services, and cannot be expected to shoulder the major responsibility of educating both the young and adults. To raise industrial productivity African societies must look to factories, to raise agricultural output they must turn to farms, and in both cases to schools only indirectly as centres that can help enlighten, create, understand, and illuminate through critical intelligence. The famous adagio of productionist educators that **all schools must be production units and all factories must be schools** makes sense only in the light of the above observations.

Yet to assert that the primary responsibility of schooling is not in any way aimed at forestalling reform. Colonial educational systems that were inherited at independence were genuinely in need of reform in several respects that are too well known to recount here. Their basic deficiency, however, was that they did not provide sufficient materials and congenial



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environments for effective learning. This deficiency has persisted and deteriorated in the postindependence era, despite some meaningful reforms. The cultivation of critical intelligence cannot thrive in an environment characterized by chronic shortages of teachers, books, laboratory equipment, and other materials, and sometimes even acute shortage of basic necessities like food and water. Additionally, schools cannot thrive if society in general does not accept and support their role as guardians of autonomous values of intelligence, criticism, and knowledge. African societies are notoriously ambivalent in their attitude toward formal schooling: they press for expanded school systems primarily for socioeconomic ends, but they scarcely accept let alone effectively utilize insights and knowledge that result from learning and inquiry in these institutions. The gap that currently exists between schooling and society in Africa is partly due to the failure on the part of the latter to respect schools for their intrinsic worth.

### Conclusion

The concept of education with production has a long history on the African continent, but what makes the current efforts to implement it different is the emphasis the schools should take production as their primary role, and basis for all learning. This shift in emphasis toward production has not received sufficient criticism from African educationists and observers. Productionists have argued that learning is most effective when it is directly related to practice. This assertion is practically supported by the writings of pragmatics philosophers, except that the latter emphasize the critical role of ideas in interpreting and transforming practice, and not the primary of doing or action as an end of learning. To the extent that schools in Africa are being coerced to assume production as their primary role a role which other institutions created for the purpose have failed to play, then the education with production movement is essentially a campaign for crude utility. Production in schools and the latter's relation to places of work can only be legitimate as a subsidiary, though important, pursuit. Moreover, current experiments with production units reveal failure to integrate educational activities with production programmes. Unless efforts are made to link the cultivation of critical intelligence to the processes of productive work, production units will continue to epitomise the crude utility aspect.

A related and perhaps more general concern is the tendency in most African countries to closely tie curricula, especially at higher levels of education, to the requirements and stipulations of national human resource

plans. Of course schools must provide the much needed human resources in Africa, but to over-emphasize the resource priority would in the long-run arrest the creative potential of schooling. It is high time that African policy makers were admonished in no uncertain terms that in their quest for utilizing schooling for national development, they must at the same time be prepared to accept the ineluctable fact that the job of schooling:

is not to provide persons with techniques, but, more importantly, to provide techniques with critical, informed, and humane persons ... . Its primary task is not to be relevant but to help form a society in which its ideals of free inquiry and rationality shall themselves become chief touch-stones of relevance [Scheffler (1973, p.135)].

This, then is the pragmatic conception of schooling which holds out the promise for the future of Africa.

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### Résumé

*Cet article est une critique du 'Strong Programme' en sociologie de la connaissance, dont l'élaboration est l'oeuvre de Barnes et Bloor. Ses auteurs considèrent ce programme comme un exemple d'approche scientifique neutre valant pour toutes les demandes de connaissance.*

*Selon les auteurs, les demandes de connaissance empruntent leur justification épistémologique à des critères locaux. En d'autres termes, le Strong Programme défend l'idée de l'existence possible de diverses rationalités, au lieu d'une rationalité, comme le dicte l'épistémologie de la recherche scientifique. Un argument peut donc être considéré comme non valable dans un contexte donné, et valable dans un autre contexte. L'auteur prend position contre cette thèse en argumentant que l'analyse interlinguistique sur laquelle se basent Barnes et Bloor n'est même possible que lorsqu'il y a des points communs de communication entre des contextes linguistiques. Cette argumentation constitue la défense du point de vue consistant à dire que l'humanité représente une unité du point de vue épistémologique.*

# BARNES, BLOOR AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Lansana Keita

## I

Barry Barnes and David Bloor have become associated over the years with what has become known as the "**Strong Programme**" in the sociology of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> This programme, while attempting to study the question of knowledge scientifically, threatens to call into question the very idea of an evaluatively neutral epistemology, which has indeed been the major credential of scientific knowledge. On account of its epistemological stance the *Strong Programme* in the sociology of knowledge has been viewed by orthodox epistemologists as an insupportable theory of strong relativism.

What is perhaps novel about the Barnes-Bloor thesis is that it seeks to extend the idea of relativism beyond its philosophically (and sociological) accustomed boundaries of value theory, to those areas where science and orthodox epistemology have determined that analysis and inquiry could yield linguistically and contextually invariant results. These areas are those of empirical science, mathematics and logical analysis. Thus, according to Barnes and Bloor, there are no empirically and logically determinable universals.

I propose to take issue with just this idea in this paper and to argue that any discussion which claims to prove that epistemological relativism is defensible interlinguistically is logically flawed merely by virtue of its claim. In the course of the discussion I shall also discuss other interesting attempts to refute the Barnes-Bloor thesis. Finally, I shall also try to demonstrate that this thesis may be justified, but not for the reasons cited by the authors. Barnes and Bloor claim to be able to support epistemological relativism empirically; I seek instead to support a variant of it by appealing to the idea of a necessarily privileged and particularistic epistemology engendered by a human subject - empirical object interaction.

For Barnes and Bloor an essential element of the Strong Programme is their version of the equivalence postulate which states that all beliefs are on par with one another with respect to the causes of their credibility. It is not that all beliefs are equally true or equally false, but that regardless of truth or falsity the fact of their credibility is to be seen as equally problematic.[Barnes and Bloor (1982, p. 23)]

The basis of this approach, for Barnes and Bloor, is that their programme goes beyond that of the traditional epistemologist, in that instead of seeking to confirm or disconfirm the truth content of a particular claim, it seeks to

outline the specific causes for the claim. Thus it is evident that the Barnes-Bloor programme does not distinguish between knowledge claims according to some rationally grounded theory of knowledge.

The general argument proposed by the Barnes-Bloor thesis is that the distinction usually made between belief claims (credibility) and knowledge claims (validity) is not supportable, with the epistemological implication that 'causes' and 'evidencing reasons' are ontologically on par. The basis for this, is that "something is only evidence for something else when set in the context of assumptions which give it meaning- assumptions, for instance, about what is a **priori** probable or improbable" [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.29)].

In support of their relativistic epistemology Barnes and Bloor take issue with the idea that incommensurable relativisms are unsupported because of a common core of cognition that universalizes human experience. This thesis argues that there is indeed a basis for a neutral or context invariant epistemology which would justify supporting the traditional distinctions between validity and mere belief. This common core of beliefs would refer to direct perceptual observations and simple inferences. The basis for this assumption is the belief that simple observations and basic inferences are common to all conceptual contexts on the grounds of empirical evidence, and the belief that the physical structure of the brain is species specific, thereby making intra and interlinguistic communication and discourse possible.

Barnes and Bloor argue that the idea of a 'rational bridgehead' (Martin Hollis' metaphor) between different linguistic contexts cannot be supported since the "particulars of experience are ordered into clusters and patterns **specific to a culture**" [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.38)]. The point here is that meanings are always conventional, hence there are really no simple perceptual observations. The authors support this by pointing out that for the Karam people of New Guinea the intention (hence extension) of the term "yakt" (translated as "bird") is not identical with the English word "bird." In the class of birds the Karam include bats but exclude cassowaries. According to Barnes and Bloor this demonstrates that there are no truly empirical terms and that the qualitative distinction usually made between theoretical and observational terms is a spurious one.

Barnes and Bloor further take issue with the idea that among the simple inferences that could constitute the rational bridgehead between linguistic contexts is the logical rule of *modus ponens*. This claim in defense of the rational bridgehead is attributed to theorists like Hollis and Lukes [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.40)]. Barnes and Bloor argue on the other hand, that *modus ponens* as a rule of logical inference is problematic. But one

could argue that, although *modus ponens* is indeed problematic for metatheorists of logic, this rule is intuitively grasped interlinguistically and is used invariably as a principle of action. In fact, *modus ponens* in its conditional form is nothing other than a rule of inductive inference, a rule for which there is no evidence of non-acknowledgement in any linguistic context. One might consider the following thinking pattern by farmers in an agricultural society linguistically distinct from that of Barnes and Bloor. "If the rains have come, then the soil will be ready for growing crops." This conditional statement of the form "if  $p$  then  $q$ " would have been established over time, hence the community when confronted with "the rains have come" ( $p$ ) would infer "the soil will be ready for planting" ( $q$ ). It is evident from this that the Barnes-Bloor rejection of the possibility of a linguistic rational bridgehead is not empirically supportable. I shall elaborate on this later.

The Barnes-Bloor critique of the rule of *modus ponens* as an acceptable logical principle on which an interlinguistic rational bridgehead could be constructed, could itself be expanded on by pointing out that if *modus ponens* is expressed as a conditional statement then it is certainly problematic as a form of the principle of inductive inference. However the rule of *modus ponens* may be expressed as a rule in which  $p > q$  is expressible as the universal statement  $(x)(Fx > Gx)$ . Thus any institution of  $Fx$  would logically yield a corresponding instantiation of  $Gx$ .

I state the above to refute the claim made by Barnes and Bloor, in support of A.N. Prior's paper,<sup>2</sup> "that appeal to rules and meanings cannot by itself justify our intuitions about validity, because these rules and meanings are themselves judged according to those intuitions. . ." [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.43)]. The fact is that our species intuitions concerning basic logical inferences are themselves grounded in our "shared material world" (Barnes and Bloor do concede that the human species shares the material world), hence the interlinguistic appeals to *modus ponens* as inductive inference, and conjunction as simple enumeration.

In their critique of theories supportive of an interlinguistic epistemological core on account of the evident universal adherence to the basic principles of logic, - *modus ponens* and noncontradiction - Barnes and Bloor argue against the possible appeal to the idea of homologous cerebral structures among members of different linguistic groups. As they put it: "to invoke neuronal structure is no better than to invoke social structure, both moves seek explanations rather than justifications" [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.44)]. The problem with this is that while we do have empirical evidence that social structures change diachronically and vary from region to region, it has not been determined that the physical

structure of the brain (as distinct from behaviour) differs in terms of gross physical features from individual to individual. Proof of this derives from the fact that every human being has the capacity to learn at least one language which can be translated (even if roughly) into any other language. In response to Barnes and Bloor the following general statement is fitting: there is no extant language which has not been translated (however roughly) into some other language. An analogy with the computer science concepts of hardware and software is fitting here. Empirical evidence informs us that the human brain may be compared to an all-purpose computer hardware which could operate with any software (language). This has not been shown to be the case with nonhuman cerebral structures. Again the burden of proof rests on Barnes and Bloor.

Barnes and Bloor argue in conclusion that "just as our experience of a shared material world does not itself guarantee shared verbal descriptions of it, so our shared natural rationality does not guarantee a unique logical system" [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.44)]. In response to the above précis of the Barnes-Bloor thesis I want to argue that since the human experience of the material world is shared, interlinguistic translations and interpretations are indeed possible. The same principle holds with regard to our *shared natural rationality*: there are indeed different systems of logic, but they are structured necessarily on the fundamental logical principles of identity and non-contradiction.

## II

In this paragraph, I want to strengthen my critique of the Barnes and Bloor thesis by demonstrating that the strong relativism endorsed by the former produces contradictory results. Let us note first of all that the Anglo-Saxon linguistic and cultural context from which Barnes and Bloor express their ideas is a result of a dynamic amalgamation of very distinct and independent linguistic contexts. Modern English is in fact a hybrid combination of autochthonous local languages of Britain and the linguistically quite disparate languages of Greek, Latin and Norman French. The same applies to the development of formal systems such as mathematics and formal logic in the Anglo-Saxon context.

It is obvious that the linguistic and intellectual contexts of the Greek logicians of Aristotle's period and those of the non-literate inhabitants of Britain were quite distinct. So if one were to endorse the Barnes-Bloor thesis of incommensurable linguistic contexts, it would have been impossible for early British scholars to be certain that Aristotle's logic and the writings of the other Greek philosophers were ever fully



understood by themselves and others. Yet much of the logical structure of modern English and mathematics as understood in its local contexts is derived from the earlier ideas of the Greeks, who had accepted and embellished the ideas on mathematics and science developed by the Egyptians, Sumerians, Babylonians and others.

It is apparent, therefore, from the history of ideas that the structures of some contemporary civilizations are founded on the synthesis of linguistically disparate cultural complexes as in the case of modern Anglo-Saxon culture. Yet one has the impression from the discussions of Barnes and Bloor on modern logic, mathematics and philosophy, that they take the theoretical foundations of these disciplines for granted, despite the fact that their modern structures derive from linguistic structures quite distinct from those of modern Europe. The linguistic contexts of the Greek and medieval worlds indeed differ from those of modern European society. Yet this is precisely the issue raised by Barnes and Bloor: the indeterminacy of interlinguistic communication.

In Knowledge and Social Imagery, for example, Bloor discusses the Greek conception of number which he argues is fundamentally different from the modern version [Bloor (1976, p.4)]. In a critique of Frege's conception of number [Bloor (1976, pp.82-94)] Bloor also engages in an analysis of mathematical concepts originally expressed in German, a linguistic context indeed different from that of modern English. It should seem evident from the above that Bloor, in his attempt to seek justification for logically autonomous linguistic contexts, makes references to the ideas of thinkers (Frege and Pythagoras, in this instance) who hail from linguistic contexts rather distinct from that of Bloor himself. But in making these references for the purpose of dialogue Bloor must necessarily assume the existence of some rational bridgehead which would make possible the interpretation of other linguistic contexts from the vantage point of another.

In fact were there no common point of interlinguistic communication between linguistic universes even Evans-Pritchard's claims (unsupportable, I would argue) that the logic of the Azande (a South Sudan African people) was autonomous and internally consistent, though apparently contradictory from that author's perspective. The question is how could Evans-Pritchard have been able to make claims about Zand modes of reasoning unless there was some mutually implicitly agreed core of communication.

It should be noted too that the question raised by Evans-Pritchard on the logic of the Azande was further discussed by Bloor in Knowledge and Social Imagery. Bloor argues that the apparent contradictions in Zand discourse detected by Evans-Pritchard in their discussions with him, we

not really inconsistencies at all, but instances of Zande logic [Bloor (1976, pp.123-130)].

Tim Triplett and Richard Jennings have engaged in a debate on this issue<sup>3</sup> with Jennings supporting the Bloor thesis and Triplett expressing reservations. In the light of this discussion I argue that the apparent inconsistencies in the logic of the Azande should not be viewed as evidence of an alternative logic but only as another instance of the multimodal kinds of reasonings that are common to every linguistic context. On issues involving purely formal thinking, reasoning patterns derive strictly from the principles of identity and noncontradiction, but in matters viewed as socially and culturally important patently inconsistent thinking is tolerated and defended. In the case of the Anglo-Saxon linguistic context, for example, beliefs concerning religion, social class, and cultural taboos are often discussed without adherence to the simple rules of formal logic. Further evidence of multimodal thinking is had from political debates on issues of rights, social justice, etc. I might venture to add that on the issue of social justice the fact that there is often such extreme disagreement between disputants leads one to conclude that there is inconsistent thinking within particular linguistic contexts. This phenomenon has been well noted by contemporary sociologists of knowledge such as Marx and Mannheim.

Another problem with the Barnes-Bloor thesis on the very likely possibility of incompatible linguistic frameworks is that the same principle could be applied to intralinguistic frameworks - whether between social groups or more importantly between individuals. If, as Barnes and Bloor argue, "our shared natural rationality does not guarantee a unique logical system" [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.44)] with regard to different linguistic contexts, then quite logically the same principle could be applied to different individuals within the same linguistic context on account of the nonuniform ways in which such individuals are observed to reason. Consider the fact that in an Aristotelian-based linguistic system individuals are often observed committing the logical fallacies known as affirming the consequent and denying the antecedent. Could these practices be viewed as warranting alternative logical systems?

In fact Barnes and Bloor could have made a stronger though more provocative argument by arguing that since there is no publicly certifiable evidence that we share the same material world or that our modes of reasoning about this world are identical. Philosophical discussions on the question of other minds have examined this issue in much detail. A paraphrase of this argument would state that identical utterances by different individuals do not mean that those utterances necessarily signify similar experiential states for the individuals in question. But this approach

would make matters epistemologically intractable for the Barnes-Bloor thesis. On this assumption there would be no firm basis for discourse concerning both inter and intralinguistic communication.

But in fact Barnes and Bloor assume the validity of intralinguistic communication on the basis of *our shared material world* and *our shared natural rationality*. It is this assumption, however, that leads ultimately to epistemological questions concerning their thesis, that is, it yields the basis for the notion of some common epistemological core that would afford the conditions for interlinguistic discourse. It seems evident that if one accepts the idea of a shared material world and a shared natural rationality one must also accept the possibility of both inter and intralinguistic discourse. The logical problem with the Barnes-Bloor thesis is that both authors express no scepticism concerning intralinguistic discourse but seriously question the possibility of interlinguistic communication. The question then is what are the implicit grounds on which Barnes and Bloor accept without question intralinguistic communication? It would seem to me that these grounds are none other than those concerning "our biological constitution and the way the brain is organized" [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.44)]. The authors claim that the issue here is one of explanation rather than justification. Yet the issue of 'other minds' does indeed raise questions of justification: how do we know that the sensory impressions experienced by different individuals experienced when they utter identical propositions are indeed similar. And, of course, with the focus now on justification the issue about explanation is no longer relevant.

The empirically based practical solution to the issue is this: just as we infer from appropriate behavioral manifestations and empirical circumstances that the proposition 'I am in pain' means just that, so too with appropriate behaviour in the form of ostensive identification, we make interlinguistic communication possible. Of course not all cases of interlinguistic or intralinguistic discourse are of equal confirmatory status. The less empirically based the proposition in question is, or the more reasoning that is logically consistent carries with it important social implications, the more the translation process becomes problematic. One might consider those cases involving religions or ideological beliefs for which the neutral observer is often surprised at the inconsistent thinking employed for justificatory purposes, regardless of whether the observer's vantage point is intra or interlinguistic.

I venture to argue that on strictly heuristic grounds the explanatory premise that human cerebral structures do not differ qualitatively to any discernible degree on matters involving interpretation has not been falsified since intra and interlinguistic communication has demonstrated much

success. And the basis for this success is the very idea of the rational bridgehead questioned by Barnes and Bloor. The authors argue that the idea of a rational bridgehead is applicable (in cases involving learning and interpretation in the form of, say, an adult imparting information to a child) only in situations specific to a culture [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.38)]. They deny that this concept carries a similar interpretive force in situations of interlinguistic translation. But the proof that this could be so necessarily involves some point of interlinguistic communication, which is none other than a rational core of understanding. For, without this assumption, how could the authors claim to know by way of the anthropologist Bulmer, that while for the Karam of New Guinea bats were classified as birds, cassowaries were not. Quite obviously for the Karam the term "yakt" (translated as "bird") meant simply "flying creature with feathers." And it is from this nodal point of communication that further discussion is possible. The claim now being made is easily reinforced by reference to the provable fact of individuals who are equally fluent in several languages and who have no difficulty switching from one linguistic context to another. Of course there may be problems concerning translation, but translation, interpretation and intelligibility would not be possible were some point of communication not assumed.<sup>4</sup>

I can now argue *contra* Barnes and Bloor that the fact of interlinguistic translation is best explained by the idea of a rational core between linguistic contexts. I argue too that this rational core is supported by reasoning dispositions which though intuitively understandable can also be justified according to what may be called 'principles of universal logic'. Consider in this regard the principles of identity and noncontradiction. And development of these basic principles would also be understood and justified on universal terms. The reason for this is that any complex logical system is necessarily deducible for the basic intuitive principles of identity and noncontradiction. Thus it is indeed erroneous to argue, as Barnes and Bloor do, that "the rationalist goal of producing pieces of knowledge that are both universal in their credibility and justified in text-independent terms is unattainable." [Barnes and Bloor (1982, p.46)] It is almost a truism to state that meaningful existence in the empirical world requires, irrespective of linguistic context, faithful adherence to the principles of identity and noncontradiction.

### III

Given the above it is instructive to comment on the general thesis of the Strong Programme in the sociology of knowledge supported by

Barnes and Bloor. In fact the discussion in this paper is to be understood as an examination of the merits of the Strong Programme. This programme is founded on the four principles of causality, impartiality, symmetry and reflexivity. It assumes a very unorthodox position on all four principles from an epistemological standpoint. But an analysis of the Strong Programme's stance on each of these principles reveals much inconsistency. For example, the programme claims to be impartial between true and false beliefs and seeks only the causes of such beliefs. The intent here, of course, is to analyze beliefs scientifically. But this purported scientific analysis of linguistic systems acquires plausibility only if core epistemological principles common to all human interpretive contexts are upheld.

Let us note at this juncture that the idea of epistemological relativism is as old as conceptual thought itself. The mere fact of interpersonal disagreements about truth and falsity common to all linguistic contexts testifies to this. But it was the recent growth of scientific knowledge and the development of anthropology in the West as a purported empirical science that led to increased theoretical interest in the concept itself. Because of the recent pragmatic yield of empirical science and the fact that its methodology sought only to follow and conform to the contours of nature, epistemologists were led to view it as the paragon of rationality. Anthropological research on the part of Westerners led to the development of schools of thought that viewed the totality of beliefs (both metaphysical and practical) of non-Westerners as essentially irrational.

This appraisal of non-Western linguistic contexts eventually underwent a paradigm shift with the view being promoted in some quarters that local belief structures were epistemologically defensible. Consider the initial efforts in this regard by anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard and linguist Benjamin Whorf. The erosion of the idea of epistemological absolutism with regard to the idea of one rationality was so substantial that it even affected the appraisal of scientific knowledge. Thomas Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions and Feyerabend's Against Method are well known as defenses of the idea of epistemological relativism in the history of science.

The situation at the moment is rather unsettled with commitments to, or misgivings about, the epistemological viability of relativism. One might consider the extreme relativism of Barnes and Bloor, and an equally vigorous defense of a unimodal rationalism by W. Newton-Smith.<sup>5</sup> But note too Martin Hollis' more recent critique of the Strong Programme with his statement that "some beliefs are universal among mankind." [Hollis (1982, p.75)] The reason he offers for this is that this must be a necessary condition for interlinguistic communication [Hollis (1982, p.75)].

In support of his claim Hollis appeals to the idea expressed by Strawson that human understanding is possible only on the condition that there be a "massive central core of human thinking which has no history." [Strawson (1959, p.10)] But interestingly enough, Hollis also argues that this "massive central core that makes understanding possible cannot be an empirical hypothesis." [Hollis (1982, p.83)] If I interpret Hollis properly, this central core of human thinking would include a set of interpretive claims involving "simple perceptual situations organized by rules of coherent judgement, which any rational man cannot fail to subscribe to." [Hollis (1982, p.74)] Assumedly what Hollis means by 'rational man' is any individual who accepts ostensive definition as a major signifier of meaning, structured on a logical framework that adheres strictly to the principles of identity and noncontradiction.

It would seem to me that this 'massive central core' about which Hollis speaks must be empirically grounded, given the way in which it is formulated, i.e. on simple perceptual situations. Hollis writes that "the 'massive central core' cannot be an empirical hypothesis liable in principle to be falsified in the variety of human cultures but luckily in fact upheld." [Hollis (1982, p.83)] But certainly the conditions required of the central core (i.e. empirically grounded perceptual situations) are no more than those required of empirical science.

In scientific research basic perceptual observations are understood in terms of explanatory theories and laws which seek the consensual support of the scientific community. It is well known that all scientific claims are compromised by the limitations of inductive inference yet scientific research itself is founded necessarily on empirical hypotheses. Yet despite the fact that any genuine scientific hypothesis ought, in principle, to be falsifiable this does not confer metaphysical status on the stock of actual and future scientific claims.

In a similar vein there is, therefore, no need for a transcendental or metaphysical defense of the central core of human thinking. The fact that all individuals, regardless of linguistic context, are perceptually aware of phenomena such as, say, lightening and thunder when they occur, offers the kind of basic perceptual situations that constitute the foundations of interlinguistic bridgeheads. Similarly, empirical science with its theoretical probings is prompted by nothing other than a human focusing on such phenomena (i.e. perceptual situations such as lightning and thunder). This focusing persists because of a natural human curiosity.

In fact it is this universally agreed on groundedness of basic empirical claims that has fostered the diachronic and interlinguistic growth of human knowledge. Ironically the linguistic context in which the nature of

knowledge claims is now specifically being discussed is none other than the end product of interlinguistic negotiations and constructions. To be more specific, the modern Anglo-Saxon linguistic context from which Barnes and Bloor formulate their theses in favour of relativism is in fact a synthesis of disparate linguistic and cultural formulae, eventually made possible by compromise and interlinguistic negotiation. Only if there was some common interlinguistic core could this have been possible.

Barnes and Bloor argue that their Strong Programme justifies itself on the grounds that it is more scientific than those theories which, in the name of rationalism and objectivism, are founded on nonrelativist principles. But there is an immediate problem here: if the Strong Programme in the sociology of knowledge were scientific then (according to the meaning of the term "scientific") its claims would be viewed as being empirically grounded and well-confirmed by the general scientific community. But this conclusion would immediately contradict the fundamental premise of the programme. This premise states that knowledge claims need only local justification for confirmatory warrant. A serious epistemological implication of this would be the theoretical inapplicability of the Strong Programme to intralinguistic contexts. In other words the Strong Programme would be incapable of making claims about any linguistic context other than that in which it is formulated.

We are led to conclude therefore that epistemological relativism with its self imposed confinement to local ontologies is theoretically incompatible with empirical science and its constant search for universal consensus. It is interesting to note in this connection though that Barnes and Bloor are intellectually in consort with such strong antirelativists as Hacking [1982, pp.48-66] and Taylor [1982, pp.87-105] on the special status accorded to the rationalist epistemology of scientific research in the West. The key difference though is that while Hacking and Taylor argue that the epistemology required of scientific research is applicable universally with the implication that rationalities are rankable, Barnes and Bloor restrict this paradigm of analysis to the West.

The above-mentioned thinkers fail to recognize, however, that the foundations of empirical science are to be found in the basic observationally certifiable claims common to all linguistic contexts. Empirical science merely takes observation one step further for the ultimate purposes of explanation, which reduces to none other than observation with the help of instruments as appendages to the human senses. They also seem unaware of the historical evidence that the earliest, and perhaps most crucial, formulations of scientific thought are to be found in the non-Western linguistic contexts of Africa (Ancient Egypt and Nubia) and Asia

(Mesopotamia, Babylon, etc.). The West, no doubt, was able to synthesize and further develop the theoretical and technological works of these earlier, no doubt happy, beneficiaries of the contingencies of geographical location and historical movement. And surely it must have been a historical accident that Western Europe was the prime beneficiary, at a crucial historical juncture, of the intellectual patrimony of the Greeks and their African and Asian patrons in scientific and technological research.<sup>6</sup> Obviously and in opposition to the Barnes-Bloor hypothesis the historical path of science is one proof of the epistemological unity of humankind.

Another important implication of the Strong Programme is that while its authors express neutrality concerning different conceptual schemes they nevertheless justify a Western monopoly on modern scientific research with the strange claim that "science is our [i.e. Western] form of knowledge." [Bloor (1976, p.144)] But this is a questionable claim given the interlinguistic transmission and development of scientific knowledge and the importance of scientific research if only for its pragmatic yield. The principle of the epistemological unity of humankind would not know how to restrict empirically based knowledge to any particular linguistic context. Of course there are limits to this position vis a vis ontologies that deal with the nonempirical. One can imagine epistemological tolerances holding sway in matters of axiology, an attitude which is at the basis of relativistic thinking. But in matters founded on perceptual situations ontological boundaries are determined only by the limits of observation. In this respect my argument here amounts to no more than a defense of interlinguistic translatability and the implications for scientific progress in this regard.

#### IV

Yet there is a sense in which the epistemological challenge offered by the Barnes-Bloor thesis could be vindicated but not as they intended. We note first of all that all observations or claims about the empirical world can be nothing other than epistemological negotiations between the human observer and the phenomenon observed. We know from the history of epistemological analysis that this has been its central concern. The point is that all knowledge, "objective" or otherwise, is necessarily compromised, being the product of two phenomena: the observer and observed. Absolutely neutral knowledge could exist only if all phenomena were viewed simultaneously and from no privileged vantage point, i.e. from everywhere. In other words, the universe as a **whole** would be reflecting back on itself. This is the criterion against which all other kinds of knowledge must be recognized as relative. Empirical science merely



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operates on a very thin slice of reality; a slice albeit of extreme to us because that is the extent of the human connection with reality.

As species members with similar neuronal structures we must necessarily strive for observational consensus. But this consensus, as pointed out above, though supportable by the stringent epistemology of empirical science is a necessarily qualified one - on account of our particular vantage points.

In the above discussion I have attempted to evaluate critically the Barnes-Bloor thesis of the Strong Programme in the sociology of knowledge. This thesis, as we saw, attempts to extend the idea of epistemological relativism from its traditional concerns with value theory to areas such as empirical science, logic and mathematics. According to Barnes and Bloor knowledge claims regardless of linguistic context are equally valid according to the justificatory criteria of their particular local contexts. The authors seek support for their thesis by arguing for the possibilities of interlinguistic epistemological incompatibilities. But I pointed out that the mere recognition of the possibilities of such incompatibilities assumed the existence of a common epistemology that bridged the assumed ontological gaps between linguistic contexts. I argued that such communication could not have been possible without the implicit recognition on the part of Barnes and Bloor that the fundamental logical principles of identity and non-contradiction were interlinguistically upheld.

I argued too that on account of the necessarily specific vantage point of the subject-observer all propositions are necessarily non-neutral. One might even venture to argue that the principles of logic rather than indicate something absolute about the nature of the world reflect more the nature of our own thinking. But given the structure of our own mental processes, the product of a biological evolution constrained by this planet's environment, it is doubtful whether we could ever know the products of context-free reflection and observation.

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Notes

1. See David Bloor [1976] and Barry Barnes [1977]. But see especially their joint paper "Relativism, Rationalism and the Sociology of Knowledge," in Hollis and Lukes [1982]. The discussion in this paper will focus mainly on the ideas expressed in their joint paper.
2. See A. N. Prior [1960, pp.38-39].
3. See Tim Triplett [1988, pp.361-366] and Richard Jennings [1989, pp.275-285].
4. See Kwasi Wiredu [1990, p.11].
5. See W. Newton-Smith [1982, pp.106-122].
6. See the works of C. A. Diop especially Diop [1991] and also Martin Bernal [1987, 1991].

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### Résumé

*Cet article fait une analyse du 'monisme anomal' comme un essai d'explication théorique du problème traditionnel de l'interaction entre l'esprit et le corps.*

*Le fond de ce problème traditionnel réside dans la question de savoir comment l'esprit et le corps s'interagissent: pour qu'il y ait une relation causale entre les deux actions, il doit y avoir des lois causales qui relient ces actions les unes aux autres. A ce propos, certains préconisent que l'interaction entre le corps et l'esprit requiert des lois psycho-physiques.*

*Ce que cette théorie semble préconiser est l'existence de deux descriptions pour une action mentale (la description physique et la description mentale). Lorsqu'une action mentale doit avoir une relation de cause avec une action physique, la propriété nécessaire de l'action mentale dans cette relation causale est la propriété physique. Ce point de vue est moniste parce qu'il affirme que les actions mentales en rapport de cause avec les actions physiques se font sous description physique. Ceci est anomal parce qu'il affirme la causalité entre le mental et la physique sans la baser sur des lois psycho-physiques.*

*Cet article est une tentative de distinction entre le monisme anomal et les autres théories qui s'y rattachent. Nous concluons donc que même si le monisme anomal ne peut pas être entièrement séparé des problèmes conceptuels, il a cependant réussi à introduire une nouvelle tendance dans les discussions sur le sujet de l'interaction entre le corps et l'esprit.*

# ANOMALOUS MONISM AND THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

Yunusa Kehinde Salami

The mind-body problem is one of the traditional areas of philosophical discourse, and it has attracted as many theoretical explanations as there are Philosophers. One of these explanations, which is at the same time a development of some others<sup>1</sup>, is called **Anomalous Monism**.

The core aspect of this traditional problem is the causal interaction between the physical and the mental. The main problem here, is the view, there must be causal laws which relate things to each other, in order for there to be a causal relation.

As we might be expected to know, the mind or the mental can only be taken care of by psychological laws, while the body or the physical is governed by physical laws. But if the mental is to causally interact with the physical, then, for some, there must be psycho-physical laws which are required for the explanation of the interaction.

According to Jaegwom, for instance:

... in view of this nomic condition to causal relations it would seem that psycho-physical causal relations must instantiate psycho-physical laws; laws connecting types of psychological events with types of physical events. Somewhat crudely speaking, if this pain causes me to wince, or this pinprick causes a pain sensation, then there must be laws connecting pains and wincings, and pinpricks and pains, perhaps with the addition of appropriate standing conditions [Jaegwom (1979, p.32)].

Davidson outlines a position which he calls **anomalous monism**. He claims that there are no precise laws linking mental with physical states, and since psychological events are causally related to physical events, both must be subsumable under some system of causal laws. Thus, if there are no precise psycho-physical laws, the causal laws must be purely physical. From this argument, Davidson concludes that it must be possible to describe psychological events in physical terms [Glover (1976, p.10)].

Davidson maintains that although mental events causally interact with physical events<sup>2</sup>, psycho-physical laws do not exist. In order to understand this view, it is necessary to examine the three main principles of psycho-physical interactionism which Davidson considers problematic and even contradictory.

This paper shall examine Davidson's attempt to solve this contradiction by introducing what he calls the main principle of anomalous

monism<sup>3</sup>. According to Davidson, this principle is also capable of solving the apparent contradiction in maintaining that there is a causal relationship between the physical and the psychic on the one hand, and denying the existence of any psycho-physical laws on the other hand.

The first main principle of psycho-physical interactionism, is the principle of causal interaction, which states that there is at least some interaction between mental and physical events. According to the second principle, on the nomological character of causality, there must be a strict deterministic law for any causal relation. The third principle states that there are no strict deterministic laws which relate mental to physical events.

The first principle is called the principle of causal interaction, while the second is called the principle of nomological character of causality. However the third denies psycho-physical laws. If we critically examine these three principles, we would come to the conclusion that a conjunction of the third to the first two principles would yield a contradiction. The third principle which states that there are no psycho-physical laws contradicts the other two principles, so the three cannot be held together. The main objective of Davidson's anomalous monism is to see how these three can be held together without contradiction, and to do this, he introduces what he calls the main principle of anomalous monism, which states that:

When events are related as cause and effect, they have descriptions that instantiate a law [Davidson (1980, p.215)].

Extending this main principle of anomalous monism, one may argue that if a mental event causes a physical event, they must be taken to be in lawlike connection, since anomalous monism denies psycho-physical laws. We must push the discussion further, by arguing that the lawlike connection between the mental and the physical should be described by a physical description. This description will instantiate a law, but a physical law. Consequently, the mental and the physical could be related under physical laws.

If this formulation is granted, the three original principles can be reconciled without contradiction. This approach allows for deterministic laws that are purely physical, without the rejection of mental events.

What this theory says is that for a mental event, there are two descriptions (the mental and the physical description). When a mental event is causally related to a mental event, it can be described in psychological terms, but if the same mental event causally relates to a physical event this should be described in physical terms. Thus, when a mental event causally relates to a physical event, the relevant property of the mental event in this causal relation is physical.

It then follows that:

To say two things are not in lawlike connection under certain descriptions is to say that certain of their properties are not in lawlike connection or perhaps, that the things are not in lawlike connection in virtue of certain of their properties [Honderich (1982, p.61)].

Anomalous monism cannot be taken as a strict or logical identity. For the interaction to occur, the physical events must be different from mental events, and there must be a causal relationship between the mental and the physical. This view is monistic because it states that those mental events which causally relate with the physical events do so under physical descriptions. It is anomalous because it asserts causality between the mental and the physical without basing it on psycho-physical laws.

Davidson's criterion for mentality is intentionality, not privacy. For him, "the distinguishing feature of the mental is not that it is private, subjective or immaterial, but that it exhibits ... intentionality. Thus, intentional actions are clearly included in the realm of the mental along with thoughts hopes, and regrets ... " [Davidson (1980, p.211)] If we examine mental events from the perspective of intentionality used in the sense of being directed at something, I suspect that there would be a problem. After all, there are some mental events which we cannot take to be intentional. For instance, it is doubtful whether mental events such as feeling a pain, and after image can be taken as mental, based on the criterion of intentionality. However, according to Davidson this criterion covers both mental events such as pain and after images, as well as events one would "intuitively accept as physical" [Davidson (1980, p.211)].

### Can Anomalous Monism coincide with some other approaches to the Mind-Body problem?

To properly understand a concept or a theory, it is necessary to compare the concept or theory with other very related concepts or theories. Here, I would like to examine ways in which one can distinguish anomalous monism from other closely related attempts to explain psycho-physical interactionism such as reductionism and behaviorism.

According to Jaegwom, Davidson's position is not different from the physicalist position. He interprets Davidson's position as an equation between mental events and neural properties. Thus, for him:

Davidson's own solution to this problem is to embrace the physicalist thesis that mental events are after all physical events; presumably neural events in the brain, and that, as

a result, psycho-physical causation turns out to be nothing but physical-physical causation [Jaegwom (1979, p.33)].

Jaegwom, I suspect, is criticizing Davidson's anomalous monism for reducing mental events to physical events. However, I think that the question whether anomalous monism is a kind of reductionism can be easily refuted. I wish to understand reductionism as stating that the mental can be reduced to the physical. It would then follow that the mental is nothing more and above the physical. However, if my interpretation of anomalous monism is correct, it must follow that anomalous monism is not the same thing as reductionism. Davidson states:

Anomalous Monism ... rejects the thesis, usually considered essential to materialism, that mental phenomena can be given purely physical explanations ... [Davidson (1980, p.214)].

Anomalous monism thus recognizes the existence of both mental and physical states. There can be interactions between the two, but if this is the case, the mental element should be described in physical terms.

Another way of refuting the reductionist critique is through the idea of supervenience. According to the idea of supervenience, if two events are similar in all physical respects, they cannot differ in mental respect, and if an event changes in mental respect, it must also change in physical respect. Thus, although anomalous monism denies psycho-physical laws, it is consistent with the view that mental characteristics are in some sense dependent, or supervenient of physical characteristics [Davidson (1980, p.214)]. In other words, anomalous monism grants some independent characteristics to the mental events, even when the mental characteristics in some sense supervene on physical characteristics.

Davidson therefore, does not say that psychological terms can be reduced to physical terms, or that for every mental event, there must be a physical correlate. According to the reductionists, however, the only proper way to understand mental events is to reduce the mental events to physical events. Essentially, the reductionists want to do away completely with mental terms.

In contrast to this reductionist view, anomalous monism holds that you cannot reduce the mental to the physical, but only redescribe it. This view can be taken as a methodological irreducibility.

The question can then be raised whether anomalous monism is a type of Behaviorism. Analytic behaviorism claims that all mental terms can be described in physical vocabulary, that we can translate all statements



using mental language in such a way that mental language is no longer necessary.

Contrary to this, anomalous monism states that we cannot get rid of the language of the mental, and we cannot do without mentalistic language. Nevertheless, every mental event still has physical descriptions.

Davidson's position is that we explain events by describing them. So for him, mental events cannot be described only in physical terms.

Davidson is aware of the systematic failure in behaviorism. He acknowledges that the behaviorists cannot take care of all the necessary requirements. For instance, the behaviorist cannot find a physicalist language sufficient to capture the whole of mentalistic language. The important aspect of the failure is that the behaviorist cannot find a behavioral language that can serve as an equivalent to mentalistic language.

### Does Anomalous Monism have any prospect?

In this paragraph, I would like to examine the contribution of anomalous monism to the mind-body problem, in relation to other positions.

Davidson's thesis of anomalous monism is not free of problems, as is clear from some of the reactions to this thesis.

Honderich, for example, argues that anomalous monism has difficulty in accommodating the central conviction that the mental is causally efficacious [Smith (1982, p.220)]. According to Honderich, we may be tempted to mistake anomalous monism for a kind of epiphenomenalism, if Davidson's thesis is understood to claim that the purely mental has no causal connection with the physical, and is thus inefficacious. He says that:

... . If we accept the first two of the claims which issue in Anomalous Monism, along with the idea that the mental as mental causes the physical, and the principle of the Nomological character of causally -relevant properties, we have the denial of the third claim, that there are no psycho-physical lawlike connections. Hence, we have a denial of Anomalous Monism. If, on the other hand, we wish to retain the third claim and accept the idea and the principle just mentioned, we must give up the first claim as we are now understanding it, that there is causal interaction between the mental as mental and the physical ... [Honderich (1982. pp.63-64)]

Anomalous monism, however, does differ from epiphenomenalism. Epiphenomenalism holds that the physical can causally interact with the mental, though the mental cannot causally relate to the physical.

Anomalous monism, at least, to certain extent, gives room for the mental to causally interact with the physical, although described in physical terms. The mental event possesses the properties that make it capable of being described in such a way.

Nevertheless, we may ask the anomalous monist how to pick out the physical event which is identical with a given mental event. In other words: "given a mental specification of an event, how are we to determine which physical event satisfies the specification?" [Smith (1982, p.221)].

Furthermore, there is the question if there are mental events that do not have physical properties. If it is possible to find such a mental event, that will pose the problem of how such a mental event can causally interact with the physical.

The more plausible way out is to argue that each mental event has both mental and physical properties.

As was raised by Bruce Goldberg, the claim that events are only mental in so far as they are described, is not altogether clear:

It is uncertain whether Davidson means to imply that if human beings (or some sort of language using creatures) had not existed there could be no animal mental events. And it is not clear whether the concepts of mental events and physical events are symmetrical in this respect. Are events physical only as described? [Goldberg (1977, p.177)]

However, even if one can argue that anomalous monism is not equivalent to epiphenomenalism, one will still be faced with the problem of circularity. The problem of circularity arises in the statement that the mental as mental cannot cause the physical, but that only the mental as physical can cause the physical.

In order to explain the relation between the mental and the physical, the mental is said to be both mental and physical and that this is how a mental event can cause a physical event. Still, it is maintained that it is the mental element that relates causally with the physical. It is not clear, however, how Davidson would explain this circularity.

Another problem is that if we are to continue to avoid the re-introduction of psycho-physical laws, the connection between the mental and the physical properties of a given event cannot be nomological. That is, the connection between the mental and the physical is accidental [Honderich (1982, pp.63-64)].

This means that if the existence of psycho-physical laws is denied, as is done by anomalous monism, we can ask whether the interaction is accidental. But, if it is true that this interaction is accidental, then, does it not follow that given a mental event, anything could follow?

In order to save anomalous monism from this charge of accidental interaction, Smith holds that problems linked with accidental relationships do not occur. For example, according to him, not just every kind of event can follow the desire for food.

There is more than an accidental relationship between the mental and the physical. It is not just any physical antecedent that leads to a belief. It could mean that certain physical conditions produce some mental states rather than the others. It could also mean that certain mental conditions produce some physical states rather than the others. Smith argues that it is not generally true that establishing causal relations requires **bringing laws to bear**.

Smith's claim is supported by Davidson's claim that:

If one event causes another, there is a strict law which those events instantiate when properly described. But it is possible to know the singular causal relation without knowing the law or the relevant descriptions [Davidson (1980, p.224)].

This view of Davidson, should be seen in the line of his earlier statement that the mental does not constitute a closed system. That is, even if we deny psycho-physical laws, there can still be a sort of law governing the interaction without our knowing the exact law, or the relevant description. Nevertheless, this defence may seem too simple.

However, even if anomalous monism cannot be entirely absolved of conceptual problems, it nevertheless has succeeded in introducing a new trend in the discussion of psycho-physical interactionism. This new trend, I think, will generate more rigorous academic discussion for some time.

## Notes

1. Anomalous monism is a development on the identity theory. Identity theory identifies at least some mental events with physical events. Anomalous monism is an attempt to refute the view, that support for this theory can only come from psycho-physical laws. For a more detailed discussion of this view, read Donald Davidson (1980, p.209).
2. In this case, the existence of psycho-physical law is presupposed.
3. Davidson makes clear that the three first principles are not quite the principles of anomalous monism. He states that while the first two describe a version of the identity theory, the third principle, which denies strict psycho-physical laws, is not quite the principle of anomalous monism, it entails it on reasonable assumption.

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## WORLD CONFERENCE OF PHILOSOPHY

Nairobi, 21st -25th July 1991

under the title of "Philosophy, Man and the Environment"

report by Jups Kluyskens

The World Conference of Philosophy in Nairobi this year was an extraordinary meeting between the Brighton conference of 1988 and the Moskow conference of 1992. It was the first meeting of the World Conference of Philosophy on the African continent.

Unfortunately only 300 participants arrived instead of the expected 1000. Extensive dissemination of the details and facts regarding the conference might have helped to get people interested, now that this conference was finally taking place in Africa.

With regard to the theme, "Philosophy, Man and the Environment", very general discussions took place. Although, the environment reaches high on the international agenda, the question of how developing nations should and could respond to ideas, policies, production-systems and development models in the industrialised world remained unresolved. This question is important in the light of the environmental effects of the industrialized nations which have a global effect altogether. Environmental problems are no longer exclusive issues for the industrialized countries but are also of concern to Africa, regardless of the question whether African nations will or will not follow western development models and experiences. The western world however, does not seem to be effected by what Africans think about the environment or how Africans respond to such global issues. It therefore remains to be seen what impact such a conference can have in the long run and to what extent Africa can voice its concerns towards the international community. Most participants agreed that technology is not the only appropriate answer to environmental questions, and that one also needs a new attitude, mentality and morale to deal with these issues on a global and international base. How this can be established and what the philosophers' role is therein, is a question of debate.

Because this extraordinary conference took place in Africa, the relation between Africa and philosophy is an important topic. To that end some sessions were organized. It was regretted by many that the majority of African philosophers living outside the continent did not attend. One can only guess why A. Appiah, V.Y. Mudimbe or L. Outlaw and others were absent, but this meeting must not have figured high on their agenda's. This definitely influenced the potential of sessions like 'Philosophy in Africa today' or 'Philosophy and Political Thought in Modern Africa' or even 'Dependency between North and South' where one would have expected lively deliberations. Only the well attended 'Philosophy in Africa today' provoked discussion with regard to the value of African philosophy for

Europe, the role of African traditional philosophy and its impact on politics, and the role of women in philosophy and Africa today.

Interesting within the context of philosophy in Africa was the presence of white South African philosophers. They presented comprehensive and interesting papers regarding the transitions that are going on in South Africa and the effect this has on the organization of their society, universities, philosophy curricula and philosophy in Africa as such. The transitions will provoke thought when claims can be put forward by which white as well as black South African philosophers will regard themselves to be African philosophers, but with a different meaning and role. They might no longer accept the geographical boundaries which have defined African (traditional) philosophy in the past and still exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. This will add a new dimension to the debate on African philosophy.

Last but not least, the political environment in which the conference took place was noticeable within and outside the Kenyatta Conference Centre. Potential demonstrations by students backed up by the judiciary and the churches were daily newstems. Pressure groups within Kenya have tried to discuss the existing political system, multiparty systems, human rights and democracy for a long time. It was noticeable that topics like human rights and intellectual freedom and liberty remained sensitive topics to be discussed. It was therefore not surprising that a Kenyan official who was part of the opening ceremony glorified Kenya's official philosophy which (still) stands for love, peace and unity, something difficult to believe when buying a daily newspaper in Nairobi. 'Let us philosophize with sensitivity' were the words with which he opened the ceremony. "Let us philosophize with sensibility" might have been a more appropriate opening.

## BOOK REVIEW

Philosophy of Liberation by Enrique Dussel. Orbis Books: New York 1990.  
Reviewed by Willem Storm

In Mozambique I used to question my colleagues about the usefulness of importing and imitating foreign technologies, In most cases they did not give me any answer, as their minds had been indoctrinated already with the idea of the universality and unending goodness of western technology. An idea with goes together with its mirror-image: the rejection of everything local as bad and as an inhibition for development.

In his Philosophy of Liberation (the Spanish original Filosofia de la Liberacion was published already in 1977) Dussel attacks this Eurocentrism with all possible means. He also investigates the question of the possibility of a **South American Philosophy**, an **Asian Philosophy**, or an **African Philosophy**. Which is as such somewhat odd, as he himself seems to be a victim here of Eurocentrist ideology in that he is unaware of the actual existence of these non-European types of Philosophy, some of them in fact older types than the European one!

As to the question of non-European philosophies Dussel proposes the following hypothesis: "It appears possible to philosophize in the periphery - in underdeveloped and dependent nations, in dominated and colonial cultures, in a peripheral social formation - only if the discourse of the philosophy of the centre is not imitated, only if another discourse is discovered. To be different, this discourse must have another point of departure, must think other themes, must come to distinctive conclusions by a different method." A hypothesis which seems clearly in line with the idea of delinking, of Samir Amin and others.

According to Dussel the philosophy of liberation should begin by determining its geopolitical and philosophical space. His first chapter is dedicated to defining the geopolitical space in terms of the dependency theory, in terms, that is, of a capitalist and socialist centre and a periphery. Note that at the time of writing of the original text there were less question-marks behind this conceptual scheme than there are today.

In order to determine a philosophical space Dussel goes back in the history of western thinking, pointing to the fact that in the pre-socratic period the important philosophers were Italian and Turkish, from the periphery of the Greek system. The Italian Parmenides introduced the central terms being is and non-being is not. Dussel paraphrases this model as centre is and periphery is not and connects this with the observation that in the European thinking the non-being which is not and the periphery which is not are no objects for reflection. The Philosophy of Liberation

breaks with this long tradition in that it puts their non-beings right in the middle of its focus. It is a philosophy of the poor, the oppressed and women.

In the second chapter Dussel discusses the fact that in European thinking the world and politics are always analysed in terms of perception (leaving aside other senses), domination and control. The Philosophy of Liberation takes a different direction here too, and gives attention to spatialness (near or faraway; centre or periphery), politics (dominating or being dominated) and relations between persons. He uses the categories proximity (person to person), totality, mediation, exteriority, alienation and liberation.

Exteriority is the most important category for the Philosophy of Liberation. Dussel discusses it among others with the example of the dominating system in which the other appears when he cries: "I'm hungry. Give me something to eat." A cry which comes from a position outside the system and which indicates that the dominating system is not just, and has to be criticized.

The fore-mentioned six categories are discussed in chapter III again but this time in the four metaphysical moments: politics, erotics, pedagogics and anti-fetishism.

In the fourth chapter Dussel applies his results from the foregoing two chapters in nature, semiotics, poietics and economics. The philosophy of production stamped Dussel with the term 'poietics'. Here he questions among others the problem of technology transfer. For Dussel European technology is not universal and in many cases not adequate for the periphery. The praxis of liberation requires a technology that starts from LIFE and a technology of liberation must be adequate for the oppressed, the poor, the women and not defend the ideology of the centre. Technological alienation exists according to Dussel when there is a rupture between the use-value, the sign-value and the exchange-value of a technological object.

The fifth and last chapter consists of a meta-discourse over the chapters two, three and four. In this chapter he criticizes the scientists who think that their scientific world is the real world and the scientists who do not reflect on the scientific attitude of controlling, of dominating. He also criticizes the scientists, technologists and philosophers of the periphery who do not accept that the scientific, the technological and the philosophical products of the centre are contaminated in such a way that they are instruments of the neocolonialists to consolidate their powers in the periphery. In Europe Dussel only perceives the **homo filosofico ludens** who follows the fashion of the moment, who think about themes which have nothing to do with the reality of 20 million Africans who are starving to



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death, which have nothing to do with the Brazilian street-children who are killed by the local police. In the eyes of Dussel the philosopher of liberation has to be an organic philosopher in the sense of Gramsci's organic intellectual.

The English version of the book includes an appendix which is missing in the original Spanish version, and which tries to clarify the different points of view of the philosophical thinking in North America.

The Argentinean Dussel, who nowadays lives in exile in Mexico, has written a book that forces one to think again about what you as philosopher are doing. Are you with your thinking defending the centre, like Hegel in his Philosophy of Right, or do you defend the oppressed, the poor, the women. Choosing for the last option can mean loosing your job, or seeing the jail from the inside, or sometimes even being killed by the secret police of the system like Susana Bermejillo - a philosophy-student of Dussel.

Dussel sketches in this book an idea for a new kind of philosophy, which starts from the selfawareness of a people and not from that of the European people (or the ruling class). A starting point which avoids a break with the cultural orientation of the people, could avoid alienation. In the 1990's the dependency-theory, which is central to Dussel's argument, may sound much less convincing than in 1977 when the book was originally written. But the capitalist regime is still governing the world and the philosophy of liberation shall again and again be asking this system for a justification. It will ask for instance whether capitalism and democracy really go together well, as the dominant ideology maintains. Whether individualism is the highest good, whether the west is an example for all other cultures and so on.

These are critical questions which remain most relevant, whatever happens elsewhere, in the ex-communist world for instance. If it were only to explain to my daughter how it can be that her grandmother in Mozambique is starving and her grandmother in Europe is doing her best to avoid overweight.

## BOOK REVIEW

Negotiating change in South Africa, by M.B. Ramose. (forthcoming)

Reviewed by Thomas K. Ranuga.

This is one of the most important and undoubtedly the most timely and challenging books ever to be written about critical questions that must be considered in the process of negotiating change in South Africa. The book is the product of a collective and collaborative effort by three Black South Africans, Mogobe B. Ramose, Tshepo G.T. Maphala and Thabo Makhabane, who have undertaken the urgent task of clearly spelling out and vigorously defending the fundamental philosophical and political principles that should guide and inform the process of negotiations in South Africa.

Many books about South Africa, written mainly by white authors, focus primarily on the history of conflict between the major antagonistic parties - Blacks and Whites - without an in-depth analysis of the basic philosophical and political principles at stake in that conflict. This book, written from the perspective of the oppressed, fills that gaping chasm and treats the relevant and pivotal historical events as essential points of reference whilst focusing primarily on the critical analysis and discursive exposition of the basic political-moral principles that should form the basis of negotiations in South Africa. The focus is therefore on fundamental ideas, specifically principles of substantive justice. From the opening pages, the author wastes no time in pointing out that the land question is of paramount importance in terms of substantive justice and must therefore be seriously addressed in the negotiations if a just and permanent solution to the South African conflict is to be realized. The point is strongly made that there is an organic relationship between access to land and the preservation of human life. The satisfaction of basic human needs is inconceivable if people are completely excluded and denied access to land. And therefore **the right to life is inseparable from the right to land.**

In the case of South Africa, coercive expropriation of land from its rightful owners, and the subsequent denial of reasonable access to it constituted a fundamental injustice because it amounted to a refusal on the part of the oppressor to recognize the right to life of the oppressed. The question of land must therefore be confronted urgently because it is a matter of fundamental justice without which there can be no peaceful and permanent solution.

The envisaged South African constitution which is no more than a

formal and thus legal statement of the moral-political principles, rights and duties that are intended to regulate the conduct of those affected by the constitution, must have a fundamentally different juridical quality about it, if it is to eradicate once and for all the inimical relationship between the dominant and subordinate categories of the population. An essential precondition in negotiation a new constitution is the recognition and acceptance on the part of the oppressor that the oppressed masses have a fundamental right to self-determination. As far as the conquered people are concerned, in making their contribution to the creation of a new constitution, they must exercise great caution and political wisdom and avoid getting entangled in intricate rules and convoluted procedures that have nothing to do with substantive justice. They must not lose sight of the fact that they have an historic title to the land of their forefathers and must therefore insist on their inalienable right to life, land and self-determination.

The ruling class has traditionally made two claims relating respectively to the right of conquest and the corollary loss of sovereignty by the conquered people. These two claims are analyzed from the perspective of law which is Eurocentric and therefore highly problematic from the standpoint of conquered people. The so called right of conquest is rejected on the grounds that the conqueror's claims that he had acquired title to the land of the 'native population' by virtue of conquest, has, from the point of view of the conquered, not matured and is consequently invalid. The question of title to the land must therefore be put at the forefront of the agenda for a new South Africa.

The issue of returning the land to its rightful owners and making proper reparations and compensation to the dispossessed people of South Africa is methodically linked by the author to the proposition that **the right to food must be regarded as an indispensable component of the alienable human right to subsistence**. Therefore, no system that claims to be committed to the protection of human rights can morally justify the denial of the right to food because the right to food is a primary fundamental human right. This basic human right must be protected by a Bill of Rights. Any Bill of Rights that fails to guarantee the fundamental right to food must be rejected on political, moral and juridical grounds by the people of South Africa.

The author advances a brilliant argument against the system by identifying the philosophical foundations of human rights, particularly the inalienable right to human subsistence, should be made to apply to the South African polity. The political system must recognize the right to life and the pursuit of happiness in terms of principles of morality and justice.

The state must see to it that proper and necessary conditions are created and maintained for the peaceful exercise of the human right to life. The government, acting in the name of the state, has the responsibility and duty, not only to maintain law and order, but also to ensure that the fundamental human right to life is fully exercised by all citizens of the country. The *Rechtsstaat* must be complementary to the *Sozialstaat*. In essence, the *Rechtsstaat* theory acknowledges the principles that the law is the constitutive foundation of the state and the principle enshrined in the *Sozialstaat* theory is that **the state is the primary guarantor and facilitator of the protection as well as the actualization of the human right to subsistence**. The state must not only maintain law and order but should also conduct its affairs in such a manner as to meet the basic demands of social justice. The state must therefore unequivocally protect the fundamental right to human subsistence. Needless to say, this essential convergence of the dual functions of the state is lacking in the South African political system where the conqueror's opinion in South Africa tends to the view that it is better to be ideologically committed to the 'Rechtsstaat' and to be indifferent as well as much less enthusiastic about upholding the principle of the 'Sozialstaat'. This misguided dominant idea of the ruling class can be finally buried if the fundamental human right to subsistence is **inscribed in any future constitutional Bill of Rights** and protected as well as enforced by the law of the country.

Distributive justice and affirmative action are also critically analyzed and discussed as specific forms of group rights in response to the exigencies of restitution and reparations that is due to the conquered people of South Africa. Moral and juridical arguments are mounted to support legitimate claims by the dispossessed people for restitution and reparations. The fact of unjust conquest does not confer a just title to the conqueror because might does not make right. On the contrary, the oppressor must perform specific duties, based on distributive justice and affirmative action, as a recognition of the specific rights of the conquered people of South Africa.

The application of principles of distributive justice and affirmative action must follow a distinctly South African path. The American model of affirmative action which has been unilaterally created by white America shall not be easily palatable to the conquered people of South Africa unless it is modified in fundamental respects. In the same way, the jurisprudence of the United States of America on the subject cannot be accepted as an unquestionable and reliable guide on compensatory redistributive action. Distributive justice and affirmative action must be demanded by the oppressed people as rights and not benign acts of charity. Reparations are

due to the dispossessed people of South Africa and must therefore be put on the agenda of political negotiations.

At this critical juncture in the history of South Africa, whatever the real reasons for the government's apparent reluctance to continue using its formidable military power to keep Blacks in permanent subjugation, one thing that is unquestionably clear is that **the conqueror has neither relinquished control over the South African military and police nor has the conqueror publicly and unequivocally renounced the use of armed force as a means to achieve political aims.** Undoubtedly, the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa have played a major role in forcing the government to think again but whether that rethinking represents just a tactical manoeuvre or genuine change of principles remains to be seen. At any rate given the superior military power of the white minority government and the relative weakness of the Black majority, there is an urgent and imperative need on the part of all negotiating parties to implement confidence-building measures. Such measures must be taken very seriously by all sides, but especially the government in light of the highly publicized policy of secretly funding the Inkatha Freedom Party as a way of perpetuating white control through divide and rule. The onus is on the government to prove its integrity and sincerity. And therefore an important and pertinent questions that should exercise the minds of concerned people is raised by the author: "What else can the conquered people of South Africa expect the conqueror will do to them for as long as control over the military and police lies in the hands of the conqueror who has not yet renounced the use of force to achieve political aims?" The conclusion is therefore unavoidable that, in view of the fact that the white minority rulers enter negotiations from a position of relatively superior military strength, it is a matter of urgent necessity for the oppressed Blacks to fortify their camp and close ranks under the shield of unity and solidarity. Their strength lies in a united front.

Negotiating Change in South Africa is an extensively researched, well documented and intellectually high-powered book that treats an important subject from an elevated level of philosophical and political analysis. It is a major contribution to the search for peace, security and lasting happiness for all South Africans. This is without question a book for every South African interested in a just solution to the country's structural inequities and must be required reading for all parties involved in political negotiations for a new South Africa.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

Work has begun on an Encyclopedia of African Religions and Philosophy, to be edited by V.Y. Mudimbe and published by Garland Publishing, Inc. of New York City. Scheduled to appear in June, 1996, the book will comprise alphabetically arranged entries on all aspects of the subject and is intended to provide an overview of current scholarship in these fast-changing fields.

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## ERRATA

Please note the following erratum in the article by Mogobe Ramose, "Hobbes and the Philosophy of International Relations" in Quest, Vol.V, no.1, 1991, pp.18-35.

The notes should be read as follows:

### Notes

1. For a detailed discussion pertaining to Hobbes' political philosophy see Ramose [1983, pp.50-85].
2. For a detailed discussion on this topic see Ramose [1983, pp.86-92].
3. Here we have in mind Hobbes' famous essay "Of Liberty and Necessity". Bearing in mind Hobbes' methodology and his monistic materialism, his recognition of **liberty** is methodologically questionable.
4. In Bohm's article already referred to, the same author argues that "holocyclation is the fundamental description of perception, while analysis into procedative steps of separate parts or aspects is at most a useful abstraction (...). Holocyclation means that (...) perception consists, not in seeing objects as isolated entities, but rather, in an over-all awareness of the relationship between the individual's outgoing movements and the incoming sensations (...)" [1971, pp.29-30]. Bohm develops this trend of thought by way of critique of fragmentative thinking in his book entitled, Wholeness and the Implicate Order.

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Please note the following erratum in the article by Christian Neugebauer, "Hegel and Kant - a Refutation of their Racism" in Quest, Vol.V. no.1, 1991, pp.50-73.

The first alinea should be read as follows;

To conclude: Kant could not have utilized the *useful experience* because in this case he would have postulated an intelligible nature, which a priori cannot exist, since it is contradicting the categorial imperative.

The name of the author Howard H. Harriott was misspelled as Howie H. Harriott (p.3 and p.118 Vol. V.1.), our apologies.

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**Abonnements:** voir dernière page.

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