PSYCHOLOGY
IN
SOCIETY

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CONTENTS

The first <u>Psychology in Society</u> was an event.   The history of "little journals" is littered with many an introductory volume, fat with manifestoes promising a different future, more positive than the chromium-plated present and the pitted, rusting past.

But with Issue 2, the one you are reading right now, event becomes process; the one-off becomes a series.

In this issue, you are invited to engage with two critiques of the "Africanness" of ideas (in philosophy and industrial psychology) and to examine the systematic excision of the social from social psychology.

Firstly, P.J. Hountondji's article <u>African philosophy, myth and reality</u> (p 4) is a rigorous attack on "ethnophilosophy".   Rejecting concepts such as "negritude" and the African "conception of the world", Hountondji dismisses ethnology and its derivatives as pseudoscience.   There is no such thing as an "African" philosophy - rather, there is philosophy conducted by Africans.   The logical conclusion of his argument - that "African" refers to a continent, and not a unanimous worldview - makes nonsense of much of the ethnopsychology produced by the HSRC and the NIPR.

"The social in psychology," writes Grahame Hayes (The repression of the social (p 41) "has been denied a theoretical space, or at best reduced to one of its dimensions: the microanalysis of interpersonal relationships." Arguing from a materialist and realist position, Hayes explores the epistemic and ontological background to this situation. The ideological payoffs of this repression raise a series of important questions for readers in general, and social psychologists in particular.

The intrusion of ideology into science, is one of several issues powerfully tackled by Bonginkosi Nzimande in his article, Industrial psychology and the study of black workers in South Africa: a review and critique. (P 54)
"... should black workers in the first instance be understood as blacks or as workers?" he asks. With an intensive critique of recent and current South African research, Nzimande offers the reader an important opportunity to reevaluate the real function of a scientific industrial psychology in this country.

Then, there's Briefings: a new section of the journal, designed to include news of recent events in South African psychology, book reviews and concise responses to articles from prior issues.

Finally, we turn again to the idea of the "little journal." In Retrospective (Critical Arts Monograph No. 2, November 1983) the editorial collective comments on the "cottage industry" nature of Critical Arts and allied journals. Psychology in Society is no exception. We can only envy (in a necessarily restricted sense)

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the kind of money that is poured into the established academic
journals in this country.   For those of us who produced this
issue, the time has had to be reallocated from other commitments:
teaching, research, work, community involvement.   That the first
word of this editorial was written six weeks before the last,
emphasises – yet again – that all cottage industries run by
moonlight.

Grahame Hayes and Bonginkosi
Nzimande.

Paulin Hountondji's work is on the one hand quite a specific
intervention in philosophy in Africa, and a critique of 'African
philosophy' or what he refers to as ethnophilosophy, and on the
other hand offers a wide range of political and theoretical
insights for social science students in general, and psychology in
particular.   His work, from which we have taken the article
reprinted here - **African philosophy, myth and reality** (1974) -
which is also the title of his book is an in-depth discussion of
the theoretical, ideological and political presuppositions behind
the idea of a specific 'African philosophy'.   It is the notion of
an underlying unanimist, collective African world view which
ultimately is the 'key' to understanding African systems and
thought, which Hountondji criticises in this penetrating work.   He
also shows how these ideological notions of ethnophilosophy
are · linked to the notions of 'the civilised' and 'primitive'
under colonial relations of domination and expoloitation.

The eight articles which make up the book were written between 1969
and 1974, with the exception of the Postscript (1976) which is a
response and answer to some of his critics, and also a much more
explicit commitment of philosophy in Africa to the politics of
liberation.   The first four articles (which make up Part One of
his book) deal systematically with the problems of European

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writings on 'African philosophy'. He reminds us that these writings, and especially the influential book by the Belgian missionary Placide Tempels, **Bantu Philosophy**, written in 1945, were aimed mostly at an European audience. This European audience included the colonial authorities and scholars in disciplines like ethnology, anthropology, philosophy, and the study of African and 'primitive' religions. It is the persistence of this 'colonial attitude' in contemporary studies in and on African philosophy which Houtondji challenges.

It is this critique of the complex and subtle ideological penetrations in the form of various ethnophilosophies which should be of particular interest to psychology students as they too should critically assess the history of psychology in South Africa as in large part an 'ethnopsychology' (of Blacks). It is at this hidden level of theory that an ethnopsychology must be challenged, and not only in the superficial anti-racism of a liberal and reformist psychology. By simply saying, as social scientists, that we are anti-racist (in political life), does not necessarily and logically entail the absence of an ethnopsychology in our theoretical and empirical work (cf Nzimande's article in this issue). It is in the interests of scientific rigour in our psychological practices that we should engage with the arguments and analyses of Paulin Houtondji.

It is in the first four articles that Houtondji criticises the notion of an African philosopy, akin to some unamimist and collective world view. He rightly objects to different African peoples' world views being referred to as 'philosophy' in the sense

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of a common universalist 'African philosophy'. He associates this ideological effect of an ethnophilosophy as integral to the reproduction of colonial relations of production and domination.

In the second part of his book, containing one article of Anton-Wilhelm Amo, an African philosopher in Germany in the 18th century, two articles on Kwame Nkrumah - 'the African Leninist', and a final one entitled 'True and false pluralism', Hountondji details what he considers to be the only valid use of the epithet 'African' in relation to philosophy, and that as a geographical location. Philosophy in Africa. He shows the diversity of philosophy in Africa, or by Africans in his analysis of the work of Anton-Wilhelm Amo whose writings were in the non-African theoretical tradition of classical philosophy, and Nkrumah, a political philosopher (Lenin) and leader in revolutionary struggles in Africa. It is this more historical and materialist analysis of African philosophy, the **reality**, as opposed to the **myths** created concerning the transhistorical unanimist view of the African 'primitive mind', which Hountondji promotes as philosophy in Africa, and gives particular political expression to in the final article of Part Two, and the Postcript of 1976.

He argues for a cultural pluralism, given the relaity of colonial penetration in Africa, for example,

> African culture must return to itself, to its internal pluralism, and to its essential openness. We must therefore, as individuals, liberate ourselves psychologically and develop a free relationship both with African cultural tradition and with the cultural traditions of other continents. This will not be a process either of Westernization or of acculturation : it will simply be creative freedom,

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enriching the African tradition itself as an open system of
options. (p.166)

For philosophy in Africa he argues for a twofold intervention : one
in relation to scientific practice, and the other in relation to
politics and marxism. Both, however with the practical intent of
improving the conditions of life of the majority of people in
different African countries. He says,

The prime problem of philosophy in present-day Africa is
therefore how far it can contribute to the development of
science. (p.175).

For marxism and philosophy the problem is more difficult because
a number of regimes in Africa say they are 'governed' by marxist
principles, however Hountondji feels,

It is not language but practice that determines whether a
person or a regime is objectively on the right on the left.
(p.181)

furthermore,

There is a danger that the time may soon come when, in the
name of Marxism, we will be forbidden to read Marx. (p.183).

So in answering some of his critics that he had previously put
philosophy 'above' political reality in some elitist theoreticist
conception, although he still sees philosophy as a **relatively
autonomous domain**, he now argues for a commitment of philosophy to
the political realities of Africa,

We must promote positively a **Marxist theoretical tradition** in
our countries - a contradictory scientific debate around the
work of Marx and his followers. For let us not forget this:
Marxism itself is a **tradition**, a plural debate based on the
theoretical foundations laid by Marx. (p.183).

It is in these two final articles that Hountondji's ideas concerning a progressive pluralism in relation to African traditions and cultures, and philosophy in Africa are most challengingly and cogently put forward. These ideas should have particular interest and relevance for social scientists in South Africa who are genuinely concerned about transforming social scientific practice in the struggle for a non-raçial, democratic and egalitarian social order.

Some specific comments on the article **African philosophy, myth and reality** :

In this article Hountondji sets out to do two things : one is to criticise the vast literature of 'African philosophy' in so far as this literature has reproduced the ideological notion of an unanimist, collective African world view to which all Africans subscribe (transhistorically) whether they know it or not; and the second is to try to address this literature as a set of philosophical discourses and texts to the plurality of philosophy in Africa and to relate this to the political, economic and social struggles of the mass of African people. It is with this second positive critique and analysis of African philosophy that we have suggested that psychologists and other sQcial scientists might constructively engage.

To comment then briefly on Hountondji's first negative criticism of 'African philosphy' in his article as being a 'fiction of a collective system of thought', 'the subject only of mythological

expoloitation', and a 'purely imaginary dialogue'. He is correct to dismiss this 'African philosophy' as ethnophilosophy, pre-philosophy, but he does this too quickly. For example he says,

> it is a smokescreen behind which each author is able to manipulate his own philosophical views. It has nothing beyond this ideological function : it is an indeterminate discourse with no object. (emphasis added)

and again

> This seemingly universal dialogue simply encourages the worst kind of cultural particularism... because its supposed peculiarities are in the main **purely imaginary** (emphasis added)

What we mean by suggesting that Hountondji dismisses ethnophilosophy too quickly is that in seeing ethnophilosophy as ideological in the way that he does above - an imaginary effect - it could encourage identifying certain discourses and texts as ideological and hence rejecting them summarily, without subjecting them to a necessary and detailed political, historical and theoretical analysis. It is argued that his notion of ideology, which seems influenced by an Althusserian[*] conception, does not easily allow for a more concrete historical and scientific analysis of the social and theoretical practices of ethnophilosophy. It is important that we detail **how** and **why** the 'imaginary effects' of the ideological discourses of 'African philosophy' conceal, obscure, lie about, avoid, romanticise the harsh political, economic and social realities of present-day struggles in Africa. This is in fact the urgent theoretical and political task facing social

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[*] He was a student in Paris in the sixties at the time of Althusser ascendancy in marxist philosophy.

scientists, or in Hountondji's case - philosophers, in (South) Africa at the moment. It is the difficult **reality** of the unreality promoted by ethnophilosophers that we must analyse and expose, and not only identify as ideological, which it of course is.

In conclusion Hountondji's work can be recommended as a rigorous and committed scholarship that engages with the problems of his region, West Africa and particularly Benin, in relation to the practice of philsophy. In this brief introduction we have tried to show how this work can meaningfully contribute to a materialist social science in South Africa.

Finally Hountondji's book is introduced with an excellent critical history of (West) African scholarship - mostly social science scholarship - from the early part of this century up until and including Hountondji's work itself, by Abiola Irele, Professor of French Literature at the University of Ibadon. It critically assesses the work of African scholars in their attempts to struggle against the domination of their cultures and societies by colonialism and capitalism, from Senghorian negritude and its critiques to the 'new' philosophy of Marcien Towa and Hountondji in post-colonial Africa. A comprehensive and critical history of social science in South Africa would certainly help us in trying to develop a democratic social scientific practice in a politically transformed and free South Africa.

**AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY, MYTH
AND REALITY**

Paulin J. Hountondji

From chapter 3 of his text called <u>African Philosophy</u>:
<u>Myth and Reality</u> London : Hutchinson, 1983 (1976
French).

This has been reprinted with the kind permission of
Hutchinson, London.   This book is available in hard
and soft cover.   The soft cover sells for about R14.

I must emphasize that my theme is **African philosophy, myth** and
reality, whereas one might have expected the conventional formula,
myth or reality?   I am not asking whether it exists, whether it is
a myth or a reality.   I observe that it does exist, by the same
right and in the same mode as all the philosophies of the world: in
the form of a **literature.**   I shall try to account for this
misunderstood reality, deliberately ignored or suppressed even by
those who produce it and who, in producing it, believe that they
are merely reproducing a pre-existing thought through it: through
the insubstantiality of a transparent discourse, of a fluid,
compliant ether whose only function is to transmit light.   My
working hypothesis is that such suppression cannot be innocent:
this discursive self-deception serves to conceal something else,
and this apparent self-obliteration of the subject aims at
camouflaging its massive omnipresence, its convulsive effort to
root in reality this fiction filled with itself.   Tremendous
censorship of a shameful text, which presents itself as impossibly

transparent and almost non-existent but which also claims for its object (African pseudo-philosophy) the privilege of having always existed, outside any explicit formulation.

I therefore invert the relation: that which exists, that which is incontrovertibly given is that literature. As for the object it claims to restore, it is at most a way of speaking, a verbal invention, a **mythos**. When I speak of African philosophy I mean that literature, and I try to understand why it has so far made such strenuous efforts to hide behind the screen, all the more opaque for being imaginary, of an implicit 'philosophy' conceived as an unthinking, spontaneous, collective system of thought, common to all Africans or at least to all members severally, past, present and future, of such-and-such an African ethnic group. I try to understand why African authors, when trying to engage with philosophy, have so far thought it necessary to project the misunderstood reality of their own discourse on to such palpable fiction.

Let us therefore tackle the problem at a higher level. What is in question here, substantially, is the idea of **philosophy**, or rather, of African philosophy. More accurately, the problem is whether the word 'philosophy', when qualified by the word 'African', must retain its habitual meaning, or whether the simple addition of an adjective necessarily changes the meaning of the substantive. What is in question, then, is the universality of the word 'philosophy' throughout its possible geographical applications.

My own view is that this universality must be preserved — not
because philosophy must necessarily develop the same themes or even
ask the same questions from one country or continent to another,
but because these differences of **content** are meaningful precisely
and only as differences of **content**, which, as such, refer back to
the essential unity of a single discipline, of a single style of
inquiry.

The present chapter will therefore endeavour to develop the
conclusions of the first two. In particular, it will attempt to
show, first, that the phrase 'African philosophy', in the enormous
literature that has been devoted to the problem, has so far been
the subject only of mythological exploitation and, second, that it
is nevertheless possible to retrieve it and apply it to something
else: not to the fiction of a collective system of thought, but to
a set of philosophical discourses and texts.

I shall try to evince the existence of such texts and to determine
both the limits and essential configurations, or general
orientations, of African philosophical literature.

The popular concept of African philosophy

Tempels' work will again serve us as a reference.[1] We will not
summarize or comment upon it again but will simply recall the
6author's idea of philosophy, the meaning of the word 'philosophy'
in the phrase 'Bantu philosophy'. More than once Tempels
emphasizes that this philosophy is experienced but not thought and
that its practitioners are, at best, only dimly conscious of it:

Let us not expect the first Black-in-the-street (especially if he
is young) to give us a systematic account of his ontological
system.   Nevertheless, this ontology exists; it penetrates and
informs all the primitive's thinking and dominates all his
behaviour.   Using the method of analysis and synthesis of our own
intellectual disciplines, we can and therefore must do the
'primitive' the service of looking for, classifying and systema-
tising the elements of his ontological system.   (p.15).

and further

We do not claim that Bantus are capable of presenting us with a
philosophical treatise complete with an adequate vocabulary.   It
is our own intellectual training that enables us to effect its
systematic development.   It is up to us to provide them with an
accurate account of their conception of entities, in such a way
that they will recognize themselves in our words and will agree,
saying: 'You have understood us, you know us completely, you "know"
in the same we "know"'.   (p.24).

It is quite clear, then: the black man is here regarded, in
Eboussi-Boulaga's words, as the 'Monsieur Jourdain of philosophy'.[2]
Unwitting philosopher, he is the rival in silliness of Molière's
famous character, who spoke in prose without knowing it.   Ignorant
of his own thoughts, he needs an interpreter to translate them for
him, or rather an interpreter who, having formulated these thoughts
with the white world in mind, will accidentally drop a few crumbs
which will inspire the Bantu, when he picks them up, with boundless
gratitude.

We have already mentioned Césaire's criticism.   That very
necessary political critique, we said, stopped short because it
failed to follow up its own theoretical implications.   To aim
cautious criticisms, 'not at Bantu philosophy, but at the political
uses to which it is being put',[3] was to avoid questioning the
genealogy of the concept itself and to treat its appearance in
scientific literature as an accident, as though its only function

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were this very political one.   It was, in fact, tantamount to
shying away from an exposure of the profoundly conservative nature
of the ethnophilosophical project itself.

It follows that not only **Bantu Philosophy** but the whole of ethno-
philosophical literature must be subjected to an expanded and more
profound version of Cesaire's political criticism.   For if, as a
result of what might be called the ethnological division of labour
(a sort of scientific equivalent of the military scramble for the
Third World by the great powers), Tempels can pass for the great
specialist in the Bantu area, and if, too, his reconstruction of
African 'philosophy' is the more sensational because of his one-
to-one contrasts between this African pseudo-philosophy and an
equally imaginary European philosophy,[4] similar attempts have been
made by other European authors for other regions of Africa.   To
quote only a few, Marcel Griaule has devoted to the Dogons of the
present-day Republic of Mali a book currently regarded as a
classic of Dogon wisdom, **Dieu d'eau,**[5] followed by another, in
collaboration with Germaine Dieterlen, entitled **Le Renard Pâle.**[6]
Dominique Zahan has made known to the world the religion, the
spirituality and what he calls the 'philosophy' of the Bambara.[7]
Louis-Vincent Thomas has carried out painstaking research among the
Diola of Senegal and has expatiated on their wisdom, their system
of thought or, as he calls it, their 'philosophy'.[8]

As might have been expected, the example of these European authors
has been widely followed at home.   Many Africans have plunged into
the same field of research, correcting on occasion - but without
ever questioning its basic assumptions - the work of their Western

models.   Among them is the abbé Alexis Kagamé of Rwanda, with his **Philosphie bantou-rwandaise de l'être**,[9] already cited.   Then there is Mgr. Makarakiza of Burundi, who published in 1959 a study entitled **La Dialectique des Barundi**.[10]   The South African priest Antoine Mabona distinguished himself in 1960 with an article entitled 'African philosophy', then in 1963 with a text on 'The depths of African philosophy' and finally in 1964 ith a meditation on 'La spiritualite africaine'.[11]   In this concert Father A. Rahajarizafy has sounded the note of the Great Island by trying to define Malagasy 'philosophy' in an article of 1963 on 'Sagesse malgache et theologie chretienne'.[12]   In 1962, Francois-Marie Lufuluabo, a Franciscan from the former Belgian Congo, appeared in the firmament with a booklet, **Vers une théodicée bantoue**, followed in 1963 by an article entitled 'La Conception bàntoue face au christianisme', signing off in 1964 with another booklet on La **Notion luba-bantoue de l'être**.[13]   Then, in 1965, his compatriot, the abbe Vincent Mulago, devoted a chapter to African 'philosophy' in his **Visage africain du christianisme**.[14]   The former Protestant clergyman Jean-Calvin Bahoken, of Cameroun, was clearing his **Clairières métaphysiques africaines**[15] in 1967, and two years later the Kenyan pastor John Mbiti, probably fascinated by his own childhood, revealed to the world in a now classic work, **African Religions and Philosophy**, the fact that the African ignores the future hardly knows the present and lives entirely turned towards the past.[16]

Before we go on with the catalogue, let us note that all the

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authors we have just quoted are churchmen, like Tempels himself.
This explains their main preoccupation, which was to find a
psychological and cultural basis for rooting the Christian message
in the African's mind without betraying either.   Of course, this
is an eminently legitimate concern, up to a point.   But it means
that these authors are compelled to conceive of philosophy on the
model of religion, as a permanent, stable system of beliefs,
unaffected by evolution, impervious to time and history, ever
identical to itself.

Let us now turn to the lay authors, with, here again, only a few
examples.   We cannot but mention Léopold Sédar Senghor, whose
chatty disquisitions on 'negritude' are often buttressed by an
analysis of what he called, as early as 1939,'the black man's
conception of the world', a phrase which he later replaced, under
the influence of Tempels, with the 'black metaphysic'.[17]   There
are also the Nigerian Adesanya, author of an article published in
1958 on 'Yoruba metaphysical thinking', [18] the Ghanaian William
Abraham, author of a book which is remarkable in many ways, **The
Mind of Africa** [19] (I believe that a book can be instructive,
interesting, useful, even if it is founded on erroneous
assumptions); the late-lamented Kwame Nkrumah, whose famous
Consciencism can hardly be regarded as his best publication,[20] the
Senegalese Alassane N'Daw, who devoted several articles to the
subject,[21] the Camerounian Basile-Juleat Fouda, author of a
doctoral thesis defended at Lille in 1967 on 'La Philosophie
negro-africaine de l'existence' (unpublished),[22] the Dahomean
Issiaka Prosper Laleye, also the author of a thesis, 'La Conception

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de la personne dans la pensee traditionelle yoruba',[23] presented in
1970 at the Catholic University of Fribourg, in Switzerland; the
Nigerian J.O. Awolalu, author of an article entitled 'The Yoruba
philosophy of life'.[24]   And there are many others.[25]

Without being motivated quite so restrictively as the church ethno-
philosophers, these authors were none the less intent on locating,
beneath the various manifestations of African civilization, beneath
the flood of history which has swept this civilization along willy-
nilly, a solid bedrock which might provide a foundation of
certitudes: in other words, a system of beliefs.   In this quest,
we find the same preoccupation as in the negritude movement - a
passionate search for the identity that was denied by the colonizer
- but now there is the underlying idea that one of the elements of
the cultural identity is precisely 'philosophy' the idea that
every culture rests on a specific, permanent, metaphysical
substratum.

Let us now ask the crucial question: is this the usual meaning of
the word 'philosophy'?   Is it the way it is understood, for
instance, in the phrases 'European philosophy', 'nineteenth-century
philosophy', etc.?   Clearly not.   It seems as though the word
automatically changes its meaning as soon as it ceases to be
applied to Europe or to America and is applied to Africa.   This is
a well-known phenomenon.   As our Kenyan colleague Henry Odera
humorously remarks:

What may be a superstition is paraded as 'African religion', and the white world is expected to endorse that it is indeed a religion but an African religion. What in all cases is a mythology is paraded as 'African philosophy', and again the white culture is expected to endorse that it is indeed a philosophy but an African philosophy. What is in all cases a dictatorship is paraded as 'African democracy', and the white culture is again expected to endorse that it is so. And what is clearly a de-development or pseudo-development is described as 'development', and again the white world is expected to endorse that it is development - but of course 'African development'. [26]

Words do indeed change their meanings miraculously as soon as they pass from the Western to the African context, and not only in the vocabulary of European or American writers but also, through faithful imitation, in that of Africans themselves. That is what happens to the word 'philosophy': applied to Africa, it is supposed to designate no longer the specific discipline it evokes in its Western context but merely a collective world-view, an implicit, spontaneous, perhaps even unconscious system of beliefs to which all Africans are supposed to adhere. This is a vulgar usage of the word, justified presumably by the supposed vulgarity of the geographical context to which it is applied.

Behind this usage, when, there is a myth at work, the myth of primitive unanimity, with its suggestion that in 'primitive' societies - that is to say, non-Western societies - everybody always agrees with everybody else. It follows that in such societies there can never be individual beliefs or philosophies but only collective systems of belief. The word 'philosophy' is then used to designate each belief-system of this kind, and it is tacitly agreed among well-bred people that in this context it could not mean anything else.

One can easily detect in this one of the founding acts of the
'science' (or rather the pseudo-science) called ethnology, namely,
the generally tacit thesis thast non-Western societies are
absolutely specific, the silent postulate of a difference in **nature**
(and not merely in the **evolutionary stage** attained, with regard to
particular types of achievement), of a difference in **quality** (not
merely in quantity or **scale**) between so-called 'primitive'
societies and developed ones.   Cultural anthropology (another name
for ethnology) owes its supposed autonomy (notable in relation to
sociology) to this arbitrary division of the human community into
two types of society which are taken, arbitrarily and without
proof, to be fundamentally different.[27]

But let us return to the myth of unanimity.   It would seem at
first sight that this theorectical consensus postulated by
ethnophilosophy among all members of each 'primitive' community
should produce a parallel consensus, at the level of results if not
of methods, among all ethnophilosophers studying the same
community.   But, curiously enough, instead of an ideal consensus,
a fine unanimity whose transparency would have revealed the
spontaneous unanimity of all those 'primitive philosophers', ethno-
philosophical literature offers us a rich harvest of not only
diverse but also sometimes frankly contradictory works.

We have noted above such divergences between Tempels and Kagamé.
It would probably be easy to find similar differences between the
many other works relating to the 'traditional' thought of Bantus or
Africans in general, if one could overcome one's understandable
boredom, read all of them one by one, examine them patiently and

juxtapose all the views they contain.

But I can see the objection being raised that such differences are normal, that the diversity of works is a source of wealth and not of weakness, that the internal contradictions of ethnophilosophy can be found in any science worthy of the name - physics, chemistry, mathematics, linguistics, psychoanalysis, sociology, etc. - that they are a sign of vitality, not inconsistency, a condition of progress rather than an obstacle in the path of discovery. It may be added that, as in all sciences, a reality may exist without being immediately understood, and that consequently it is not surprising if an implicit system of thought can be reconstructed only as a result of long, collective and contradictory research.

The only thing this object overlooks is the 'slight difference' between the sciences cited and ethnophilosophy that they do not postulate anything remotely comparable with the supposed unanimity of a human community; that in these sciences, moreover, a contradiction is never stagnant but always progressive, never final or absolute but indicative of an **error**, of the **falsity** of a hypothesis or thesis, which is bound to emerge from a rational investigation of the object itself, whereas a contradiction between two ethnophilosophical theses is necessarily circular, since it can never be resolved by experimentation or any other method of verification. The point is that an ethnophilosophical contradiction is necessarily **antinomal** in the Kantian sense; thesis and antithesis are equally demonstrable - in other words, equally

gratuitous. In such a case contradiction does not generate synthesis but simply demonstrates the need to re-examine the very foundations of the discipline and to provide a critique of ethnophilosophical reason and perhaps of ethnological reason too.

Ethnophilosophy can now be seen in its true light. Because it has to account for an imaginary unanimity, to interpret a text which nowhere exists and has to be constantly reinvented, it is a science without an object, a 'crazed language'[28] accountable to nothing, a discourse that has no referent, so that its falsity can never be demonstrated. Tempels can then maintain that for the Bantu being is power, and Kagamé can beg to differ: we have no means of settling the quarrel. It is clear, therefore, that the 'Bantu philosophy' of the one is not the philosophy of the Bantu but that of Tempels, that the 'Bantu-Rwandais philosophy' of the other is not that of the Rwandais but that of Kagamé. Both of them simply make use of African traditions and oral literature and project on to them their own philosophical beliefs, hoping to enhance their credibility thereby.

That is how the functioning of this thesis of a collective African philosophy works: it is a smokescreen behind which each author is able to manipulate his own philosophical views. It has nothing beyond this ideological function: it is an indeterminate discourse with no object.

Towards a new concept of 'African philosophy'

Behind and beyond the ethnological pretext, philosophical views remain. The dogma of unanimism has not been completely sterile

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since it has at least generated a quite distinctive philosophical literature.

Here we must note a surprising fact: while they were looking for philosophy in a place where it could never be found - in the collective unconscious of African peoples, in the silent fold of their explicit discourse - the ethnophilosophers never questioned the nature and theoretical status of their own analyses. Were these relevant to philosophy? There lay the true but undetected problem. For if we want to be scientific, we cannot apply the same word to two things as different as a spontaneous, implicit and collective world-view on the one hand and, on the other, the deliberate, explicit and individual analytic activity which takes that world-view as its object. Such an analysis should be called 'philosophology' rather than 'philosophy' or, to use a less barbarious term, 'metaphilosophy' - but a metaphilosophy of the worst kind, an inegalitarian metaphilosophy, not a dialogue and confrontation with an existing philosophy but a reduction to silence, a denial, masquerading as the revival of an earlier philosophy.

For we know that in its highly elaborated forms philosophy is always, in a sense, a metaphilosophy, that it can develop only by reflecting on its own history, that all new thinkers must feed on the doctrines of their predecessors, even of their contemporaries, extending or refuting them, so as to enrich the philosophical heritage available in their own time. But in this case metaphilosophy does not rely on an exploitation of extra-

philosophical data or on the arbitrary over-interpretatin of social facts which in themselves bear no relation to philosophy. Metaphilosophy signifies, rather, a philosophical reflection on discourses which are themselves overtly and consciously philosophical. Ethnophilosophy, on the other hand, claims to be the description of an implicit, unexpressed world-view, which never existed anywhere but in the anthropologist's imagination. Ethnophilosophy is a pre-philosophy mistaking itself for a metaphilosophy, a philosophy which, instead of presenting its own rational justification, shelters lazily behind the authority of a tradition and projects its own theses and beliefs on to that tradition.

If we now return to our question, namely, where philosophy resides in the world-view described or in the description itself, we can now assert that if it resides in either, it must be the second, the description of that vision, even if this is, in fact, a self-deluding invention that hides behind its own products. African philosophy does exist therefore, but in a new sense, as a literature produced by Africans and dealing with philosophical problems. A contradiction? Oh no! Some may be surprised that, having patiently dismantled the ethnophilosophical machine, we should now be trying to resore it. They have simply failed to understand that we are merely recognizing the existence of that literature as **philosophical literature,** whatever may be its **value** and **credibility.** What we are acknowledging is what it is, not what it says. Having laid bare the mythological assumptions on which it is founded (these having suppressed all question of its

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status), we can now pay greater attention to the fact of its existence as a determinate form of philosophical literature which, however mystified and mystifying it may be (mystifying because mystified), nevertheless belongs to the history of African literature in general.

Let us be accurate: the issue here is only **African** ethnophilosophy. A work like **Bantu Philosophy** does not belong to African philosophy, since its author is not African; but Kagame's work is an integral part of African philosophical literature. In other words speaking of African philosophy in a new sense, we must draw a line, within ethnophilosophical literature in general, between African and non-African writers, not because one category is better than the other, or because both might not, in the last analysis, say the same thing, but because, the subjects being **African** philosophy, we cannot exclude a geographical variable, taken here as empirical, contingent, extrinisic to the content or significance of the discourse and as quite apart from any questions of **theoretical** connections. Thus Tempel's work, although it deals with an African subject and has played a decisive role in the development of African ethnophilosophy belongs to **European** scientific literature, in the same way as anthropology in general, although it deals with non-Western societies, is an embodiment of Western science, no more and no less.

A happy consequence of this demarcation is that it emphasizes certain subtle nuances and occasional serious divergences which might otherwise have passed unnoticed and which differentiate African authors whom we initially grouped together as

ethnophilosophers. It is thus possible to see the immense distance which separates, for instance, Bahoken's **Clairières métaphysiques africaines,** [29] justifiably assessed as a perfect example of ideological twaddle designed by an apparently nationalistic African to flatter the exotic tastes of the Western public from Kwame Nkrumah's **Consciencism,** written chiefly for the African public and aimed at making it aware of its new cultural identity, even though Nkrumah's book, unfortunately partakes of the ethnological conception that there can be such a thing as a collective philosophy. [30]

Another even more important consequence is that this African philosophical literature can now be seen to include philosophical works of those African authors who do not believe in the myth of a collective philosophy or who reject it explicitly. Let me cite a few of these, Fabien Eboussi-Boulaga's fine article 'Le Bantou problématique' [31] has already been mentioned. Another Camerounian, Marcien Towa, has given us a brilliant critique of ethnophilosophy in general, the **Essai sur la problématique philosophique dans l'Afrique actuelle,** followed by an incisive criticism of the Senghorian doctrine of negritude, **Léopold Sédar Senghor: négritude ou servitude?** [32] Henry Oruka Odera of Kenya has published a fine article entitled 'Mythologies as African philosophy'. [33] The Béninois (former Dahomeyan) Stanislas Spero Adotevi earned fame in 1972 with his brilliant book **Négritude et négrologues.** [34]

But more than that: African pohilosophical literature includes works which make no attempt whatever to broach the problem of

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'African philosophy', either to assert or to deny its existence. In fact, we must extend the concept to include all the research into Western philosophy carried out by Africans. This broadening of the horizon implies no contradiction: just as the writings of Western anthropologists on African societies belong to Western scientific literature, so the philosophical writings of Africans on the history of Western thought are an integral part of African philosophical literature. So, obviously, African philosophical works concerning problems that are not specially related to African experience should also be included. In this sense, the articles by the Ghanaian J.E. Wiredu on Kant, on material implication and the concept of truth,[35] are an integral part of African philosophy, as are analyses of the concept of freedom or the notion of free will [36] by the Kenyan Henry Odera or the Nigerian D.E. Idoniboye. The same can be said of the research on French seventeenth-century philosophy by the Zairois Elungu Pere Elungu, **Etendue et connaissance dans la philosophie de Malebranche**,[37] of the epistemological introduction to **Theologie positive et theologie speculative**[38] by his fellow countryman Tharcisse Tshibangu. The work of the Camerounian N'joh Mouelle, particularly **Jalons** and **De la médiocrité a l'excellence. Essai sur la signification humaine du développement**,[39] may also be placed in this category, although their subjects are not only universal but also lined with the present historical situation of Africa.

By the same token we may readily claim works like those of the Ashanti scholar Anton-Wilhelm Amo, who studied and taught in German universities during the first half of the eighteenth century, as

belonging to African philosophical literature,[40] although this may be regarded as a borderline case, since Amo was trained almost entirely in the West. But is not this the case with almost every African intellectual even today?[41]

The essential point here is that we have produced a radically new definition of African philosophy, the criterion now being the geographical origin of the authors rather than an alleged specificity of content. The effect of this is to broaden the narrow horizon which has hitherto been imposed on African philosophy and to treat it, as now conceived, as a methodical inquiry with the same universal aims as those of any other philosophy in the world. In short, it destroys the dominant mythological conception of Africanness and restores the simple, obvious truth that Africa is above all a continent and the concept of Africa an empirical, geographical concept and not a metaphysical one. The purpose of this 'demythologizing' of the idea of Africa and African philosophy is simply to free our faculty for theorizing from all the intellectual impediments and prejudices which have so far prevented it from getting off the ground.[42]

Final remarks

There can no longer be any doubt about the existence of African philosophy, although its meaning is different from that to which the anthropologists have accustomed us. It exists as a particular form of scientific literature. But, of course, once this point is established, many questions remain. For instance, how shall we distinguish philosophical literature from other forms of scientific

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literature, such as mathematics, physics, biology, linguistics, sociology, etc., inasmuch as these disciplines also develop as specific forms of literature? In other words, what is the particular object and area of study of philosophy? In more general terms, what relation is there between scientific literature and non-scientific literature (for instance, artistic literature), and why must we include philosophical literature in the first rather than the second?

This is not the place to answer these questions. All that we have tried to do so far has been to clear the ground for questions of this kind, since they presuppose that philosophy is recognized simply as a theoretical discipline and nothing else, a discipline which, like any other, can develop only in the form of literature. Moreover, such questions can never receive definite and immutable answers, for the definition of a science must be revised constantly in the light of its own progress, and the articulation of theoretical discourse in general - by which we mean the demarcation of the various sciences - is itself subject to historical change. At this point, it is true, a much harder question, or series of questions, arises: how is the object of a science determined? What conditions, economic, historical, ideological or other, contribute to fixing the frontiers of a discipline? How is a new science born? Ho does an old science die or cease to be considered a science?[43]

This is not the place to answer these questions either. But at least there is one thing we are in a position to affirm: no

science, no brand of learning can appear except as an event in language or, more precisely, as the product of discussion. The first thing to do, then, is to organize such discussions in the midst of the society where the birth of these sciences is desires. In other words, whatever the specific object of philosophy may be, the first task of African philosophers today, if they wish to develop an authentic African philosophy, is to promote and sustain constant free discussion about all the problems concerning their discipline instead of being satisfied with a private and somewhat abstract dialogue between themselves and the Western world.[44] By reorienting their discourse in this way, they will easily overcome the permanent temptation of 'folklorism' that limits their research to so-called African subjects - a temptation which has owed most of its strength to the fact that their writings have been intended for a foreign public.

It is indeed a strange paradox that in present conditions the dialogue with the West can only encourage 'folklorism', a sort of collective cultural exhibitionism which compels the 'Third World intellectual to 'defend and illustrate' the peculiarities of his tradition for the benefit of a Western public. This seemingly universal dialogue simply encourages the worst kind of cultural particularism, both because its supposed peculiarities are in the main purely imaginary and because the intellectual who defends them claims to speak in the name of his whole people although they have never asked him to do so and are usually unaware that such a dialogue is taking place.

On the contrary, it is to be hoped that when Africans start discussing theoretical problems among themselves, they will feel spontaneously the need to gather the broadest possible information on the scientific achievements of other continents and societies. They will take an interest in these achievements not because they will be held to be the best that can be attained but in order to assess more objectively, and if necessary improve, their own achievements in the same areas.

The paradox is therefore easily removed: interlocutors of the same origin rarely feel the need to exalt their own cultural particularities. Such a need arises only when one faces people from other countries and is forced to assert one's uniqueness by conforming to the current stereotypes of one's own society and civilization. Universality becomes accessible only when interlocutors are set free from the need to assert themselves in the face of others; and the best way to achieve this in Africa today is to organize internal discussion and exchange among all the scientists in the continent, within each discipline and - why not? - between one discipline and another, so as to create in our societies a scientific tradition worthy of the name. The difficult questions we have been asking concerning the origins, the definition, the boundaries, the evolution and the destiny of the various sciences, and more particularly the nature of philosopy and its relation to other disciplines, will then find their answers in the concrete history of our theoretical literature.

We must therefore plunge in and not be afraid of thinking new thoughts, of simply **thinking**. For every thought is new if we take

the word in its active sense, even thought about past thoughts, provided we are not content simply to repeat hallowed themes, catechetically and parrot-fashion, with a pout or a purr, but on the contrary boldly rearticulate these themes, justify them, give them a new and sounder foundation. Conversely, every blustering declaration of loyalty to a so-called 'modern' doctrine will be at best mere folklore - when it does not turn out to be an objective mystification - unless it is accompanied by some intellectual effort to **know, understand** and **think out** the doctrine by going beyond the more sensational formulations to the problematic on which it is founded. We cannot go on acting a part indefinitely. The time has come for theoretical responsibility, for taking ourselves theoretically.

In Africa now the individual must liberate himself from the weight of the past as well as from the allure of ideological fashions. Amid the diverse but, deep down, so strangely similar catechisms of conventional nationalism and of equally conventional pseudo-Marxism, amid so many state ideologies functioning in the Fascist mode, deceptive alibis behind which the powers that be can quietly do the opposite of what they say and say the opposite of what they do, amid this immense confusion in which the most vulgar police state pompously declares itself to be a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and neo-Fascists mouthing pseudo-revolutionary platitudes are called 'Marxist-Leninists', reducing the enormous theoretical and political subversive power of Marxism to the dimensions of a truncheon, in which, in the name of revolution, they kill, massacre, torture the workers, the trade unionists, the

executives, the students: in the midst of all this intellectual and political bedlam we must all open our eyes wide and clear our own path. Nothing less will make discussions between free and intellectually responsible individuals possible. Nothing less will make a philosophy possible.

As can be seen, then, the development of African Philosophical literature presupposes the removal of a number of political obstacles. In particular, it requires that democratic liberties and especially the right of free criticism, the suppression of which seems to constitute the sole aim and **raison d'être** of the official ideologies, should be acknowledged and jealously guarded. It is impossible to philosophize in Africa today without being aware of this need and of the pricelessness of freedom of expression as a necessary condition for all science, for all theoretical development and, in the last resort, for all real political and economic progress, too.

Briefly, and in conclusion, African philosophy exists, but it is not what it is believed to be. It is developing objectively in the form of a literature rather than as implicit and collective thought, but as a literature of which the output remains captive to the unanimist fallacy. Yet, happily, it is possible to detect signs of a new spirit. The liberation of this new spirit is now the necessary precondition of any progress in this field. To achieve that we must begin at the beginning; we must restore the right to criticism and free expression which are so seriously threatened by our regimes of terror and ideological confusion.

In short, it is not enough to recognize the existence of an African philosophical literature. The most important task is to transform it from the simple collection of writings aimed at non-African readers and consequently upholding the peculiarities of a so-called African 'world-view' that it is today into the vehicle of a free and rigorous discussion among African philosophers themselves. Only then will this literature acquire universal value and enrich the common international heritage of human thought.

NOTES

1 P Tempels, **La Philosophie Bantoue** (Paris : Presence Africaine 1949) (AS 601). The letters AS, followed by a number, refer to the 'bibliography of African thought' published by the Rev. Father Alphonse Smet, in **Cahiers philosophiques africains** no. 2 (July-December 1972), Lubumbashi. This 'bibliography', despite the fact that it lumps together philosophical and non-philosophical (i.e. sociological, ethnological, even literary) texts, is nevertheless a useful instrument for any research on African literature or Western literature concerning Africa. The number following the letters AS indicates the number of the text in Smet's 'Bibliography'.

2 F Eboussi-Boulaga, 'Le Bantou problématique', **Présence Africaine,** no. 66 (1968).

3 Aimé Césaire, **Discours sur le colonialisme** (Paris: Editions Réclame 1950) (AS 95), p.45.

4 Comparisons between the 'world-view' of Third World peoples and European philosophy involve stripping the latter also of its history, its internal diversity and its richness and reducing the multiplicity of its works and doctrines to a 'lowest common denominator'. This common stock-in-trade of European philosophy is represented in Tempels by a vague system of thought made up of Aristotle, Christian theology and horse sense.

5 AS 214.

6 M Griaule and G Dieterlen, **Le Renard pâle** (Paris: Publications of the Institute of Ethnology 1965) (AS 220).

7 Dominique Zahan, **Sociétés d'initiation bambara: le n'domo, le koré,** (Paris/The Hague: Mouton 1963 (AS 718); **La Dialectique du verbe chez les Bambara** (Paris-The Hague: Mouton 1963) (AS 713); **La Viande et la Graine, mythologie dogon** (Paris: Présence Africaine 1968) (AS 719); **Religion, spiritualité et pensée africaines** (Paris: Payot 1970) (AS 716). See my review of this last book in **Les Etudes philosophiques,** no. 3 (1971).

8 Louis-Vincent Thomas, **Les Diola. Essai d'analyse fonctionnelle sur une population de Basse-Casamance,** vols. I and II (Dakar: Mémoires de l'Institut Francais d'Afrique Noire 1959) (not mentioned in AS); 'Brève esquisse sur la pensée cosmologique du Diola', **African Systems of Thought,** prefaced by M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen (OUP 1965) (AS 620); 'Un Système philosophiques sénégalais: la cosmologie des Diola', **Présence Africaine,** nos. 32-3 (1960) (AS 638); **Cinq Essais sur la mort africaine,** Publications de la Faculté des

Lettres et Sciences humaines (Philosophie et Sciences sociales) Dakar no. 3 (1969) (AS 621): 'La Mort et la sagesse africaine. Esquisse d'une anthropologie philosophique', **Psychopathologie Africaine**, no. 3 (1967). See also other texts by the same author, cited in AS 617-39.

9 AS 294. See also, by the same author, 'L'Ethnologie des Bantu', **Contemporary Philosophy. A survey**, ed. Raymond Klibansky, vol. IV (Florence 1971) (AS 754).

10 AS 347.

11 Mongameli Antoine Mabona, 'Philosophie africaine', **Présence Africaine**, no. 30 (1960) (AS 342); 'The Depths of African Philosophy', **Personnalité africaine et Catholicisme** (Paris: Presénce Africaine 1963) (AS 343); 'La Spiritualité africaine', **Présence Africaine** no. 52 (1964) (AS 344).

12 A Rahajarizafy, 'Sagesse Malgache et théologie chrétienne', **Personnalité africaine et Catholicisme** (Paris: Présence Africaine 1963); AS 504.

13 Respectively, AS 341; 'La Conception bantoue face au christianisme', **Personnalité africaine et Catholicisme** (Paris: Presénce Africaine 1963); AS 339.

14 AS 414. The chapter in question is the eighth, entitled 'Philosophical outline'; 'Dialectique existentielle des Bantous et sacramentalisme', **Aspects de la culture noire** (Paris 1958) (AS 410).

15 Jean-Calvin Bahoken, **Clairières métaphysiques africaines** (Paris: Présence Africaine 1967) (AS 46).

16 John Mbiti, **African Religions and Philosophy** (Heinemann 1969) (AS 372); **Concepts of God in Africa** (New York: Praeger 1970) (AS 375); **New Testament Eschatology in an African Background. A Study of the encounter between New Testament theology and African traditional concepts** (OUP 1971).

17 See in particular the texts (written between 1937 and 1963) collected in **Liberté I. Négritude et humanisme.** As a theory of 'negritude', the Senghorian ethnology was always, above all, an ethnopsychology concerned essentially with defining the 'Negro soul', where sociology (usually idyllic descriptions of 'Negro society') and aesthetic analyses (commentaries, many of them excellent, on various works of art) are used mainly to reinforce this fantasy psychology. However, **ethnopsychology** always betrays the ambition to become an **ethnophilosophy** by accounting for the black 'conception of the world' as well as for the psychological characteristics. The project is clearly formulated in the celebrated 1939 article 'Ce que l'homme noir apporte' ('The black man's contribution') in which the black 'conception of the world', however, still appears as a psychological

quality: an animism, or rather, according to Senghor, an anthropopsychism. This is no longer so in the 1956 text 'The Black African aesthetic' and the 1959 text on the 'Constitutive elements of a civilization of Black African inspiration' **Liberté I,** pp. 202-17 and 252-86: apart from a few alterations, these are reprints of Senghor's reports to the First International Congress of Black Writers and Artists, Paris 1956, and to the Second Congress, Rome 1959. Explicitly referring to Tempels, but still wishing to **explain** the black's 'metaphysics' in terms of black 'psychophysiology', Senghor defines it rather as a system of ideas, an 'existentiál ontology' (ibid., pp.203-4,264-8).

The reader will therefore readily understand that I should feel reluctant to situate ethnophilosophy 'in the wake of negritude' or to treat it as a '(late) aspect of the negritude movement', as Marcien Towa does in **Essai sur la próblematique philosophique dans l'Afrique actuelle** (Yaounde: Editions Clé 1971), pp. 23, 25. If **African** ethnophilosophers are undoubtedly part of the negritude movement, they owe the philosophical pretensions of their nationalist discourse rather to the ethnophilosophy of **European** Africanists.

18 A. Adesanya, 'Yoruba metaphysical thinking', **Odu,** no. 5 (1958) (AS 15).

19 W Abraham, **The Mind of Africa** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press and Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1962(AS 5).

20 AS 436 and 438. This book will be discussed below, chapters 6 and 7.

21 Alassane N'Daw, 'Peut-on-parler d'une pensée africaine?, **Présence Africaine** no. 58 (1966) (AS 420); 'Pensée africaine et développement', **Problèmes sociaux congolais** (Kinshasa: CEP SI Publications 1966-7) (AS 419).

22 This unpublished thesis is mentioned here mainly because it is discussed a length by Marcien Towa in his critique of ethnophilosophy (Towa, **Essai sur la problématique philosophique** pp. 23-33 (AS 646).

23 Subtitled 'A phenomenological approach' and prefaced by Philippe Laburthe-Tolra (Berne: Herbert Lang 1970) (AS 325).

24 The article was published in **Présence Africaine,** no. 73, (1970) (AS 39).

25 For instance, G. de Souza, **La Conception de 'Vie' chez les Fon** (Contonou: Editions du Benin 1975); a doctoral thesis defended in 1972.

26 Henry Oruka Odera, 'Mythologies as African philosophy', **East Africa Journal,** vol. IX, no. 10 (October 1972) (not mentioned in AS).

27 See, on this point, Ola Balogun, 'Ethnology and its ideologies', **Consequence**, no. 1 (1974). See also my article on 'Le mythe de la philosphie spontanee. **Cahiers Philosophiques Africains**, no. 1 (1972), and Chapter 8 below.

28 That is, 'Language gone mad'. I have borrowed this phrase from the Zaïrois V.Y. Mudimbe, whose books **L'Autre Face du royaume, Une introduction a la critique des langages en folie** (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme 1973) ranks among the finest works written to this day on (not of) ethnology.

29. How revealing that this work was published in France 'with the help of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique'.

30 For an interpretation of the qualifications added to the 1970 edition of **Consciencism** and for an appreciation of the ideological limitations of the work, see Chapters 6 and 7 below.

31 I have mentioned this article as the most vigorous and complete critique of Tempels to date for its rigorous analysis of the contradictions in his work. Eboussi-Balaga shows that these can ultimately be reduced to

> an interplay of value and counter-value .. which characterizes the colonizer's judgements on the colonized. Bantuism is partly admirable and partly abominable. It is valuable when the colonized wish to forsake it for equality: then they are reminded that they are losing their 'souls'. But Bantuism becomes a vile hotchpotch of degenerate magical practices when the colonizer wishes to affirm his pre-eminence and legitimize his power. ('Le Bantou problématique', p.32).

However, Eboussi does not totally reject the ideal of an 'ethnological philosophy', a philosophy which would abandon the search for an 'ontological substratum for social reality', would deal with the 'mythical discourse of "native theorists"', instead of bypassing it with scorn (ibid., p.9). On this point I believe a more radical view should be taken. Later (particularly in chapter 4) we shall see why.

32 Towa, **Essai sur la problématique philosophique; Leopold Sédar Senghor: négritude ou servitude?** (Yaoundé: Editions Clé 1971) (AS 647).

33 Odera, 'Mythologies as African philosophy'.

34 S A Adotevi, **Négritude et négrologues** (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, Coll. 10/18 1972((not mentioned in AS).

35 J E Wiredu, 'Kant's synthetic **a priori** in geometry and the rise of non-Euclidean geometries', **Kantstudien**, Heft 1, Bonn (1970) (not in AS); 'Material implication and "if ... then"', **International Logic Review**, no. 6, Bologna (1972) (not in AS); 'Truth as opinion', **Universitas**, vol. 2, no. 3 (new series), University of Ghana (1973) (not in AS); 'On an African orientation in philosophy', **Second Order**, vol. 1, no. 2, University of Ife (1972) (not in AS).

36 H Odera, 'The meaning of liberty', **Cahiers Philosophiques Africains**, no. 1, Lubumbashi (1972) (not in AS); D.E. Idoniboye, 'Freewill, the linguistic philosopher's dilemma', **Cahiers Philosophiques Africains**, no. 2, Lubumbashi (1972) (not in AS).

37 E P Elungu, **Etendue et connaissance dans la philosophie de Malebranche** (Paris: Vrin 1973) (not in AS).   One may also mention the unpublished thesis defended in Paris in 1971 by the Senegalese A.R. N'Diaye, 'L'Ordre dans la philosophie de Malebranche'.

38 T. Tshibangu, **Théologie positive et théologie spéculative** (Louvain/Paris: Béatrice-Nauwelaerts 1965) (not in AS).

39 E.N'joh Mouellé, **Jalons: recherche d'une mentalité neuve** (Yaoundé: Editions Clé 1970) (AS 775); **De la médiocrité à l'excellence.   Essai sur la signification humaine du développement** (Yaoundé: Editions Clé 1970) (AS 432).

40 On Amo, see below, Chapter 5.

41 More generally, this new definition of African philosophy opens up the possibility of a history of African philosophy, whereas the very notion of such a history was unthinkable in the ideological context of ethnophilosophy.   If African philosophy is seen not as an implicit world-view but as the set of philosophical writings produced by Africans, we can at last undertake to reconstruct their chequered history, including those of Afro-Arab authors like Ibn Khaldun, Al Ghazali, etc., whatever may be the historical and theoretical distance between these texts.

42 On the gross simplification of 'primitive' societies by Western anthropologists and the need to recognize the internal diversity of African culture by 'demythologizing' the concept of Africa itself, see below, chapter 8.

43 For a consideration of these questions and some representative answers, see: L. Althusser, **for Marx** (1965), trans. B. Brewster (Allen Lane 1969); L. Althusser, èt al., **Reading Capital** (New Left Books 1970); G. Bachelard, **La Formation de l'esprit scientifique** (1947) (Paris: Vrin 1969); **Le Nouvel Esprit scientifique** (1934), 9th ed. (Paris: PUF 1966); G. Canguilhem,

Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences (Paris: Vrin
1968); M. Foucault, **The Birth of the Clinic** (1972), trans. A.M.
Sheridan Smith (Tavistock 1973); **The Order of Things** (1966),
(Tavistock 1970); **The Archaeology of Knowledge** (1969), trans.
A.M. Sheridan Smith (Tavistock 1972).

44 It is worth mentioning here the part that can be played in
   promoting this new type of dialogue by the departments of
   philosophy in African universities and the philosophical
   associations (e.g. the Inter-African Council for Philosophy)
   and their respective journals.

The repression of the Social[1]

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The development of psychology and the term "psychological" (cf Williams, 1977, pp 207-209) has often been against the domain and sciences of the social. This "against" is meant negatively, that is, the **separation** of the realms of the psychological and the social. It is **against** this traditional current that I shall try to present a rigorous conception of the psychological, which integrally incorporates a notion of the social.

The history of psychology in its study of individual behaviour has been dominated by an individualism, a psychologism, and has negated and disregarded the interaction of the social with the personal. As Resler & Walton say

"we must jettison the false conceptual divisions that official psychology erects between individual and society; one must see people and society as forming a complex unity." (p 292, in Armistead, 1974)

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[1] It might seem that this article has relied too much on quoting the various sources, for and against, the integration of the social in psycholgical theory and research. This has been done intentionally so as to demonstrate the **substantive** basis against which this article situates its critique. In contentious and ideological matters in science the charge of caricature and/or fabrication can otherwise be invoked to dismiss unpalatable critiques!

Developing this further it is argued that the "complex unity" of people and society is based on a materialist ontology which posits social reality **before** consciousness.   In other words, the scientific order of determination is physical reality - biological reality - social reality - psychological reality (cf Soper, 1979; Timpanaro, 1980).   This scientific materialism must not be construed as **reducing** the psychological to the social, or biological, or physical for that matter.   Two epistemic conditions are implied here for psychology : one ontological, the other epistemological.   Ontologically the realm of the psychological is constituted and enhanced in its articulation with priororders of determination, in this case particularly the social.   We do not come to a better comprehension of what the psychological is by negating its context.   Resler and Walton in talking about social psychology make a point in this regard which applies as pertinently to psychology in general; they say

> "What is necessary for the reconstruction of social psychology is to analyse people's psychic development and responses within a historical perspective, which recognizes that the limits on behaviour are shaped by the relations between power, politics and people."   (p 290, In Armistead, 1974).

Theoretically the ontological constitution of the psychological will directly affect the epistemological dimension.   I say theoretically, because in psychology and other social sciences there are often antinomies between ontology and epistemology. Therefore, **what** the psychological **is**, is certainly going to logically influence our (psychology's) **conception** of the

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psychological. On this basis then it seems that the separation of the psychological from other co-determining, or in the language of phenomenology, co-constituting, orders or realities is logically fallacious and epistemologically absurd.

If the psychological is not logically explained in terms of the philosophy of science (of psychology), then it seems that the explanation lies elsewhere : in its internal history, and the **ideological** distortions of its ontology and epistemology. Social reality is integrally part of the psychological and hence must constitute part of its definition. Referring again to Resler & Walton

"It is the theoretical split between the individual and society which is unreal; even the best methods and techniques would fail to put them together again" (ibid., p 283)

Jacoby (1977) corroborates this by saying that

"... psychology is not a passing fad on the fringes of society; rather it is deeply entangled in the social reality. For this reason any study of psychology must simultaneously study the society and culture of which it is a part." (p xvii)

In this book of Jacoby's, which has the title of **Social Amnesia**, he shows how in the case of post-Freudian psychology the social dimension of psychological experience has been "forgotten", repressed, and "driven out." This clearly serves ideological rather than scientific interests. Jacoby develops his memory loss analogy

"The general loss of memory is not to be explained solely

psychologically; it is not simply childhood amnesia. Rather it is **social** amnesia - memory driven out of mind by the social and economic dynamic of this society." (ibid, p.4)

Psychology has not only divorced itself from other social sciences in its rupture with the social, it has also compartmentalised its relations internally. So it would seem that the science of the social in psychology is to be found in social psychology. An investigation of social psychology reveals a strangely asocial notion of the social dimension of human experience. For example, English and English (1974) define the social as

"... whatever relates to the interaction of two or more persons or to the influence of one upon another. The term is designedly very broad; comparatively few psychological phenomena are non-social." (pp 506-507)

This definition, on its own admission, is at the same time very broad (everything is social) and very restricted (interaction between two or more persons). In another dictionary of psychology this definition is developed. Victoroff says that most specialists in the field of social psychology

"... would certainly admit that the notion of **social interaction** - a concept mediating between individual and group qualities - is central to their interests. It is psychology as the study of interaction processes : interaction between individuals, between individuals and groups, and between groups." (p 1027, in Eysenck et al, 1975)

Commenting on these kinds of definitions of the social in social psychology Armistead (1974) says

> "From early on, psychological social psychology conceived of the "social" as the **interaction between organisms** leading to differences in behavioural output, these organisms being abstracted from any ongoing real-life social context and processes." (p 13)

Predominantly the whole tradition of social psychology in the English-speaking world has been guilty of the above definitions of the social, when they have been explicit enough as to **define** the social! See for example the following texts in social psychology : Krech et al, 1962; Middlebrook, 1974; the symbolic interactionism of Karp & Yoels, 1979; and to a lesser extent the work of Sherif & Sherif (1969) in America. This work has been critically attacked by British social psychologists, and European social psychologists. See for example the critical volume edited by Armistead (1974), and the substantive social psychology of Israel & Tajfel (1972) and Billig (1978; 1982), and the German "Kritische Psychologie" (Stroebe, 1980). This is obviously just a sample of the work that has gathered around Tajfel[2] in England, and the hole marxist social psychology that has (re-)developed in Europe, especially Germany. I say "re-developed" because there has been a significant historical repression of the critical social psychology of the early Frankfurt School, that is, the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. The most famous piece of social psychology which came from this group was the work on the authoritarian personality by Adorno and his co-workers. Significantly too this work has been subject to a positivist interpretation in mainstream social psychology (cf Krech et al, 1962).

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[2] Tajfel died in 1982.

In short, the positivist influence in social psychology has been responsible for the lack of critical and theoretical reflection on substantive and fundamental issues : what is the constitution of the **social** in social psychology?   As Hartley says in discussing social psychology, "There is currently little interest in social philosophy or theoretical speculation" (p 1023, in Eysenck et al, 1975).   Criticising this positivist dominance in social psychology Armistead (1974) says

"When you combine the striving for general laws with a conception of the 'social' in terms of interaction between organisms and with the experimental, laboratory method, you end up with a social psychology that systematically ignores, both in its conceptualizations and in its predominant method, the social context in which social behaviour occurs." (p 15)

A final comment on this kind of social psychology is by Stroebe (1980), "Change in social psychological theorizing is thus more a matter of satiation than falsification." (p 106)

A further effect of positivist social psychology that needs to be discussed is the resultant conception of "society" that comes from the absent and inadequate notion of the social.   Because of the paradoxical asocial basis of much contemporary social psychology the notion of "society" is often taken for granted, or identified with the social group, or a social group (e.g. minority groups), or reified as something **outside, against,** and **alien** to the individual. We rarely see a dialectical conception of the individual in his/her social functioning.   Stroebe (1980) makes the point that,

"Social psychologists are unable to develop a general theory of social cognition which would subsume the distortion of reality through dissonance reduction as a special case, because such a theory would have to be based on assumptions about the

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objective nature of social reality, which they are unwilling to consider." (p 109)

There have more recently been some critical correctives "... to the individualistic orientation of present-day social psychology..." (ibid, p105). Stroebe talks about the emphasis on "social structural variables and functional analysis" in the "Kritische Psychologie." Armistead (1974) suggests that as

"I have already mentioned how psychological social psychology thinks of the 'social' as to do with observable social interaction. This definition of the 'social' has excluded a serious developmental or historical perspective. However, we need to follow the development and change of social behaviour and experience over time both in the individual and in society." (p 20)

Positively he says about a reconstructed social psychology that

"... we need to have a developmental perspective on the individual (the accumulation of past experience), and a historical perspective on 'society' (the accumulation of other people's experience and ideas); we need to look at real-life behaviour and pay a lot of attention to people's experiences in real life; we need to look carefully at the social context of behaviour and experience; and we need to be involved in producing social change ourselves." (p 10)

In this more coherent articulation of the social with society Resler & Walton correctly ask that we specify the dynamics of society in our conception of social psychology, thus :

"For we are not dealing with a social psychology of all societies, but a social psychology of societies in a given historical period. In our period the contours of advanced societies are determined by their relationship to the world market - a capitalist market. Thus, a social psychology which ignores these relationships and their impact on the psyche of the individual cannot be regarded as social." (p 289), in Armistead, 1974, emphasis added).

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So a social psychology must be responsive to an historical conceptionof society and a developmental conception of the individual and individuals in particular historical social formations (societies).

I have thus far discussed the problem of the social in psychology as I see it, and detailed some of the effects of this "social amnesia" in social psychology.   The social is not important simply because the materialist and realist theory of knowledge which informs this critique of psychology calls this forthsubstantively, repetitively, and sometimes vacuously (Meiksins Wood, 1981 ; Hirst & Woolley, 1982).   The whole meaning of the social in materialist scholarship is currently being debated (cf, for example Mepham & Ruben, 1979).   However it is not only a social theory like marxism which insists on the social articulation of individual experience in understanding the complexities and dynamics of human behaviour. The reviewers of personality theory and research, in the Annual Review of Psychology since 1976 at least, have been making a call for personality to be the study of social - interpersonal behaviour, and that personality loses it's meaning unless understood as situationally dependent behaviour.   They have also bemoaned the traditional separation between personality research and social psychology (cf Sechrest, 1976; Phares & Lamiell, 1977; Helson and Mitchell, 1978; Rorer & Widiger, 1983).   Sadly, it seems that these rigorous reviews of personality studies have not significantly, if at all, changed the direction of empiricist & positivist research in personality.   The extent of the problem is such that the 1983 reviewers started their article by saying

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"... we have studiously avoided most of the literature that is typically included under this topic, on the grounds that it deserves to be avoided." (pp 431432, Rorer & Widiger, 1983).

They then review literature which they feel **should** comprise the science of personality.

What then is the social that needs to be incorporated in the constitution of the personality so as not to **reduce** individual behaviour to an individualist distortion? The trouble with most social sciences, and psychology is no exception, is that there is a tendency to over-formalise concepts, and especially when trying to define complex and difficult social and human realities. The argument in this article is that the social in psychology has been denied a theoretical space, or at best reduced to one of its dimension : the micro-social analysis of interpersonal relationships. We need as psychologists to open up the space inhabited by the social (cf Deleuze, in Donzelot, 1980; and Donzelot, 1980, pp ix-xxvii).

Positively the social is a number of things and relations, and it is a mechanical social science which tries to restrict it to one set of meanings. Furthermore, the social is nothing on its own, and it is also a strained theoretical concept trying to accurately capture the complexity and totality of human social reality. For some authors it is the interaction of the personal and the political (p 9, Armistead, 1974; p 290, Resler & Walton, in Armistead, 1974; Halmos, 1978). It is also to repeat some previous quotes,

"... a **developmental** perspective on the individual (the accumulation of past experience), and a **historical** perspective on 'society' (the accumulation of other people's experience and ideas); we need to look at reallife behaviour and pay a lot of attention to people's experiences in real life; we need to look carefully at the social context of behaviour and experience; and we need to be involved in producing social change ourselves."
(p 10, Armistead, 1974, emphasis added)

And to repeat another important quote on the social, Resler & Walton say,

"What is necessary for the reconstruction of social psychology is **to analyse people's psychic development and responses within a historical perspective**, which recognizes that the limits on behaviour are shaped by the relations between power, politics and people." (p 290, in Armistead, 1974, emphasis added).

And again these authors say that,

"[I]n insisting that we examine the way members have **internalised the values of a given social system**, they have advanced social psychology. But when they go on to reject objectivity and thus the reality of structure, they lapse into metaphysics of idealism. In substance their project is atomistic; they **see individuals as creating rules not social relationships.** It is significant, therefore, that most of their work focuses on face-to-face interaction. For such action is apparently relatively unstructured. Our approach so far has been critical and somewhat negative. But it is the case that the positions outlined above show **a characteristic carelessness in moving from the individual to the social.**" (ibid, pp 288-289, emphasis added).

It is an attempt to undermine this "carelessness" of analysis of the individual and the social that this article contributes.

Finally besides someof the above theoretical and definitional statements about the social, it is also historically and substantively constituted. In short, the social is what the history of the sciences of the social have been trying to grapple with in the last two centuries : social science, sociology and

psychology, social psychology, marxism, psychoanalysis, and

feminism (cf Deleuze, in Donzelot, 1980; Donzelot, 1980).   As

Deleuze comments about the social,

> "[A]s the contours of this domain are nebulous, one has to
> recognize it first by the way it took form, beginning in the
> late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, by the way it
> sketches out its own originality in relation to older sectors,
> so that it is able to react on them and effect a new distribution
> of their functions." (p ix, in Donzelot, 1980)

Developing this "new distribution "Deleuze says

> "... the social is a **hybrid domain**, particularly in regard to
> relations between the public and the private spheres..." (ibid,
> p x - emphasis added)

Donzelot (1980) then captures the historico-theoretical movement

of the social; for psychologists the social as **process**,

> "For 'the social' is not society understood as the set of
> material and moral conditions that characterize a form of
> consolidation. It would appear to be rather the set of means
> which allow social life to escape material pressures and
> politico-moral uncertainties; the entire range of methods which
> make the members of a society relatively safe from the effects
> of economic fluctuations by providing a certain security-which
> give their existence possibilities of relations that are
> flexible enough, and internal stakes that are convincing enough,
> to avert the dislocation that divergences of interests and
> beliefs would entail." (p xxvi).

It is hoped that in critically moving through different and

problematic conceptions of the social in psychology, and concluding

with a positivity of what the social **is**, that a different and

scientifically acceptable rigour has in part been established in

trying to "define" and constitute the social.

This project must be continued, in both theoretical and empirical research, in trying to integrate and mediate between the social and the individual in constituting the domain of the psychological.

This article is based on part of the first chapter of my Masters' thesis.

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**INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY
AND THE STUDY OF BLACK
WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA :
A REVIEW AND CRITIQUE**

Bonginkosi Nzimande

"The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew :

that is the simple truth from which we must start

... It is the anti-semite who makes the Jew.

(Sartre)

1   INTRODUCTION

A number of reasons have prompted the writing of this
article.   Firstly, I have been watching painfully how
industrial psychology in South Africa has over the years,
avoided or deliberately ignored some of the critical areas
relating to the study and understanding of black workers.
Apart from glossing over the issues, the framework within
which black workers have been studied is too narrowly defined
and in almost all instances it is biased in favour of
management.

Secondly, the development of industrial psychological theory
has been characterized by a lack of critical analysis,
particularly in relation to (black) labour.   This has
resulted in very simplistic and highly questionable
conclusions and statements being made about the position and
experiences of workers.

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Thirdly, there is a significant lack of intervention in these studies and theoretical debates by both black workers and black scholars. This has evolved into a situation whereby debates about blacks in industry have been taking place without black participation which has helped reproduce the racialistic fallacy that whites are "experts" on blacks.

However, it must be emphasized that this intervention is not made for the sake of a black person's intervention, but it is an intervention by a concerned South African psychologist. This point must be emphasized as to dispel yet another myth that just because a person is black, all that he/she says is true and correct, as proponents of black consciousness would like us to believe.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to critically evaluate current methods and theoretical paradigms used by mainstream industrial psychology in the study of black labour. An attempt is made to highlight the tension between industrial psychology as a science and its study of workers. Some tentative comments are also made on the teaching of industrial psychology in South African universities, to throw further light on the subject under discussion. Lastly a very broad basis for an alternative industrial psychology framework within which to articulate the position of black workers is outlined.

However, it must be mentioned that this article is only a critique of the direction mainstream industrial psychology

has taken in South Africa.   Therefore, because of its
nature, its shortfalls may be that:

1.   Its thrust is on critical evaluation and it is not a
      positive and substantive analysis of the issues raised,
      within an alternative framework.

2.   It is also aimed at a broader audience than normally
      would be the case.   There is therefore a possibility of
      people, particularly those within a critical social
      science, to find some of the arguments too simplistic and
      common knowledge to them.

Nevertheless, these disadvantages are perhaps offset by the
fact that there is no critical evaluation of these
psychological studies on black workers (except perhaps
Fullagar (1983) in relation to labour relations).   Secondly,
before any positive critical analysis of the issues can be
done, within an alternative psychological paradigm, a critique
of the current state of affairs is the logical starting point.
Although the danger of being critical and never offering any
alternatives is realized, this article is regarded as offering
something more than that.

2   METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

For the purposes of a clearer discussion this subject is
discussed under two headings:
i) methodology and (ii) findings.

One important feature about these studies on black labour is that they have been carried out largely with the view to answering the question: "What motivates the black workers so as to improve productivity?" The bulk of them have been carried out under the auspices of the National Institute of Personnel Research (NIPR). Others have been carried out by independent researchers who are mainly psychologists, and by private organisations or companies. The limitation of reviewing only published studies is acknowledged. It is assumed, however, that the unpublished and usually confidential studies have mainly taken the form of the published ones, because bodies such as the NIPR and the HSRC have dominated and led the field of research in this area. The NIPR has also been contracted by various companies to carry out research on their behalf.

It must be pointed out, however, that this review concentrates on the general features of these studies and uses single studies as examples only where they are appropriate.

2.1 Methodology used in such studies

The one major characteristic of the methods used in such studies is that they have avoided the use of more open-ended approaches that may yield undesirable or controversial information. Such research techniques have been very popular in industrial psychology. In fact, the massive body of literature on black workers have been accumulated using such methods which restrict and exclude sensitive information.

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The first popular method which has been extensively used in studying black workers has been the critical incident technique. This technique has been most frequently used by Backer (e.g. Backer, 1973). In this method a "subject" is required to recall an incident or particular situations where he/she felt strongly motivated and enthusiastic about his/her job and another situation where the individual felt very unhappy and lacked enthusiasm. Backer (Ibid) goes on to explain that in cases where the "subject" has difficulty in formulating sequences of these events, the interviewer would "... discuss the subject's job with him in general ..." In this connection it is very important to lead the subject away from complaints of a general nature towards the identification of a specific incident by the subject" (my emphasis) (Ibid p. 60).

The second method which has also been used quite extensively is the laboratory experiment (e.g. Graen, 1962). In such studies the experimenter creates conditions that will simulate a work organization operating under different conditions. The experimenter then observes and records behaviours resulting from these different conditions. This method follows the "independent-dependent variable model" in the strictest sense, where the experimenter manipulates the independent variable and record the effects or changes in the

dependent variable.

A third technique also used extensively in psychological studies of black workers is the <u>response scale</u> and ranking techniques. In such scales the individual is asked to react to certain statements and is given a continuum, for example, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

Another approach, and perhaps the most popular approach, is statistical correlation techniques. The basic aim of this technique is to get to what extent certain variables or factors correlate with other variables or factors (e.g. Barling, 1977, Coldwell, 1982).

A closer examination of these techniques reveal a number of shortcomings. The critical incident technique for instance, has the danger of basing its analysis on two isolated events to the exclusion of other related factors in a person's work experiences. The fact that the individual is even led away from issues and complaints of a "general nature", as Backer says, can also lead to a biased and shallow understanding of a person's total work experience. One may further ask the question "To what extent can the researcher be sure that those complaints of a general nature do not form an important part of workers' experiences in industrial organisations?"

The laboratory experiment is one of the most dangerous techniques ever to be used in studies of black workers by

industrial psychology. First of all why should the psychologist worry about setting up a simulated work organisation, when real organisations, where production takes place are there, and have been with us for so many years? Is it not a waste of time to try and do the impossible, "creating" a work organisation that can never reflect all the social processes of production inherent in real industrial organisations? The laboratory experiment is so artificial and useless that it is a positive sign to observe that this technique is on the decline in industrial psychological studies of black workers in this country. For instance, the way the experimenter structures the simulated factory has a definite influence on the type of results produced. Factors included, or rather excluded, in the simulated environment will also result in particular behaviours manifested. The result of the experiment will therefore be nothing more than a reflection of how far the experimenter's imagination could stretch.

The response scale and ranking techniques have also been used in a very problematic fashion in South Africa. Firstly, in such scales the subject's manner of response is prestructured and tied to the terminology used by the researcher. The subject is unable to use his/her own terminology in explaining a particular phenomenon, and immediately the results are likely to be biased towards what the researcher wants. Secondly, the subject is not

usually given an adequate opportunity to explain why he/she agrees or disagrees. In most instances, such response scales do not give subjects the freedom to express any feelings beyond what is required by the researcher.

Ranking also has serious limitations which may have a profound impact on the nature of results produced. This technique requires that the subject arrange or rank a number of items in order of importance. The major flaw in this technique is that more often than not the subject has to rank factors given by the researcher, thereby eliminating other factors which maybe of importance to the individual. Besides this, ranking does not go beyond listing items. It does not take into account the individual reasons for a particular ranking. It remains solely at the discretion of the researcher to deduce the reasons why some factors are ranked lower or higher than the others.

Correlation studies form just about the bulk of psychological studies on black workers. It must first of all be acknowledged that correlational or, broadly speaking statistical methods, have yielded some fruitful results in industrial psychology. However this "success" has resulted in a number of researchers remaining fixed on these techniques. Correlational studies are now used indiscriminately, even where they

are inappropriate. This has prompted Strumpfer (1980)
to conclude that "... most psychologists and industrial
psychologists ... tend to be method-orientated rather
than the other way round," (p. 19).

The point which this article is trying to get to is that
although the methods as such may be useful scientific
tools, they have been used in a manner that excluded
contentious information, as it will become evident in the
discussion of results of such studies. There is also a
notable tendency in such studies in avoiding open-ended
approaches because of their potential to include
contentious issues, or aspects of worker behaviour which
industrial psychology is unable to deal with.

The point being made here is that as a starting point, a
thorough and critical review of these methods should be
undertaken as to identify their limitations or
potentialities to contribute to the development of
psychology as a relevant social science. The first
question to be asked is why is it that such methods have
yielded results that exclude social, economic, political
and ideological issues. Such issues do not only affect
the lives of black workers, they also affect the very
practice of research.

"Social research is never conducted in a political
vacuum, the structures, tensions and values of a
society condition are are reflected in the type of
social research that is produced within it. In
South Africa an authoritarian political system and
a deeply divided social structure have interacted

with one another to create a climate which is
inhospitable to free-ranging social inquiry."
(Savage, 1983, p. 21).

The problematic use of these research techniques have
manifested themselves in a number of studies.   In most
instances industrial psychological definition of problems
facing black workers has been wrongly formulated.   Let·
us illustrate this point with an example.   A number of
industrial psychologists in this country have, for
instance, attributed "low productivity" of black workers
to their cultural backgrounds which emphasizes need for
affiliation as opposed to "Western culture" which
emphasizes need for achievement and individualism (e.g.
Nasser, 1981; Coldwell and Moerdyk, 1981).

For instance Moerdyk and Coldwell (1982) argue that :

> While the white child is typically socialized
> into patterns of early independence, self-
> responsibility and competitive materialism,
> the black child in Africa is generally reared
> in patterns of group awareness, shared
> responsibility and the need to preserve and
> foster communal bonds - especially family and
> tribal bonds. (p.190).

This sweeping generalisation about blacks (including
black workers) is boldly and courageously made without
any reference to the possible influence of the current
socio-political situation in South Africa.   The problem,
according to Reese (1981) and Moerdyk (1983), is the
cultural background of the black worker, not the
political and social formation in South Africa.
According to these researchers, any research inquiry

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therefore will have to explain and solve this cultural mismatch.

> This process of trying to "fit the job to the man" is where I believe South Africa should be looking to solve its productivity problems in the short and medium terms. (Moerdyk, 1983), p. 9).

This is a very erroneous formulation of the "problem" by Reese (Ibid) and Moerdyk* (Ibid). In spite of Moerdyk himself recognizing that "...South Africa's low productivity is a multidimensional problem, reflecting a complex interaction of historic, political, social, cultural and economic factors", (p.1) he still goes on to focus only on cultural factors to the complete exclusion of the other factors. Therefore, in such instances, these research techniques are used to investigate problems whose very basis is either false or narrowly defined. The problem in the above example is defined such that use of these techniques will yield shallow and biased results.

Hindess (1973) has made a similar observation about the use of statistics in Sociology, that many sociologists have been uncritical in their use of social statistics. His conclusion on this may well be true of the way Industrial Psychologist have used these on black workers' studies. "Their use is uncritical and there is no attempt to demonstrate that the criteria in question can <u>fulfil the function assigned to them</u>" (Ibid p.44).

*"problem" is in quotes because the very issue of productivity and black workers is a subject of considerable controversy (see C. Meth, 1983).

Perhaps a second example would help to clarify this
problem. The basic model of experimental research is
the "independent-dependent variable model". McCormick
and Tiffin (1977) explains this model thus:

> In research there are two primary types of
> variables, namely, independent variables and
> dependent variables. The independent
> variable is the factor that is varied,
> frequently being controlled in some way by
> the investigator, such as level of
> illumination on a work task, the method of
> training, or size of letters in a reading
> experiment. The dependent variable (or
> criterion) is the measure of the effects of
> the independent variable such as work
> production, learning time ... (pp.11-12).

The way problems relating to black workers have been
posited using this model have also been problematic and
have never really been examined critically. Using the
same example of culture and productivity, culture in this
instance is regarded as the independent variable with
productivity as the dependent variable. The researcher
manipulates "black culture" in order to effect change in
productivity. This can be done by "civilizing" black
workers into Western culture thereby improving
productivity as Reese (op cit), again supported by
Moerdyk (op cit), claims: "The message seems obvious:
only after our black management candidates have been
'deculturized' can they benefit for present training."
(Reese, p. 23). The question to be asked here is : Can
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> In research there are two primary types of variables, namely, independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variable is the factor that is varied, frequently being controlled in some way by the investigator, such as level of illumination on a work task, the method of training, or size of letters in a reading experiment. The dependent variable (or criterion) is the measure of the effects of the independent variable such as work production, learning time ... (p11-12).

The way problems relating to black workers have been posited using this model have also been problematic and have never really been examined critically. Using the same example of culture and productivity, culture in this instance is regarded as the independent variable with productivity as the dependent variable. The researcher manipulates "black culture" in order to effect change in productivity. This can be done by "civilizing" black workers into Western culture thereby improving productivity as Reese (op cit), again supported by Moerdyk (op cit), claims: "The message seems obvious: only after our black management candidates have been 'deculturized' can they benefit for present training." (Reese, p. 23). The question to be asked here is : Can culture, which is treated as an independent variable in this instance, not be construed of as a dependent

variable in itself with the broader social formation or class position of the workers viewed as the independent variables? Can one not argue that cultural formations are a reflection of the basic economic relations and their contradictions? This, therefore, clearly shows how the very definition and counterposing of variables can be narrowly defined, with the likelihood that use of these research methods will only serve to justify the "scientificity" of the results.

One is at this stage tempted to ask why has Industrial Psychology continued to apply these methods without any full consideration of the above mentioned issues and problems. I would argue that industrial psychologists have successfully hidden behind "scientific practice" to justify their results. Since such methods and techniques have been categorized as scientific tools, they have therefore been liberally used in psychological studies of black workers, without any critical examination of the danger of being used in an ideologically biased fashion.

> And so, the idea that psychology is some sort
> of "science" is carefully maintained and
> reproduced without really being considered.
> Each succeeding generation of "scientists"
> are taught to believe that they are doing
> psychological science, and an orthodoxy
> develops which can rightly be called
> psychology's "dominant framework" (Moll,
> 1983, p.64).

What has contributed to this successful hiding behind the

banner of science? The word "science" is surrounded by a mystique that makes it difficulty for most people, including scientists, to challenge these scientific procedures. The "scientific" tools used in so many studies have over a period of time been accepted in psychology as empirically valid and have yielded consistent, scientific results. This has further contributed to the mystification of these techniques. "We loyally believe in the myth of science as apolitical and objective, as sometimes pure and above humans" (Anderson, in Rose & Rose, 1976, p.130). Although it is not the aim of this article to debate whether industrial psychology is a science or not, it is worth pointing out some of the issues to be confronted in the use of science in our society. The fact that such tools have been used under the banner of science, further warrants these few comments on this subject.

First of all it must be pointed out that science can be subject to misuse. There is a very real danger, as it is already happening that science can be used quite successfully to serve particular interests. In their analysis of the social role of the natural sciences, Rose and Rose (1976) have convincingly argued that science in the developed countries has been successfully co-opted to serve the interests of the ruling elite. This then has an important message for the "scientific" study of black workers by industrial psychologists. We must as a

matter of urgency, just like Rose and Rose (Ibid) have done in relation to the natural sciences, start asking whose science is it that we claim to be practising? Who pays for it? Who decides what problems to study? Who benefits from it? The fact that most psychological studies on black workers in South Africa have been carried out to answer questions posed by management undermines the very scientific status which industrial psychology is so much concerned about. This gives rise to one very pertinent contradiction which Industrial Psychology has thus far failed, either deliberately or through ignorance, to locate and expose. Industrial psychology is undermining the very goal it is trying to achieve i.e. scientific practice. It is also contradictory for scientific practice in industrial psychology to be unable to articulate a contradiction, whilst the very aim of science would be to explain such contradictions. In short, if science means objectivity or neutrality, as we are made to believe, it therefore cannot afford to take a side and for its problems to be formulated by management.

Secondly, it needs to be mentioned that science is not immune to ideological infiltration. The social sciences in particular (including psychology) are the most vulnerable to such infiltration. In fact, ideology is even capable of posing as science. Industrial psychologists, particularly in South Africa, need to be

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very much aware of this reality. Our psychological

practice must also guard against such dangers. Anderson

(in Rose and Rose, 1976) has made an interesting

observation in this regard, which must be a warning to

all psychologists who believe in genuine and relevant

scientific practice.

> When we look at science and technology as
> they function within the Third World
> societies, we see two contradictory
> processes. The first is a liberation
> process. Science and technology have freed
> large sections of societies from the killing
> extremes of labour and diseases. The other
> is an oppressive and exploitative device.
> (p.123).

Anderson has located yet another contradiction inherent

in scientific relations between "developed" and

"underdeveloped" countries. This relation or rather

this contradiction is a pointer to another manifestation

of the ideological role science can play in contemporary

society. Science can be advanced as panacea to a number

of problems facing the "recipients" to cover up for its

basic aim, that of facilitating social domination and

control. Yet another contradiction to be brought into

the open by industrial psychology!

Thirdly, I feel obliged to explode the myth that science

can be practised without being influenced by the social,

political, economic and ideological factors in the

particular environment in which it is practised. In

order that scientific practice be scientific it has to

take into account these factors and be able to explain
their influence on the "psychology" of those people under
study.   There is a very popular myth, which is
particularly disturbing, that science is above these
relations.   This is to a large extent a manifestation of
the negative effects of positivism in the social
sciences.   Science is part of this environment and no
matter what can be said to the contrary, it is affected
and infuenced by such issues.

> Inventions are not make in a vacuum or from
> the vacuum; "new" ideas do not fall from the
> sky; they are part of a world of attitudes,
> way of thinking and previous ideas about
> reality... (Anderson, ibid,p.125).

This myth has led to a very ahistorical practice of
science, particularly in South African industrial
psychology.   Again, Anderson aptly summarizes this
situation.

> According to the ideology of Western
> civilization, the way of presenting the
> current situation in the Third World ...
> begins by ignoring history.   Thus the world
> appears as a God given set of nations with
> some that happen to be more developed than
> others.   There are no causes for this
> situation.   It is never presented as part of
> historical process, and therefore all
> solutions offered for development are based
> on mimickery of the "advanced" countries.
> "Western thought" takes for granted that ...
> Third World countries will always be behind
> although they can get a little closer through
> some fatherly development programme. (Ibid,
> p.127).

Industrial Psychology in South Africa, in its endeavour

to study black workers scientifically, has entered into this relation with its "subjects". One does not have to search too hard to find evidence of this (e.g. Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981, 1982). Another piece of evidence on this approach to the study of Black workers, has been the application of Maslow and Herzberg's theories.

Maslow and Herzberg have been applied in a very ahistorical fashion, as if the United States and South African social formations are the same, in line with a psychology which takes the laws of human behaviour as simple universals. Without repeating Wiendick's (in Jubber, 1979) excellent work, it is worth giving some examples to illustrate his. Herzberg, for instance, studied American accountants to come up with his motivator-hygiene theory. This theory has been applied in South Africa without questioning the fact that Herzberg based his theory on research done on a strata of the American professional-managerial class. Maslow's concepts have also not been critically examined in the light of their meaning and application in the South African contexts which may be different from the American middle class definition and understanding of these. I think that Wiendieck's argument in relation to Maslow's concept of "self-actualization" clearly illustrates the deficiency of such attempts.

> The terms "self-actualization" is an empty shell until it is filled with concerete meaning. This meaning is provided by the

dominant normative system and the powerful
social structure individuals have been
socialized in without their having been asked
for their consent and without being aware of
it.. Structural societal norms, firstly,
define different ways of self-actualization
for different groups and, secondly, make
these people believe that the way given to
this is really their own choice. A person's
conviction about self-actualization of his
self concept is the result of his
socialization process and must therefore be
evaluated against this background. It would
be extremely narrow-minded if the industrial.
psychologist takes these individual beliefs
in isolation and regards them as guidelines
for his attempts to reconstruct the work-
world to fit the idea of human dignity (in
Jubber, 1979, pp.245-246).

The last comment I would like to make about science
emanates from the previous one. It should be understood
that science is a social practice - practised by human
beings living under concrete, material conditions.
Science does not emanate from "supra" human beings or
from the heavens in the sky. Such understanding will go
a long way towards the demystification of science. The
removal of this mystique is one of the most urgent tasks
facing not only industrial psychologists, but scientists
from all disciplines.

Industrial psychologists are therefore faced with two
major projects in this regard. The first immediate
project is the critical examination of the scientific
status of current industrial psychology. This would help
us define what a relevant and truly scientific industrial
psychology would be like. It is only after this task
has been undertaken can we then be in a position to

"The (the African worker) does not seem to be
at a stage yet where he thinks in terms of a
career."

properly evaluate the relevance and usefulness of the
scientific tools currently used by industrial
psychology.   This would facilitate the development and
use of relevant scientific tools, which is the second
major project for South African psychologists.   It is
also important to mention that the tools being discussed
here may not be unscientific as such, but they need to be
"liberated" from the context of the dominant
psychological practice.

However, there is a very real danger that the way these
have been used and modified in the past may have
neutralized their scientific value, hence the writing of
this article.

2.2 A Critical Overview of the Findings of these Studies

A review of the psychological studies on black workers
reveal a number of dominant themes.

The first theme that is common across many studies is
their apoliticism (apolitical explanation of findings)
and a disturbing inability to situate such findings
within the broader social context.   Vorster (1970 in
Backer, 1973*), for instance, in his reviews and
discussions of studies carried out in the sixties, makes
the following observations and conclusions.

*This critique of Vorster's arguments is a response
within his own frame of reference.   The critique
would be more damning if we analysed the class
origin and character of "career", "vocation",
"profession", etc.

"He (the African worker) does not seem to b'e
at a stage yet where he thinks in terms of a
career."

"Most workers claim they have no occupational
preferences whatever when first starting
work."
"...workers want their children to enjoy
secondary education, there seems to be no
strong desire on their behalf for
occupational advancement." (pp.34-35).

Such conclusions avoid the very fundamental questions
that are closely related to such generalizations. The
first conclusion, for instance, implies that there is an
underlying cause for this situation, but Vorster never
took his analysis further to adequately explain the
possible causes. The underlying assumption here is that
black workers, by nature or through "traditional"
cultural conditioning and by their "backwardness", do not
think in terms of a career. Vorster never bothered to
discuss influx control as one major obstacle which may
have "caused" this condition. For instance, very few
black workers have control over their work lives as a
result of influx control measures, amongst other things.
The situation facing workers is such that they do not
have a choice of where to work, in which company and
types of work to do. All is dependent on how an
individual got the job through the labour bureau
procedures. The most important factor here is the fact
that legislative measures have effectively made it
impossible for any person who goes through this procedure
to choose a career or to have an occupational choice.

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This is one fundamental political issue which is blissfully ignored by Vorster in his conclusions. Therefore such conclusions are apologetic of the broader social system which structures and controls the allocation of black workers at work. This dominant approach in South African psychology in general has been aptly summarized by Holdstock (1981).

> Since we have been unable to escape the traps of our compartmentalized approach to science, we have deduced quite misguidedly that psychology and politics are mutually exclusive. In doing so we have effectively cut ourselves off from one of the burning issues of our time. (p.126).

The second theme dominant in the approach and findings of industrial psychological studies of black workers is the "black-white dichotomy". Whilst the fundamental project and aim of positivist psychology has been to study individual differences in human behaviour, South African industrial psychology has expanded this project and taken it a step further to include the study of racial differences. For instance, the primary emphasis in the study of black workers has been on their "blackness" as opposed to "whiteness". Herzberg (in Backer, 1974), in response to the inapplicability of his theory to the South African black workers, argues that:

> The blacks are different to whites - at the moment they are interested in different factors to motivate them than is the case with most Whites - the motivators are totally absent - they don't even expect anything in the line of motivators. (p.2)

This statement has been endorsed by, amongst others, Backer (Ibid) as a basis for explaining problems related to the application of the M-H theory to black workers in South Africa. The findings of many other studies have taken this line of racial categorization. The underlying assumption is that the different racial groups need to be motivated and treated differently. Barling (1981) in his summary of a cross-cultural study of Maslow's theory in industry also categorized his findings in terms of the same notion of racial differences.

> The physiological, safety and security, and love and belongingness needs predicted promotional aspirations for the Black group, while only physiological needs predicted promotional aspirations for the Indian subjects. On the other hand promotional aspirations were not predicted significantly by any of the needs for the White group. (p.1 - Abstract, emphasis added).

Backer (1973) thinks that such approaches are consistent with a scientific method.

> For such studies a sound theoretical framework and a systematic scientific approach... is essential. The emphasis should be on differences between groups centralized/decentralized areas, rural/urban, ethnic differences...in so far as motivation is concerned. (p.62, emphasis added).

This approach raises a number of issues that should not be glossed over unchallenged. First of all these findings fit "hand in glove" with the ruling ideas in this country. Wiendieck (in Jubber, 1978) has a valid

point in this regard:

> Given the fact that South Africa is an
> apartheid society, the South African
> industrial psychologist is solicited into
> producing motivation theories for racial
> groupings because the society dictates that
> the various race groups may not be motivated
> in terms of the same opportunities for
> development, promotion, self-expression,
> remuneration, security, achievement, self
> determination, and so forth. (p.232,
> emphasis added).

This therefore confirms the arguments above about the
fact that science is not "immune" to ideological
"contamination". The importance and urgency of
relooking at the scientific status of psychology as a
whole in South Africa is further reaffirmed. Without
any understanding of the social structures within which
psychology operates,it remains incapable of separating
the wood from the trees (science from ideology). As
industrial psychologists, we must be wary of any
explanation or theory which, as its starting point,
assumes that because of "racial differences", various
race groups have to be motivated, trained or understood
differently.

We need to be very critical and examine closely all those
theories or packages especially designed for different
race groups. This would help us to determine whether we
have fallen into an ideological trap or not. Lastly but
perhaps the most important thing that needs to be
investigated and clarified about black workers is the

source of their current conditions of work. The following questions need to be answered by industrial psychology in particular : should black workers in the first instance be understood as blacks or as workers? Are they workers before they are black or is it the other way round? If in the final analysis they are primarily workers, as the present author would argue, and secondarily black what implications does this have for scientific analysis in psychology? These questions need to be explored and answered and not coercively repressed by the ruling ideas and the dominant political practices of this country. Without exploring the above questions the scientific status of industrial psychology is at stake.

The third theme evident in the findings of psychological studies on black workers is an extension of the second one. Although this may be a diversion of some kind, it nevertheless arises out of the general "findings" of the bulk of such studies. The emphasis on the racial differences in South African industrial psychological studies has led to attempts to research and explain what is called "Black Personality". This attempt to "discover" a black personality initiated in South Africa by de Ridder (1961) has culminated in a creation of a Division for Research concerned with Black Personality by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) institute for Psychometric Research founded in 1974. This development

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has led to the adaptation of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) exclusively for blacks, called the TAT-Z (see Minnaar, 1979). The development of such a test implies that there is a white or non-black personalty and secondly, that blacks cannot be assessed in terms of the same TAT that is used for whites because blacks have a different personality structure. This test has further adopted the model of the urban/rural split i.e. urban blacks are different for rural blacks.

This of course, is the cornerstone of the apartheid politics practised by the ruling group in South Africa. All that the theory of black personality is doing is reproducing, under the banner of science, the dominant ideological reasoning in South Africa.

The late seventies have witnessed the emergence of very "sophisticated" psychological theories on the South African black workers. These theories are now based on the concept of traditional African culture or values as the determining variable in black worker behaviour. For instance, Moerdyk and Coldwell (1981) argue that the main "problem" facing black employees is their African world view which is fundamentally different from the Western world of view. This postulation does not even touch on the other aspects of the everyday relationship between worker and manager. Their analysis completely ignores the social, political, economic and ideological relations in the broader South African political context. The

assumption is that there is a common underlying African world-view found in all Africans irrespective of their economic and political location in the broader society. An interesting feature of these culturally based studies is the fact that psychology has played a more prominent role in developing such arguments e.g. Nasser's adaptation of McClelland's need for achievement theory. According to Nasser (1981) blacks have a low need for achievement because black culture displays a high need for affiliation.

There are a number of grave errors in this cultural approach to the understanding of black workers. First of all this approach assumes that all blacks have the same culturally patterned behaviours and beliefs. This completely ignores the fact that blacks are not a homogeneous group. (I wish to emphasize here that this does not by any means refer to the different ethnic groupings as "created" by the state machinery.) There is now a clear dividing line between working class and middle class blacks across the so-called ethnic groups. Their life-styles and conditions of living are fast becoming radically different. Therefore to assume a common culture across class lies is a grave error and a very myopic understanding of the social structures in South Africa.

Secondly, because such analyses fail to understand the points just made they become an apology for the system.

Thirdly, traditional African culture does not exist in the manner we are made to believe. Instead there are different cultures that are emerging which almost oppose one another i.e. working class culture and black petty bourgeoisie culture. It is absurd that in present day South African we can talk of a traditional African world view in the face of such glaring structural changes, brought about by industrialization and gradual destruction of black peasant life. Does this mean that blacks exist outside of the South African social structures? This obviously cannot be true. The other problem with the cultural approach is that it has a static view of black workers. It fails dismally to understand a very simple fact : the situation of black workers is continually changing and therefore their behaviour pattern is always changing. The failure to take this into account has resulted in the very major failure of industrial psychological studies of black workers, that of developing tools of analysis which are sensitive to these structural changes. In view of the above problems this approach therefore remains unacceptable. Instead it has only been used in creating a monster in South African industrial psychology, some form of "Ethnopsychology", and this includes everything which goes with ethnic analysis of

human behaviour.   In summary, it is appropriate to quote
what Cesaire said of these attempts to create an African
philosophy and world view in Africa thirty-three years
ago!

> Bantu philosophy is an attempt to create a
> <u>diversion</u>.   It diverts attention from the
> political problems of the Bantu peoples by
> fixing it on the level of fantasy, remote
> from the burning reality of colonial
> exploitation (in Hountondji, 1983, p.37).

Hountondji* (Ibid) himself concludes that

> ... every such theoretical project, every
> attempt at systematizing the world-view of a
> dominated people is necessarily destined.
> and intended to fuel an ideological debate
> which is centred <u>elsewhere</u> - in the ruling
> classes of the dominant society (p.49).

The above exposé only leaves one with an uncomfortable
conclusion: that thus far the psychological picture of
the black worker is nothing more than an imaginary
creation of the dominant framework in South African
industrial psychology.   There still exists the real,
concrete black worker who exists somewhat outside this
conceptualization.

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*   The reader is referred to this man's works
   for a rigorous critique of writings on
   African philosophy.

3. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE TEACHING OF INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The current research framework and findings on black workers can perhaps be linked back to the teaching of industrial psychology in South African universities. The present author has made a number of personal observations on the teaching of industrial psychology in our universities which are to a large extent responsible for the reproduction of this dominant framework. These are worth mentioning to place the whole subject in perspective.

A cursory examination of university syllabi of industrial psychology clearly shows that more emphasis is placed on teaching personnel techniques rather than analytic skills to enable students to have a deeper insight into the psychological problems and issues facing South African industry. The difference between a personnel management course an an industrial psychology course today is often only in name. As a result of this, students with very poor analytical skills are produced thereby blunting their ability to analyze and reflect on the range and meaning of social, economic, political and ideological factors in industrial behaviour. That is why so many studies in industrial psychology are geared towards solving practical problems facing industry in relation to black workers. As a result industrial psychology has adopted a pro-management approach in its study of black workers, to say the least is non-academic!

The second problem in the teaching of not only industrial psychology, but psychology as a whole, is the compartmentalization of the social sciences. This artificial division of the social sciences has served to justify the exclusion of other factors considered to be outside the field of psychology. This has led to the emergence of what I would call "abstract psychologism" (a tendency to over-psychologize using abstract concepts, in spite of other evidence to the contrary, which traditionally lie outside the subject matter of psychology, e.g. need for achievement, self-actualization, etc.). This has also encouraged the analysis and explanation of black workers using these vulgar concepts.

The division of psychology into various sub-fields has also exacerbated the problem. For industrial psychology this has made emphasis being put more on "industrial techniques" rather than on psychology in industry. The "technique-oriented" teaching of the subject has made a lot of industrial psychologists "forget" that industrial psychology is nothing more but the application of general psychological principles in the analysis of industrial behaviour. A true psychological "diagnosis" of industrial behaviour is therefore lost. However, the worst thing is that this divorce of industrial from mainstream psychology is now being imposed on all universities training industrial psychologists. Another disturbing feature of the breakaway is the requirement that industrial psychology be taught as a commerce subject. Whilst theoretically this cannot affect the content of what is

taught, it has however thrown the subject deeper into bondage, of being a "management science" rather than an independent social science. The "utilization orientation" of the subject has thus become firmly entrenched, as is evident in the study of black workers.

Lastly, but not the least, there is an almost obsessive preoccupation with professionalization and specialization in industrial psychology. Progress in the subject has been most of the time judged in terms of how many professionals are produced each year. Less emphasis has been placed on evaluating the type of professionals produced and their understanding of the broader parameters within which they function.

All the above points need to be debated and clarified, in the true spirit of academic and intellectual debates characterized by freedom of expression and exchange of ideas. There is a very high probability that the inadequate study of black workers is related to the teaching of the subject and the lack of debate, or rather lack of a suitable climate for such exchange of ideas.

4. CONCLUSION

Perhaps the best way to conclude this papers is by posing the question : what is to be done?

In the light of these inadequacies in current industrial psychology, a completely new framework needs to be developed

within which to carry out authentically scientific psychological studies of black workers. The criteria for a truly scientific psychology would include the development of new units of analysis and concepts which are sensitive enough to identify and articulate contradictions inherent in the dominant relations of production. Such tools and units of analysis must also be able to detect any ideological influences in studies of black workers.

A critical evaluation of the current research strategies and framework is also urgent. Industrial psychology must ditch once and for all the current management framework within which black workers are studied. The abandoning of this approach can only help the discipline to erase its present stigma of being a particular brand of a managerial ideology. The research techniques themselves will have to be expanded as to include relevant, but previously ignored, variables.

Industrial psychological studies will also have to include the concept of history as the most important foundation upon which to build a more relevant psychological understanding of black workers. Thus far, these psychological studies have been ahistorical. For instance, the cultural models of understanding black workers have operated as if worker behaviour exists outside of history. History has taught us that not all blacks are workers and it is not only blacks who are workers. It is also history which will judge this very vulgar approach to understanding black workers, to prove that the repository of objectivity and truth is history itself.

It is only after the above groundwork has been done that we can hope to see the emergence of a materialist industrial psychology. This means, as Strumpfer (1980) puts it, "... getting out of our laboratories into the real world, out of an environment controlled and manipulated into experimental sterility, into the places where people live and work in dread, dearth and desperation". (p.18).

Lastly, but not the least, it needs to be pointed out that up to this point in time, industrial psychology has been using workers as "guinea-pigs". As Fullagar (1983) points out that, "research has tended to have been done on workers rather than _for_ workers or with them, and as a consequence large areas of work remain ignored." (p.1). It is crucial to understand that industrial psychologists have been doing research on black workers, claiming that this is done in their name, although workers never asked them to do so and the likelihood is that workers are not even aware that such statements and assumptions are made about them.

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Apartheid & social research :
A reply to Michael Savage
by
Grahame Hayes

Savage (1983) has presented us with an important survey of the
effects of doing social research under apartheid, and racial
capitalism.   It is necessary for us to detail the material
instances that contribute to the constraints and restrictions which
social research is subjected to.   The social practices which go to
make up apartheid society most certainly do have specific
politically negative effects.

However, a thoroughgoing critique of apartheid society must
include the social relations which sustain the particular effects
of that kind of society.   Savage's article, and many of the other
contributions in the Unesco (1981) volume don't really deal with
the problem of apartheid at this level.   In the interests of
promoting some debate and discussion on the relationship between
political ideologies and the practice of social science some
aspects of Savage's argument will be responded to.

Savage's, and some of the other 'liberal' analyses (cf Glaser,
1984) in the Unesco (1981) volume edited by sociologist John Rex,
omission of a clear theory of society make it difficult to know how
to proceed in a social scientific practice which does not reproduce
apartheid.   Savage is descriptive at the level of society and
social science and hence is only able to detail the effects of
apartheid on social research, rather than the details of how

apartheid social structures and social relations interact with and determine the inner fabric and sociology of social science. It is felt that because he presents apartheid primarily as ideology, rather than in the materiality of its social relations, he is unable to offer a different (free) practice of social science, other than the implicit removal of apartheid.

For example he starts his article with the following sentence: 'Social research is never conducted in a political vacuum: the structures, tensions and values of a society condition and are reflected in the type of social research that is produced within it'. (p. 21, emphases added). He never develops the interesting issue of the processes involved in how society conditions, reflects, refracts, etc social science, or other theoretical activities for that matter. We need also to penetrate how apartheid "conditions" the content of our theories of people and their behaviour - cf the industrial psychology of black workers in South Africa! - and the outcome of our empirical research. In this regard Hountondji's (1983) work is an attempt to present a critique of the ideological and social practices which have dominated social scientific scholarship in (West) Africa under the political and economic domination of colonialism, imperialism and racism. Hountondji's (ibid) analyses are mostly directed at his own discipline, philosophy, and anthropology, although his work is extremely pertinent to all scholars of social science. (cf Introduction to Hountondji's work in this issue).

Savage charcterises South African society as authoritarian, and based on oppressive racial divisions. The constraints that this

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society places on social science are both direct, for example '...
by the State and by community agencies' (p.35), and indirect, for
example the organisational framework of social research, the
'selection' of students, and the training and education of students
and social researchers. He unfortunately does not detail the
relationship between an authoritarian society and the
organisational framework of social research. His critique tends
to remain at the general level of ideology - apartheid as a
politically oppressive ideology - rather than an anlaysis of social
research/science under apartheid in terms of specific social,
political and economic practices. We need to know about the
social production of knowledge under apartheid.

The context of apartheid has blinded Savage from some of the
debates and discussions concerning the problems of the
democratisation of science in less overtly racist capitalist
democracies. There is a significant implication in his article
that if the constraints of apartheid on social research are
removed all will be well in the social sciences. It is this
fundamentally idealist notion of the relationship between science
and society which is challenged. Some of the (external)
constraints of the society on science for Savage are '... [A]t the
national level, four aspects of Government restraint on access to
information particularly affect sociological research : censorship,
restrictions governing access to places, bannings of individuals
and a variety of legislation regulating the gathering and reporting
of specific information' (p.43). Of course these factors have a
negative effect on any attempt at a free social science, but it is

also the (internal) social relations of the scientific production process under racial capitalism that need simultaneous analysis with the (external) constraints and restraints upon social research in apartheid South Africa.

It is also argued that following this idealist conception of science and society Savage "leads to" a radical individualism as a mode of action against apartheid influenced social research. I say "leads to" because this is implicit as Savage does not really offer a way-out for social scientists. What I am referring to is the social/political equation:

Afrikaner social scientists = conservative; ruling class ideologies

Black " " = radical; socially aware

English " " = nothing is said but liberal, neutral, ambivalent!!

It is arguable whether the work of Fatima Meer, Archie Mafeje, Noel Manganyi, Nimrod Mkele which Savage refers to (p.30) is a <u>radical challenge</u> to social scientific practice in South Africa today, or when some of this scholarship was presented. It is this journal's intention, in a forthcoming number, to subject Noel Manganyi's work to a thorough and critical assessment in terms of contributing to a social science of liberation (cf Rex, 1981; Webster; 1982). The response to apartheid is not an inversion of its operations. I don't even think that Savage is articulating an affirmative action response to the absence of black students, scholars and researchers in the social sciences.

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There is much of value in Savage's article, and some of the others in the Unesco (1981) collection, and is essential reading for all students of the social sciences in South Africa. The intention of my brief reply to Savage's article, was not to be finicky on a few points - this 'style'/type of scholarship does not impress me - but rather to engage positively in developing a more concrete analysis of social science in South Africa, and more especially in transforming the present social relations which determine a repressive scientific practice. To this end I tried to show a few areas where Savage's analysis is merely descriptive and tends to 'float' in its non-articulation of ideology (apartheid in social research) <u>and</u> social scientific <u>practices</u>. The practice of social science in South Africa needs a much more tenacious critique than what Savage has presented us with.

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The year 1983 has witnessed the re-alignment of two main psychology groupings in South Africa, SIRSA and SAPA, culminating in the formation of the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA).

Various institutes have been formed under this new body, amongst which is the Institute for Industrial Psychology (IIP). Before the formation of this institute under PASA, the interests of industrial psychologists were catered for by the **Committee on Training and Professional Matters concerning Industrial Psychology** formed in 1978. However, this committee dealt mainly with matters relating to training of industrial psychologists, unlike the Institute which has broader objectives as outlined by Prof. Raubenheimer in the IIP first newsletter (December, 1983).

One notable tendency in all the developments that have taken place in South African industrial psychology circles is that the Reef has dominated and led the field. Natal, for instance, has been more or less in the background of events. However, 1983 has seen a resurgence of interest in industrial psychology in Natal and its contribution to psychology in South Africa. This resurgence took place at about the same time of the founding of the IIP*. This has led to a group of industrial psychologists (from both the academic world and practice, research and industry) coming together to form the Natal Industrial Psychology Group (NIPG). This group was formed about a year ago.

*This was merely a coincidence, the NIPG was not initiated by IIP. These were two independent developments.

The main aim behind the formation of the group was to set up a forum through which industrial psychologists in Natal could exchange ideas, information and experiences in various spheres of activity.   The Group has held about nine meetings to date.

However, a particular concern for members of NIPG has been the direction industrial psychology has taken in South Africa, both as a science and profession.   Arising out of this concern a workshop was held on 11 February, 1984.   The overall purpose of this workshop was to achieve a common view amongst members, of the relevant future focus in industrial psychology.

Through groupwork and discussion a broad focus was identified as relevant for the future.   This included, inter alia:

(a) focus on relevant issues in South Africa on a dynamic, proactive basis.

(b) creation of a broader awareness of psychological-environmental issues.

(c) to be concerned with relationships in and between individuals and organisations within broader society via a broader perspective and a focus on all organisations (not just business organisations).

(d) to broaden the science and practice of organisational psychology from its present non-disciplinary paradigm to a multi-disciplinary one in order for it to recognise and accommodate the wider social determinants of people's behaviour, outlook, attitudes and experience within

organizational setting.

Although it is too early to judge this Group, it is however worth mentioning the two major characteristics of it. First of all it has recognized the need and relevance of locating people's behaviour within the wider social context. This heralds a significant shift from the approach of mainstream industrial psychology, which has tended to be asocial. Secondly, the group has set itself the objective of critically reviewing current industrial psycholgical practice in an open and scholarly fashion.

If this tradition can be maintained, the group offers the much needed forum for open and critical debates on social-psychological issues in South African industry.

B. NZIMANDE
May 1984

SOWETO'S CHILDREN:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATTITUDES

by

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The past decade has seen a substantive change in the face of
social psychology. In the sixties the discipline was dominated by
American psychology, with its particular view of reality, its
ideological biases, and with its penchant for strict
experimentalism. This mainstream social psychology is
characterized by the analysis of the social at the level of the
individual. The behaviour of the individual within the setting of
a number of other individuals is seen as the concern of social
psychology. There is no recognition that the social context,
inclusive of sociological and political perspectives, presents
certain pressures and forces which do not occur in the
interpersonal spectrum.

By the early seventies the discontent with mainstream social
psychology, stemming in particular from European and British
psychologists, had become strident, culminating in the development
of a new direction within social psychology.

This direction moves away from the reductionist concept of the social, in favour of the primacy of the group. Intergroup relations became a topic of particular concern. Within this new trend, a number of publications have emerged, under the auspices of the European Association of Experimental Social Psychologists. One of these is a series entitled the European Monographs in Social Psychology, edited until recently by one of the 'architects' of the new social psychology, the late Henri Tajfel. **Soweto's Children** is number 20 of this series.

Soweto's Children is fundamentally a report on an extensive study into the attitudes, expectations, aspirations and values of 'Black' (African) school-children in Soweto conducted in the sixties. In the words of the authors, this study "sought to examine the demographic and educational variables which influenced the way the young Black viewed his or her world" (p. 6). However, this book does not confine itself to the description and analyses of the study, but contains a number of chapters outlining the historical and sociological situation of South Africa.

The book appears to have two main foci. The first is an account of how Soweto, and Black urban townships in general, have come into being. This part of the study is augmented by the autiobiographical essays of Soweto children. Excerpts of these are used to illustrate descriptions of life in the township. Some of these provide a vibrant insight into this experience, and present an indication of the level of political awareness held by some of the children. The second, and most emphasized aspect of the study concerns the issue of education within Soweto. One

thousand children from four Soweto schools contributed to the study.   Each completed a questionnaire which was designed to glean information on such things as "tribal affiliation; the attitudes toward the church; orientation to urban life; political attitudes; educational involvement, aspirations and expectations; occupational aspirations and expectations; motivational reasons for occupational and educational choices; reference groups and nationalism" (p. 159).   The African Thematic Apperception Test was also administered to a subsample of the children.

One of the more interesting results that emerged from the findings was that three distinct constellations of attitudes were discerned amongst the students.   The first is termed a conservative set defined predominately by the support of the Church and tribe, though not necessarily endorsing the political status quo. Included here is an attitude that education is the means to personal mobility and social change.   The second constellation is termed radical, embodying a rejection of all political and tribal institutions, and a dubiousness as to the real value of education within the South African setting.   The final set is one indicative of internalized repression.

In conception, this book represents an attempt to fulfil the aspirations of the 'new' social psychology.   It makes an effort to situate psychology within the social reality of the subjects.   It also demonstrates that the so-called 'soft' methodologies such as autobiography, content analysis, questionnaires, etc. have a valuable part to play in the pursuit of (psychological) knowledge.

However, **Soweto's Children** does have a number of problems. The approach of the authors in their presentation of the history, and the sociological and political analysis of South Africa is manifestly superficial and limited. The writing often tends towards ambiguity: points are not made clearly, but are blurred, frequently by embedding them within discussion of the surprising number of relevant studies. For example, in discussing the TAT results, an indicator of 'need achievement', together with the constellation of attitudes as explanatory variables of 'success' in societal terms, the authors criticize a number of similar studies for not taking the social context into account. Yet they still suggest "that one set of attitudes and intentions is more likely to lead to success than another: ......" (p. 123), without presenting an analysis of how this may be realized within the South African context.

Finally, the major issue on which this book may be held to task is that of its implied claim to offer an understanding of the Soweto school riots of June, 1976. In the introduction (p. 7) the authors state "[it] is rare for a social scientist's predictions to be confirmed" and support this statement with a quote from Geber's 1972 unpublished Ph.D. thesis (submitted to London University):

> While is is perhaps true that in all societies those values taught at school are not necessarily directly relevant to the life that is led outside it, it is not all societies which present such firm, race dominated obstacles to the translation of these school values to the adult working life. It is possible that the reaction to this frustration will be rejection and aggression, and the whole system of values will be discarded.

The anticipation of violence in South Africa is not an uncommon view to be held by any observer of the situation, and hardly qualifies as a prediction based on the findings of the study. If anything, the results could be argued to predict the opposite. In discussing a group of students who manifest the radical constellation of attitudes, the authors state:

> They are aware of the issues that confront them, concerned with national progress and they understand that political issues demand political solutions. And yet, despite their awareness of the problems and the necessary actions to solve them, the students seem to feel no real competence in actually being able to achieve their aims. There is some helplessness in their responses, and although they are conscious of the notion of resistance it remains at the verbal level rather than being translated into action. (p. 115)

In the final chapter which comments on the 1976 Soweto school riots, the contradiction is attributed to the change in political events that occurred between the time of the study and 1976, in particular, that of the worsening economic situation experienced by Blacks, and the rise of Black Consciousness. Thus, in the final analysis, this book leaves one with the quandry of deciding whether in fact psychology has anything to offer in the prediction and analysis of socio-political events, or whether the authors have demonstrated rather poor judgement in their assessment of the situation and in their selection of relevant variables.

However, while **Soweto's Children** is not wholeheartedly recommended, it should not be totally dismissed. If nothing else, it perhaps deserves a place on the library shelf, but as a demonstration of a technique rather than a conveyor of deep insights.

Man, Mind, and Morality: The Ethics of Behaviour control.

by Ruth Macklin[*]

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Since it is impossible to review all the aspects that this book covers, a few areas of interest will be presented.   Macklin's work serves to educate the young health worker into the convoluted logic that is used to justify "control" of people's behaviour on the basis of "what is best for people".   It addresses itself to clinical psychology, psychiatry, medicine and education, amongst others and how knowledge generated within these areas has been used to implement programmes of social control.

It is a book that gives the health worker who has been too long in the sun a fresh look at the way in which behaviour change (treatment, therapy) can become behaviour control (over-medication, invasive surgery, shock treatment).

With the development of the social sciences the technology of behaviour has had to deal with the morality of behaviour control. Who will use it and to what end?   It is especially the young health worker who in his/her eagerness to "save people from themselves" that the distinction between what is therapy and what is social control becomes blurred.

Without doubt behaviour control permeates many facets of society; from what Macklin refers to as "hard" methods to "soft" methods.

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[*]Englewood Cliffs : Prentice-Hall, 1982.

At the hard end of the spectrum lie psychosurgery, electrical stimulations psychopharmocology and other forms of physical manipulation.

Haloperidol, an antipsychotic preparation "is usually prescribed in cases of extreme 'psychomotor excitation', and then usually with anti-Parkinsonian agents to counteract the painful and dangerous side effects. Haloperidol creates a hyperactive state in which the patient cannot be still - sitting, lying or standing - for any period of time. It can also cause muscular spasms, stammering, involuntary contractions of the face and body and other symptoms associated with Parkinson's disease". (p.20)

This drug helps those who are sick, but has frightening neurological effects on normal people. A good example of the deliberate blurring of the distinction between therapy and social control, thus appears to be the treatment of mental patients and even more so in the case of political dissidents.

Soft methods of influencing behaviour include amongst others propaganda and education - the theme always being "it is for the good of society as a whole".

The critical question posed by Macklin is "who should have control?" Should behaviour control lie in the hands of the state orshould individuals be allowed maximum liberty and self-determination? Such either/or arguments do not do justice to the rest of Macklin's book. What it does do is force a re-examination of the concept of freedom and related issues such as

responsibility, autonomy, coercion, paternalism, competence, rationality and voluntariness.   In short, the essence of the entire book is "Who may do what to whom and with justification?" (p.8)

Psychological theories have stuttered along in their own idiosyncratic ways to explain human behaviour.   Macklin criticizes psychological theory because of its apparent inability to state clearly what is psychologically possible for people to do or refrain from doing.   The notion of psychological possibility has a philosophical counterpart in the idea of freedom.   Freedom is conceptualized in terms of two related dimensions: freedom in terms of political liberty, to pursue one's own ends or goals with a minimum of outside interference and second freedom as in the belaboured   notion   of   "free will".

It is the latter concept that has direct bearing on the treatment of human beings as moral agents.   The more genuine freedom in the "free will" sense of the word, the more appropriate it is to hold people responsible for their actions.   Psychological theories which propose that human behaviour is determined by nature and nurture, would seem to suggest that people cannot be held morally responsible for their actions.

Macklin also provides a useful insight into the role of freedom in institutions such as mental hospitals and prisons.   Freedom is also discussed in relation to informed consent, involuntary commitment and research into developing methods of control of human behaviour.

Other issues raised, includes the role of the psychiatrist (or any other health worker) who has to operate as a "double agent". If a psychiatrist is employed by the state (as many are) is his/her duty always only to serve the interests of the patient? Or does being in the employ of an institution set up new obligations that must be honoured? While no easy solutions are provided some viable alternatives are presented.

In sum, a work that is well written, but may not be ideal material for bedside reading. Read it.

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