



The University of the West Indies
Department of History and Philosophy
Faculty of Humanities and Education

CAVE HILL PHILOSOPHY SYMPOSIUM 2017

*Conversations 12: Interrogating Caribbean
Philosophical and Intellectual Traditions*

April 19-21, 2017

ABSTRACTS

The impacts of the plantation system on the family structure of Jamaican society

Oluwadamilola Ajayi

This essay is concerned with how plantation lifestyle has affected and has been affecting the Jamaican family. It seeks to show that there has always been an intrinsic connection between the procreation style in the plantation and in the present day Jamaican family.

The main feature of the plantation lifestyle about the family is the act of separation of the family members. That is, separating the father, mother and children. It also encouraged the use of adult males as studs, rather than acting as the responsible fathers in their households.

The methodology employed in the paper is that of textual analysis of the existing literature on the plantation system and its impacts on the family structure in Jamaica.

This paper holds that an ideal family is the one in which parents and children share love, care, resources, and achieve set goals together. With this in place, family as the foundation and an important unit in the society contributes to the development of the society. However, the plantation lifestyle has undermined and has been undermining the notion and existence of an ideal family.

An ideal family is basically a family, consisting the father, mother and children. The family values they exhibit are discipline, responsibility, honesty and trust. It is clear and reasonable enough to know that these family values are necessary for positive and productive social relations within the family and in the society. Thus, this paper advocates proper and continual sensitization of adults, regarding the advantages living with their families and being responsible parents.

The paper suggested that the “Maintenance Act 2005” and the “Status of Children Act” should be reviewed by the Jamaican government. The former should mandate the delinquent parent to pay more, as this could serve as deterrence to parents who may want to indulge in act of delinquency towards their responsibility and relationships. The latter should mete out harsh penalties for false paternity claim declarations by women. This will serve as deterrence to women who may want to engage in the act. It will also make them to be more responsible in their relationships.

Key words: Plantation system, Jamaican family, “Maintenance Act”, “Status of children Act”.



Creolizing Caribbean Aesthetics

Lawrence **Bamikole**

If Caribbean philosophy is a product of creolization (a term to be defined in the paper), and Caribbean aesthetics is a branch of Caribbean philosophy, then Caribbean aesthetics is a product of creolization.

This paper argues that a distinctive Caribbean intellectual tradition in aesthetics could emanate from the interrogation of aesthetics theories from Western, Asian and African philosophical traditions.

The paper employs the concept of beauty as an aesthetic category as theorised from the perspectives of these philosophical traditions and argues that Caribbean aesthetics could take the aesthetics concerns in these traditions as points of departure and in the words of Paget Henry, “invent and create” a distinctive theory of Caribbean aesthetics.

The concept of beauty that will be invoked in the paper is identified with human beauty. The paper identifies human beauty with all the aspects of the human person: physical, mental, ethical and spiritual. Given the belief that the concept of beauty is attributable to each of human aspects, a plausible argument for a holistic notion of human beauty becomes feasible.

It is the logic behind this reasoning that is extrapolated to theorising Caribbean aesthetics. The paper therefore argues that Caribbean aesthetics cannot be confined to physical beauty alone; rather, it has to be derived from other forms of beauty that are exemplified in the intellectual, ethical and spiritual aspects of the human person.



Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Caribbean Thought and the Dissemination of Ideas

Richard **Clarke**

My paper is concerned with metaphilosophical issues and, in particular, the putative existence of a Caribbean ‘philosophy’ per se. My starting point is an arguably common conceptualisation of Caribbean ‘thought’ as a choice between two stark alternatives. On the one hand, adherents of so-called ‘Analytic’ philosophy as well as scholars pursuing related endeavours in the natural sciences assume that it is merely a sub-set or tributary of a larger, arguably universal human rationality. By contrast, others inspired by so-called ‘Continental’ philosophy and located especially in historically-, socially- and politically-oriented disciplines stress its socio-historical and cultural specificity for which reason they almost inevitably end up measuring its interaction with other traditions in terms of relationships of influence and

resistance. Drawing on aspects of the rhetorical / hermeneutical tradition, I argue that there is another way of thinking about how Caribbean people think that avoids both extremes of universalism and dualism as well as their attendant pitfalls, the key to which is focusing our attention on the semiological processes by which meaning is produced.



Towards An Understanding of Caribbean Identity

Khimaja Connell

The Caribbean being comprised of different island states with different languages, religions, cultures, races and ethnicities, has been said to suffer from an identity crisis. The term 'Caribbean identity' thus appears quite ambiguous. It is very difficult to explain what Caribbean identity is. Academics have gone as far as to argue that the Caribbean is nothing but a geographic location and that Caribbean identity exists only conceptually and not in reality.

The term identity is essentially used in reference to something which exists, so to speak of identity is to speak of an existent. Therefore, it may be understood that reference to Caribbean identity is an attempt at coming to an understanding and a possible description of what it is that exists and is called Caribbean.

There seems to be two main problems with understanding what is meant by 'Caribbean identity.' They are: i) a disagreement about what is to be regarded as identity in general; and ii) a poorly developed idea about what the term Caribbean ought to mean.

It is argued in this paper that identity is an affirming response to something that exists, regardless of one's understanding of what it is that actually exists, and thus, the problem with identity lies in understanding, defining, describing and reaffirming that which exists. Coming to an understanding of Caribbean identity is essentially an attempt at justifying Caribbean existence, its persistence through time and its uniqueness in comparison to other people and places.

The findings of this research shows a link between identity and survival—that how people adapt to and cope with change can be viewed as an identification marker. Thus, what is called 'identity crises,' or not having a well defined concept of who Caribbean people are, may have allowed Caribbean people the freedom of defining and redefining ourselves in useful ways. The most important thing towards coming to an understanding of Caribbean identity is for Caribbean people to realise that they share a common experience and history, and our identity is a symbol of such experiences and history.

Keywords: Caribbean; Identity; Metaphysics; Existentialism



Caribbean Mysticism: Spiritual Knowledge and the Mystics

Felicia Dujon

Paget Henry's simulating Caliban's Reason notes that African people in particular, have a unique ability to acquire spiritual knowledge as it is one of the four core dimensional worlds that constitute their belief system. The three others are the physical/material, the social and the individual. He observes existence as we know it, see it and live it as neither self creating nor self-sustaining. Whether it is the material world of nature, the social world of human relations or the egocentric, self-reflective world of the individual, none except the spiritual world carries within them the Ashe, or creative power that accounts for their origin and continued existence. African origin narratives posit a super-sensible spiritual world that has both immanent and transcendent relations to the material, social and individual worlds. (Henry, 24) If "Knowledge of the everyday, sensible world was acquired through the normal functioning of the senses, the emotions and the mind while knowledge of the super sensible world necessitated their suspension" (Henry, 41). Because African ontology of knowledge entails an objective and subjective rationality that interconnects with each other, it offers the individual the capacity to interact with the creative being, the purpose of which is to explore the various paradigm shifts needed to secure spiritual knowledge. This essay explores the various beliefs of Caribbean Mysticism and the philosophical debates surrounding them.



The Revolutionary Act: Rodney's Formulaic Act or Harris' Hysteric Act?

Duane Edwards

In a debate between two outstanding Guyanese thinkers, namely Walter Rodney and Wilson Harris, Rodney asked Harris the pointed question: 'so what happens when we stop dreaming? Doesn't the tree we uprooted in our dream confront us again with equal or greater obstinacy'? The direct question by Rodney could be interpreted in two ways. The first is the obvious meaning intended by Rodney himself. If we use the Harrisian dream world activity as a substitute for on-the-ground revolutionary activity, what happens when we wake up from this Harrisian dreamworld? Are we not confronted anew by the wretched conditions that give rise to revolutionary action? Doesn't the tree we uprooted in our dream confront us against with renewed obstinacy after we exit our dream world? Are we not faced again with the ethical call to act? This meaning, of course, places Rodney in a very radical and revolutionary position a propos Harris and political action. There is however a second meaning to Rodney's question, a meaning which interestingly serves as a negation and supersession of the first meaning highlighted above; this meaning was unintended by Rodney himself. The second meaning of the question 'What happens when we stop dreaming?' is 'Doesn't our last dream reified into the

symbolic structure of the day and takes on totalitarian dimensions, thereby locking out any further possibility of mythic and poetic input? Do we not then become enslaved by an everlasting one dimensional stasis which is the product of our last dream? This is the revolutionary though unintended dimension of Rodney's question that is very pertinent today in the postcolonial West Indies. By means of a mythic reconstruction of this debate, the paper explores two approaches to social change represented by these two thinkers in the context of the contemporary Caribbean. The formulaic act undergirded by the episteme and praxis of Marxism and Pan-Africanism is explored in relations to the hysteric act undergirded by a less 'archic' approach to social change championed by Wilson Harris. Against the backdrop of this mythic conversation, we will offer a brief exploration of the revolutionary act in Harris and Rodney's philosophy. After this we will also explore the possibility of bridging the gap between these two revolutionary thinkers. In accomplishing this task, we will take the rather indirect route of first offering a summary of the ideological and philosophical frameworks within which their respective views are located as a precursor to revisiting the positions of both thinkers in reference to their own works. We will then demonstrate how in a particular understanding of Rodney's question, there is the possibility of convergence between the two thinkers' ideas of social change.

Keywords: Social change, Caribbean philosophy, revolutionary action, radical imaginary, pan-Africanism, Marxism.



The Historicist and Poeticist schools in Caribbean Philosophy: A Dualism?

Rudolph Ellis

The question of Caribbean philosophy has been addressed by several scholars. One of the questions relates to the methodology to be adopted in understanding and interpreting Caribbean philosophy as a philosophy that is different from its Western and African counterparts.

In this paper, attention is focused on Paget Henry's interpretation of Caribbean philosophy in relation to its various phases. The phase which will be the concern of this paper is the third phase, which he labelled as poeticism and historicism.

Henry reasoned that the poeticist and the historicist schools constituted a dualism; the outcome of which is not healthy for a coherent Caribbean philosophy. For him, a coherent Caribbean philosophy can only emanate from the reconciliation of the poeticist and the historicist schools. The concern of this project is to examine whether (i) The poeticist and the historicist schools actually constitute a dualism and (ii) If the answer is in the negative, then the idea of fostering reconciliation

between the schools is not warrantable and (iii) If on the other hand there is no presupposition of dualism between the two schools, then how can we proceed with the question of addressing the question of Caribbean philosophy in relation to the poeticist and the historicists programmes?

The position that I will argue for in the paper is that the poeticist and the historicist schools should not be seen in dualistic terms to the effect that they are opposed to one another; rather, the paper will suggest that these schools be treated as separate methodologies of understanding and interpreting Caribbean philosophy. This position, it is argued, will better address the question of Caribbean philosophy in a holistic way.

Keywords: Caribbean philosophy, poeticist and historicist schools, dualism, Paget Henry.



Scapegoatism vs Agency: A philosophical examination of political and social development in Jamaica

Okechukwu Anthony **Ezenne**

The bulk of the literature on Jamaica's development has highlighted the reality that since the country achieved Independence in 1962, it has struggled to reap the full benefits of development through various political, economic and social means, and also most of the literatures on Jamaica's notion of freedom and agency continue to highlight the historical realities while placing less emphasis on socio-political issues which have negative consequences on self-determination, crime, corruption, levels of poverty and social apathy.

Several Caribbean and philosophical schools of thought can be used to explain this state of slow development. This paper however has emphasised on a reductionist approach towards individual and collective agency versus an individual and collective scapegoating trend that proffer alternative perspectives on Jamaican society which place the blame elsewhere. This form of scapegoating in the literature may have been the derivative of a social coping mechanism as blame shifting may have thus become a pervasive element found not only in academic literature but throughout society as well. The Second goal of this paper will focus on the philosophies that underpin the literature in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how responsibility for development is understood in Jamaica. This would necessitate an examination of perceptions at various levels as well the systems under which development exists. Colloquial terms such as 'crab in a barrel' and 'the Babylon system' offer insights into the reality of cultural mentalities which seek to abdicate individual responsibility citing victimization as the cause of social and

political ills. Philosophical theories of agency, freedom, scapegoating mechanism, action theory will be used as a frame of reference to examine the problem.

Keywords: Scapegoat, Agency, Moral panic, Victimisation, Freedom.



The Awful Burden of Respectability

Therese **Hadchity**

The proposed paper engages with uses of 'the popular' in visual art from the Anglophone Caribbean from the earliest anti-colonial stirrings to the post-nationalist postmodernism, which defines the current avant-garde.

The paper opens with an overview of the most characteristic interpretations and manifestations of 'the popular' in the region's visual art - ranging from the thematic focus on spiritual and cultural practices in Creole modernism and social realism, to the cultivation of a new indigeneity in the form of 'intuitive art', as well as to more recent efforts at using the region's popular expressions as a matrix for new art forms.

Referencing the frequently used dichotomy between domains of 'reputation and masculinity' versus domains of 'respectability and femininity' in Caribbean studies, the paper argues that the centrality of 'the popular' in Caribbean cultural discourse - and particularly in current visual art debates - bases itself on a similarly dichotomous (and quite risky) positioning of Caribbean and Western art as, respectively, 'popular/working-class' and 'elitist/bourgeois'.

The main objective of the paper is to examine the changing motivations for the incorporation of 'the popular' into the visual arts. It raises questions about the intrinsic possibilities of the discipline, about visual artists' negotiations of competing demands for cultural and critical autonomy, on visual art and social engagement, and on the conditions, which set modernism in this region apart from its western counterpart and make various modernist assumptions redundant. The paper ultimately argues, that while some uses of 'the popular' imbue Caribbean art with a collective scope unknown to western modernism, there is a potentially reactionary or opportunistic element in certain contemporary practices.

The paper is accompanied by a slide-presentation with images of selected works, which will illustrate the points made.



“The Overbearing Tide of French Influence and Principles”: The Dutch Guianas and Multicultural Communication Networks

David Jamison

Historically, the term “Age of Revolutions” has been associated with nation-states. The American, French, and Haitian revolutions are the most commonly named, and all three depict the shift from monarchical to democratic statehood. But underneath the macrohistory of this rejection of the “divine right of kings,” the Caribbean saw the rise of a political ideology that used and transformed the language of the “rights of man” and retrofitted it for a New World, with new ethnic groups of people making the rules. The “rights of man” philosophy, or “natural rights,” had been crafted in the salons of England and France and argued that mankind had natural rights that we were heir to by virtue of our birth, and rejected the European notion of kingship.

In the Caribbean, however, kingship was not the problem—or at least kingship was not equally problematic for all groups. The main problem for both African slaves as well as Native American peoples was the attempt by European colonists to control both their bodies and their land. Fortunately for them, the European colonization mentality was not monolithic. My research presents several instances in which the slave-resistance efforts in the Dutch colonies of Guyana and Suriname were helped demonstrably by sympathetic Europeans —indeed, all exclusively French or overwhelmingly influenced by French culture. But this was all before the French Revolution. Through a complex multicultural communication network, sympathetic whites helped rebel Guianese slaves collect military intelligence, provide succor and comfort to escaping relatives, aid in instances of escape, and provide direct support in combat capacities. One military officer in fact blamed a 1795 slave rebellion on the “overwhelming tide of French influence and principles” at the time present in Guyana.

These events suggest that the “rights of man” discourse was percolating in the New World and providing an articulation of what liberal French expatriates might have already been feeling before it exploded into the nation-state context in Haiti and France. It could be the case that natural-rights proponents had been filtering into the Caribbean for years—what better way to escape the perceived persecution of an unjust system than by fleeing halfway around the world? Several French soldiers had bled for these principles on nearby American soil. And the neighboring penal colony of French Guiana was known to house several political prisoners. Could liberal French complicity in Dutch Guianese slave rebellion have been instances in which members of the international French proletariat were trying out their new philosophies in real-life protostates? Could, indeed, their successes or failures have served as a guide or inspiration for their disaffected brethren back home? The liberal French role in aiding and abetting Caribbean slave rebellion is a topic that merits further study.



A Defense of Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism

Kibujjo M. Kalumba

What is the best way to characterize the relationship between a person and his or her community? In their attempt to answer this enduring question, Western philosophers have found themselves polarized into two opposing camps: individualists and communitarians. Whereas individualists embrace the thesis of the ontological primacy of the individual over the community, communitarians, in contrast, insist on the thesis of the ontological primacy of the community over the individual. Let me explain.

Individualists regard the person as an atomic, self-sufficient individual who does not need the community to exist or to flourish. They see the community as owing its existence to the atomic individual who may or may not choose to create it or to participate in it. On the ethical plane, individualists generally take the ontological priority of the individual to entail the thesis of the moral primacy of the individual, which prioritizes individual claims over communal claims. In contrast, communitarians regard the person as a social being by nature, since he or she is necessarily born into a preexistent community whose support he or she needs for his or her existence and flourishing. On the ethical plane, communitarians generally take the communal priority of the community to entail the thesis of the moral primacy of the community, which prioritizes communal claims over individual claims.

It should be easy to see from the above description of the two opposing camps why individualist find it challenging to account for an individual's involuntary obligations to the community and why communitarians face the challenge of accommodating individual rights deemed inviolable by the community. These challenges, which are inherent in the tenets of the two opposing campus, are what have triggered the Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye to seek a middle path between them. Let me elaborate.

A self-described communitarian, Gyekye (1997) accepts the thesis of the ontological primacy of the community over the individual. However, unlike typical communitarians that he calls extreme communitarians, Gyekye denies that this thesis entails the moral primacy of the community over the individual. Describing his position as moderate communitarianism, Gyekye insists on ascribing to the individual and the community *"the status of an equal moral standing."* He claims to ground his position in his native Akan traditional social and political philosophy.

In what follows I will probe into the coherence and plausibility of Gyekye's moderate communitarianism in light four of its leading contemporary African critiques: Famakinwa (2010), Matolino (2014), Metz (2012), and Oyowe (2013). I will argue that a modified version of Gyekye's position is both coherent and plausible.



Echographies and the Poetics of Memory: Experiences and Theory of Creative Repetition

Lazare **Ki-Zerbo**

"They that walked in darkness sang songs in the olden days-- Sorrow Songs--for they were weary at heart. And so before each thought that I have written in this book I have set a phrase, a haunting echo of these weird old songs in which the soul of the black slave spoke to men"

W.E.B du Bois, *The Souls of the Black People*, Ch. XIV

The echo in Du Bois premonitory comments on African music-on the Continent or in the Caribbean- would be best understood if we are able to conceptualize it in a broader sense, referring to the echo of Africa in the Caribbean and of the Caribbean in Africa. The echo might be a sonic experience through with the complicated global historical and human relation of Africa to "her" diaspora and vice versa might be interrogated not only through textual discourses but also through art and aesthetic.

This paper will first comment the fourteenth chapter of *The Souls of Black folks*, linking it to the expanding trends on reggae studies in what I call the musical humanities embodied in the work of Julian Henriques or Michael Veal.

Tony Martin and Horace Campbell had once described it well in their articles and book: "Rastafari as Pan Africanism in the Caribbean in Africa", and "Bob Marley, Marcus Garvey and the Pan African Revolution", *Rasta and Resistance: From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney*. Reggae music forges such resistance of the intensities and dynamics of the material vibrations of sound itself at about the same historical moment of the 1960s and early 70s as it was being rendered verbally as "black power", drawing on a political history that Marcus Garvey in Jamaica in the 1920's".

In reggae music bass can be understood as a reference to the ultimate base which is land and earth (Walter Rodney speaks of "groundings"). Echography here approximates a new echology bases on human's body relation to nature. Echographical reggae ("dub music" invented by King Tubby) embodies Peter Tosh realism: "If you know what life is worth/You would look for yours right here on earth".

To elaborate these aesthetic perspectives we can use the psychoanalysis of Lacan, precisely the notion of appeal drive (“pulsion invocante”) as explained by Erik Porge ‘s *La voix de l’écho* (the Voice of the Echo) to comment the trope of “Mother Africa”, mother-child relation being the basic experience of the psychoanalysis of the voice.

In conclusion to this introduction to a general echography, we can evoke among other relevant materials such as the aesthetic of the Abeng, the vibrations of the balafon (African xylophone) provoked by the spider’s web, as Ananse/Ananze can be considered as the mistress of the echo as a vibration effect.

Finally intertextuality is also a tool for this philosophical and literary echography which allows creative repetitions and critical reappraisals.



African and Caribbean Heritages in Maryse Condé’s *En attendant la montée des eaux*

Kahiudi **Mabana**

Maryse Condé, née Boucoulon, is a prolific writer from Guadeloupe who gathered valuable experiences from Europe (France), Africa (Mali, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Senegal) and the New World (New York). Brought up in a family where Creole was banned, she happened to meet her African love while studying at Sorbonne, Paris. She is one of the most known writers and scholars from the French Caribbean. She challenges what she calls the “Martinican school of Creolité” led by Chamoiseau, Confiant and Bernabé. The protagonists of her novels evolve either in Africa (Segou) or in the Caribbean (Francis) or the New World (Tituba). In *En attendant la montée des eaux* (Lattès, 2010), M. Condé presents the life of Dr doctor Babakar Traoré, son of a Guadeloupean mother and an African father, Babakar Traoré I, who migrates to the Caribbean, adopts a child he names Anaïs of Haitian origin before moving to Haiti in search of the child’s roots.

This paper seeks to explore the mutual interactions between Africa, Guadeloupe and Haiti. My reflection will focus on the quest for identity since the African-Caribbean doctor accomplishes a special mission at humanitarian and symbolic levels. The experience of xenophobia, resentment, linguistic and communication obstacles, shows that beyond this multiples encounters with Haiti where Negritude stood up for the first time, there is an initiative of joining hands and hearts in order to win the struggle for life. From Africa to the Caribbean and back to Africa, from Mali to Guadeloupe and Haiti, and back to Africa, there is an echo to WE Du Bois’ Panafricanism and Frantz Fanon’s appeal for pragmatic action. This text really opens a space for a closer, active and positive relationship between Africa and the Caribbean.



Self-contempt: A Fault-line in African-Caribbean Identity

Nigel C. Newton

"The plantations and estates of this island cannot be fully managed and rendered useful, without the labour and service of a great number of Negroes and other slaves. Inasmuch as the said Negroes and other slaves brought here to this island for that purpose, are of barbarous, wild, and savage natures, they are wholly unqualified to be governed by the laws, customs, and practices of our nation. It therefore becomes absolutely necessary that certain other constitutions, laws, and orders should be formed and enacted in this island for their proper ordering and regulation."

"For fear that our future generations may not understand the principles of breaking both horse and men, we lay down the art. For, if we are to sustain our basic economy we must break both on the beast together, the nigger and the horse..." Willie Lynch as Quoted by (Liqua Maemiran Zacharias & Dr. Ruth E. McAfee)

Throughout the Caribbean, people of African ancestry are troubled by a series of threats to their identity and their well-being. Poverty, crime and violence, drug addiction, mass incarceration, mental illness and the bleaching of the skin/hair mirrors the identity crisis afflicting the youth. African Caribbean citizens are also concerned that a skewed concept of development and fear of the galloping devolution of people of African ancestry are irreversible treats to the lives and identity of their offspring.

This paper advances the argument that such issues are rooted in the self-contempt which forms a major fault-line in African-Caribbean identity, a fault-line which originated in the conquest, enslavement, colonization and cultural oppression of enslaved Africans.

The aim of this paper is twofold: First to trace briefly the historical development of the cultural oppression which led to the destruction of the African identity of enslaved Africans through the Caribbean and created the now mayhem which currently prevails. Secondly, to suggest meaningful, practical solutions for addressing and redressing the identity crisis, existential psychosis and, the nihilistic attitude and behavior rooted at the epicenter of the aforementioned mayhem.



Conditions Shifting: Revisiting the Near-Impossibilities of the Colonized Becoming Decolonized

David Oyedola

Whether the colonized can, in any sense (be it economic, political, and psychological) be completely decolonized, is dependent, largely on some stable conditions that can only help in the attainment of decolonization, not when there is needless, ceaseless and/or continuous shift in the goal-post. Be as it were, complete decolonization has remained elusive to Africa. Conditions' shifting is one of the major factors which have stood against Africa to attain complete decolonization; and this has made many scholars in and outside of Africa to be cynical about the role and contributions that the West have made towards the development, freedom and/or complete decolonization of the African state or Africa's mind. In this study, it is argued that such attitude of the West to consistently shift the conditions (or goal post) concerning the development of Africa is attitudinal: an attitude which is as a result of the fear that their (the Western) domination— power, might, technology, resource, and strategy will be usurped, be made to stand at par, or rob shoulders with a continent (once) regarded as a sleeping giant, and that Africa would become a dominating, strategic, and relevant player in the scheme of things or comity of continents.

Keywords: decolonization, goal-post, development, colonized, scheme of things.



Folk wisdom & the African Philosophical Tradition of Bob Marley on Survival

Amon Saba Saakana

The context for philosophy has historically been encapsulated within the context of the Western tradition and criteria applied to non-Western traditions have been ill conceived and discriminatory. The history of African philosophy is not confined to a written tradition exclusively, but viscerally linked to its manifold expressions in art, symbolic language, proverbs, tales, songs, dance, etc. We therefore move from the paradigm that the African philosophical tradition has been maintained in the West through both oral and artistic media. Bob Marley is thus contextualised within a tradition in which spiritual inheritance, both religious and secular, have been transmitted to him via family, elders of the community and biblical references.

These references are expressed on the album, *Survival*, which is devoted to examining the social and political condition of the 20th century African universe, and formulating pathways to change and transformation through references to international figures and their philosophical expressions as well as original insights informed by references to folk wisdom. In this context, Marley represents a breakthrough in realigning the African philosophical tradition to a popular base

through the form of song-music. This revolutionary intervention commits the artist to new levels of investigation through the utilisation of indigenous African Caribbean traditions.



A Fanonian Account of the Affective Mechanisms of Cultural Change

Dan Wood

Fanon's *L'An cinq de la révolution Algérienne* treats the ways meaning, use, and psychosocial comportment alter forms of association, identification, and belonging at individual and group levels within the Algerian Revolution. His book is a hopeful and qualitative social theory of politico-cultural transformation. In this essay I make use of arguments found in *L'An cinq de la révolution Algérienne* and Spinoza's *Ethica* in order to provide a hybrid argument that highlights the role of affect in cultural change.

Consider Fanon's essay, "Medicine and Colonialism": For a large number of Algerians prior to the onset of the Algerian Revolution, Western medicine was identified—with justified resentment—as belonging to (because weaponized by) white Westerners. During the Algerian Revolution, a large number of Algerians began to become empowered through appropriation and exaptation of 'Western' medicine for their own and the FLN's ends. This shift in empowerment was accompanied by pleasant affects and new ablenesses. This "people henceforth demanded and practiced a technique stripped of its foreign characteristics (Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 142)." Such empowerment and pleasant affects allowed for new forms of the identification of the referent of 'Western' medicine's quality of 'belonging.' Portions of 'Western' medicine were no longer only 'Western' in any simplistic, essential, or even everyday-praxeological way. How can one theorize this alteration?

To grasp this transformation, I unpack the following argument by a rigorous and detailed focus on *L'An cinq de la révolution Algérienne*: When A. an individual is or imagines that she is involved in new empowering relations of social belonging, then this thought will be accompanied by pleasant affects, whereas when B. an individual is or imagines that she is involved in new disempowering relations of social belonging, this thought will be accompanied by sad affects. And, when A. occurs among numerous individuals within a particular group (who share a minimal awareness of belonging to said group), and who previously felt the same type-identical affect in regard to the identification of some relation of belonging X, then such changes can give rise to new identifications of relations of social belonging not-X, Y, or Z, and so on. And, since group self-identification is one type of identification among others, the new forms of identification that can arise due to changes in power, imagination, and affectivity can be about the group itself. This argument

concerning the process of the identification of relations of social belonging can thus shed light on Fanon's mapping of the ways in which group self-identifications change over time, as also described in "West Indians and Africans."

