

William Esuman-Gwira Sekyi (Kobina Sekyi) of Ghana, (1892-1956): Theory of Politics, Development and Cultural Identity

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Introduction

For a number of important reasons I would be remiss if I did not bring an African perspective to bear on a conference on Philosophy and Race and on the contribution of Professor Alain Locke, a true renaissance man and one of the leading lights of the Harlem Renaissance, to the freedom, and literally and aesthetic achievements of the African American. The subject of this paper, William Esuman-Gwira Sekyi or Kobina Sekyi as he was popularly known by his contemporaries in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), was like Alain Leroy Locke born in the latter part of the nineteenth century. He was exposed to English education from the age of eight in Cape Coast in the south of present Ghana in a missionary school run by the Rev. W.T. Balmer, among whose "Faithful Eight" he was numbered. According to his thinly disguised autobiographical essay "The Anglo Fanti," which was serialized in West Africa in 1917 and published in Nancy Cunard's Negro Anthology (1932), he was brought up and educated an Anglophile, came to school in woollen suits and wing collars, and looked down on things African. By the age of 18, he was sent to England to study

engineering like his uncle J.B. Esuman, but appears to have changed to philosophy and law. He enrolled in the English Department for his first honors degree but according to one of his letters, was persuaded to enroll in the Philosophy Department by a fellow student from Nigeria (perhaps Delo Dosumu) who had recently graduated from the Department. By the time he graduated from King's College, London University, in 1914 and returned to Cape Coast where he reimmersed himself in Akan-Fanti culture, he had become disillusioned with English culture, and with capitalism and imperialism, as is clear from the poems he wrote while in England notably "The Sojourner" in three parts and the more philosophical "Concerning Man's World". Part I and II of "The Sojourner" namely: "The Loud Interval" and "The Lucid Sustained" in England show the development of his philosophical critique of Western civilization and the change in his political outlook while a student in London.

W.E.G. Sekyi was a contemporary of Professor Alain Leroy Locke. Like him he was trained in the philosophical discipline of

the West, and like him he developed a system of value relativism and a theory of race consciousness and cultural nationalism ('race manhood' or 'Africanity' as he called it) as a political ideology and an African aesthetic to combat colonialism and the racism that went with it.¹ Like Professor Locke, Sekyi was a "philosopher, critic and spokesman," and both felt they were called upon to guide the destiny of the black race through values, culture and education. They also felt called upon by virtue of their intellectual gifts to undertake this mission of political salvation and redemption of the race at a particularly crucial and dangerous time when it was clear to all that President Woodrow Wilson's *Fourteen Points* did not apply to Africans and Africans in the Diaspora and that far from fighting the Great War to "make the world safe for democracy", racism and colonial exploitation continued unabated. Above all, both philosophers regarded African history, culture and art as important sources of race, pride, political action, artistic inspiration and creativity. Separately, both men developed an ethical theory of development and cultural relativism grounded in the African past ("ancestralism") and its cultural legacy. While both men were "cultural cosmopolitans" with universal literary and philosophical tastes, they distinguished the cultural universals (or the arbitrary and subjective universals thereof) from the particulars and defended what may be called "cultural dualism"² on behalf of Africans and people of African descent. In both cases they were ahead of their time because the majority of their contemporaries swam with the imperial or dominant tide either out of opportunism or ignorance.

Sekyi, like Locke took personal interest in the struggle of Africans abroad in the 1920s and 1930's. He followed and commented on Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro

Improvement Association and African Communities League in the United States which had branches in South and West Africa, and wrote poems and articles for its journal, "*The Negro World*".³ Two chapters of Sekyi's unpublished manuscript *The Parting of the Ways* (1923) are devoted to an analysis of Garvey's UNIA. He has a copy of Garvey's *Philosophy and Opinions* and some copies of *The Negro World* newspaper. Both he and Professor Locke were in touch with the French African and Caribbean political and literary groups in Paris in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Professor Alain Locke was a member of the American Philosophical Society and many other professional societies. Sekyi was a member of the Aristotelian Society, the Philosophical Society of Kings College, London University, and the British Ethical Union some of whose distinguished members included: Professor Albert Murray (classicist); Professor Harold Laski of the London School of Economics and Political Science; J.A. Hobson of *Imperialism* (1902) fame, and leading sociologists such as Professors L.T. Hobhouse and Graham Wallas. Sekyi was particularly fond of the growing number of literary clubs in Ghana in the 1920s, 30s and 40s and enjoyed being invited to address them on topics ranging from techniques of good writing to political and philosophical issues. Among the latter, his most famous series of public lectures which, were serialized in the local newspapers, were "Thoughts for the Reflective" and "The Meaning of the Expression Thinking in English", both dealing with the political development of the Gold Coast and with the contact with Europe that culminated in the British annexation of the Gold Coast in 1900.

Like Locke, Sekyi believed in the wisdom and guiding power of the African ancestors, and in

the importance of a people's development being anchored in their history and cultural heritage. He believed this cultural framework was important for the socialization of the youth, and the internalization of Western education and science without the uncritical consumption of their deracinating elements. He believed that development anchored in one's culture would arrest the atrophy of indigenous institutions that was beginning to affect his society and other African societies under alien rule. In his *New Negro*, Locke attempted not only a cultural and social documentation of the New Negro, but also argued that he was focusing anew spiritually and culturally on the black man and developing "a renewed race spirit that consciously and proudly sets itself apart".⁴ For Locke, the task of the New Negro was to discover and define his culture, and his philosophical and aesthetic mission was to aid this effort through "the building of a race and defining of a culture".⁵ Indeed, one of Locke's students used the term "ancestralism" "to describe the totality of Locke's race-spirit concept, which was grounded in Locke's profound respect for the African past and for the folk spirit developed in the American South."⁶ Despite the apathy and ambiguity among many African-Americans, Locke and some of his contemporaries, including W.E.B. DuBois, regarded Africa as a powerful political symbol and aesthetic inspiration. The image of Africa also came to symbolize the racial identity and the cultural inheritance of the New Negro, who had a distinctive racial and cultural contribution to make to the world.

Having introduced the subject of this paper albeit via some comparison with his contemporary Alain Locke, and outlined some of their similarities of philosophy on the question of race, culture and freedom, let me now consider W.E.G. Sekyi's philosophy of racial identity, and authentic, sustainable

African development.

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William Esuman-Gwira Sekyi or Kobina Sekyi as he was popularly known, was born in Cape Coast on November 1, 1892. He was educated at Richmond College of West Africa, later named Mfantsipim School, at Cape Coast, the University of London and the Inns of Court (Inner Temple) where he studied philosophy and law respectively. He combined a successful legal practice with journalism, intellectual pursuits unusual in the Africa of his day, and nationalist politics from 1910 to 1954. During the period he was an active member of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society (GCARPS), a member of the Cape Coast **Oman** Council, Achimota Council and the University College of the Gold Coast Council. Throughout his public career spanning forty-six years, he wrote prodigiously on political, legal constitutional and literary subjects, often giving talks to schools and the growing number of 'literary clubs' in the country. He was in delegations to London to protest against acts of the colonial government, appeal cases to the Privy Council or participate in campaigns against foreign monopoly of the cocoa trade. He also served on various commissions of inquiry and constitutional commissions, of which the Coussey Constitutional Commission was the last, declining all fees and sitting allowances.

Brought up as an 'Anglo-Fanti',⁷ Sekyi was to develop into one of the most brilliant political thinkers of his time in Africa, and a leading and respected member of the National Congress of British West Africa in the 1920s and of the Gold Coast nationalist intelligentsia. His eloquence in Fanti and English was legendary. As his contemporary, the scholar and politician Dr J.B. Danquah put

it in his obituary: "In his writing he was classic and his English was as high as Latin." He saw himself not as one of Plato's philosopher kings (for he neither believed in party politics nor sought political office) but as 'guide, philosopher and friend' of his people and as a defender of indigenous institutions and values of the rights of the individual against the colonial power. To this end, he was un-compromising in his rejection of party politics which he considered an alien importation that would not take roots on his country's soil, and refused to join Kwame Nkrumah and the opposition to Nkrumah's Convention People's Party, arguing that the experiment with the Westminster model was unsuitable for the political development of the country. The rest of this paper analyzes his philosophy of racial identity (or "race manhood") as he called it, and his ethical theory of the State, and of political and socio-cultural development, which he argued was altogether different from the dominant imperialist paradigm of the time. The conclusion discusses the significance of his ideas for African political and social thought and for the development of contemporary Africa.

Sekyi's Theory of History

Like the classical political philosophers he had studied, Sekyi was deeply concerned about forms of government, man and society, and about political and cultural processes that, with suitable modifications, could be adapted to the traditional Akan-Fanti system of government for modern purposes. There is some evidence that he envisaged an elective scheme or representation in the context of a federation of traditional states, similar to the Fanti Confederation Scheme of the 1860s, which, under the leadership of King Ghartey IV of Winneba, was an ambitious program of modernization within the traditional Fanti political and social system. King Ghartey IV,

as Magnus Sampson observed, 'tried to do for the Gold Coast in 1867 what Meiji did for Japan in 1867'.⁸

To reconstruct and adapt the traditional system, however, Sekyi needed not only a model but also a theory of history and a theory of cultural, social and political development. The philosophy on which this theory was based was his theory of evolution or development and his concept of duty or political and social obligation based on naturalistic ethics. These ideas were in the tradition of British, European and American philosophical and sociological thought of the time. What is new about them is the way Sekyi Africanized or indigenized them in a brilliant and original manner to develop a theory of indigenous African development, law and sovereignty, and of individual rights and political obligations.

Sekyi viewed history as a cycle of evolution from a primitive society of hunters and gatherers to an agrarian and industrial society, and in terms of the rise and decline of nations. For him, nations declined partly because of the ascendancy of the nation-state, industrialization, capitalism and imperialism, and the social deprivation and moral decay which he viewed as an adjunct of this process, unlike John Stuart Mill and contemporary nineteenth century philosophers who saw them as incidents of growth and not a mark of decline. This thesis is a recurring theme in his writings, beginning with the earlier pieces in 'Morality and Nature' (1915) originally a paper read to the Philosophical Society of King's College, London; *The Relation Between State and the Individual Considered in the Light of its Bearing on the Conception of Duty* (1918) and his poems, particularly 'The Sojourner' and 'Concerning Man's World' both written between 1915 and 1918.

It is doubtful if Sekyi's theory of history was influenced by Marxist theory even though he may have read some literature. It is more likely that his thinking was influenced by the historians of classical antiquity, and by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and contemporary historians, playwrights and social critics like J.A. Hobson author of *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), George Bernard Shaw and Oswald Spengler, author of *The Decline of the West*. He rejected the unilinear theory of history and development and the universalization of the historical experience of Europe as the model to be replicated or followed elsewhere, and criticized fellow Africans who endorsed or recommended the model. For him, there was no such thing as universal history, or the history of non-European peoples, particularly the African people being considered 'irrelevant' or nonexistent, since each people and culture had its own genius and unique contribution to world civilization. In fact, evidence from his private papers clearly shows that he was a precursor of Cheikh Anta Diop and other leading historians of the African past in his efforts to collect materials on the subject, as evidenced in his files on C. Seligman's *Egypt and Negro Africa* and on *Africa Ancient Discoveries*. His poem "Concerning Man's World" also contains a stanza asserting the African origin of civilization.⁹ His project on the history of the various states, including the Ashanti Confederacy, is based almost entirely on oral tradition, including customary law. He was uniquely placed to undertake the project giving his interest dating to the foundation of the Cape Coast National Research Association in 1914 and his intensive study of the oral history and traditions of the Fante, which, in fact, inspired his 1918 Ethics MA thesis on *The State and the Individual*. In this he was following in the tradition of John Mensah Sarbah's *Fanti National Constitution* (1906) and *Fanti Customary Law* (1897) and J.E.

Casely Hayford's *Gold Coast Native Institutions* (1911), although he seems to have had a more ambitious legal and political book in mind.¹⁰ He was also in touch with Dr Carter Woodson, the editor of the *Journal of Negro History* and the father of African American history on the possibility of contributing an article on the Akan-Fanti people but the project did not materialize.¹¹ He acquired knowledge of customary law and local history from **Akyiami** (linguists or spokesmen of the Paramount Chiefs), Paramount Chiefs such as Nana Bassayin, **Omanhin** of Wassaw Amanfi, lawyers such as S.H. Brew also known as Prince Brew of Dunquah who was one of the architects of the Fanti Confederation, Chiefs such as his grandfather Kofi Sekyi, Esuon Wiredu of Bisardzi, Yamoah III of Arkra, Sam Amissah, and **Tufuhim** George Moore of Cape Coast. His Gold Coast history project includes files on:

- a) The history of Anomabu: The formation of the town of Anomabu.
- b) The Negro's belief in **Onyakopon** or paramount God.
- c) The Constitution of the Ashanti Kingdom.
- d) The origin of Wassaw (traditions).
- e) The history of Elmina (the opening of Lagoon Benya).
- f) The history of Tekyiman.
- g) The arrival of the Mfantis on the coast.
- h) Tribal characteristics.
- i) The emigration of the people of Akyem Busume.
- j) Some important characters in Fanti history.
- k) The origin of the Oath of the **Omanhin** of Cape Coast.¹²

Another file on the Ashanti Confederacy is also contained in his papers.¹³ The valuable materials in these files have been used by

scholars to reconstruct the early history of the Fanti.¹⁴ The ambitious oral history project of the Fante states he worked on but never completed for publication has now been realized by one of Ghana's leading historians.¹⁵

According to Sekyi, the political uses of history or its instrumental value lay in using it to develop national and political consciousness and pride in one's culture. He also viewed history as a means of guiding youth and of transmitting cultural values and enhancing cultural identity in a period of political, cultural and economic change brought about by the imposition of colonial rule. He and the Cape Coast nationalists maintained to the end that the Gold Coast had never been conquered and that the declaration of colony status in 1901 was a usurpation of Fanti sovereignty (based on the Bond of 1844 signed between the Fanti Confederacy and the British) and an interruption of the natural evolution of the Fanti state system. According to this view of Ghanaian history, the political history and development of Ghana would very likely have been different from the rest of the British colonies in Africa.

Sekyi used the weapon of theory to buttress his radical conservatism in his struggle against colonial rule. As noted earlier, after his 'Lucid Interval' when he returned to Cape Coast before continuing his legal studies and earning a Master's degree in philosophy, he developed a moral, political and legal philosophy of the state and the individual which strongly influenced his thinking on law, political and social development. His theory of development cannot therefore be properly understood if the three stands of ethics, law and politics are considered in isolation.

The ethical basis of his political and social theory is his paper 'Morality and Nature' and

his thesis on *The Relation Between the State and the Individual Considered in the Light of its Bearing on the Conception of Duty*. Three earlier articles, the 'Essentials of Race Manhood', 'Education in British West Africa' and 'The Future of Subject Peoples' must be read in conjunction with the *State and the Individual* and 'Morality and Nature'. At the time he wrote, much of ethics and sociology was written in the context of evolutionary naturalism, in spite of G.E. Moore's criticism in *Principia Ethica* (1902) and Sidgwick's skepticism. Charles Darwin, L.T. Hobhouse and Herbert Spencer continued to exercise a powerful influence on sociology and ethical theory. Sekyi's argument in 'Morality and Nature' should therefore be seen as his criticism of aspects of evolutionary theory which tended to justify the political subjugation of Walter Bagehot's 'Unfit Men and Beaten Races', the European conquest of Africa, and the imposition of colonial rule on the continent and elsewhere on the basis of theories of racial superiority derived from supposedly scientific facts. The first part of his critique can be said to constitute his scientific interest in evolutionary theory. The second part, contained in the 1918 manuscript and in the 1915-17 articles may be seen as the socio-political extension of, or corollary to, the first part and constitute his *moral or philosophical interest* i.e. his consideration of what constitutes the basis of morality, law, sovereignty, political obligation, and political and social development, from an African point of view.

Sekyi's naturalistic ethics begin with the subjective view that 'one can never be moral without conforming strictly to Nature'. In this subjective sense 'natural' is taken to mean the original or essential, as opposed to the acquired, artificial, conventional or accidental, similar to the Stoic attempt to derive positive rules of life in 'conformity to nature' and their

definition of morality as 'right reason in agreement with nature', the latter being a permanent and unchanging standard or norm by which the worth of positive law would be judged. Nature he defined as the totality of things not rational in the sense in which we speak of the human animal as rational as well as all rational beings in the universe.¹⁶ He criticized J.S. Mill and T.H. Huxley for positing a gladiatorial theory of Nature and accused them of applying moral predicates to Nature and judging natural processes according to an ethical standard of right and wrong. If Mill and Huxley accepted that rational agents and their morality are the products of the cosmic process, he argued, then they were inconsistent in branding Nature criminal and non-moral.¹⁷ In his view, they had failed to prove 'the relation of the ethical order of rational agents to the ultra-ethical order of the cosmic process'.¹⁸ Having derived morality from nature, Sekyi questioned whether man with all his scientific and technological achievements had any claims to a theory of morals formulated independently of Nature, and criticized L.T. Hobhouse, then a professor of sociology at London University as an exponent of the latter view in his theory of development. If, he asked, man merely represented a stage in evolution, should he insist on establishing and imposing universal standards? Was he not committing the naturalistic fallacy of deriving what ought to be from what is, such as imposing a universal or unilinear model of development on non-European societies, particularly Africa which was regarded as a continent with no history or accomplishments of its own? His central argument here was that it was one thing to talk about evolution in a neutral or scientific manner but quite another to talk as if evolution necessarily tended in a direction one ought to rate as good. Even if, as a matter of contingent fact, evolution did make for progress, and is

therefore good, it would, in his view, be wrong to equate the evolved with the good or the good with the evolved. The English philosopher, Bertrand Russell put the argument forcefully:

*If evolutionary ethics were sound, we ought to be entirely indifferent as to what the course of evolution may be, since whatever it is thereby proved to be the best. Yet if it should turn out that the Negro or the Chinaman was able to oust the European, we should cease to have any admiration for evolution...*¹⁹

Sekyi's derivation of the 'good' or morality from nature is not without its philosophical difficulties, and some contemporary philosophers were by no means agreed as to the derivation of 'good'. Henry Sidgwick, for example, did not think that morality could be based on nature: "There is still much controversy" he argued, "as to the precise content of the notion of 'good' ... It is a controversy which ethics has got to work through, and in the settling of which it cannot derive any material aid from sociology". In his view, morality can only be derived from nature "if we introduce a theological significance into our notion of nature attributing to its design and authority".²⁰ To which Sekyi might have replied that his conception of state and society differed from what he viewed as the artificial development of the state in European thought and practice in that it was an organic whole whose constituent parts were held together not by force or the threat of force but by an internal force, virtue or *custom* associated with the evolution of the Akan-Fanti social and political system.²¹ He would certainly have agreed with Sidgwick that it was the role of ethics to establish principles and morality and the concept of the good by virtue of man being first and foremost a social animal. In other words, the concept of the good could not

be explained by reference to supernaturalism or religion but by naturalism. Sekyi's naturalistic ethics thesis was the "the concepts and principles of morality derive their whole meaning from the nature and needs of man as a social being."²² Thus, Sekyi saw philosophy as a practical activity, as "man's greatest gift" and as "impartial thought of Man and Mortality"²³ that is of value to society because it examines the intellectual and moral basis of human existence and applies critical thought to human welfare.²⁴ For Sekyi, therefore, ethics was the philosophical basis for the reordering of society and the intellectual framework for the anti-colonial struggle that lay ahead.

In his theory of development, Sekyi distinguished between the social process, the civilization sequences among all societies, as in the development of pre-political society into family and kinship organizations, the political community and the state. He developed these ideas in detail in *The Relation Between the State and the Individual*, showing the evolution of law and the state as a result of increased stratification. He described the evolution of the modern state as the result of increasing artificiality, the creation of new economic and social classes, and the development from customary law to statute law, and law as the command of the sovereign, with the subsequent distinction between the state and society and the resulting conflict of duties in that situation, which he compared to the situation created by the imposition of colonial rule.²⁵ The 'civilization process' consists in the accumulation of technical knowledge to exploit natural resources and to promote industrial development. In Sekyi's view, in Europe this stage of development was characterized by imperialism and war. He believed that scientific and technological knowledge was transferable but that the 'culture process' was

not. Anticipating the German sociologists such as Alfred Weber,²⁶ he argued that culture was unique and incommunicable and unlike science, incapable of universal validity. The casual laws of science had no applicability to the realm of culture as the latter did not follow any unilinear progression but defied the determinism of science and technology. Uncritical importation would lead to 'denationalization' and development failure. This line of reasoning is evident in his criticism of the Western model of development recommended for Africa in Duse Mohamed Ali's *The African Times and the Orient Review*²⁷, to which the editor replied that Sekyi "having stated what should not be done should go on and inform us what he believes that we must do to be saved".²⁸

Sekyi dedicated the rest of his life to the problems of African development in general and the development of the Gold Coast in particular. In his legal battles with the colonial government, in writings and lectures on the law, and in newspaper articles on politics, education and culture, he made it his mission to educate, to provoke thought and raise national consciousness and pride in indigenous institutions especially the institution of chieftaincy, and their relevance to the present and future development of the country. He did not reject the benefits of British colonial rule except where certain laws and activities undermined traditional institutions and values. He believed that modernization or development should be based as far as practicable on the culture and institutions of the people, not the other way round, if the process was to take root and be sustained and internalized by the people who are supposed to be both the means and the end of development. For social, political and economic development to be sustainable and internalized, and not lead to what he called 'denationalization' and confusion, he believed

the process should be internally located and generated and guided by African values. Careful study of his two poems – the autobiographical ‘The Sojourner’ and the more philosophical ‘Concerning Man’s World’ – leaves one in no doubt about the profound impact of life in England on the development of Sekyi’s ethical theory of the State and political and social development, especially his ideas on ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’, on culture and development, on the disparity between modern man’s technological evolution and his social evolution. That experience reinforced by the ‘lucid intervals’ rediscovering his culture and identity with the help of the philosophical legal and sociological training and education he was acquiring at university and the inns of court created a compelling need to undertake a philosophical examination of the Akan-Fanti polity and culture to see if, notwithstanding the socially corrosive impact of alien rule, the permanent and unchanging elements and operative principles of that polity could be found, salvaged or readapted, which might have a bearing on the future of the Gold Coast society, and indeed of African society, and act as catalysts of beneficent evolution and progress.

Sekyi’s ethics thesis for the MA degree in philosophy can be understood as the philosophical basis of his reinterpretation of the Akan-Fanti scheme of governance showing the place of man in it, the moral basis of the political order; legitimacy and obligation, and the restoration of a stable political evolution for the country based on Ghana’s cultural patrimony. To provide this framework, he had to de-center the dominant imperial (Western) culture and represent the Akan social system and oral tradition which he learned from **Akyiami** (linguists), in the philosophical framework he developed in *The State and the Individual Considered in the*

Light of Its Bearing on the Conception of Duty (1918) which differed in material respects from the evolutionary ethics of the time. The problem of race was important to him and his African contemporaries in the British colonies because race was so deeply woven into the very fabric of imperialism and colonial rule and was firmly entrenched as an instrument of power, privilege and control. Although always denied, race was always a key factor in the mechanics of colonial rule, right up to the decolonization period.²⁹

Sekyi was born in 1892, four hundred years after Christopher Columbus “discovered” America, and the year New Yorkers dedicated a statue to Columbus. He was a schoolboy at the height of British imperialism and when Ashanti was declared a Protectorate of the British Crown in 1900. He was the grandson of Chief Kofi Sekyi and on his maternal side was descended from a family of merchants, lawyers, journalists and men of public affairs with a tradition of writing books on law and politics. He was also born in Cape Coast which was famous for its schools, nationalist agitation, and as the seat of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society which was established in 1897 and was still in existence (at least on paper) when he died in June 1956. For him and his fellow patriotic intellectuals, then, the burning questions at the end of the World War I in 1918 were: white (British) racism and the paternalistic and condescending forms it took in the British colonies, including his country, and the related question of African identity and future development. Sekyi was perhaps the first Western educated African to develop a philosophical framework for analyzing these problems and finding an African solution to the colonial crisis of identity, values and development. What follows is a summary of Sekyi’s ethical theory of development in which was embedded his ideas of a moral

society, duty, political legitimacy and authentic development from which he never wavered, despite the invitation of younger politicians such as Dr J.B. Danquah, Dr Kwame Nkrumah the first President of Ghana, and Dr Kofi A. Busia, Prime Minister under the Second Republic, who believed that the British model of parliamentary democracy they had inherited would work in an independent Ghana.

Sekyi's ethics thesis is in three parts. Parts I and II deal generally with the relation between the state and the individual and the development of the concepts of duty and obligation in this context from the pre-political (family) group to the primitive State and the election of the sovereign. At this stage, governance is based on memory and tradition or custom, not law, and political obligation is based not on legal compulsion but on "natural and free obedience". Although the concept of duty or obligation becomes modified as the state develops and as the sovereign and his councilors begin to specify the ends of government and how these are to be attained by the social group, the stage is now set for potential conflict of social and political duties. The conflict is not real because the sovereign is still revered and obeyed partly out of habit and partly because of that indefinable attribute, mystery or superstition (Thomas Hobbes's "spirits invisible") of the sovereign. When the state begins to be ruled by the will of the sovereign, and law conflicts with custom and morality based on custom instead of supplementing it, the traditional moral sanctions and customary practices erode and "obedience to law begins to be more commendable from the point of view of political prudence than obedience to mere morality or custom unsupported by law ... Disobedience of law begins to be rarer than disobedience of morality. In time even honesty and kindred virtues become matters of

policy".³⁰ Political obligation now becomes a problem as a conflict of loyalties becomes inevitable.

Sekyi concludes Part I with an account of the development of the state to the stage of absolute monarchy in which the monarch, having abused his power, is removed by the nobles and replaced by a constitutional monarch with limited powers, or by a democracy at the one end, or revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat at the other end of the political spectrum.

Part II discusses the central question: What is law and why must I obey it? Here again Sekyi, arguing from his evolutionary ethics and organic concept of the state, distinguishes between law and morality. Law he defines as the command of the sovereign based on the rule of compulsion, and as the creation of the state in its artificial stage. Obedience to law is based on punishment that deters. For this reason, Sekyi argues, the law is outside the person who obeys. Morality, on the other hand, is not outside the person who is moral since it is never possible to elude morality. For this reason, obedience of the moral law is not influenced by the deterrence of punishment:

It is clear, then, that the ethical idea of duty as a course of action followed ... not for a reward or in order to avoid punishment or pain, is possible only where the moral law prevails, that is, by individuals who acknowledge the moral law. When, therefore, the state is ruled by law it is only those who are still under the social influences that can do their duty in the strict meaning of the expression. I have endeavored to show that this is entirely due to the highly artificial nature of the state in its later development.³¹

Part II constitutes Sekyi's conclusions about

the "ethical development of the state" based on the analysis in Parts I and II, and his attempt "to determine the true line and character of human progress".³² The main conclusions of Part II are: The development of the Western nation-state is "the development of artificiality" and cannot, therefore, be seen as man's progress since "the object of that progress must be to make him less and less a man, to divest him gradually of his human nature and make him entirely artificial ... a product, so to speak, of his own impulsive activity ... Clearly, the development of the State cannot be rightly conceived as involving the progress of man."³³ On the contrary, argues Sekyi, it is the rise of that group or class of persons created by law as distinct from morality that takes place during the later development of the state: "the class of persons who are protected by law although they defy the moral law and obey law itself only in order to avoid being punished".³⁴ In such a society and government, the 'moral' man is at a complete disadvantage in this 'immoral' society. To borrow the title of one of Reinhold Niebuhr's books, a "Moral Man and Immoral Society" develops at this stage in the growing artificiality of the State which, in Sekyi's view, is sometimes referred to by those who do not see far enough as an "Improvement in Nature" but is "in reality nothing other than the supplementation of Nature made defective through human short-sightedness."³⁵ Here Sekyi is reiterating the theory about race and ethics he had been developing between 1913 and 1918 namely: they develop along autonomous lines anchored in their history and values so long as they follow a development trajectory based on the so-called universalism of Western culture and development experience, which was but another vehicle of Western dominance. Ethics or moral philosophy, then, is the basis of Sekyi's social and political philosophy or

racial and cultural identity. As Professor Wiredu so rightly observed: "Ethics ... may quite naturally be considered as a preliminary to political or, more broadly, social, philosophy, which is concerned with the fundamental problems of the social institutionalization of the concept of the good. Social philosophy is, indeed, the crown of all philosophy."³⁶ In the words of Professor Jowett ... ethics, law and political development are "the warp and woof which run through the whole texture"³⁷ of Sekyi's political and social philosophy for the reconstitution of the Akan-Fanti body politic to enable it to "resume its interrupted advance towards modernity by normal adaptation to its modern milieu and surroundings."³⁸ As his son, who read classics at Cambridge University and had a distinguished diplomatic career, noted in a letter to the author :

I have in my possession a collection of his manuscripts in prose and verse, and I have so far managed ... to establish a chronology, thus making it possible to trace the development of his thinking as far as it can be traced. I think, 1910. In so doing, I have come to the conclusion – for instance, based on the evidence of some early verses and master's thesis – that during his university career he developed a moral and political philosophy of the state and the individual which seems to have colored all later political ideas and ideology ... It seems to me the three strands – philosophy, politics and law – interweave and reinforced each other and cannot really be studied in isolation from each other.³⁹

As already noted, Sekyi's derivation of morality or the good from nature flows from this naturalistic ethics or naturalism as opposed to religion or supernaturalism. It is clear from his note on religion at the end of his thesis on *The Relation Between the State*

and the Individual Considered in the Light of its Bearing on the Conception of Duty (1918), that religion for him, and in traditional Akan-Fanti, practice has a purely utilitarian function⁴⁰ as 'an aid to social uniformity' and for reinforcing reverence for kingly (or chiefly) authority.

By the time he returned to Cape Coast in 1918 (according to his autobiographical poem, "The Sojourner" has was "home again, restored to mental health" after his sojourn in England), Sekyi had ceased to be an "Anglo-Fanti" and had become a Fanti traditionalist and Gold Coast nationalist. With his philosophical and legal training he was regarded as 'an invaluable national asset' and a 'desirable recruit' into the ranks of the nationalist intelligentsia for the current and future struggle against British colonialism.⁴¹ No sooner had he been anointed by the elders than he was writing on "Christians and Fanti Festivals"⁴² in the columns of the *Gold Coast Leader*.⁴³ The article was criticized by some of his contemporaries, notably the Reverend Gaddiel Acquah of Mfantipim School, who Sekyi described as "a most rabid Christian", while describing himself as "a very extreme Rationalist". Sekyi was accused of ingratitude to the Christian missionaries who educated him and of advocating to return to **Nanaamism** or the **Nanaam** cult, and to what the revered Acquah called the "Rum and Gin" theory of Akan-Fanti society. He in turn reiterated his theory of religion in *The Relation Between the State and the Individual*, and dismissed the reverend gentlemen with the remark that "philosophy is not something which can be represented and criticized off-hand by theological fledglings".⁴⁴ On religion in general, Sekyi believed that all imported religions were inimical to Africa's development.⁴⁵

As a philosopher trained in the philosophical

discipline of the West, but also with a deep understanding of the Akan conceptual scheme, Sekyi viewed his role as philosopher in the tradition of Plato's philosopher kings:

*It must be borne in mind that the bloody revolutions of the old days are now obsolete: these are the days of bloodless revolutions, and the leaders of such revolutions are thinkers, realizing the Platonic dream of the time when kings will be philosophers and philosophers kings. The kingdom of the philosopher is not a kingdom built on arms: it will be a kingdom of righteous thought, logical all the way, not afraid to draw inevitable conclusions even as to the demerit of the best beloved, where such demerits exists.*⁴⁷

Sekyi also believed that philosophy could help Africans and people of African descent to reclaim what he called their "African soul", "Black soul" or "Africanity",⁴⁸ following Edward Blyden, Rev. Mojola Agbebi (alias D.B. Vincent), Bishop James Johnson (Holy Johnson) and J.E. Casely Hayford (W.E.B. DuBois also spoke of the 'souls of black folk' in his book of the same title, (1902)). Sekyi believed that his cultural reclamation would help them realize their true line and path of development as a race, and find salvation for the black race which by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century was, from the perspective of Sekyi and his African and African American contemporaries, in danger of dying under the most brutal forms of colonialism and racism. The DuBoisian Pan African Congress from 1900 to 1945, the Harlem Renaissance and Negro movement, the early nationalist movements in West and South Africa and parts of East and Central Africa in the 1920s, and the literary and political activities of Africans and West Indians in France in the 1920s and 30s should be understood in this racial and anti-colonial

context. Indeed, in verses 13 and 14 of "Concerning Man's World" Sekyi was bold to claim Philosophy for the Black Race:

*Man's greatest gift, sublime Philosophy, I
worth a thousand such as he can show
Of his devices for his comfort ...
Philosophy alone can reconcile
Thy life to Nature and to Death, and give
Thy stateless soul content ...
Philosophy is often manacled
With dogma's trammels. The Cartesian
Doubt⁴⁸*

*Is many a time itself bespectacled
With lurking prejudice, that looks without
On men and things, and on Causality
and reason, and from hen doth instant bound,
with one wild leap, to Immortality!
Then let thine own philosophy be sound
And free from superstitious preconcepts.*

*Philosophy is but impartial thought
On Man and on Mortality. It treats
of Life and Death – all else it holds as nought
This is the teaching of Philosophy:
"If thou should'st live, be thou prepared to die!"*

In his poem interestingly titled "Mirage", written in the same post-war period, Sekyi addresses Africans and Black people in general, and makes it clear that Africans must learn to think for themselves, and that they should rely on their own efforts and not expect sympathy or support from the white man because this was a delusion.

In Part III of *The State the and Individual* (1918), Sekyi does not quite succeed in his thesis that what he called the artificial state, i.e., the modern nation-state or post-Westphalian state that evolves from the primitive State is morally and socially inferior to the organically evolved State whose law is

moral because it is based on Nature and Custom. Instead, he launches into an argument against the doctrine of immortality of the soul, which he tries to link to the argument that if "morality is essentially purposive and must always involve self-consciousness", then it should be considered an experiment by human beings in their efforts to establish a way of life without discord. For this state of affairs to endure, he concludes, it must be based on the continuation of the species.

Sekyi did not mention Europe's African colonies by name or African Americans specifically, although he addresses them as "African" or "Negro", but the thrust and direction of his thesis is clearly pro-African and anti-colonial. It is also pro-development and pro-progress without being pro-Western. It has taken the Western World five centuries since the voyage of Christopher Columbus⁴⁹ to understand the difference. Even when the difference is finally recognized, Western scholars such as Professor Huntington persist in treating Africa as "the other". Thus he classifies the main civilization as ... "seven or eight major civilizations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African Civilization".⁵⁰ The adverb 'possibly' is heavy with prejudice and doubt, making Africa, as George Lamming said of Shakespeare's Caliban. "... the excluded, that which is eternally below possibility ..."⁵¹ To illustrate his philosophy of political and social development, sovereignty, law and individual rights, which were treated more abstractly in *The Relation Between the State and the Individual*, Sekyi followed in the tradition of J. Mensah Sarbah and J.E. Casely Hayford in his description of the traditional Fanti political and social system, which is summarized below.

For Sekyi, the Akan-Fanti polity was an extension of the extended family or clan. 'Family' and 'State' were not differentiated in kind but only in degree, in a loose federation of states dating from the migration of the Fante from the north-west and the consolidation of the Fante states of the coast in the eighteenth century, where they came into contact with the European trading settlements.

The social organization of the Fante was similar to that of the Asante in three important respects: The **Abusua** or matrilineal clan, the **Asafu** or patrilineal military company which had important military, civic and religious functions in the political and social system, and the traditional religion based on the veneration of the ancestors. In the Akan system, eight exogamous matrilineal and patrilineal clans constituted the major units of society and the matrilineal clan on which lineage was based. Following Sarbah, Sekyi defined family as all persons descended from one female ancestress. The family thus constituted something like a corporation within which all duties and rights including property rights, were collective, with the family elders settling all disputes and having custody of property. Political structure and authority reflected the social organization of lineages into villages, towns and states, with the king or chief at each level assisted by a council. National identity and social cohesion were cemented by the traditional religion, shrines of the chief traditional deities being located at **Mankessim** ('the big city').

Sekyi's more empirical account of the Akan-Fanti system is provided in *Thoughts for the Reflective* (1947) where he makes use of Sarbah's *Fanti National Constitution* chapter 1 on the 'Origin and Government of Akan Communities' and discusses the military states of Denkyira and Ashanti as well as

various forms of federalism, republicans and elective monarchical systems within the traditional state system. A similar account appears in his *The Social System of the Peoples of the Gold Coast* (1918), which seems to be an earlier draft of his thesis *The Relation Between the State and the Individual*.

With regard to the accountability and limits of the exercise of power by the ruler, Sekyi argued that the traditional Akan-Fanti concept of kingship differed from the European and Asiatic concept of kings as absolute rulers. The Akan-Fanti conception was that the king was the highest public servant in the state (**Oman**). He was an elected constitutional functionary, not a legislator, who must govern according to customary law, which Sekyi described as 'the highest form of law'. The ruler's relationship to his 'subjects' was like that between a father to his children or grand children, there being no corresponding word in Akan-Fanti usage for 'subject'. The people are sovereign and the king is himself a 'subject'. Hence the use of the appellation **nana** or **nananom** (plural) for both king and 'subject'. In the traditional political system, checks and balances consisted of 'a perpetual opposition' in the Council of State of the **Oman**, the **Asafu** or military companies as well as constitutional conventions such as the one in use in Elmina state: **Ehin no ni man** meaning that the ruler is merely the representative of the sovereignty of the people rather than their sovereign or master.

Although there was a traditional distinction between **mpanyinfu** and **mbrentsie**, i.e. between those who were members of the **oman** or state council and those who were not, his did not correspond to the European distinction between commoners and peers: 'the king himself is a subject of the state, a servant of the state who is created and can be deposed by the state without recourse to an

extraordinary or revolutionary act.' The Fanti proverb **Oman ye nsu na ehin nyi adwin a edam**, meaning 'a state I, or is comparable to, a body of water, and the king is the fish (or gem) in it', illustrated the constitutional position of the king. Moreover the king or chief is bound by his oath of office – during his occupancy of the stool or throne. Paramountcy, Sekyi described as an "indefinable attribute of rulership", noting that there was a difference between the paramountcy of the stool and the paramountcy of the stool in relation to land. Blackstone's chapter on English tenures in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, he argued, did not apply to the Akan-Fanti doctrine on the king's paramountcy over land. Quoting Sarbah's *Fanti National Constitution*, Sekyi noted that whereas in the Fanti system allegiance is personal, it was both personal and territorial in Ashanti, and that a ruler was not necessarily the owner of any land in his jurisdiction. It was unusual for the principal stool in a state to own all land, for the ordinary state of affairs was one in which every family had its own land. Even in relation to common land, it could not be argued that they were owned by the stool, "for it is the people who can own such lands, and the principal stool or its occupant is the trustee of such lands for the people ..."⁵²

On the question of sovereignty in the traditional political system, Sekyi's view was that African ideas of state sovereignty 'differ fundamentally' from the European which deriving from the feudal system were based on loyalty to an individual ruler 'instead of being based, as our institutions are, on loyalty to the people as a whole'.⁵³ In his view, unlike the European conception of sovereignty which originated from a Hobbesian state of nature characterized by the "war of everyman against everyman" that ended only when out of "fear of violent death" men obey the laws

of nature (self preservation) and transfer their 'rights' to a civil power for mutual protection, the traditional African state was conceived as a living organism and personality and not as an artificial or abstract entity. It was based on the notion of "transferred common power" in the personality of the sovereign or Chief, on ancestor worship and on symbolism of the Stool, which embodied the state as an organic whole in the interests of society. Thus, the king, Chief or **Ohin** becomes the custodian of the common sovereignty of the people and is therefore not the African tyrant of popular imagination in the eighteenth and nineteenth century who "utters oracles and governs. ... with a more Despotic Sway"⁵⁴ but a limited constitutional monarch bound by his oath of office and by customary law. As a leading African jurist said of the French jurist Leon Duguit whose theory of law and government was remarkably similar to Sekyi's:

*Duguit readily admits that customary law is law. Indeed, his sociological evaluation of human groupings as well as his theory of government are concepts which all the main types of African societies can claim for their own. The king or chief and his council of elders are looked upon only as constitutional functionaries who must govern in strict accordance with the traditional norms of political and social behavior. The chief is father of his people who, in their turn, are expected to maintain the social equilibrium by performing their civic duties ... no one, not even the king or chief, was allowed to disturb the social solidarity.*⁵⁵

With regard to the rights and the status of individuals in the Akan-Fanti polity, Sekyi treats these in detail in *A Comparison of English, Gold Coast and Akan-Fanti Laws Respecting the Absolute Rights of Individuals; Custom and Law in West Africa*, and in *The Study of Our Institutions*, in respect of the law

of succession, the status of women, criminal summons or warrants and land rights. Sekyi's treatment of these rights of African customary law can usefully be compared with the Nigerian jurist T.O. Elias on the subject.⁵⁶

For Sekyi, the most important political symbol in the traditional polity was the Stool (or throne), meaning all the principal Stools originating from the Golden Stool of Ashanti, which symbolized not only Akan-Fanti sovereignty but also "the emblem of national unity ...[and] the container of the national **sunsum** or spirit".⁵⁷ It was the living, unwritten constitution and the outward and visible manifestation (the 'plastic theory' as one authority has described it) of the Akan-Fanti system of government. The only other visible expression of sovereignty and nationhood with which he could meaningfully compare the Stool was the Holy Crown of St. Stephen of Hungary. For him and his countrymen, the Stool symbolized the transmission of authority from one ruler or **Ohin** to the next and the political legitimization of the new ruler, which was accomplished through the religious rites and ceremonies connected with the annual Stool festivals. The symbols and rituals also re-affirmed the continuity of the State or **Oman** as the representative of the common sovereignty.

Sekyi's uncompromising defense of the relevance, validity, and rationality of indigenous values and institutions, and his strong defense of them against foreign influences, especially alien rule and Christian missionary influence (which he thought had undermined traditional religion and loyalty to indigenous institutions, was denationalizing the people of the Gold Coast and undermining 'race manhood'),⁵⁸ was based on his strong belief that associational life and indigenous institutions are essential to the maintenance of

civic culture, for guiding the development of Akan-Fanti society and for steering the society through economic and social change in terms that were meaningful to the people in internalizing change without disrupting the social order. In light of the social and economic changes then taking place in the country, he believed that indigenous institutions constituting the ancestral *res publica* should be strengthened, revitalized and adapted to the new environment since their integrity was being eroded in the clash with an alien culture and a powerful and often culturally insensitive and arrogant colonial bureaucracy. He also believed that traditional values should be strengthened concurrently with improvements in education adapted to African circumstances and racial autonomy to avoid the kind of British colonial education designed to ensure the Africans' "amenability to imperialistic regulation and control" by adapting Western education selectively to "the expansion of the native system of education so as to equip the young native to react in the traditional manner to the previously unknown circumstances of contact with Europe which has all but completely changed their environment".⁵⁹ For those reasons, Sekyi was of the view that:

*Our children must be taught to read and write, without doubt; but they must also be taught to think. They must study science and its application in the arts and crafts; but neither the one nor the other should be subordinated to the ends of trade. They require first to be proud of themselves, of their nation, of their race. The foundation of stability is self-respect, individual, national, racial. Whatever we do, we must bear in mind that our end is national development as a means to racial unity.*⁶⁰

The importance Sekyi attached to the integrative role of culture, indigenous

institutions and traditional values in the development process was finally given official recognition in 1937 in a *Memorandum on a Proposed Institute of West African Culture* at Achimota College composed by the Principal of the College, H.V. Meyerowitz, E. Amu of Achimota College, Dr. Meyer Forte (Institute of African Languages and Cultures, London), Professor F. Clarke and Dr. W.B. Mumford (University of London Institute of Education) with the support of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education. Whether Sekyi was consulted by the authors of the memorandum is not clear, although the project is one he would have supported wholeheartedly. He was a member of the Council of Achimota College. What is clear is that his ethical theory of African-oriented development anchored in traditional value of African aesthetics runs through the memorandum. The memorandum referred to the problem of adapting African education "to African tradition: political, economic, religious, cultural" in a period of transition". The chairman of Achimota Council felt that "the whole question is so profound in its relation to the complicated situation in the Gold Coast that nothing short of an almost revolutionary approach to the subject will be of any real value". The memorandum expresses concern about the negative impact of modernization on African society and about the:

Premature desertion by the African of ancient practices and traditions which have not only served to give unity and cohesion to this society, but have in them elements capable of indefinite development and of assimilation of those European ideas and usages which now exercise a strong attraction.

The memorandum also made the important recommendation that one of the major functions of African culture in the future

would be "to receive the historic institutions of Europe, and after a period of assimilation, to return them with a new and vivid light upon their significance". Because of the gradual transition of the Gold Coast from an agrarian society to a semi-urbanized one with a westernized social division of labor and a monetized economy dependent on world markets, the memorandum identified a certain malaise and the anxieties of modernization such as the future of children and their education, and the beginnings of conflict between the traditional extended family and the emerging nuclear family in the Gold Coast. The memorandum observed similar conflicts in the area of religious and ethical ideas. One of the causes of this malaise and uncertainty associated with the transition to a monetized economy was the decay or absence of effective integrative mechanisms in the society. Consequently, a reconciliation had not yet been effected between the economic and social systems of West Africa. Africans, the authors noted, wanted the best of both worlds; clinging to the fundamentals of their traditional ways of life while assimilating European ideas and techniques. The malaise would continue unless there was a program of cultural adjustment and the articulation of a new philosophy of the transition. The memorandum concluded with a very Sekyian prescription of cultural awareness and the relevance of indigenous institutions as effective vehicles of social, economic and political development suited to the needs of the people: "a society must know itself if it is to progress."

Conclusion

Kobina Sekyi died on June 2, 1956. The obituaries, while paying tribute to his patriotism, moral courage, vision and greatness of spirit, were ambivalent in their assessment of Sekyi as a political leader but unanimous in praising him as a great thinker

and patriotic statesman. J.B. Danquah referred to his stubborn and unrealistic belief in the apostolic succession of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society and to his Olympian contempt for the wily politicians whose ambition, Sekyi suspected, was to win power and oppress their own people. The Convention Peoples Party (CPP) owned *Ghana Evening News* praised fierce nationalism and high political principles, in contrast to other politicians. It pointed out, however, that Sekyi had ceased to be an effective political force around 1949-50 partly because of the arrival of Nkrumah and partly because of his inability to see eye to eye with the youth and the "very abstract" nature of his political ideas. To most of his contemporaries, however, Sekyi's greatest contribution to modern Ghana and to Africa was in the realm of ideas. To Danquah he was the last of the great patriotic intellectuals of the Gold Coast and a "perpetual question mark to the running politicians and unproductive intellectuals" of the country. Joe Appiah, a leading nationalist politician and a contemporary of Kwame Nkrumah, compared him to Socrates, while Sir Edward Akuffo Addo and the later Professor K.A. Busia both former Heads of State of Ghana, emphasized the importance and relevance of his ideas to Africa. In F.L. Bartel's assessment, "He (Sekyi) made his greatest and finest contribution as a leader of thought. Aggrey inspired. Sekyi made people think. The people of this country owe their advance to independence to the thought which Sekyi

provoked. And yet he claimed no credit for it".

Kobina Sekyi's writings compel us to re-think not only Ghana and African history but also the neglected role of culture in development, and the role of philosophy in African society and in the African Diaspora. As this paper has attempted to show, this rethinking is not only interesting because of the African perspectives involved but also because of the interdisciplinary perspectives Sekyi brought to bear on the subject of development and culture which, as indicated in the conclusion of this paper, are more relevant than ever to Africans and people of African descent on the eve of the twenty-first century. We can conclude this discussion with the observation that a study of Kobina Sekyi's thought establishes him as a precursor of Leopold Sedar Senghor and the Negritude philosophy school, and as perhaps the first African trained in the philosophical discipline of the West to put philosophy to the service of Africa and the liberation of Black people in general. But he was more than a precursor. He was also one of the earliest leaders of African thought to see through the limitations of Western civilization and point the way forward to Africans and people of African descent, emphasizing the capabilities and potentials they can bring to the world of peoples and cultures, and to the rendezvous of the History that white mythologists of empire claimed as their monopoly.

NOTES

1. For an excellent analysis of the use and color as instruments of imperialism and colonial rule see Christopher Fyfe (1996); "Race, Empire and Decolonization in Africa", paper presented at the University of Edinburgh Center of African Studies Conference on Rethinking African History, Edinburgh, 22-23 May, 1996.
2. James B. Barnes "Alan Locke and the Sense of the African Legacy" in Russell J. Linnemann (ed); *Alain Locke: Reflection on a Modern Renaissance Man*; Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, pp. 100-108.
3. Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League to Kobina Sekyi, February 20, 1922, Private Letters, 1922. Acc. No. 571/64. Also Duse Mohammed Ali to Kobina Sekyi, Private Letters, Acc. No. 571/61, March 2 and August 19, 1922; Kobina Sekyi to Duse Muhamed Ali, Private Letters, Acc. No. 571/64; July 12, 1922.
4. Locke, quoted in Russell J. Linnemann (ed) op. cit. p.100.
5. Russell J. Linnemann (ed) op. cit. p.100.
6. Ibid. footnote 2, p. 100.
7. For Sekyi's thinly disguised autobiography as well as his study of the colonial acculturation process, see his 'The Anglo-Fanti', which was serialized in *West Africa* (London), 25 May - 12 September, 1918 reprinted in Nancy Cunard's *Negro Anthology* (1932) and his satirical play 'The Blinkards' (1914) depicting 'Anglo-Fanti' society at Cape Coast.
8. Magnus Sampson, (1937) *Gold Coast Men of Affairs*, quoted in Fyfe, Christopher, H (1972) *Africanus Horton*, 99. I am indebted to Christopher Fyfe for correcting me on this point. Horton himself contributed to the ideas for the modernization of the Gold Coast in Chapter 10 (which is entitled "Self-Government of the Gold Coast. Kingdom of Fantee") and Chapter 16 of his book *West African Countries and Peoples* (1868). See *West African Countries and Peoples* with an Introduction to Professor George Shepperson, Edinburgh University Press, 1969. With regard to the Japanese modernization experience, it is interesting to note the references to 'Japanism' in the Gold Coast Press in the 1920s and 30s. More specifically, see J.M. Sarbah, (1906, 240-42) and G. Metcalfe, (1964-46).
9. Sekyi's Paper, *Egypt and Negro Africa*, Acc. No. 372/64 and *Africa, Ancient Discoveries in* Acc. No. 554/64. Sekyi followed in the tradition of Edward Blyden and J.E. Casely Hayford who made ideological use of the African past but made no systematic study of it.
10. L.E.V. McCarthy to Sekyi, 17/12/38. Sekyi Papers Acc. No. 378/64.
11. Sekyi to Carter Woodson, 14/10/20, Acc. No. 571/64, Sekyi Papers.
12. *The History of Various Tribes*, Acc. No. 554/64. Sekyi Papers.
13. *The Ashanti Confederacy*, 1931 - 1935. Acc. No. 362/64. Sekyi Papers.
14. J.R. Sanders, (1980). *The Political Development of the Fanti in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Study of a West African Merchant Society*. Ph.D. Thesis, Northwestern University and "The Expansion of the Fanti and the Emergence of Asante in the Nineteenth Century"; *Journal of African History*, 203, 349-64 quoted in Kofi Baaku (1991) 'Kobina Sekyi of Ghana: An Annotated Bibliography of his writings', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 24, 2, 375-76.
15. J.K. Fynn (1987); "The Political System of the Fanti of Ghana During the Pre-Colonial period" *Universitas* (University of Ghana, Legon), vol. 9, 108-20; *Oral Traditions of the Fante States*, 8 vols (Legon, 1974, 1976) 1983.
16. *Morality and Nature*, op. cit. p. 55.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid. Sekyi's criticism of Huxley seems to be supported in W.F. Quinlan, (1915), *The Moral Theory of Evolutionary Naturalism*. (Yale University Press, p90-92.)
19. Bertrand Russell. *Philosophical Essays* quoted in A.G.N. Flew (1967). *Evolutionary Ethics*,

- London, Macmillan. p. 44.
20. Henry Sidgwick: *Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses*. (London. Mcmillan and Co. Ltd., 1904. p.263.) The argument is stated in detail in Ch. XI 'The Relation of Ethics to Sociology'.
 21. See J.K. Fynn, and J.R. Sanders. op. cit., and Sekyi's theory summarized in this paper.
 22. Kwasi Wiredu. *Philosophy and an African Culture*. (Cambridge University Press, 1980. p.171.)
 23. Kobina Sekyi. 'Concerning Man's World', poem, circa 1914.
 24. Kwasi Wiredu. op. cit. p. 62.
 25. Compare Sekyi's theory for example, with M. Fried (1960) "On the Evolution of Social Stratification and the State" in Stanley Diamond (ed) *Culture in History*. (Columbia University Press, N.U.) and Field, M. (1965), "Anthropology and the Study of Politics" in Sol Tax (ed) *Horizons of Anthropology*. (Allen and Unwin, p181-90.)
 26. Raymond Aron. *German Sociology*. The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964. p43-51.)
 27. Kobina Sekyi. "The Future of Subject Peoples" in *The African Times and Orient Review* (London), October-December 1917, p. 78, 94, 109-110.
 28. Duse Mohamed Ali, *The African Times and Orient Review*, op. cit.
 29. Christopher J. Fyfe (1996): "Race, Empire and Deolonization in Africa", Paper presented at the University of Edinburgh Center of African Studies Conference on Rethinking African History, Edinburgh, 22-23 May, 1996.
 30. W.E.G. Sekyi. *The Relation Between the State and the Individual Considered in the Light of Its Bearing on the Conception of Duty*. Ethics Thesis, MA Degree in Philosophy, University of London, 1918, p. 14.
 31. W.E. G. Sekyi, op. cit. p. 22.
 32. Ibid. , p. 1.
 33. Ibid., p. 23.
 34. Ibid., p. 43.
 35. Ibid. , p. 24.
 36. Kwasi, Wiredu. op. cit. p.172.
 37. B. Jowett, Introduction to *The Republic of Plato*, for Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1888, P. viii.
 38. Nana Nketsia IV, Chairman's Remarks on the Occasion of the Sekyi Exhibition, Ghana National Archives, December 9, 1993.
 39. Personal communication from Henry van Hein Sekyi.
 40. W.E.G. Sekyi: *The Relation Between the State and the Individual* (1918): 'Note on the Social Function of Religion', 33-35 for a discussion of the Akan concept of existence and *Particulars: An African Perspective*. (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1996. Chapter 5.)
 41. *Gold Coast Leader*, October 5-12, 1918, p. 5.
 42. Ibid.
 43. Ibid.
 44. *Gold Coast Leader*, December 7, 1918. p.6.
 45. A.R. Nayyar, (B. Phil.) To Kobina Sekyi, October 21, 1921 - "I am not inclined to favor any religious propaganda which has its source outside Africa, although I would listen to any religious addresses".
 46. W.E.G. Sekyi. *Thoughts for the Reflective*, 1923.
 47. W.E.G. Sekyi. "The Future of Subject Peoples", *African Times and Orient Review*. London, 1917. p.110.)
 48. For an analysis of the African concept of existence and critique of the Cartesian 'coito' in African philosophy and literature, see Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1996. P.152-126; 140-141) and Achebe Chinua, *Hope and Impediments: Selected Essays*. (New York, Doubleday, 1989. P.50-52.) For a post structuralist interpretation of Carteianism and logocentrism in the context of the development of capitalism, colonialism and the resistance of "the other to colonialism" including the rewriting of history from the point of view of the oppressed, see Couze, Venn, "History Lessons: Formation of Subjects, (Post) Colonialism and an Other Project" in Bill Schwarz (ed): *The Expansion of England : Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History*. (New York, Routledge, 1996. p32-60.)
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50. Samuel P. Huntington (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations*; Samuel P. Huntington: "The West: Unique, Not Universal" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 6, November/December 1996. P.28-46.
 51. George Lamming, "The Pleasures of Exile", quoted in Edward W. Said: *Culture and Imperialism*. (Vantage Books, 1994. p.213.)
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