

ence as pain in Purgatory is not so much a *torment inflicted by God as the traces of sin holding us back and weighing us down*. In the holiness of God we shall see the least stain of imperfection, in his being our nothingness. In the fine words of Fr Bede Jarrett O.P. 'He allows us a place where we may be purged of our sins and rendered fit by the fires of love for an entrance to the beatific vision of His beauty'.

There is a remarkable wholeness in Fr Ombres' approach to his subject. Pastoral considerations (especially ministry to the dying and the bereaved) are brought to bear, and alongside theology, the witness of art and poetry (especially Dante) is given full expression. There are some splendidly forthright statements on prayer for the dead. Refusal to pray for the souls in Purgatory is 'eschatological laziness', for prayer for the departed is only an aspect of praying for the coming of the Kingdom, a prayer for the consummation of God's hidden plan (p 59). The Church, we are told, has most often

made statements about Purgatory not so much to describe the doctrine as to defend the value of suffrages and penances and thus to restate her belief in the solidarity, in Christ, of the living and dead. It was, incidentally, this failure in a sense of solidarity across death that most appalled St Thomas More about Protestantism: 'that any Christian man could, for very pity, have founden in his heart to seek and study the means whereby a Christian man should think it labour lost, to pray for all Christian souls'.

One final point. At a time when the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches are once more engaged in official dialogue, it is particularly heartening that a Catholic priest, in expounding what in the past has been such a contentious issue, should show such openness to what he calls the 'theological and pastoral resources of the Orthodox' (p 69). Perhaps in a more extensive work Fr Ombres could take his eirenical task a stage further.

JOHN SAWARD

THE TRAGEDY OF ENLIGHTENMENT. AN ESSAY ON THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL by Paul Connerton. *Cambridge University Press* 1980. **£10.50 (hardback) and £3.50 (paperback).**

'The reception of critical theory', as Paul Connerton points out, 'is a story of impeded assimilation and belated acknowledgement' (p 11). Not least, as he also suggests, because of the difficulties encountered by the would-be-reader in penetrating the language of the texts of Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas. A short, critical exposition of the work of these four authors is thus to be heartily welcomed.

Connerton's main achievement is to document the extent to which all of these authors depart from central tenets of Marx's thought while continuing to invoke his concern and ostensibly his methodology (Horkheimer's paradigm for the work of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research was Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*). Thus, in their joint work, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno abandon Marx's injunction that the 'self' is to be seen as socially constituted, and that 'domination' must be referred to specific social structures. The shift seen by the authors as crucial – that from 'myth' to 'enlightenment' – is never directly related to the

break between pre-capitalist and capitalist societies.

Marx would have been utterly contemptuous of Marcuse's argument that the development of 'technological rationality' *per se*, rather than its specific application in capitalist societies, inevitably implies domination and repression. Marcuse's solution – the 'great refusal', i.e. the rejection of technological rationality – is reminiscent of the arguments of the 'utopian' socialist of the 1840s upon which Marx poured so much scorn. Marcuse's wholesale condemnation of capitalist society (especially of those 'bourgeois' liberties which have been so essential to the construction of an organised socialist movement', and his abandonment of the industrial working classes of the advanced capitalist nations as a *potentially* revolutionary force, made his eventual political pessimism inevitable.

Habermas is a more sophisticated heretic. Connerton traces the roots of Habermas' analysis of capitalist societies back to his fundamental distinction between 'instrumental' and 'communicative' action. In late

capitalism, so the argument runs, the state and its capitalist economic substructure are conflated, and 'instrumental' action threatens to drive out any remaining traces of 'communicative action'. Habermas suggests the creation of a dialogue between men of goodwill, through which men will once again be able to debate the nature of the good life – a dialogue which is to be characterised by a genuine exchange of views, and an absence of coercion. However attractive in theory, Habermas' proposed solution simply fails to take into account the fact that (as Marx pointed out) capitalist societies are characterised by intellectual and political domination, as well as economic domination, all of which prevent the creation of a genuine social dialogue about the nature of the good life. Habermas seems to be taking for granted the correctness of the notion of a classless society in which the removal of material conflicts would make possible a genuine dialogue, a genuinely human life. To expect such a dialogue within a capitalist society is, to say the least, naive. Connerton could have pointed out that 'real, existing socialism' is not characterised by a super-abundance of possibilities for communicative action, as the har-

assment of Bahro and the Charter 77 dissidents, and of the 'alternative' universities in Poland and Czechoslovakia makes clear.

On the whole, Connerton provides a lucid and balanced exposition and criticism of the work of the four (central) members of the Frankfurt School. At times, he seems to be infected by the literary style of the authors he is dealing with – his account of the history of the notion of 'critique of ideology', for example, is unnecessarily difficult to follow. But his basic (though hardly original) point comes out clearly enough: the Frankfurt School's basic weakness was that it constantly appealed to a 'critical public' which is never clearly identified (who for example, are Habermas' 'men of goodwill'?) More should have been made of the points of difference between the Frankfurt School and Lukacs (the most important interpreter of Marx since 1918). And a mention of Gramsci's notion of 'hegemony' (especially in connection with Habermas) would not have gone amiss.

Despite these criticisms, Connerton's book is probably the best introduction to the thought of the Frankfurt School on the market.

STEPHEN SALTER

PHILOSOPHY AND AN AFRICAN CULTURE by Kwasi Wiredu. *Cambridge University Press*, 1980. pp xiv + 239. £13.50 h/c and £3.95 p/b.

Apart from the fact that its author is a professor of philosophy in Ghana, it is really only the first part of this book (Chapters 1-4) that justifies its title. But anyone who wants to know what an African philosopher can say about philosophy and Africa will still find plenty in it to keep him going, though much of that is rather dull. Imagine an average Anglo-American philosopher, and imagine what he is likely to say about philosophy and Africa. That is roughly what you have in the case of Wiredu of whom it is characteristic to recommend 'a certain kind of training that will produce minds eager and able to test claims and theories against observed facts and adjust beliefs to the evidence, minds capable of logical analysis and fully aware of the nature and value of exact measurement'. (pp 15-16) It sometimes seems as if all Wiredu wants of philosophy is that it should help people to be physically comfortable. But his book is not just a plea

for the healthy ideals of a scientific society; much of it is devoted to discussing traditional philosophical questions in the theoretical manner in which they have traditionally been approached by philosophers. Wiredu writes on marxism, ideology and utopianism (Chapters 5 and 6), on mysticism (Chapter 7) and on truth (Chapters 8-12), which he holds to be opinion. 'Nonsense', he maintains, 'is nothing but one man's opinion forcefully declared by another to be defective in a particular way.' (p 117)

Wiredu's text can be warmly recommended as a clear and well written assertion of a distinctive philosophical position. It is especially worth the attention of those concerned with the nature and purpose of philosophy. But it is not without its drawbacks. Take, for example, Chapter 7. This contains a wholly sensible plea for consistency in thinking; but the plea is buried in a discussion that shows no awareness at all that