ANTON WILHELM AMO

THE INTERCULTURAL BACKGROUND OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

by

Jacob Emmanuel Mabe

Verlag T. Bautz GmbH

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(translated from German by J. Obi Oguejiofor)

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Preface to the English Edition

African philosophy has no doubt carved a niche for itself in the domain of academic philosophy. This is seen very clearly in the number of philosophy departments all over Africa where the sub-discipline of African philosophy is usually given pride of place. It is also seen especially in the result of the researches of African philosophic workers in these departments, and their predilection for different themes in African philosophy. Still, one lacuna that is yet to be filled in the field of African philosophy is the rarity of researches on individual African philosophic thinkers. It is in this regard that this booklet devoted to the Wilhelm Anton Amo and his philosophy solves a very special academic need.

The book first attempts to throw more light on the life of Amo. There are of course, some writings on his life, but in the process of presenting this enigmatic African, many inaccuracies have arisen to cloud the history. Jacob Mabe attempts to correct some of these using the result of the latest researches on the life of the African philosopher. In doing this, Mabe makes a very useful effort to underline the dual belonging of Amo to two intellectual traditions: European and African. There is no doubt that Amo lived for most of his life in Europe and that his intellectual work was axed on the philosophical issues that were current in European philosophical terrain. Still his Africanness was not without influence on the outcome of his thought and his life, forcing a non-extant monograph on the rights of Africans in the then European societies and eventually the sad turn that marked the end of his mysterious life in Europe. It is therefore very appropriate that Jacob Mabe presented Amo from an intercultural perspective.

For so long Amo has not gotten much more than fleeting reference both in African and European philosophical terrain. There are not many researches that concentrate on the outcome of his philosophical reflection; there is hardly any philosophical engagement with the issues that he discussed in his many books even notwithstanding the fact

that these books have been edited and translated. It appears that it was enough that an African was able to ascend to be a professor of philosophy in the Europe of the time. That is why there has been till date just one doctoral thesis devoted to Amo's philosophy. From the domain of African philosophy, this neglect may be due mainly to the unavailability of research material as well as the still lingering colonial colour of philosophy in Africa. But the deafening silence of German philosophy on Amo's thought even with German translations of his extant works is a pointer to more telling intellectual parochialism. On account of this parochialism such a doctrine as that of the thing-in-itself which is still today widely attributed to Immanual Kant as originator is, unknown to many, traceable to Wilhelm Anton Amo.

It is by concentrating on the philosophical doctrines of Amo that Mabe's book is able to bring to light the consequence of the neglect of Amo's teaching in European philosophical history. There are of course other aspects of his philosophy that finds a suitable place in this book. Amo is placed in the context of the Enlightenment within which he worked. His ideas were as profound and critical as those of other enlightenment thinkers who are described as very bold in enunciating innovative ideas on many aspects of human life and thinking but failing colossally in translating these to practice.

Mabe dwells on specific philosophical reflections of Amo, concentrating on his theory of knowledge and brief description of his theory of thing-in-itself; the nature and methodology of philosophy; theory of language; hermeneutics and the problem of prejudice; materialism as well as dualism of mind and body. Each of these themes is discussed within the context of Amo and also traced through its later development in European philosophy, as well as how such issues have evolved in contemporary African philosophy.

All these enabled the book to place Amo very firmly within the intercultural context. Amo's philosophy was mainly an engagement with themes that were current in the European context of his time. But Mabe tries to show at each stage that the issues discussed remain

relevant in contemporary African philosophical discussions. It goes without saying therefore that the relevance of Amo to African as well as European philosophy goes beyond mere wonder about how a black man could attain such a distinguished academic position in the Germany of that time. Amo was a very active participant in the philosophical development of the Enlightenment period. He was able to use his philosophical acumen in defense of the rights of his fellow Africans living in Europe, but finally gave up in despair to return to Africa on account of his disappointment with European racism. He was taken out of Africa but Africa was not taken out of his life.

The publication of this book poses a challenge to both European and African philosophers. To the Europeans, it is a challenge to review the reason why such an intellectual should be received rather in silence over the years; and to inquire whether such an incomprehensible neglect is not rather a reflection of the subtle politics of purportedly objective intellectualism. And well beyond Amo, Mabe's book points a visible finger toward the obviously wide neglect of African philosophy in most European universities. To African philosophic thinkers, Amo's life and teaching as presented in this book is also a strong challenge to go beyond the often unconscious tendency to prove the claim of Africans and those of African origin to the patrimony of philosophic reflection, and through that furtively affirm the ability to think. Amo's life and thought make him an heir to these two traditions of philosophy. Like Aurelius Augustine before him he deserves to have an indisputable place in the annals of both traditions. This book and its translation into English will certainly go a long way in ensuring his relevance in these and indeed in other regional philosophies of the world.

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CHAPTER 1
LIFE AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Anton Wilhelm Amo was probably born in 1700 in Gold Coast (today's Ghana). Precise information about his ethnic root is not available in that his family background is not known. He was not an orphan, but rather became, early in life, a victim of slave trade[1] in the Gulf of Guinea,[2] and thus had to grow up without parents and close relatives. It is well known from oral and written sources that the whole of west coast of Africa from 15th to 18th Century served as a big reservoir from which many bound Africans "were loaded into Dutch vessels and sold in Brazil and mostly Central America."[3]

The trade in human beings is without doubt the worst inhuman burden that Africans ever experienced.[4] Irrespective of their sex and age, millions of human beings were mercilessly bound and held for lengthy periods in closed fortresses built by Europeans; raped, humiliated, suppressed, etc, before they were transported and then displayed in

1 Around the end of the 17th Century, the English, the Dutch, the French, Portuguese and Danish built many forts in West Africa from which bound Africans were transported to Europe, Asia and America. According to John Kells Ingram between 1680 and 1700 the British exported around 300,000 Africans to England and from 1700 to 1786 around 619,000 were exported to Jamaica. In addition to this, he estimates that the number of Africans deported to West Indies from 1680 to 1786 to be 2,130,000. This makes a yearly average of 20,095. John Kells Ingram, Geschichte der Sklaverei, translated by Leopold Katscher, Dresden and Leipzig, 1895, p. 108 ff.

2 Amo constantly presents himself as coming from Axum and Guinea in order to stress his identity. By Guinea is meant the Gulf of Guinea which at the time referred to the west coast of Africa.

3 Robert and Marianne Cornevin, Die Geschichte Afrikas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, Frankfurt a.M./Berlin/Wien 1980, p. 229

4 See Joseph E. Inikori, Der Sklavenhandel, in: Das Afrika-Lexikon. Ein Kontinent in 1000 Stichwörtern, edited by Jacob E. Mabe, Stuttgart and Wuppertal, 2001, (special edition 2004) pp. 556 – 559.

slave markets mostly in Europe and America, and offered for sale at laughable prices.

The usually lengthy and tortuous stay in the fortresses, in addition to the massing together of human beings without any ethnic, social and cultural links had a devastating effect especially on children. They very quickly forgot not only their mother tongues but also their names and those of their parents. After he was captured, Amo was taken to a Dutch fortress near Axum from where he was later to face the forced journey to Europe. Given the background of his particularly young age, his correct identity could not be found. Still the legend of Ghanaian origin of Amo continues to make the rounds.

The ethnic confusion in the fortresses had negative results even in adults. They came from different regions and spoke very different languages. They could not therefore communicate adequately with one another. From this situation comes what can be called "slave ideology" which means that the enslaved Africans were forced, not only to learn the languages of the slave dealers, but also to deny their ethnic and personal identities. The simple use of African names was also strictly forbidden. Worse still was the painful remembrance of family and cultural life before their capture since one could never share that with any other person. Because of the mixture of different folks, one can neither ascertain that the original home of Amo was Akonu-Nkubean, nor connect him genetically with the Nzema people.

The fact that above all, Amo was brought to Rotterdam[5] by Dutch-West Indian company[6] that not only had fortresses in West Africa but

5 Before he was sold to Germany, Amo remained a few weeks or months in Rotterdam. On account of this short stay he was listed among the "historical sons and daughters" in Rotterdam.

6 This agency was founded in 1621 and was very much involved in the commerce in slaves.

also exported Africans to the slave metropolis with their own ships excludes any speculation that his emigration to Europe had any humanitarian and social motive behind it. Against some affirmations, Amo's journey to Europe was not undertaken with the wish or consent of his parents to be trained for priestly work in the Netherlands.[7] The widespread opinion in Germany that the Dutch-West Indian Company gave the young African as a gift to Herzog Anton Ulrich (1633–1714) of Wolfenbüttel-Braunschweig[8] is not backed by any evidence.

New researches in the "Ulrich-Anton Archives" have now shown that Amo was a servant of the Herzog. With dismay the writers report that "There has been much discussion concerning the position of Amo in the court. Now we can prove his exact responsibility in the court at Wolfenbüttel. Amo had a position as a lackey."[9] He had also other responsibilities. There were cost and payment receipts that were signed by Amo himself.[10] Before and after him there were court servants

7 That is what Francis Ogunmodede wrote citing William Abraham: "He stowed away as a child in a ship to Holland 1707 to become a Presbyterian priest." Francis I. Ogunmodede, "The Scholasticism of William Amo: The 18th Century Ghanaian Philosopher in Diaspora," West African Journal of Philosophical Studies, 2 (1999), pp. 57–73. In his search for the reason for Amo's journey, William Abraham himself formulated three hypotheses: (a) Amo was kidnapped, (b) Amo was sold as a slave, (c) Amo came to Europe for training as a pastor. See also William Abraham: The Mind of Africa, London, p. 61. The third hypothesis that was also favoured by Paulin Hountondji corresponds to what is known at the time. He should therefore not be regarded as naïve. Paulin Hountondji, Afrikanische Philosophie: Mythos und Realität, Berlin, 1993, p. 128.

8 Anton Ulrich was not only the ruling State prince and Duke of Braunschweig and Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel, but also baroque poet and chivalry knight. He made many chivalrous tours to Italy and to the Netherlands during which perhaps he came across Amo and the Dutch-West Indian Company.

9 Cultural City Wolfenbüttel Society (ed.), Anton Wilhelm Amo – Ein Schwarzer am Wofenbütteler Hof, Wolfenbütteler Barockjahr 2006, Ausstellungsheft Nr. 6, Wolfenbüttel, 2006, p. 4.

10 According to receipts Amo was paid from Easter 1716 as he was 16 years old. The last receipted payment was made on 28.11.1721. His means of livelihood

from Africa who were kept as servants or decorative vassals not only in Wolfenbüttel but also in many other Electorates' yards. It is no longer a secret that the court of the Elector of Wolfenbüttel was deeply involved in slavery. For there was "already during the reign of Herzog August a court moor[11] named Augustus who belonged to the court."[12] Credit must be given to the orientalist Burchard Brentjes (1929)[13] for researches on Amo. But his portrayal of Anton Ulrich as a humanitarian supporter of Amo is somewhat exaggerated. For this Herzog was by no means in position to give a minor the appropriate paternal education, due to his family situation as well as his advanced age, being 74 years old at the time of Amo's arrival. Again, he had thirteen children of his own, even though they were already adults at the time.

What else apart from pure prestige could have made him to take care of a young African three years after the death of his wife Elisabeth Juliane of Holstein-Norburg (1634–1704)! Taking this aspect into consideration, Anton Ulrich cannot be attested to have had charitable intention. He acquired Amo and other Africans for the sake of his reputation above all, and in order to maintain the standard of European

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and how he financed his studies is not known.

11 The expression "court moor" is characteristic of the baroque age and a typical expression of racist discrimination. It has thus a negative connotation.

12 Augustus and another African were sold at the slave market in Leipzig for 50 Thaler each. Augustus served in the court with his wife (also from Africa) that he married in 1703 till his death in 1725. His wife Juliane Rosina lived alone for 17 years after the death of her husband. According to the sources, Rudolf August earned 230 Thaler a year for his court service. Kulturstadt Wolfenbüttel, loc. Cit., p. 2.

13 Burchard Brentjes: "Anton Wilhelm Amo, afrikanischer Student der Philosophie und Medizin in Halle, Wittenberg und Jena (1727–1740)" in: In memoriam Herrmann Boerhave (1668–1738). Wissenschaftliche Beiträge der Martin-Luther-Universität, CR 10 Halle, p. 135–138; the same author: Anton Wilhelm Amo. Der Schwarze Philosoph in Halle, Leipzig 1976.

court life,[14] for the ownership of slaves raised the reputation of a king or a duke at the time.

However, the life of Amo raises many puzzles particularly as no one can give reliable information about his birth and the year of his death. It was merely presumed that he was eight years old at the time of his baptism in 1708. Research on Amo is all the more difficult on account of his complicated biography. Already his name presents a very difficult problem to African researchers in nomenclature in so far as they have sought in vain to link Amo's name genealogically and genetically with any ethnic group in Africa. It is clear that the name Amo was not a native name in Ghana as it was very often claimed. Amo is the verb form of amo, which means I love in Latin. In my opinion, there are many reasons to believe that he got this artificial name obviously in the Dutch fortress near Axum.

In addition the word "amo" was fashionable in Dutch poetry and arts from the Barock period. This means that as symbol of love, the name was assigned with extraordinarily majestic meaning, to rehabilitate and gladden human beings. Still Anton Wilhelm Amo never argued over the possible connection of his name with Latin, although he studied, lectured and wrote books in this language. All the more he had interest in onomatology, which he defined as the discipline that is concerned with the "clarification of names."[15]

Amo is not alone in this, for there are still many Africans with names that have no known connection to their ethnic group or language today. This is so because the Africans that were pushed into slave ghettos received artificial names which they were allowed to use. No other

14 For a critique of European court behaviour see Norbert Elias: Die höfische Gesellschaft, Neuwied and Berlin, 1969.

15 Anton Wilhelm Amo: Traktat von der Kunst, nüchtern und sorgfältig zu philosophieren, translated by Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Halle (Saale), 1965, special part Chapt. IV, 5, p. 217.

possibility was left to them than for them to come to terms with this imposed identity. Especially little children could in no way be worried about the authenticity of their names under such situation. Adults found themselves in conflict with their identity at the beginning, and others began on account of unknown reasons, to personally suppress their past. It is in this way that a sort of historic and African denial which shapes the consciousness of the future generations of Africans that were taken to America and other parts of the world step by step developed. The historical break conditioned by long colonial time in addition strengthened the cultural and emotional distance from Africa of blacks in oversea.

However, freed slaves in Africa were also confronted with the hidden identity paradox. After their liberation, they mostly remained near the fortresses in which they vegetated for many years, and from there they tried to adapt to the culture and conditions of life of their new neighbours. Thus they were obliged to imitate the styles of life as well as the thought patterns of these neighbours in order to avoid renewed social ostracism. However most of the descendants of these freed slaves had fewer impediments to integrate in so far as it was possible for them to be integrated in the village communities of their respective partners through procreation. Some of them retained the names that they were given in the fortresses without questioning the origin of these names. Still there were Africans who, after lengthy research later consciously upheld their artificial identification because they saw a special symbol of their paradoxical identity and authenticity in it.

On 29th July 1708 in the court chapel of Salzdahlum (Salzthal) near Wolfenbüttel, Anton Ulrich allowed Amo to be baptized in the Protestant Church with his first name and that of his most beloved son and crown prince Wilhelm August.[16] In 1709, he changed to the Catholic faith. After the death of the Herzog in 1714, Amo still went to an unidentified school in addition to his duties as a lackey in the court of

16 The document of the chapel has a written remark that a small moor with the name Anton Wilhelm was baptized.

August Wilhelm (1662–1731).[17] Perhaps he ended his education in the Knight Academy in Wolfenbüttel before he went to study philosophy and jurisprudence at Halle. He was matriculated there on 9. 6. 1727.

At that time in Halle philosophy was marked not only by the rivalry between the philosophies of Cartesianism,[18] and Leibnizianism[19] but also between two opposing doctrines. On the one hand there was the secularism that was influenced by the Enlightenment under Christian Wolf (1679–1754), which attempted to reconcile reason and worship of God, so as to give religious faith a rational foundation, on the other hand there was pietism. Amo was strongly influenced by epistemological rationalism. At the same time he was inclined towards sensualism because he regarded them as suitable for the explanation and demonstration of the truth.

He explained this with the argument that with the sensation the causal connection between things which can be grasped through the senses can be explained; and also the necessary connection of things with their explanations through reason, i.e., with arguments that are well

17 August Wilhelm was married three times and remained without a child till his death.

18 Cartesianism is linked with René Descartes (1596–1650), the so called father of modern philosophy and founder of the new rationalism, according to which things in the world follow laws in accordance with logical and mathematical thinking. From this, rationalism draws the conclusion that human beings can arrive at the knowledge of the world through general rules and necessary concepts, i.e., innate ideas.

19 As the first modern philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) heavily influenced the Enlightenment as well as all rationalist and idealist debates in Germany. He agreed with René Descartes about the rationalist principle of philosophy, according to which all true knowledge comes from reason. Contrary to Descartes, he in addition defends an idealistic position according to which the being of things is of spiritual nature.

grounded, can be reflected.[20] The school of Wolf which had its original domain in Halle had two fundamental goals: strict adherence to method for the sake of science and the spreading of philosophy through popular genre like conversations, etc. Rationalism was the dominant way of thinking in early Enlightenment and Amo himself described it as the most effective means against authoritarian clericalism and feudalism.

German pietism under Philipp Jacob Spener (1646–1705) and later also under Hemann Francke (1663–1727) was a protest movement within the Lutheran Church which saw a danger for religious thinking and life in the increasing secularism. Pietism stood for a renaissance of religiosity and for more subjectivity, individuality and interiority of faith. Amo was a convinced Enlightenment thinker. But from his critique of dogmatic theology one can see that he did not distance himself from pietism clearly.[21]

Amo was gifted with languages. Apart from German, he had a mastery of Latin, Greek, Dutch and French.[22] On 28. 11. 1729 he held his first disputation on "De jure maurorum in Europa" ("On the Rights of Blacks in Europe,"[23] which unfortunately is no longer extant.) If this

20 Anton Wilhelm Amo, Tractatus, Chapt. III, sect. II and IV, p. 223ff.

21 Ibid., chap. I, sect IX, 1ff, p. 117 f.

22 Amo already learnt Dutch in the Dutch fortress at Axum. Later, he also maintained good contact to the language and culture. He often referred to Dutch thinkers like Cornelis van Bynkershoet (1673–1743), Gerhard Noodt (1647–1725) etc. He uses Aristotle and Epictetus in the Greek original. Again he engages in critical discussions with French intellectuals Claude Saumaise (1588 – 1653), Jacques de Cujas (1522–1590), etc. He could also have known Hebrew and English.

23 Here Amo criticizes the miserable conditions of many blacks who serve in European royal houses who are used as body guards and objects of exhibition for curious Europeans without any protection of the law. This disputation was delivered almost at the same time as the protest of British Quakers against the slave trade in 1727. Already by 1671, the founder of the Quakers George Fox

scientific lecture[24] which was not commented upon in public were not lost, undoubtedly it would have been of special importance not only for political philosophy and theory of rights, but also for international law. For it is possible that Amo was able to lay the foundation for some of the intercultural and international debates on human rights, minority protection, racism, tolerance, migration, xenophobia, social exclusion, and so on. Amo tried to present the conditions of those who came from Africa and who were victims of shameless arbitrariness and abuse in the European society.

This disputation precedes the Pan-African ideology which sought a practical solution for the problem of discrimination against blacks especially by whites about 170 years later. Pan-Africanism is traceable to the club "African Associations" founded by Henry Sylvester from Trinidad in 1897 which had the aim of providing legal aid to Africans living in Great Britain. As a lawyer in London Sylvester even prepared official delegations from Africa to the British crown on legal issues. Through this means, he became aware of the critical situation of the African people. The brutal politics of expropriation in which the colonial masters rubbed the Africans of their land he found particularly explosive. In 1900, he decided to call a conference which bore the name "Pan-African Conference." He wanted to develop strategies to protect African landed properties. After his conference, Africans felt

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described slavery as a grave denial of human dignity. Still the understanding of human rights as inborn, inalienable and unimpeachable right and dignity was first clearly formulated in the declaration of independence of America in 1776 and was documented after the French Revolution of 1789.

24 The disputation was an open lecture which was followed by discussion. In the then university system, the first came after two full years of study and was comparable to the Anglo Saxon Bachelor that will be gradually introduced into Germany. The great disputation was the defense of doctoral thesis. Amo himself described the disputation as an art of defending the truth. "The disputation is an act of celebration in which reflexive truth discovered by the act of the mind is defended uprightly and publicly against objections and doubts raised by opinion for the sake of the firmness of truth."

strengthened in their fight against European racism and colonialism. Pan-Africanism was, however, able to acquire international dimension only after the cooperation of African Americans. The operative aim was to enhance the solidarity of all peoples of African origin and to realize their cultural and political emancipation.

It is unfortunate that the Chancellor of the university Johann Peter von Ludewig (1668–1743) merely referred to this disputation in the November edition of the "Weekly University of Halle Questions and News Report," with the following lapidary remark: "How far does the freedom or service of the blacks bought from Christians in Europe extend the normal right which they have?" However this ironic remark contradicts in any case the views of many learned Europeans.[25] After all, 250 year later, Ernst Popper, the Rector of the University of Halle-Wittenberg spoke and indirectly contradicted his predecessor with the honoured presentation that Amo was a shining "defender of the equality of all human beings and people irrespective of their racial belonging."[26]

25 Voltaire (Francois Marie Arouet, 1694–1778) wrote in 1756 "Nous n'achetons des esclaves domestiques chez (les noires); on nous reproche ce commerce. Un people qui trafique de ses enfants est encore plus condemnable que l'acheteur. Ce négoce démonstre notre superiorité." Voltaire: Essai sur les moeurs et l'espirit des nation, Paris, 1756. Voltaire condemns the European buyers less than the African sellers of slaves, without taking account of the basis under which Africans were led to slave trade. It is still surprising that he did not speak of the ethical or epistemological questions, which strengthened the European slave buyers, to degrade Africans as wares and thus with that also human rights. In any case, Voltaire devoted a chapter in his later work (Traité sur la tolerance) to slavery, in which he condemned the institution. Still he systematically bracketed the thesis of the superiority of Europeans over the Africans and other races.

26 Ernst Popper, Antonius Guillemus Amo ab Aximo in Ghana. Student, Doktor der Philosophie und Hockschullehrer an den Universität Halle, Wittenberg und Jena 1727–1747, translation of his works, Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg, Halle (Saale), 1965, p. 2.

There is no doubt that Amo as a philosopher saw himself personally confronted with the central paradox of the European Enlightenment with reference to the sinful character of slavery as well as the question of the legality of racial discrimination. The trade in human beings, the victim of which he was, was incompatible, not only with natural law and human rights, but also with the spirit of humanism and the rationale of the Enlightenment.[27]

In 1730 Amo left Halle and moved to Wittenberg. There he also studied physiology, pneumatology (now known as psychology) and medicine. This interest in natural sciences helped him to develop a new perspective on the being of human soul and body. On 17th October, 1730, Amo obtained a Master's degree in philosophy. August Wilhelm was present at the presentation of the degree. After Wilhelm's death in 1731, his brother and successor Ludwig Rudolf (1678–1735) maintained contact with the African. In 1733 Amo obtained yet another Master's degree in the natural sciences. Under the influence of mechanistic and atomistic methodical reflections, Amo tended towards materialism, and with that distanced himself from idealism.[28] This tendency is documented in his doctoral dissertation of 1734, De humane

27 The great humanist Karl Marx (1818–1883) described freedom and slavery as antagonistic concepts. Still he erred in his criticism of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), with the attempt to explain slavery as an economic category with negative and positive sides. He writes: "The only thing that must be explained is the good side of slavery." Karl Marx, Das Elend der Philosophie. Antwort auf Proudhon "Philosophie des Elends" German Edition, Frankfurt/M. 1978, S. 177. He states further: "Only slavery has given the colonies their value. The colonies were created by international trade and international trade is the condition of big industries. In that manner is slavery an economic category of utmost importance." p. 105ff. Whether with this Marx wanted to legitimize the racial and biological ideology of the right of the strongest is not clear.

28 Materialism is a philosophical thinking that understands the being of things from those things themselves and sees the cause of things in their original elements. Thus matter is prior to spirit and consciousness. Idealism on the other hand affirms the priority of the spirit or consciousness over matter or nature. Idealism was, since Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805) the most important philosophical movement in Germany.

mentis apatheia.[29] Leaning on rationalism, Amo developed his own materialistic position without falling into atheism and radical empiricism.

Under his care, the Disputation of the student Johannes Theodosius Meiner successfully took place on 19. 5. 1734 in the presence of Ludwig Rudolf. As the latter died in 1735, it was obvious that Amo did not have any clear link any more to the court of Wolfenbüttel.[30] Once again he returned to Halle in the same year and two years later he submitted a work with the title: "Tractatus de arte sobrie et accurate philosophandi" (Treatise on the Arts of Sober and Accurate Philosophizing), a work that is a comprehensive collection of a systematic presentation of his most important lectures in Halle. This work qualified him for independent teaching position since at that time there was yet no Habilitation in Prussia.[31] On 6th July 1737 he was registered as a university teacher, a sort of venia docendi, for philosophy. In 1738 he published the Tractatus in Halle.

29 Anton Wilhelm Amo, Die Apatheia der menschlichen Seele, German translation, Martin-Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, Halle (Saale), 1965.

30 Ludwig Rudolf was the youngest son of Anton Ulrich, who became the successor to his childless brother. But he had three daughters who could not inherit the thrown on ground of their gender. After his death, the crown was transferred to a neighbouring royal house. All his daughters got married to men from other kingly dynasties, partly in foreign lands.

31 The Habilitation was first introduced in Prussia in 1819. The title Privatdozent is generally traceable to 1810. Amo described himself as Magister legens of the liberal arts, but this is not to be confused with today's Magister Artium (M.A.). The Magister was one who was a certified university lecturer who was normally called as a university teacher or a private teacher. Today there are in Germany what is called Privatdozenten, which means part time teachers in higher institutions. They drop this description once they are officially named professors. Also Christian Wolf served as a part time lecturer till 1710 when he was officially named full professor in the Law Faculty of the University of Leipzig. It is possible today for Privatdozenten without official teaching positions to advance to Professorial positions. It is therefore correct to call Amo a professor on account of the lecturing right that he received in Halle.

In 1739, Amo went to Jena and taught at the University till he disappeared without trace. According to Burchard Brentjes, Amo was first referred to in a degrading manner in a leaflet. He had tried to get married in Germany without success. However there was no legal justification at all why exactly this attempt was rejected, for there was no juridical consideration standing against marriage between a German woman and an African.

This does not however mean that it would have been easy for a European woman to enter into an open or evident marital partnership with an African. On the other hand, the relationship between African women and European men (Women were then not allowed to travel to Africa) in Africa were always surrounded by secrecy. The birth of children with European pigment brought the hidden sexual relationship between African women and European men in the open.
The probable newspaper announcement was published when Amo had already left Germany. He was said to have begged the Dutch-West Indian Society to enable him to travel back to Africa. The attempt was successful and Amo's ship left Rotterdam on 20.12.1746.[32] When he died remains a puzzle. In 1782 he was named in the Memoires of a Swiss Ship doctor in the service of a Dutch shipping company named David Henrij Galandat, who reported about Amo's poor life in Ghana but without mentioning any motive for the report.

Whether Amo's return journey was undertaken freely or not, it reminds one of the destiny of many an Afro-American with nostalgia for Africa, as well as the New Testament parable of the "lost son" in which a young man decided to leave his homeland, and to move to another country with his share of his father's wealth. His hope of living an independent and free life in a distant place turned into a bitter dis-

32 According to the report of the Dutch National Archives in The Hague, Amo sailed in a ship named Catharina Galey. The Director of the port at the Gold Coast was even said to have confirmed his arrival on 7. 4. 1747.

appointment after he had lost his inheritance. When he was no longer able to withstand the consequent hunger, he returned to his father, who accepted him without any resentment. On the contrary, he celebrated the return of his son with music and dancing.

The nostalgia of Americans began around the end of the 19th century with the formation of the "Back to Africa Movement," a radical movement, which had the aim of making the blacks aware of the racist discrimination against them in America and to encourage them to return to Africa. The first success was achieved with the foundation of the Republic of Liberia in 1859 by the first group of returnees. With Marcus Garvey (1887–1940), this movement assumed a racial undertone, as he formed an "Imperial League of Black Union" with the aim of building a united nation for all world "blacks" in Africa.

The intention of Garvey was to win many blacks for his ideology. In 1920 he created for the first time a "Black Kingdom" in New York that elected him as the first provisional President of Africa. Although he relocated to Liberia, he did not succeed to become President. The whole project floundered because of the stubborn behavior of the returnee in relation to their African people. It is astonishing that after more than a hundred years and till date, even their heirs feel superior to other Africans.

This racist tendency faced a humanistic Panafricanism, which was linked with the personality of William Edward Burghardt DuBois (1868–1963). He strongly backed a peaceful cohabitation between Africans and Europeans in the United States of America, and decidedly turned against all attempts of repatriation to Africa. He rather sought a means for a peaceful co-existence between all races of America, founded on equality and freedom.

In cooperation with William Monroe Trotteur, DuBois convoked a conference in 1901 which gave rise to the "Niagara Movement" and which in 1909 became the "National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People." The aim of this movement was to fight for the integration of all with African root into the American society. Although DuBois himself returned to Africa, he encouraged those who remained not to follow his example but instead to accept America as their homeland without cutting the link to Africa.

Contrary to the "prodigal son," Amo did not leave his parents and his homeland willingly. He was forced to live in a foreign land. Instead of giving way to resignation, he courageously assumed the challenge to live without home sickness. Thus he was able to obtain a remarkable academic qualification in spite of humiliating slave labour. His decision to return to his homeland shows clearly that he severely missed necessary affection, security and love. Perhaps because of that he saw himself compelled to show Germany his back in order to spare his soul (he himself would talk of the body) further suffering. Amo was not adequately aware of the concrete life situation of people in Africa under colonial conditions, otherwise he would not have returned merely because of disappointment and anger, but rather as an African with ambition and conscious of his responsibility with clearly mapped out aims.

Amo's socialization in Europe obviously did not fit in with the reality of the society in the oral culture of the Gold Coast. While he fulfilled his desire to live with people of his colour, his lofty expectation met a heavy disappointment when he must have realized that there was hardly any African who could adequately understand him. First the people communicated in a language which Amo could neither speak nor understand. In addition he was in no way familiar with their lifestyle. Thus Amo's nostalgia for his African homeland and identity turned out as pure fiction.

This longing for an unknown identity is hereby described as fiction. Still the fictional identity is such that it is not really experienced or manifested. It is more a project of fantasy of a reality that is not empirically perceptible. Some people who must live in a foreign land today endure the trauma of nostalgia for a fictive homeland, culture and identity. They live steadily with home sickness and wanderlust at the same time. Under that condition, they are confronted in their whole life with the dilemma of either returning home or remaining in distant climes. On the one hand, the emotional link to the original homeland is very powerful. On the other the attractions of life in the country of residence are so overwhelming and so attractive that one hardly wants to abandon it.

What happened to Amo? He had no cultural connection to Africa. His decision to move to Africa can only be explained by his personal motive to avoid further social isolation in Germany. Unfortunately in Africa he fell into spiritual loneliness, since he did not find learned people, nor high schools, and also no adequate infrastructure for learning (libraries, archives, etc). Disappointed, he left Axum and moved to the Dutch Fortress Chama, so that at least, he could communicate with Europeans.

Amo neither wished nor sought after his destiny as orphan, homeless person, servant and philosopher, but rather accepted these with reluctance. Still he drew the consequence of these conditions and sought to convince people in Europe with his intelligence, and during his last years, in Africa about the meaning of love and of thinking. Fear, intimidation and discouragement were strange to him. On the contrary, he always longed for freedom, peace and love, and wanted to assist all that came in close contact with him to realize these ideals of life irrespective of their religious beliefs, biological determination, or their social and cultural belonging. Although Amo was not hated, he felt he was not understood as is the case with all who live in distant countries

or who oscillate or swing between different cultures and traditions. At the same time, rational abstinence often prevails or reason is absolutely overcome by the emotion.

Again and again, there are human beings for whom the illusion of paradise beyond their homeland or their habitual residence corrupts and who are drawn by the temptation to move to totally unknown lands, without taking thought of the consequence of the local realities for their body and spirit. Happily, modern tourism provides such people who wish to emigrate many possibilities such as holidays, conferences and expeditions to obtain a concrete picture of their country of desire before deciding to emigrate permanently.

The last years of Amo cast a shadow not only on the humanism of European Enlightenment but also on the spirit of communal life and solidarity in Africa. He must have become convinced that no culture, no people and no single country is free from evil, for one meets in each cultural circle not only happy friends and benefactors, but also lurking enemies and envious people, that are only thinking of how to mar the life of others. Amo had indeed a big burden to bear. Thus, on account of his exemplary biography, he is in the process of becoming not only a historical hero but also a universal model of strength of character.

That the very first ceremony in memory of Amo only took place in 1965 is understandable from the background of complex German history. The University of Halle used this opportunity to publish the extant complete works of Amo in parallel translations from Latin to German, English and French. Since then he belongs to the immortal pioneer spirits of Halle and Wittenberg. One can only hope that Wolfenbüttel, Jena and Berlin as German capital, will at least name a street after Amo. The great homage in Halle at the time would not have been possible without the popularity of the then President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah in the communist world.

In any case, this book was written not only from purely intellectual interest. It was undertaken on the basis of a philosophical motive: to make the thought of Amo familiar to interested readers. At the same time one should not deny the personal intention to strengthen Amo's presence in the history of European and African philosophy. Amo was a multitalented thinker who did not shy away from defending his thought before his opponents, his enemies and those who despised him. Through his paradigm, this book will bring to light the fact that the unscrupulous and humiliating treatment of foreigners in Europe is not a new but an old phenomenon that was known at the time of Amo. Because he himself was repeatedly a victim of the same clichés and stereotypes that Africans and migrants are exposed to today.

The publication of this work is linked finally with the hope that especially the Germans will draw a conclusion from the life of Amo for their thinking and behavior toward the minority. Given the background of globalization in the sense of a worldwide networking of the intellectual worlds, it is even in their interest to seek for peaceful relationship with those who have found a home among Germans through their physical and intellectual work.

Biologically and geographically, Amo originated from Africa, but he was raised within the European-German life-world. He remained very closely connected to the spirit of the Enlightenment. The intercultural and universal bond of his philosophy is understandable given that it did not contradict European intellectual tradition or African modernity in any way. Amo argued with Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 B.C. – 65 B.C.), Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 B.C.), Marcus Tulius Cicero (106–43 B.C.), Epictetus (about 50–138), Aurelius Augustinus (354–430), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Martin Luther (1483–1546), Giulio Cesare Scaliger (1484–1558), Phlipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), Francis Bacon (1561–1626), René Descartes (1596–1650), Hermann Coring (1606–1681), Christian Thomasius

(1655–1728), as well as the materialistic and idealistic tendencies of his time. Without regard to his European socialization he always acknowledged his African origin. On account of this background, it is justified to read him both as an African and as a European.

Although Amo outlined original philosophical reflections, these were not attributed to him but to other people. In this regard one thinks of the category "Thing-in-itself," which was attributed to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) although Amo had discussed it before Kant. In the same way, modern hermeneutics is till today attributed to Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher (1768–1834), William von Humboldt (1767–1835), etc., while Amo is systematically shut out. But he wrote on this theme more than three decades before the birth of Schleiermacher.

It is remarkable in this regard that the researches on Amo in Germany and the University of Halle were anchored on his biography till now,[33] as Paulin Hountondji (*1942) rightly pointed out.[34] The only constant interest was the question of how an African was able to attain such a high intellectual height in Germany in the 18th Century. The question that would have been historically more relevant is whether Amo was also personally known to Frederick the Great (1712–1789), the King of Prussia who embodied enlightened absolutism and maintained good contact with foreign philosophers.

33 On this see Wolfram Suchier, "A. W. Amo. Ein Mohr als Student und Privatdozent der Philosophie in Halle, Wittenberg und Jena, 1727–1749," in Akademische Rundschau, Leipzig, No. 9–10 (1916), p. 444–446; the same author, "Weiters über den Mohren Amo," in Altsachsen Zeitschrift des Altsachsenbundes für Heimatschutz und Heimatkunde, Holzminden, No. 1-2 (1918); pp. 7-9; Norbert Lochner, "Anton Wilhelm Amo," in Übersee-Rundschau, Hamburg, Jahrgang 10, 1958, pp. 22-25; Christine Damis, "Le philosophe connu pour sa peau noire" in: Review Rue Descartes 36 (2002), pp. 115-127.

34 Paulin J. Hountondji, Afrikanische Philosophie. Mythos und Realität, Berlin, 1993, p. 124 (original publication: Sur la "philosophie africaine. Critique de l'ethnophilosophie, Paris 1976).

This king attracted many learned people and writers and gave them responsibilities in the King's court. The philosopher François Marie Arouet Voltaire (1694–1778) owed him his exalted reputation in Germany on account of his position as adviser in the court of Postdam. An intellectual affinity with Frederick would have certainly been very useful to Amo at least for the sake of popularity in the world. The assertion of John Fredrick Blumenbach that Amo had worked as a Privy Councilor before his journey to Africa[35] is not very credible. The truth is that there were also black people in the court of Berlin. Whether any of these ever attained the position of Councilor has not been confirmed by court historiography till date.

On account of the restrictions of the publishers, the discussions of the following chapters cannot take account of all aspects of Amo's philosophy. They are therefore mainly limited to three points of emphasis: (a) the relation of Amo to European Enlightenment, (b) his materialistic thought and (c) his hermeneutical position. Three questions arise from these three central points: What did Amo's intellectual development achieve and which philosophical claims does his thought make? What is his relationship to the European as well as to the African intellectual world? How is his philosophy to be understood from the intercultural perspective?

Thanks are due to the editors of the series "Intercultural Library" and also to the Traugott Bautz publishers for the acceptance of this book in their programme. By so doing, they are doubtlessly contributing to strengthen Amo's standing in world philosophy. As a philanthropic universalist, Amo proves that dialogue and intellectual communication or cooperation between human beings from supposedly different culture is not only possible, but can be successful. Now is the time, to

35 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach: "Einige naturhistorische Bemerkungen bey Gelegenheit einer Schweizerreise," in : Magazin für das Neueste aus der Physik und der Naturgeschichte, 4/3 (1787), p. 9-11.

follow this example resolutely, not only in philosophy but also in fields of knowledge and work.

CHAPTER 2
2 AMO AND THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT
2.1 AMO AND THE SPIRIT OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment is the period in European intellectual history between the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th.[1] Its highest aim was to overcome all irrationalities and to free human beings from the stranglehold of feudal and clerical social system. The Enlightenment was founded on optimism as a philosophical principle which is manifested in belief in progress in the sense of steady process of change and trust in reason.

In this movement the human being is seen as a perfectible being, and reason is understood as the only means of improvement of being and knowledge. That means that reason has in its essence a ready creative power which can show humans the way to better and happier life.[2] Apart from philosophers, the most important pioneers of optimistic progress were especially the astrophysicist Isaac Newton (1643–1727) and Galileo Galilei (1564–1564), who were able to separate natural sciences from theology. The philosophers Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and René Descartes had at their time the merit of trusting in the possibility of man becoming the master of nature on account of his knowledge.

The aim of this chapter is not the reconstruction of the history of the Enlightenment. It solely seeks to present the intellectual context which

1 See Lester Crocker (ed.), The Age of Enlightenment, New York 1969; Peter Gay: The Enlightenment, New York 1973; Eduard Bene and Ilona Kovacs (eds.), Les lumières en Hongrie, en Europe Centrale et en Europe orientale, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiado 1971, 1975 and 1977. Erich Donnert: Rußland im Zeitalter der Aufklärung, Wien 1984; Richard Herr: The Eighteenth Century Revolution in Spain, Princeton 1958.

2 See Robert Mauzi, L'idée du bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée française au XVIIIe siécle, Paris 1960.

was determinant for philosophical reflection at the time of Amo. In that period almost all philosophers steadfastly sought after new explanations of God[3] as well as better and exact understanding of the being of things.[4] In doing this they tried to subject human thought and action to the control and test of reason.[5] With this, they hoped to cultivate critical, human and tolerant spirit before those with other opinions, beliefs and life-style. With this programme, the philosophers made themselves unwanted and open to attack on the side of rulers and churches. Still in spite of all attacks on philosophy,[6] it remained the motivating power of the Enlightenment since at the time there hardly was any social, political or cultural theme that was not determined by philosophical teachings.

On account of this almost incomparably lasting effect on the economy (growth prognosis) and the society (quest for innovation), the Enlightenment presents itself as probably the most significant epoch of European cultural and intellectual history.[7] In reality, Europe owes its

3 Cf. Frank E. Manuel, The Eighteen Century Confronts the Gods, New York, 1967.

4 Roy Porter points out that though the Enlightenment did not obliterate religion, but it "made it untrustworthy." Cf. Roy Porter, Kleine Geschichte der Aufklärung, aus dem Englischen von Ebba D. Drolshagen, Berlin, p. 91.

5 Ernst Cassirer, Die Philosophie der Aufklärung, Hamburg 1988; Paul Hazard, Die Herrschaft der Vernunft. Das europäische Denken im 18. Jahrhundert, Hamburg 1948; Werner Krauß, Studien zur deutschen und französischen Aufklärung, Berlin 1963; Arno Baruzzi, Einführung in die politische Philosophie der Neuzeit, 2nd edition, Darmstadt 1988.

6 See Michel Foucault, Wahnsinn und Gesellschaft, Frankfurt/Main 1969; Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialektik der Auflärung, Frankfurt/M. 1969.

7 Due to this background the Enlightenment was also understood as the founding epoch of modernity. See Günther Lottes/Brunhilde Wehinger/Iwan A'April, Aufklärung und Moderne, vol. 1, Hannover 2007.

current dominance in the world to the Enlightenment.[8] This is because most ideas that guided intellectual discussions at the time and which continually influence the continental as well as the international spheres are traceable to the Enlightenment. Apart from that the Enlightenment introduced a period "in which for the first time a secular intelligence evolved which was great and powerful enough to oppose the clerics."[9] Thus this intellectual epoch deserves to be called the womb of modern civilization.

Now what determines the spirit of the Enlightenment and how is it distinguished from earlier European epochs? The determinant moment of the Enlightenment is traceable to its relentless struggle for the emancipation of human beings especially from the authoritarian feudal ideology and absolute monarchies as well as the transcendent conventional atavistic world and the idea of God of theological metaphysics. With the Enlightenment political power, organizational structures of the society, the sciences and all arts including philosophy were for the first time in the whole of Europe subjected to uncompromising critique.

The intention is to overcome all tendencies that are contrary to the progress of knowledge. This underlines the fundamental difference between the Enlightenment and especially scholastic Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation metaphysics. In this regard, the statement of Roy Porters is very appropriate:
As the Enlightenment gained grounds, it entailed the end of creedal wars, suppression of witches and burning of heretics. These indicated

8 For details see Jacob Emmanuel Mabe, Die Kulturentwicklung des Menschen nach Jean-Jacques Rousseau in ihrem Bezug auf die gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen in Afrika, Stuttgart 1996, p. 190ff, by the same author: Der Vorwurf der kulturellen Dominanz und Neokolonialismus, in Dossier Afrika, published by Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, www.bpb.de/Themes.

9 Roy Porter, op. cit, p. 94

the death of magic and astrology, the decay of occult and weakening of belief in the reality and physical existence of heaven and hell, the devil, and all his helpers. The supernatural disappeared from public life. In order to fill this gap, the sensibilities of the nineteenth century were obliged to equip nature with its own sacred and justify new traditions, above all the public display of patriotism.[10] There was no contradiction between the spirit of the Enlightenment and the individual thought of Amo. On the contrary Amo was a known Enlightenment thinker and a convinced apologist of his time. That is why there is no difference between him and his contemporaries in France, England and Germany, especially as he also steadfastly stood for a radical change of the political and religious mentality as well as for universal and timeless morality, ethics and metaphysics. If the Enlightenment has gained universal valence today, this fact depends less on the general nomenclature of its programme than on the contribution of non Europeans on its development. Amo contributed to this development in a very special way.

If Amo remained unknown for long, then this must be due to his biological origin. Added to this is that at the time philosophy was too weak in Germany, not least on account of its independent from Latin, that some thinkers took as the only academic language. Still there hardly was any German speaking philosopher who was able to play on the international stage or especially to develop personal original concepts between 1700 and 1750. It means that Germany had almost not one giant thinker to offer that could seriously compete with the renowned English men George Berkeley (1685–1753), David Hume (1711–1776) etc., or the French Voltaire (1694–1778), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Denis Diderot (1713–1784), etc. The Thirty Years' War ruined Germany materially and paralysed it culturally and was also responsible for this intellectual stagnation.

10 Ibid., p. 91.

The one philosopher of German origin that could be internationally taken seriously was Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716).[11] But he wrote mostly in French while the English and the French could respectively use their mother tongues for the articulation of their thoughts. In Germany, thinkers still tried further to expressed themselves in Latin. Almost all philosophers of the generation of Amo, like Samuel Christian Hollman (1696–1787), Christian Georg Schüsler, Theophilus Marquardt, Johan Adam Past etc., even defended the use of Latin and argued against the movement for the use of German in academic writings that was led by Christian Thomasus (1655–1728).

The mother tongue may be belittled, as is partly the case among African intellectuals, but an authentic, massive and effective Enlightenment cannot be realized without it. This is confirmed by the examples of French and English philosophers that as a consequence of the dominance of Latin began earlier than other Western Europeans, to use their respective mother tongues in oral and written expressions.

Whether the spread of the spirit of Enlightenment throughout Germany from the middle of the 18th Century would have been possible without the pioneering work of Christian Thomasus (1655–1728) and Christian Wolf (1679–1754) is in any case very doubtful. After the death of Thomasus, Wolff remained the greatest philosophical shining light for long. He attributed this contribution to his engagement with the philosophy of Leibniz whose doctrine of Monadology he slightly modified. While Leibniz described Monads as centres of power like points and souls, Wolff understood it as a material atom.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) could only rise to the position of the most significant German representative of the Enlightenment because the philosophical ideas developed by Christian Wolff were not origi-

11 For details see Hans Poser, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz zur Einführung, Hamburg 2005.

nal enough. Although for long he influenced intellectual debates in Germany, yet after the powerful emergence of Kant he remained almost without effect. At least he receives the plaudits for being the first philosopher to have written in German language. For this reason he was taken as a great Enlightenment thinker.

There was another completely different motive behind the Enlightenment ideas of Christian Thomasius. His intention was not to spread the teaching of other philosophers or his own teaching but more to make philosophy as such accessible to the generality of the German people. That is how he strengthened the longing for rational knowledge in the mother tongue. Contrary to Germany the French and the English had before then translated the most important Greek and Latin works into their respective mother tongues and brought a wide recognition for French and English as academic languages in this way. The engagement of Thomasius with the German language is therefore praise worthy because with it he made it possible for the Enlightenment to be both credible and effective. He was very surprised that some critiques wanted to disqualify his work with the argument that he only wanted to imitate the reflex of the French and the English. Probably he was merely inspired by the delatinization in England and France in order to attempt using his mother tongue as language of thought. If Thomasius described "Latin language as an important part of a learned man" this is on account of the dominance of Latin in philosophy.

In summary the Enlightenment was accompanied by a linguistic revolution in European philosophy which found expression in the difficulty with Latin, in which almost every thinker was strong and felt uncertain at the same time. This uncertainty is not only felt in foreign languages speakers but equally also in some mother tongue speakers who do not acquire composure and tranquility in their own language. The contrary assurance comes first through the inner conviction and

certainty that one knows how to go about with this language, also without external help and with grammatical and semantic competence. The emancipation from Latin came in the early Enlightenment in Europe also from the longing for a certain and easily manipulable language in which one could always find suitable expressions which would mirror the actual state of his thought, and which could be used as one likes. The movement for the use of German after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805) itself hit a lexical boundary also. For up till today, there is still not fitting German expressions for such concepts as substance, quality, quantity, modus, absolute, relative, etc.

The French, Spanish, English for example also share this dilemma. In this way, all Europeans later arrived at a compromise in which some complicated terms borrowed from Latin were downrightly transcribed. The creation of new words like internet, video, stereo, etc, does not only show the boundary of the possibility of these words being adequately translated, but also points to the fact that not all languages are suitable for the melodic naming of certain facts. The use of borrowed and foreign words does not necessary show the inadequacy of a language. On the contrary this can contribute to the enriching, the attractiveness and the better understanding of the language.

Just as Latin prevented the emancipation of contemporary European languages for hundreds of years, in the same way these European languages on their side paralyze native African languages for more than hundred years. In colonial times, French, English, Portuguese and Spanish were introduced into different countries of Africa as the languages of instruction and administration. Up till today, they determine the general educational standard although they are not mastered by the majority of Africans. Unfortunately they encourage the assimilation of European thinking and life styles more than communication between those who socialized through writing and those socialized

orally. In this manner, the languages are not useful in transmitting ethically relevant values and norms in Africa.

With the one-sided favoring of European languages in teaching and in modern work places since the independence of African states comes unfortunately the vernacularization[12] or the degrading of native languages to mere dialects without any function in African modernity. This practice overlooks the fact that these languages served to transmit essential ethical values for thousands of years. At the moment the native languages are in a very disadvantageous position in view of becoming veritable languages of instruction.

Instead of encouraging their own languages, in order to make them helpful in the understanding of their imagination, world-view, mode of thought and laws, some African thinkers often use European languages as means even in glorifying their cultures. This is nothing but pure mythologization of African mode of reflection. It always has no link with the present but much more with a fictive past. This overlooks the fact that with the one-sided backward-looking orientation, African knowledge loses its current relevance.

This example taken from Africa's condition is comparable to the development in East and West European philosophy and history from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. At that time the European thinkers did not show their identity in their national or ethnic languages, but

12 Vernacularization means the creation of a specific terminology which differs from standard language and enables everybody to master its new terminology. Way of speech like colloquialism that makes communication between humans easier is part of it. Vernacularization is also found in European languages in order to make dialogue among Africans and also between Africans and Europeans possible. It is in this way that Pidgin-English for example, which in many African countries today is an important language of communication, evolved. Cf. Jacob E. Mabe; Mündliche und schriftliche Formen philosophischen Denkens, loc. cit., p. 281 ff.

exclusively in Latin, which forced them to mythologize Greek history. It is therefore not surprising that Latin and Greek myths still maintain their presence in Europe.

The Enlightenment could also not destroy these old myths. Nevertheless, it brought remarkable linguistic turns through the separation of philosophy from Latin. The great breakthrough was achieved through the translation of many abstract concepts. It also became possible to create new terms and to discuss these in the different languages. The Africans could learn from this experience and achieve meaningful thinking through association of European and African terminologies. The one-sided assumption of the then colonial languages has only led them to self alienation as well as to the denial of their identity.

The importance of Amo for the Enlightenment is emphasized not least through his tireless fight both against prejudice and also for the extension and application of the implication of human rights to non-Europeans. Apart from that he spoke for a philosophy that is open to universal knowledge and which serves the whole of human gender. Not least of all he was an optimist because he believed in the moral perfection of the human being as well as in the ideals of equality before the law, justice, tolerance, peace and a communion of values at the service of understanding among people.

2.2 AMO AND PIETISM

Pietism is a special expression for inner piety. Originally it came as a protestation of a few Lutherans who fought for renewal of devoutness and a radical reform especially of their church. The chief representative of pietism in Halle Philipp Jacob Spencer (1635–1705) and Hermann Francke (1663–1727), stood vehemently against the deformation of Protestantism. The Lutheran church has become too superficial for them. It is only marked by external ceremonies. From these they

drew the consequence: to draw professing Protestants nearer to Jesus Christ who is the real essence of the Gospels and New Testament.

The intensive preoccupation with the Bible should as a consequence show the faithful the way to a good and meaningful lifestyle in accordance with Christian principles. The fundamental principle of pietism touches on the knowledge that the soul needs an orientation otherwise the human being is overcome by the many temptations of earthly life. With biblical instructions pietists hoped to form the soul of the Christian in such a way that it is not only able to distinguish between good and evil, but also to be able to trace the way to virtuous action through his personal power. According to pietists, the decisive factor for human life is the orientation of the soul. With this, it encouraged different projects for the direction of the soul in view of building the religious community (care of the sick, orphanages, etc.). Reading the Bible still remained the highest principle of pietism, given that it led to the strengthening of the discipline of life, subjectivity and interiority of the human being.

Contrary to the French Jansenism and Swiss Calvinism, which had the political and social aims, German pietism, remained above all a pure religious activism. This is perhaps a reason why it later became almost meaningless and declined within the Lutheran mother church. Still to pietism is owed the fact that even the simple member of the Protestant church was relatively familiar with the Bible for centuries. Beyond that religion pietism prepared the way especially for the age of sentimentalism and also for psychology.[13]

At time pietism was so strongly represented in Halle so much so that its archrival, Christian Wolff was obliged to leave the university for a time. He was even accused of atheism. The pietism of Amo expresses

13 In this regard see Marianne Beyer-Fröhlich/Ernst Volkmann/Heinz Kindermann (eds.): Pietismus und Rationalismus, Darmstadt 1970.

itself especially through the high value he placed on the Holy Scripture which for him was the proof for the wisdom of God. He described God himself as "the origin of things"[14] and praised the "ethics of Christian values and prudence"[15] but gave a firm warning that this should not be understood without reference to the Gospel.

Amo described over bloated authority including that of the Church as unfounded prejudice, for it is absurd merely to affirm "what famous men have confirmed" as "true and very good."[16] Whether he changed his place of studies to Wittenberg in order to escape the dominance of pietism is difficult to say. At the same time Amo's giving of prominence to the difference between objective hermeneutics of the Bible on the one side and the dogmatic Bible interpretation of the positive and polemic theology of patristic origin on the other which claims the "knowledge of Godly intention"[17] reflects his sympathy for pietism.

In summary, an objective assessment of the Enlightenment from today's perspective would only be intellectual insolence and arrogance. Seen from this angle it is philosophically unserious to pass a suitable judgment over a period. However, if one were to fix on the announced reform programme of the Enlightenment, one should not on account of one's modesty hide one's disappointment due to modesty. For the ideas that were then foisted: freedom of humans, making philosophy mature or the maturing of philosophy remained mostly theories without practical application. The criticism of feudalism as well as religious dogmas could hardly prevent the rise of new authoritarian regimes and the Church in Europe.

14 Anton Wilhelm Amo, Tractatus, general part, chapter I, section I, p. 107.

15 Ibid., chapt. I, section IX, § 6, p. 118.

16 Ibid., special part, chapter I, section VII, § 6, p. 219.

17 Ibid., chapt. II, section IX, § 4.

Also the exhortation for tolerance and for human rights had only limited positive effect. For there is no concrete solution up till today against intolerance before foreigners; those who have different ideas; those who have different life style; those of other genders, etc. On the contrary, the ethnic conflicts and wars, the colonial and neo-colonial or neo-imperial politics of powerful states against weak countries, the exploitation of oligarchy of capital etc. refers to the limits of the Enlightenment. Still in spite of these lacks the Enlightenment was, in terms of courage to criticize, a veritable new beginning in intellectual history, to which the human being should be bonded, if one wants to give hope to cultural humanity for a better future.

CHAPTER 3
THE PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM OF AMO
3.1 THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE MEANING OF THE- THING- IN-ITSELF

Anton Amo engaged in intensive discussions in all relevant fields of philosophy of his time: from ontology and metaphysics to logic, ethics, philosophy of law, theory of knowledge, etc., up to the philosophy of language and hermeneutics. Philosophy is for him a disposition[1] of the intellect (i.e. one of the virtues of understanding that is linked with the will) and of the will.[2] Amo felt obliged to define philosophy as the quest for wisdom an idea that throws back to the ancient Greeks. He rejected the thesis of Cicero that philosophy is "the knowledge of godly and human things"[3] with the argument that Cicero cares only about theory and not about practice, i.e., he bracketed away the pragmatic aspects of philosophy. With that Amo intended to say that wisdom is not simply an idea but much more a virtue combined with an act of the will and understanding, in order to show the knowledge that is acquired through practical exercise.

Philosophy hence always has to look at all things that are to be known as its object of knowledge. This is so that it not only brings its objects of concern to clearer understanding but also determines their foundational ideas. At the centre of Amo's philosophy therefore stands the knowledge of things through the human soul whose more natural act is the understanding of what is understandable. If the soul is the understanding substance in the human being, according to Amo, it can come to certain knowledge only through steady and unchangeable

1 "Disposition (habitus) is a constant act which is acquired through many repeated exercises." Anton Wilhem Amo, Tractatus, chap. II, part III§13, p. 136.

2 Ibid., part II § 1 and 2, p. 126. Cf also part X § 2, p. 119.

3 Ibid.

things. For constantly changing things or things that are subject to change cannot give any assurance of perfect knowledge of the truth.[4] Here Amo gives to the understanding the function of the soul to serve as the means of fulfilling its purpose of knowledge through ideas. But the deciding power in the human being is for him the will as interior capability to want or not to want, that something will be observed by the soul or done by the body. Ethically and morally he thus explained the will as that which absolutely stands by the human that is made of body and soul even in the practicalization of its freedom and in the realization of justice and goodness.[5]

Still the important criterion of perfection is the absence of doubt. Hence each philosophical knowledge according to Amo remains imperfect and useless so long as it has not achieved its aim which is the preservation and perfection of human species and with that "the moral perfection even with regard to the Spirit and with regard to the body."[6] But only through working together of the understanding and will can philosophy become pragmatic, seeking the truth which serves the moral and physical perfection of human existence. In the Tractatus he writes: "Philosophy is a disposition of the intellect and the will, the power of which constantly occupies us with the thing in itself, in order to know it in its certainty, much as possible determined and adequate, so that through the application of such knowledge the perfection of human being will be attained as much as possible."[7]

While the natural perfection has self-preservation, protection of existence through just actions and spiritual exercise for the sake of the truth as its foundation, moral perfection aims at wisdom and con-

4 Ibid., § 1

5 Ibid., special part, sect. I, chapt. I part II, p. 172.

6 Ibid., sect. II, § 6, p. 128.

7 Ibid.

formity with the Godly being and with that, eternal beatitude.[8] On account of this Amo puts God at the centre of morality, because He is among all spirits the most perfect. With regard to happiness, Amo is different from some of his contemporaries who make beatitude dependent on the satisfaction of individual inclination and needs.

For Amo happiness is an individual feeling that comes less from the human than from Godly intention. It can only come to fulfillment in union with God and in relationship with others. As a perfect being no error can be attributed to God. The human is on the contrary an imperfect being and can therefore err. But the possibility to experience his happiness with love that is directed by the wisdom of God is open to him. Similarly he can achieve perfect existence provided that he strives for a higher union with God. Amo thus makes interior faith in God an absolute condition for the love of neighbour and for individual happiness. At the same time it does not, like in Leibniz, concern reason-directed feeling of love.

In agreement with its purpose philosophy is shaped for the realization of perfection both of the human and of knowledge itself. It is therefore imperative that "each philosophical knowledge be adequate, i.e. be perfect, so that we know through that with regard to the terms and the number all and each parts and properties of known object whether intentional or real."[9] This does not mean that imperfect knowledge is as such false. It does not merely apply to all the elements of a thing. On the contrary false knowledge has by no means any equivalent in objective reality.

Perfect knowledge includes speculation, morality and experiment. The speculative or intellectual knowledge, according to Amo, comes from

8 General part, chap. II, part III § 6, p. 128.

9 Ibid., § 5, p. 128.

contemplation or from pure perception with regard to the origin, existence and being of something. Moral knowledge on its side goes hand in hand with the will, not only in order to distinguish between good and evil, but also to choose the good and the useful and to reject the bad and the useless. At the end Amo points to experiment based pragmatic knowledge which is obtained "through the things perceptible by the senses"[10] that is attained after long experience and through much practice. Its twin sister is sensual or historical knowledge.

The knowledge itself is either "Nothing or a being."[11] Still for Amo, only the truth is knowable in as much as existence, i.e., the presence of a thing is identified in reality. However, nothing can be said about nothingness as absence of being everywhere in space. Therefore a thing is only known through its attributes. All real and rational things including the spirit and the material have their origin in God, which Amo described as "primary source of all things."[12] In the same way the human soul is a function of Godly intention.

Amo finds reasons for this thesis in the argument: each effect points to an intention and a realizable aim. Where there is nothing outside God which originates from itself, then everything must be at the same time its primary cause and effect: "Each effect assumes as the principle of action the necessary outcome of an intention."[13] That there is nothing that exists by accident is for Amo an indubitable proof for the existence of God and a direct influence on the life of humans. The connection with God which he intended serves to secure absolute truth for philosophical knowledge because "all that is in God, always" attains "the surest truth."[14]

10 Ibid., chap. I, part VI, § 10, p. 116.

11 Ibid., general part, chap. I, part I, p. 107

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

As thinking and knowing substance, the human soul has the power to understand the connection between causes and effects.[15] Its action assumes as principle of an effect (a) the intention of the subject (b) the object (c) the aim, and (d) the modalities of the operations. According to Amo the sensation itself marks the very capacity by means of which understanding acquires immanent meaning through the senses that exist in the organic body acquires.[16] After that the role of the body in knowledge is in the reception of sensation which from the soul through its connection with the body can be perceived as ideas.[17] For there is nothing in the intellect (and also not in the soul) which was not in the senses or was not perceived earlier in the sense organs.[18]

Immanuel Kant has the reputation of having raised the concept of the thing-in-itself to philosophical category. Johann Heinrich Lambert (1728–1777) is named as the only predecessor of Kant. But before these two Germans, Anton Amo intensively and systematically discussed the question of the thing-in-itself. After Kant, the thing-in-itself is an "equivalent appearance that has an effect in reality and whose existence is sure, whose knowledge is impossible."[19] He subsumed under this all things that are only objects of human knowledge, i.e., that are only thought if their appearance is perceived. That one does not know the nature of these things is for Kant the proof that their existence is independent of the human capacity to know. All that is perceived and thought in knowledge is only appearance which the knowing subject produces.

15 Tractatus, general part, especially chap. V, p. 140 ff.

16 Die Apatheia, chap. I, part II, § 1, p. 79.

17 Ibid., chap. II, p. 80f.

18 Ibid., special part, chap. II, sect. IV, § 2 and 3, p. 157 f.

19 Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können, in; Werke, vol. 3, edited by Rolf Toman, Cologne, 1995, B 58 f, § 13 II.

The basis of the thing-in-itself for Amo is the certainty of a knowledge that is founded on itself. Therefore to philosophy belongs the knowledge of the thing-in-itself, i.e., the perception and understanding of a thing in accordance with its unchanging nature. This means that one only knows a thing adequately when one does not perceive it otherwise than in line with its being. The thing is then something for the sake of whose knowledge something exists. It does not owe its existence to godly and human intention. In other words, from the intention the thing itself, the action of the soul and the perception are made accessible.[20]

Amo refers to two ways of knowledge that lead to the understanding of the thing in itself.[21] On the one side there is the real knowledge or experience dependent knowledge which is acquired through contemplation and which is attained through proofs. On the other and in opposition to this stands the sensual or intentional knowledge which is realized through perception and induction.[22] In both cases the correctness of knowledge is tested with reference to the possibility (possible or disputable), to the hypothesis (through affirmation or negation), to the probability and fiction (i.e. knowledge that is founded on pure idea).

An idea, a concept or a sentence does not therefore come from God himself but they are direct effects of "contemplative actions of the soul."[23] For each idea is the knowledge of a self contemplating thing in its objective and formal condition. On the contrary, the thing-in-itself is the archetype of the idea, i.e., the thing-in-itself, which is known. The idea is according to Amo intentional (i.e., it is dependent on the

20 Tractatus, special part, cha. III, p. 170 ff.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid. part IX, § 8, p. 192 ff.

23 Ibid., sect. III of special part, chap. I part I, § I , p. 205.

intention of the soul) or hypothetically, i.e., it exists for the sake of the other. However, the intention of the soul is primarily directed to knowledge. Amo thus distances himself from other philosophical conceptions of ideas, like Plato, Plotinus, Descartes and Locke.

Plato for example describes the ideas as visible external objects, i.e, as objects that can be predicated from the universals. So the idea of equality is equal. Ideas are therefore truly eternal and unchangeable beings, which are known by means of sensible perception through anamnesis (remembrance). Visible individual things take part in the ideas through methexis (participation). In the Timaeus[24] Plato presents the Ideas as timeless primary examplers with reference to which the Godly Demiurg made the visible world. From this the ideas are independent of the reason that knows them.

With his second hypothesis Plotinus (205–270) makes idea and spirit to be equal, even though the spirit is the essence of all ideas. For Aurelius Augustine and some scholastic thinkers the ideas are original thoughts in God. For Descartes ideas are not examplars of things in godly reason but rather copies of things in human consciousness. In this context he differentiates between idea as act of consciousness or material conception on the one hand and idea as contents of consciousness or formal conception on the other. In other words the idea is an image or a representation that indicates the content of reality or the so-being of a thing. John Locke and other English empiricists defend the position that all ideas come from experience. They acknowledge two origins of ideas (a) the passions (affects) of the senses through things (sensation) (b) and the perception of the operations which our spirit receives with these impressions of the senses.[25]

24 Plato, Timaeus, 27 d ff, in: Werke in acht Bänden (Griechisch-Deutsch) edited by Gunther Eiger (special edition), Darmstadt, 1990, vol. 7.

25 Details in Peter R. Anstey (ed.), The Philosophy of John Locke. New Perspectives, London, 2003.

For Amo an idea is the result of the action of the soul on its own impulse.[26] It is represented in language by specific and clear words or concepts which are in accordance with the known things. Things can therefore be explained differently, so that there is an explanation "of things according to genus and specific difference,"[27] which is called definition. Two categories of definitions come into question here: an objective or real definition and an intentional or hypothetical definition. Over and above that Amo shows a one-sided explanation either with regard to the genus or the specific difference which suites the description.

From this categorization, Amo tries to explain the meaning of philosophy in which he throws more light on the onomatological point of view, i.e., he defines the word philosophy according to its name as "the quest for wisdom and the love of wisdom."[28] He remarks that this definition is real, i.e., it makes only the being of philosophy explicit as a concept or idea. But only the intentional definition refers to the purpose of a concept and explains at the same time what is methodically said about a thing. As far as the intention of the soul is concerned according to Amo it is nothing other than an act: to judge sensations and ideas with a specific purpose.

For Amo the intention only belongs to the spirit including the human soul and God. The special quality of the intention of the soul comes from its ability to know.[29] However the intention of the soul is not only subjective or just directed at a purpose such that it only related to the effective causes, but it is also objective in so far as it is directed to the knowledge of things in themselves. The objects of the intention of the

26 The Apatheia, chap. II

27 Tractatus, part III, chap. II, sect. IV, §, 1, p. 216.

28 Ibid., § 4.

29 Ibid., general part, chap. I, sect. I, § 7, p. 109.

soul are the senses, the understanding and action. The final purpose of the soul's intention is according to Amo to confirm the pleasant sensation of the human body and to guarantee self preservation and moral perfection.

Amo names the eternal or absolutely certain truth[30] and the creation of the world as objects of Godly intention; its purpose is the warranty of the highest perfection. The spirit of God is distinguishable from the human soul because it needs no idea or concept for the execution of its intentions. But human beings and animals have the instinct of self preservation in common. What marks the human, according to Amo, is his will in so far as it is not mere indication of spontaneity, but more an act determined by the consciousness which is in accordance with the human nature.[31]

Although the will is an inborn instinct, it needs the cooperation of the intention (as intellectual capacity) in order not only to avoid negative passions which harm the human but also to stimulate positive feelings which promotes the quest for what is pleasant as far as these are in accordance with human nature.[32] The intention strengthens the will in its task of orienting the behaviour of the human being in the preservation of his bodily existence according to rational knowledge.[33]

By recourse to oral traditions modern African Christian thinkers have introduced the concept of vital force in written philosophy which metaphysically and ethically comes very close to the concept of human perfection in the thought of Amo. This term was used by the Belgian

30 Ibid., § 10 p. 100. Further he says, "All what is in God is always the surest truth." Sect. III, § 1, p. 111.

31 Ibid., § 7, p. 109 and special part, chap. V sect. I, § 2-15, p. 140 ff.

32 Ibid., § 2.

33 Ibid., § 5 – 8, p. 141.

priest Placide Tempels (1906–1977) for the first time in order to bring up the ontological quality of African thought. By vital force Temples means an energy that resides in the interior of all living beings which is preordained by God and serves as the means of preservation of life and the assurance of survival.[34]

As the creator of the universe God does not only give life but also directs the world of powers according to his will. Tempels believes he has understood that Africans attribute vital force not only to the living and the death but also that its possession in each varies according to age, social level and category of being. So he speaks of the hierarchy of forces and God as origin of the world of forces is at its pick. In his opinion the dead possess more vital force than the living, the old more than the young, the healers, soothsayers and protector of the village more than ordinary humans. Vital force can increase or decrease, generate or degenerate with divine influence.

Alexis Kagame (1912–1981) from Rwanda disagrees with Tempels and affirms that all human beings have the same measure of vital force according to their nature and independent of their culture, family origin, or their age. According to him there is no force in itself. Rather force is dependent on the existence of a living being and is limited to human beings and animals. In any case human vital force which is intellectual is distinguishable from animal force that is completely physical.[35] Common to both is the constant tendency towards perfect life with vital force and energy. The unity of beings, the "union vitale" is founded on this.[36]

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34 Placide Tempels, La philosophie bantou, Elisabethville, 1945 (Engish: Bantu Philosophy, Paris, 1959)

35 Kagame speaks of "force vitale intellectualle" as against "force physique." Humans and animals have the later in common. Cf. Alexis Kagame, La philosophie bantou comparée, Paris 1976, p. 216. (English: Language and Being: The Ontology of the Bantu in Central Africa, Heidelberg, 1985).

36 Ibid., p. 217.

In addition to this it is Kagame's opinion that the concept of vital force cannot be applied to immaterial beings like God and dead human beings. In maintaining this, he consciously distances himself both from the Christian faith on the eternal influence of the Spirit of God on earthly life as well as from the belief in the supernatural in oral tradition. In addition, he attributes the capacity of increasing vital force to all human beings the world over which Tempels limited to Africans only. For according to Kagame all living beings (human beings and animals) possess similar vitality. But while the one of animals have physical nature, the vital force of human beings is shown through their intellectual valence. It is nevertheless common to the two categories of being that on account of their vital force they strive for perfection and unity of life.

Pierre Meinrad Hebga (*1928–2008) also believes that there can be something like vital force. But he warns against witches and magicians who manipulate and misuse the powers of nature in order to intimidate and control other human beings. That an overwhelming majority of Africans south of the Sahara feel insecure in their homeland today, or are not able to attempt to visit their homeland because of fear of witchcraft and magic shows, according to Hebga, how powerful seduction to sin and superstitious belief in this region is. As a philosopher of religion he is convinced that the deliverance from the power of superstition is only possible if trust in the power of nature is superseded by reverence of God.[37] In his conviction profound faith in God together with the acknowledgement of his omnipotence is very effective for perfection and security.[38]

37 See especially Pierre Meinrad Hebga, La rationalité d'un discours africain sur les phénomènes paranormaux, Paris 1998.

38 Tempels on the contrary held that the invocation of other powers including those of God is a ritual that is native to the Bantu.

3.2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF PHILOSOPHY

Amo divided philosophy into a theoretical and a practical part. Under the theoretical or speculative philosophy he grouped (a) ontology, pneumatology (teachings about the soul) and physics. To ontology belongs the consideration of substances or the general characteristics of things. While pneumatology has as object the knowledge of the spirits and souls, physics or natural philosophy studies the knowing body.
To practical philosophy belong ethics, politics, natural law, international law and logic. The aim of the latter is the adequate understanding of things-in-themselves with reference to their existence, their origin and their being. Amo distinguishes between the philosophy of law which has as foundation the knowledge of the right and wrong from the science of law or jurisprudence which is nothing but the art of interpreting laws and applying these to the human community.[39]

In accordance with Amo's ordering a theoretical principle underlies ethics: to seek for knowledge, which serves for the security of the human existence, i.e., for the "self-preservation, perfection, eternal beatitude of the soul."[40] All political and technical or artistic activities have to be oriented to that. The aim of eternal beatitude of the soul is realized in the knowledge of God's revealed truth.[41] For the fact that ethics also has to deal with moral knowledge, it should, according to Amo, help the practice of wisdom for the purpose of improvement of customs and increase of moral excellence.

Amo also understands the human as a social and rational being that obtains his knowledge not only from the independent action of the soul but also from sensory perception. Furthermore he emphasizes

39 Tractatus, special part, chap. I, sect. X, § 2, p. 119.

40 Ibid., chap. I sect VIII, § 1.

41 Ibid.

that social factors thoroughly influence sensible experience, the passion and the interests of humans. Given this, moral knowledge and action depend on the association of human beings with one another and on their society. In other words, social relationships, along with other factors are decisive for shaping moral and ethnic norms.
From this it is clear that sensation as bodily reaction to external influence does not only have amoral effect, but that it can also have ethical value and with that cognitive quality assuming that the human being draws[42] its implications for his knowledge. Therefore the moral power of judgment depends on the sensation. For one human being cannot know that another human being feels pain without knowing that the pain felt is a sensation and not a fantasy or imagination.[43] The consciousness of pain as a sensation can thus be thought because the one that feels knows what he feels and what sensation is.

For Amo, natural law and law of nations concern the knowledge of the observation of general obligations for the mutual preservation of all human beings. Universal, general special and most special politics belong to political science. The objects of universal politics are the questions of justice, wisdom and virtue in any chosen state. General politics on its side inquires about the foundation and the maintenance of the state in accordance with the rules of prudent leadership. At the central point of special politics Amo puts the art of ruling. And to the most special politics he assigns the competence to research on the general obligations of each person and social classes.[44]

42 Ibid., chap II, sect. II, p. 172 ff.

43 Ibid., chap III, sect. § I, 1-4, p. 175 ff.

44 Cf. Chap. II, sect. II, § 9 and 10, p. 130 f.

3.3 THE METHODOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY

Methods are generally understood as modalities and techniques which are used for the treatment of problems of knowledge, the conceptualization of truths, the control and construction of thoughts. Its responsibility is in the first place to order knowledge according to the manner of thinking suitable for the examination of specified questions. Still each philosophical method serves the exact classification of the relationship between research object and the learning process that is connected with it.

The modern turn of philosophy to methods began with Réne Descartes. The foundation of his procedure was proofs by means of logical theorems. Methodically Amo begins each theme with its own definition. Before he goes to the next consideration he makes sure that the first thesis has been concluded. Here he uses many mostly short paragraphs in order not only to clarify the concepts but also to draw the boundaries between the questions to be tackled. He himself understands method as the "derivation of a theme from principles that have already been determined."[45] In this regard Amo speaks of "two ways of method": (a) The first way goes "from principle to the principled,"[46] i.e., "from centre to periphery," "from the principles to the conclusions" or "from cause to effect."[47] Amo names this first method synthetic. (b) The second way goes from the principled to the principles "from the periphery to the centre, from the conclusions to the principles, from the effect to the cause."[48] This second method is analytic. In short "God operates with the synthetic method through nature and in nature, human being employs the analytic method with regard to technical things."[49]

45 Ibid., chap. IV, sect. VI, § 1, p. 266.

46 Ibid., § 2.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

3.4 THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Amo orders pragmatology and onomatology under the philosophy of language.[50] Pragmatology or the science of definitions searches for the properties and rules of philosophical arguments on the bases of the distinction between affirmation and negation. With regard to this Amo raises the difference between the limitative (demarcating), probative (grounding) and demonstrative (proving) definitions. Finally he separates real and topical definitions from each other. Real definition deals, with respect to being, with the physical and metaphysical properties. For example "the human being is a substance that is composed of a soul and a living organic body" or "the soul is an intelligent substance."[51] Definition is indeed "the best means of proof,"[52] but it cannot be proven[53] but can only be justified.[54] In addition Amo distinguishes between sensual and intentional definitions. A definition is sensual when one uses the senses for the explanation of a thing. It is then causally grounded in so far as the relationship between cause and effect clarifies or describes what is changed in the subject or what remains unchanged. The sensual definition is: (a) intellectual in the sense that it serves "the explanation of an idea which is in agreement with the archetype,"[55] (b) moral when it explains the object and the purpose of knowledge, and (c) genetic when it assures the explanation of behavior, i.e, it explains " in what way the effect acquires origin, existence and being."[56]

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50 Ibid., sect. III, § 1, p. 129. Elsewhere he elaborates: "Onomatology is the explanation of the giving of names." Sect. II of special part, chap. I sect. IV, § 4, p. 216. Further: "In pragmatology we treat the genus of definition." Ibid., § 10, p. 217.

51 Ibid., sect. V, § 2, p. 218

52 Ibid., § 4, p. 220.

53 Ibid., § 4, p. 219.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., p. 220.

56 Ibid. sect. VI, § 9 p. 222.

Finally Amo arranges onomatology or the science of name-giving in two parts: the real onomatology which means the nature of things (e.g. philosophy is the quest for and the love of wisdom), he puts in opposition to the intentional onomatology, which is hypothetical or teleological ("aimed at the end") and refers to that "which is to be said methodically." To onomatology belongs etymology, homonymy, synonymy and paronymy.[57]

3.5 HERMENEUTICS AND THE PROBLEM OF PREJUDICE

Hermeneutics means the art of explanation and translation of texts. It is also understood as a method of interpretation of words fixed in writing and other signs of speech. Therefore, it is a method of reflection which goes back to ancient times. Probably, the word hermeneutics goes back to the god of envoy in Greece named Hermes whose duty it was to inform human beings about the correct meaning of divine messages after proper exposition and explanation.

Hermeneutical analysis existed already in ancient Egypt and Greece. In Addition other thinkers of African origin had before Anton Wilhelm Amo, dedicated themselves to the question of understanding of knowledge in general. However, Hermeneutics par excellence began with biblical criticism. Philo of Alexandria (Circ. 10 B.C.–40 A.D.) is the first African scholar who brought the "Tanakh" (Holy Scripture) including the Tora under a philosophical-allegorical interpretation without putting them into question. It was his aim to harmonize ancient Greek philosophy with the Bible. Philo believed that an analogous exposition according to the sensible meaning of the scripture is only attainable through transformation of the allegoric and literary method. With his maxim "the spirit is more important than the letter" and "the letter kills, but the spirit does not" he introduced the theological and philosophical exegesis.

57 Ibid., sect. IV, § 5 -9, p.217.

Also the African Christian scholars Tertullian (150 – 230), Origines (185 – 254) and Augustine on their own side laid the foundation for a hermeneutical biblical analysis. Tertullian hits against the already established rhetorical principles in order to support the Bible and the Christian tradition. With Origines, the tradition of Platonism stands at the centre of scriptural exposition. But it was first with Aurelius Augustine that the art of Biblical exposition reaches its climax. In the De doctrina christiana he develops a sign theory of language in order to explore each word in its concrete and figurative meaning. Augustine presents the word as sign that stands for the thing that is signified by it; which again is a sign for the inexperienced reality. He related the first part of the function of designation to free arts (artes liberales), i.e. science and the second part to faith.

He was able to mold Greek and Neoplatonic elements and Christian dogma into a united system.[58]

On the Islamic side reference was made to not least of all to Ibn Ruschd or Averroes (1126 – 1198)[59] who vehemently defended and reconstructed the teaching of Aristotle against neoplatonism and other Arab-centred interpretation.[60] His hermeneutics has as aim to interpret the verses of the Koran in such a way that they do not contradict reason. Averroes clarified this especially in his Tractatus on method in which he indicated how the cannon of religion and philosophy can be brought in harmony.

58 Details in Matthias Jung, Hermeneutik zur Einfuhrung, hanburg, 2001.

59 See jameleddin Ben-AdbeIjelil, Ibn Ruschds Physosophie interkulturell gelesen, Nordhausen, 2005.

60 Arabocentrism is understood in the following as a tendency to raise Arab – Islamic culture as a measure of thinking and acting.

On his side Amo outlined the meaning of hermeneutics and developed his own point of view independent of theology. Still he was strongly influenced by the debates which were ignited then in Halle by the book which Christian Wolff published in 1728: Philosophia rationalis sive logica. Wolff referred to the problems of interpretation and the explanation errors of his writings on the side of his critics and reproached them that the word of God should not be put at the focal point of a political controversy and academic dispute. At the same time he warned against unrealistic demands on authors. He suggested that the works should be read and understood as they were written without projecting external opinions into them.

According to Amo, hermeneutics is not simply a philosophy of interpretation but an art which serves rather the methodical understanding and foundation of the object of inquiry: "The art of interpretation or hermeneutics is the skill of the contemplative intellect to discover the meaning of a special text by bringing in logical rules and suitable methods."[61] He assigns the task of (1) maintaining attentiveness (2) practicing contemplation (3) keeping in sight the object of inquiry to the interpreter.[62]

But in order not to dissipate his credibility, the interpreter must make exact reference to his sources and the author in addition and not deny the references in silence. Hermeneutics is thus not credible and not authentic without the trinity of author, text and interpreter. The interpreter is only credible when he/she emphasizes the originality of the author and only seeks the objective truth without being attached to any party or seeking false sources.[63] Nonetheless Amo warns against

61 Whihelm Anton Amo, Tractaktus, sect. II of special part, chap. VII, sect IV, § 1, p. 260.

62 Ibid., sect. II, § 1, p. 257.

63 Ibid., chap. VIII, sect. II, § 7, p 256.

doctrinaire interpretation which simply follows the rules of logic and grammar while many questions that are relevant to knowledge remain open. For "each interpretation only is successful if unclarity can be sorted out."[64]

An interpretation is doctrinaire according to Amo when it is loaded with fictions and suppositions. As example he names the interpretation of the Bible by dogmatic theologians and also blind law-abidingness by jurists in as much as they themselves apply stringent laws just because these are promulgated. Juridical hermeneutics should help to explain all promulgated laws and eliminate all uncertainties without changing the purpose of the law maker. Amo places the logical or authentic interpretation before the doctrinaire. Authentic interpretation is extensive on the one side, i.e. it serves to extend the object, and on the other hand it is restrictive in the sense that it limits the thing to be explored until its opposite is proven or not.

Concerning the interpretation of the past, Amo suggests that one should not only look at it in a special way but also generally. General examination provides that each critic or interpreter should think in an interdisciplinary manner. He should also have linguistic proficiency and complex knowledge in order to be able to work as a versatile polyhistorian. On the other hand, special exploration is limited to the area of specialization. But also a good specialist must be knowledgeable in the whole of philosophy and possess competence in the rules of texts and reading. Amo suggests attention and contemplation on the theme in order to prevent the projection of strange opinions on the texts to be interpreted.

From these explanations it is obvious that Schleiermacher is not to be credited as being the theoretician and systematic thinker to speak

64 Ibid., § 10.

of hermeneutics. It is thanks to him that he made hermeneutics the philosophy of understanding which does not only deal with the interpretation of texts but also with historiography. And he succeeded in laying the foundation of the human sciences.

Till now, Amo was completely ignored in the hermeneutical science in Europe as well as in Africa. African hermeneutics is a discipline and at the same time a method that serves the exploration of written and oral traditions of philosophy. Also in more recent researches greater space is devoted to the understanding of African society at present and in the future.[65] Both written texts and oral materials are interpreted with the hope of uncovering specific patterns of thought and action, which could be accepted as model by the present and future generation.

The Nigerian philosopher and theologian Theophilus Okere was the first contemporary African philosopher who discussed the hermeneutical method in a dissertation[66] that he defended in Leuven in 1971. Unfortunately he neither began with Augustine or Tertullian nor Anton Wilhelm Amo. He simply tried to found philosophy on the perspective of Igbo culture and the meaning of "African" philosophy on oral traditions. With that he introduced hermeneutical research in Africa.

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65 For the present tendency in Hermeneutics see Tsenay Serequeberhan(ed.), The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy. Horison and Discourse, New York 1994 ; Okonda Okolo, " Tradition et destin: Horizons d' une herméneutique philosophique africaine", in Présence Africaine 2 (1980), pp. 18 – 26. Binda Ngoma, "pour une Orientation authentique de la philosophie en Afrique: l'herméneutique", in : Zaire-Afrique 113 (1977),p. 143 – 158; J. Kinyongo, "Essai sur la fondaton epistemologique d'une philosophie herméneutique en Afrique: le cas de la discursivitive" in: Presence Africainel (1979), p. 11 – 28.

66 There he made clear his hermeneutical programme "We shall look at hermeneutice as an epistemological tool, a method of mediation, and of making the passage between culture as lived and culture as reflected." Th. Okere: "Can there be an African Philosophy? A Hermeneutical Investigation with Reference to Igbo culture," Leuven, 1971, p. 15.

Meanwhile the increasing interest in hermeneutics is especially due to the problem of unanimity in modern philosophy. Taking from the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913 – 2005) and the german Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2004), the Africans explored the philosophical background of pharohnic thought (Theophile Obenga, Mubabinge Bilolo, etc) and the parables, fairy tales, poems, aphorisms, fables and other genres (Oleko Nkombe, Ngombi Binda, Tshiamalenga Ntumba, Henry Olela, Olubi Sodipo, Claude Sumner, etc) and search for the roots of African intellectual world in traditional texts.

The starting point of African hermeneutics was the modern biblical exegesis and the accompanying experience of translation into African languages. One came thus to the knowledge that it is possible to understand and interprete the Bible in another linguistic and cultural context without changing its originality and its content, unless one wants to falsify the truth consciously. Since oral and literal texts cannot be understood without interpreters, Africans tried to give meaning to their old and unwritten thought-culture through the hermeneutical method.

In German enlightenment, hermeneutics, as the correct exposition of reasonable speeches and texts, had as its purpose the overcoming of intellectual one-sidedness and prejudice. According to Amo, each prejudice is due to an error of understanding. In other words "errors and prejudices arise from one and the same source, which is the intellect."[67] Prejudice is therefore not a consequence of false knowledge. It rather comes from stack failure of knowledge. With ignorance, authority is taken as truth, not truth as authority.

Amo asserts emphatically that authority is founded on the prejudice of famous human beings who declared as true and very good all that

67 Amo, Tractatus, chap. IV, sect. VII, § 1, p.210.

they themselves approved. Prejudice comes from understanding and recognizing something other than it is in itself. The error itself is not only linked with ignorance but also with inattention, forgetfulness, impatience, and the lack of good will. With this is linked the principled inclination to specific things or the categorical rejection against them. For example prejudice arises from the stupidity of following the known and the habitual.

Not least of all Amo criticizes the "prejudice of antiquity,"[68] which is to accept only what comes from the old as true and also the "prejudice of tradition,"[69] which is to believe all traditions unchanged and unquestioned. With regard to learning, Amo speaks of the prejudice of subtlety which is found in the exploration of insignificant and useless things. Amo was in agreement with almost all his contemporaries in the criticism against prejudices that is negative and required to be overcome. Hans-Georg Gadamer does not only hold the discrediting of prejudice but also the general tendency of the Enlightenment to regard tradition and reason as incompatible as false. For with this separation, the Enlightenment thinker wanted to over value the individual reason in his view and to completely degrade the collective traditional inheritance of Europe.[70] Gadamer however is of the strong conviction that there is no such reason which can serve as the last only normative source of all knowledge.

For Gadamer, all justified criticism of the Enlightenment, its attempt to overcome prejudice is prejudice itself. As a consequence of this knowledge he intends to preserve tradition with all its prejudices as far

68 Ibid., § 4, p. 211.

69 Ibid., § 5

70 Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, Grundzuge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik, 3, enlarged edition, Tubingen 1972, p, 290 ff.

as these appear legitimate.[71] He justifies his position with the assertion that understanding is not a subjective act of thought but rather a move into traditional sphere in which the past and the present mediate. For "each understanding is dependent on pre-understanding which connects the author and the interpreters notwithstanding historical time and social space."[72]

In summary Gadamer's pladoyer nevertheless shows that a concrete debate on prejudice from today's perspective is hardly possible. For such debate is hardly explored objectively: while some evaluate this as judgement yardstick for their thought and action and purposely use or defend, others who energetically fight against this see it as humiliating, insulting and injurious. But there is no disagreement that philosophers are confronted with different cultural traditions from which they cannot or will not break away. For one cannot swear to be faithful to a tradition and at the same time free oneself from its power over themes, values and imaginations of all aspects of life. There lies the dilemma of all specific traditions and all culture oriented philosophy.

71 Ibid., p. 295.

72 Ibid., p. 37.

CHAPTER 4
AMO AND MATERIALISM
4.1 THE MATERIALISTIC THOUGHT OF AMO

Amo's thought can only be understood in connection with dominant intellectual tendency of his time. At the time it was intellectually fashionable to take one's stand between rationalism and materialism in order to properly position one's philosophy.

The starting point of contemporary debates was the question of whether human knowledge had its source in the human and not in God anymore as it was up till then affirmed by the metaphysics that goes back to the scholastics.

The English thinkers, Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626), Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679), and John Locke (1532 – 1704) gave the determinant impetus to the critique of metaphysics. Not least of all Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727) contributed to this critique by his attempt to appeal to the physical conformity to natural law of velocity and the evaluation of the astronomical facts. Philosophy is indebted to him for his mechanistic method and their emancipation from scholastic metaphysics. For since then philosophy was understood as a discipline which does not only dwell on speculation but above all on knowledge of effects through causes or of causes through effects.

Hobbes builds his philosophy on Bacon's conception of the origin of knowledge and idea from the sensible world. At the same time he dismissed his division of the soul into a feeling and mortal part on the one hand and an immortal rational part on the other, which has its origin in God. In order to overcome this dualism, Hobbes suggests a complete emancipation and separation of philosophy from theology. For all that can be understood and rationally constructed is for him a body and so a subject matter of philosophy. Basing on this, he distin-

guished two forms of bodies: the natural bodies, which have a material foundational origin; and different from this, he places artificial bodies like the state which owe their being to conventions and agreements among humans.

Also John Locke, who is credited as the founder of sensualist theory of knowledge based on the dualism of Hobbes and also systematized it. However, materialism is founded on the knowledge, that all human ideas are found first in the consciousness. Locke tried to show how the understanding comes to this idea, i.e. to its conceptions of object. Like Descartes he begins with doubt with the difference that he did not take mathematical deduction as the most precise method of knowledge. While Descartes developed a universal conception of God, Locke defended the thesis that each community has its own idea of God.

For Locke the ideas or conceptions come to the consciousness because they are their contents. In this way the consciousness fashions the ideas through abstraction from experience in the course of which Locke separates outer experience (sensation) from inner experience (reflection) from each other. In this ways he wanted to emphasize the specificity of simple ideas which arise without contribution from reason. Against the later he placed general ideas which need reflection for their coming into being. Hence for Locke, there is nothing in the consciousness before experience. Thus he contradicts the Cartesian teaching of innate ideas (ideae innatae).[1] For, in his view, the soul is a tabula rasa; or a white sheet of paper on which nothing is written before experience.

1 Descartes differentiates between in –born, adventitious (adventitiae) and artificially acquired ideas(idea me ipso factae). But the concept of innate ideas does not originate from him but rather from Marcus tullius Cicero (106 UB.C. – 43 A.D.) who links it with the imagination that is common to all human beings (e.g. the idea of God).

With his attempt to lay down the first and absolute ground of certainty of human knowledge, Rene Descartes introduced rationalism. But the teaching of innate ideas is not his original discovery. Historically it goes back to Plato who was the first to defend the idea that there are eternal ideas which are immanent in human souls. These ideas serve as a standard that the human can understand by thinking and imagining as well as by training (propaedeutics). He who rises to the knowledge of ideas acquires the philosophical eros as the longing of the mortal to raise itself to immorality. For propaedeutics Plato recommends music and mathematics as guide through the sensorial nature into pure forms. To this effect, he allows the observation of the beautiful as both preparation and mean of knowing the ideas.

Contrary to Locke imaginations or ideas in Descartes are not dependent on sensible perception but are directly plausible evident, clear and distinct to the soul. Descartes understands the idea itself as a manifestation of capability of thinking. By this he means the very action of the soul which leads to knowledge as the consciousness of the idea. Thinking is thus an intellectual act through which the knowing subject manifests[2] his real existence and fulfills his vital function.[3] Given that the true being of things is spiritual in nature, it can only be known by the reason. Descartes assigns to the human the capacity to develop clear and distinct ideas in his consciousness through active thinking.

Amo's interest in the debate of the two opposed tendencies is in the exploration of the being of sensation and faculty of sensation. In the

2 Rene Descartes, Meditationes de Prima Philosophia. Meditationen Uber die Erste Philosophie, Latin/German, translated and edited by Gerhardt Schmidt, Stuttgart, 1986., 2nd Meditation 8, p. 87. "What am I now? A thinking thing. What is that? – A thinking that doubts, sees, proves, negates, wants, wands not, that imagines in pictures and feels." (Cf. English version).

3 See Genevieve Rodis-Lewis, Descatres et le rationalism, " 4th Edition, Paris, 1985, p. 25.

Apatheia[4] and in the Tractatus he defends the thesis that the two predicates are not applicable to the whole human being but only to his body. He then arrived at the conclusion that the human soul is a substance on which all knowledge depends. However he made a personal attempt to use induction as the method of developing knowledge from the senses, without explicitly referring to Locke. Thus he presents the intellect as an act of the soul which cannot imagine the thing in itself without the cooperation of the senses or sense organs.[5] He therefore separates the sensory impression which is sensual from the supersensory perception by means of the understanding.

Amo argued thoroughly with Descartes whom he condemned with regard to his conception of the soul. He averred that Descartes contradicted himself because he confused the being of the soul with its function as the thinking part.[6] In his own view Descartes overlooked the point that thinking is a contemplative act.[7] It is neither a feeling nor an affect not to talk of passion. The act of the soul as thinking substance is accomplished through reflection and has knowledge as its aim.[8]

Amo expands his critique to natural scientists, Daniel Sennert (1572 – 1637), Jean Leclerc (1657 – 1736), Georg Daniel Conschwiz (died 1729) etc who explained the sensation as the work of the soul through

4 Anto Wihelm Amo, Die Apatheia der menschllichen Seele, Wittenberg 1743,Faksimile, Halle (Saale) Martin –Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, 1978, § III, Note I, p. 8.

5 Traktatus, chapt. Iv, sect. II, § 2, p. 154f.

6 Die Apatheia, chapt. II, p. 81.

7 Under contemplation, Amo understand a moment of reflection of learning from logical ideas and senences. Tractatus, part II of special part, chapt. 1, § 1, and 2, p. 181. But before contemplation the ideas are sensual and historical, after contemplation certain and judemental. Ibid.

8 Die Apatheia, chapt. I, § 4, and Tracatus, general part, chapt. I, sect. I, IV, p. 133 ff.

extrapolation.[9] For Amo this idea is linked to an error, since the sensation will be explained as reaction of an organ to an external influence. But for him the soul is not an organ and thus not a sensible or material essence which is subject to such external effect. For Amo the only defensible position comes from Aristotle who defines matter as the only substance that can move and endure.[10]

In general Amo's materialistic philosophy is founded on his rejection of the capacity "of sensation and the direct sensations in the human soul on principle."[11] According to Amo, the spirit or the human soul lacks every disposition for sensation on principle and the capacity for sensible experience and perception of passions. For these powers exclusively belong to the organic material body. On the contrary the soul is an immaterial being with exclusively supersensory perception that lies in thinking, which is again not a passive reaction but an active action. Hence the consciousness excludes the perception, the feeling and the sensation as sensual moments which come simply through the senses or the sense organs.

In spite of his critique of Descartes, Amo praises his clear separation of spiritual world and that of the body. This dualistic theory obviously had a definitive influence on him. But the originality of Amo is seen especially in the fact that he recognized that the human soul neither pre-exists as in Plato, nor is it something that is dependent on the body, and has no post-existence at all. From this point of view he differs from the English and French materialists of his time.

9 Die Apatheia, chapt. I, sect. I, § IV, p. 76, and chapt. II p. 80.

10 Ibid, p. 81.

11 Ibid., sect. II, § IV, p. 79.

4.2 DUALISM OF BODY AND SOUL

With his treatise Experiment on the Being of the Spirit (Versuch von dem Wesen des Geistes) published in 1691 Christian Thomasius ignited a fierce controversy on the soul-body relationship. His aim was not to develop his own philosophical theory not to talk of separating the two substances from each other. The heart of the matter was that he operated with scholastic terminologies without casting critical reflection on them. Thomasius was therefore condemned for eclecticism and plagiarism. Besides, Amo and other German philosophers put forward their own contributions to the soul-body relationship including Ludwig Philip Thumming (1697 – 1728), Johan Christoph Gottsched(1700 – 1766), Johan Heinrich Wincker (1703 – 1770), etc, and later Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten(1714 – 1762) and Georg Friedrich Meier (1718 – 1777).

In the Apatheia de Menschlichen Seele, Amo wanted to solve the problem of the dualism of body and soul or spirit with a reflection on the sensation.[12] On the question whether the expressions sensation and sensible capacity can be applied to the soul or permitted, he answered with a clear negation and defended his position with the argument that one can only understand a substance as the soul only with reference to its operation which is thinking.
Amo makes his position more precise dialectically when he demonstrates that the human soul is a purely active substance which operates with ideas. For him the operation of the soul and the idea are not only simple logical categories, but also qualities which are equal to their substance, that is, the soul. The idea is therefore no sensation, otherwise it would have pre-existed as Plato held and made to acquire present sensation through remembrance. Amo however affirmed that the idea is direct while remembrance and sensation are indirect.

12 Cf. T. Uzodnma Nwala, " Anthony William Amo of Ghana on the Mind-Body problem," in: Présence Africaine 4 (1978), p 158 – 165.

He begins his dialectical argument with the following thesis: the human soul does not perceive any material things, because sensation is the feeling of an external influence through sense organs.[13] He subsumes the soul that is intrinsic to the human being under the genus of spirits which are generally immaterial substances, to which God and other invisible beings belong. Amo states that the human soul is on account of its connection with a living organic body a special type of spirit, but it does not possess any organs which can receive sensations.[14]

On the contrary sensation and its faculty completely belong to the self-moving or moved body that was either created by God or that was genetically produced. For Amo the human body has a provable material existence which one can know, explain and describe through its organic parts. Here Amo points to the categorical difference between the soul as such and the spirit in the material and spiritual sense. As regards the later he speaks of the spirit of the ancients, the Greeks, the Romans, etc., or of the natural spirits which are suffused by energy or life force.

As example of spirited natural beings Amo names the spirit of the dead, of the ancestors, of animals, etc, (spiritus naturales, vitales et animales). He differentiates spirits from the soul which merely belongs to living human beings. With that he rejects the thesis of animism according to which even stones, plants, and animals have a soul.[15] When Amo speaks of the mortality of humans, he only means the material or bodily part. For Amo the spirit as spiritus intelligentes is the very soul of man/woman that is united with the living body. As such the function of constantly striving towards knowledge belongs to it. If the soul needs no external effect for its operation, it still owes its unending

13 Die Apatheia, I, chapt. 1, § 1 and 2., p. 81.

14 Ibid., chapt. II, p. 80 f.

15 Ibid.

dynamism to the will and the intellect.[16] For the operations of the soul is nothing but the contemplative act of the will as an effect of idea and reflection,[17] in so far as its aim is the acquisition of knowledge that is founded on explanations.

The act of the will itself is carried out according to a principle of action to do or not to do something. With its help and that of the intellect the soul steadily proceeds to its conscious ends.[18] For Amo, the consciousness and the understanding are equal.[19] By this he means the certainty of the soul itself that it knows and acts. Ignorance on the contrary is "set in opposition against the consciousness."[20] In this way the operation of the soul is autonomous and is carried out without any unconscious external sensual effect.

In his conflict with Descartes, Amo referred to the boundary between interior sensation (sensatio internae), which are affect or passions, and external sensations (like the sensation whether something is pleasant or unpleasant), which are evoked through material objects. For Amo, it is shown in the two cases that sensations are not logical ideas but merely physical categories which are conditioned by external or interior influential factors.[21] They owe their existence to the imaginations or perceptions of things through the sense organs.

In his antithesis, Amo tries to explain how the human soul lacks the faculty of sensation. Here he remembers that this theory goes back

16 Ibid.

17 Trakctatus, chapt. IV, sect. III p. 143 ff

18 Ibid., chapt IV, sect. I, § 6, p. 141 and sect. II, § 4, p.. 143

19 Ibid., sect. III, § 6, p. 156.

20 Ibid., sect. IV, § 3, p. 158.

21 Die Apatheia, chap I, Sect. I, § I, p.78.

to the ancients where the faculty of sensation was equated to the anima sensitiva (sensitive soul) and anima vegetans (vegetative soul) was placed in opposition to it. Thus plants were inevitably understood as substance endowed with souls. At the same time, human beings and animals were presented as living beings with sensitive souls. But the two were differentiated by the fact that human soul on account of its thinking property was endowed with immortality.[22]

For Amo the human soul does not possess any characteristics which can be influenced or affected by matter. Under matter, Amo subsumes all living beings with sensitive body (humans and animals), as well as non-living and insensitive bodies (minerals, vegetables). So there is no matter that can have direct effect on the spirit. Material things can only influence themselves. Given that the human soul has nothing in its being that is bodily, extendable, perceptible, it does not succumb to any external effect.[23]

The synthesis tries to clarify why sensation and capacity for sensation are properties of organic living bodies. Sensation means, for Amo, nothing but to endure and directly feel the effect of another matter. The faculty of sensation is on its part the disposition of matter to passively submit to the influence of the other matters. Enduring and feeling belong then to living organisms which go along with externally generated changes. The efficacy of matter manifests itself therefore only on sensitive objects as well as objects capable of sensation or bodies. Sensation and the faculty of sensation express over and above this the bodily needs. If the human soul comes in mutual union (mutua unio), with a living organic body, it is not capable of feeling and enduring in spite of this union of sensation. Amo even holds that the application of material concepts to the soul is not permissible.

22 Ibid., § 2.

23 Ibid.

In summary, the dualistic materialism of Amo that is explained here is based on the knowledge that even though a human being is made of body and spirit (or soul), still he senses material things not with his soul but his living organic body.[24] Sensation results from contact[25] (mutual exchange of effect), penetration and communication. One speaks only of contact when two physical and perceptible objects mutually affect each other. Sensation and the faculty of sensation are therefore passive reactions and at the same time affective conditions of the body that receives impression through its sensitive parts. The human soul is according to its being dispassionate and only operates on its own initiatives, for it always knows what it does.[26]

If the contact between the material and immaterial substance is not possible, then the interrelationship between two immaterial beings is not perceived through the senses or explained through the soul. Amo tries to explain this in the following way by reference to the paradigm of heating of iron in fire: when one puts iron in fire it will be hot. But the soul cannot explain how the heat goes into the iron. Although fire and iron are physically and bodily perceptible, its reaction with the heat is not received by the soul because it cannot be affected by sensible or sensitive things.

For Amo the absence of the disposition of sensation does not categorically preclude that the soul in itself feels. For, "the sensations of our soul will be explained by others either with words or through actions."[27] Feeling in this understanding is not passive enduring but an act of the soul, which the human can prove, describe and explain to himself and other human beings by means of reflection and of understanding. Still

24 Ibid., chap. II, p. 80.

25 "What contact is, is learnt directly by the sensation itself."

26 Ibid., chap I, p. 75.

27 § 3.

possible sensation of the soul cannot be ascertained, perceived or felt through the sense on account of the efficacy of a material essence.

With this argument Amo does not want to reject the inner compulsion to think to which the soul or the spirit itself is exposed. For the spirit "actuate itself on the basis of purpose, i.e., on the basis of foreknowledge (praecognitio) of a thing that should be done, and an aim that it set out to achieve through its operation."[28] The purpose that is meant here underlines the interior compulsion of the soul, to act spontaneously and freely but not to react. For Amo, this points to the nature of the soul which "acts in accordance with reason and from the exigency of knowledge."

For the spirit of humans possesses the consciousness of its self and its actions and that of other things; it is responsible for the motive of his action and his knowledge. Amo therefore describes the spirit as spiritus intelligentes (realizing spirit) or the cognitive capacity as a substance which itself acts "from free impulse" for the spirit "ascertains its operations from the interior in order to attain to attain its aim." In this way it can in no way be forced or inspired to any activity by something material.

In general the principle of life does not belong to the soul, i.e., "the capacity of sensation is not intrinsic to it"[29] because life for Amo means nothing but to admit feelings, to experience shortage and to be excited by material things.[30] In other words only the material can feel, act, per-

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., p. 83.

30 For Amo the sensation is "the things that are really influenced through sensitive characteristics by direct, present and material things via the sense organs." Die Apatheial, p.78.

ceive and manifest power.[31] The soul is merely capable of interrelationship with a living organic body: "Interrelationship of body and soul is found in the fact that the soul uses the body in which it resides as an object, as instrument and means of its operation."[32] As instrument the body servers the practical concretization of a conscious end and as the medium of theoretical realization of the intention of the soul.

But the spirit in general (including God) does not need contact with material essence in its operation; otherwise its knowledge does not have to come from itself but from sensory perception. Amo regards as impossible the impression of matter on the soul because the presence of immateriality assumes the absence of materiality. If spirit and body are contrary substances, they do not mutually exclude each other on account of their essence but much more on account of their attributes (thinking and feeling). For contrary things cannot receive or possess one another.[33]

Although the human soul feels, for Amo, it would neither intentionally nor accidentally receive material or sensitive things, which are, in accordance with its being, its contraries. For between substances which are diametrically opposed in their characteristics, there is no possibility of touching each other. In addition nothing material can be immaterial at the same time and vice versa. Also the penetration which comes from the effect of other material essence or the effect of their part is not possible with the spirit, for it does not possess any constitutive organs which make it accessible. Here there is an agreement between Amo and Descartes.

31 Here is meant above all the soul which for Amo is also called the spirit of human being which is still in the body, but, however, survives it and separates from the body when the person dies. Thus death does not concern the soul. Also the sentence "The human being is mortal" is merely in relation to the body and does not apply to the soul. Ibid., chap. II, p. 80.

32 Ibid., chap. 1, § 3, remarks, I, p. 76.

33 Ibid.

Concerning the operation of the spirit in general, Amo makes the following remarks: "Although I do not know how God and other immaterial spirits know their operation and other things still it does not seem probable to me that they know with the help of concepts (per ideas)."[34] Amo is saying that a concept is a "momentary operation of our soul, through which it makes itself current or present through things formerly perceived through the senses and the sense organs." God and immaterial spirits so far as they are not bound to the senses or the sense organs can make no representations (visualizations) or acquire knowledge, for e.g., of future things or past things. This is because the past and the present are absent at the moment of representation.

Given that God is omniscient, "there is no imagination for him because the imagination demands the absence of what is imagined."[35] Amo explains as follows: God is omniscient and has therefore no need of any imagination or any knowledge of the past and the future because all is present in his cognition. It is common to God and other spirits that they do not need the "formation of a concept (idealitas)"[36] for their operations, i.e., they know without concepts and sensation. God's wisdom is shown in the fact that he knows all about the future, past as well as about present and absent things.

The human being, however, also owes his material and intellectual operation to sensual concepts because of the union of his soul with the body. Still the human spirit operates spontaneously and freely, proceeds autonomously from inside, because he is a rational agent that pursues his end on account of an intention, that is, with previous knowledge of a thing. Furthermore he is not subject to any passion and he always has the awareness of himself, of his operations and

34 Ibid., p. 74.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

other things as well. It means that he is the causa efficience of his operation. If human spirit were dependent on another immaterial substance, which no human could know, it would lose his spontaneity and freedom of action.

That the spirit (i.e. human understanding)[37] only works with its cognitive capacity, the function of the soul lies in the pure operation and in the perfection of human existence: "The intention of our soul is directed either towards knowledge or towards effect."[38] Intentionality is an important moment of intellectual operation, i.e., thinking. It is further founded on the will to cognition. God and human souls are intelligent substances whose operations are intentional and which work according to a certain order. The spirit of human being works in accordance with its own mind and from its own intention.

The intention is the operation of the spirit through which it becomes conscious of itself and other things to be thought. It shows in this the endeavour of the spirit towards an aim which is again a moment by which the spirit comes to rest during its operation. If the human thinks, then it entails that the spirit has not reached the knowledge to be realized. In this way, thinking has as aim to arrive at knowledge that the human understands. Restlessness in no way means suffering or sensitivity because it is a substantial act which is founded in itself. In that the intention is objective in itself, proceeds on the spirit's own initiative with regard to the effective causes and under consideration of the knowledge to be acquired.

37 Tractatus, general part, chap. I, sect. II, § 2,p. 108. In a different place it is said that the spirit is "each pure active immaterial thing which understands from itself and willingly from an intention (intentio) for the sake of a certain and conscious end effective substance." Apatheia, p. 72.

38 Trakatus, chap. I, sect. IV, § !, p. 113. By effect Amo means also a principle of action which includes the perfection of existence, as well as survival of the species and self-preservation. The final purpose of life is eternal beatitude, i.e., "the knowledge of truth that is revealed by God." Ibid., sect. VIII, § I, p. 117.

Thus Amo agrees with Aurelius Augustine that the act of thinking has the fulfillment of intention as its end. For the spirit does not recognize anything outside of itself. "It is conscious of itself, of its operation and also of other things."[39] That quality does not only apply to human souls but also to other spirits that understand through ideas (per ideas). The specialty of the intention of the soul expresses itself through its function of understanding the causal connections of things. It is therefore identical to the human. Godly intention aims at the highest wisdom. On the contrary, the intention of material spirits or damned souls leans towards evil.

Above all, life and sensitivity belong to the same category, for "all that lives inevitably feels and all that feels lives necessarily."[40] With this it would not be existence that is to be proven but life through movement of bodily substances. Although to live also means to exist, but like a stone or a spirit, "not all that exists lives."[41] The later have in common that they lack the disposition to sensation.

The principle of life belongs to human beings and animals because of their bodies that do not only indicate manifest existence, but also can act and endure. Although the two living beings are constituted of the same "sensitive soul," this is in animals of merely pure formal existence at the same time as far as it does not reflect. The sensitive soul of human beings is, however, identical with reason or understanding provided that it is united with the living body. Furthermore it possesses immortality.

Amo differentiates himself with reference to this from Aristotle who understands the human soul as the carrier of theoretical and practical

39 Die Apatheia, chap. I, p. 72.

40 Ibid., remark, II, p. 80.

41 Ibid., p. 82.

reason and as such as fundamental principle of life. For Aristotle, the soul is the entelechy of the body. It moves the body and dies with it. For Plato the soul is immortal because of its immaterial nature. It has pre-existence and also post-existence. For Amo the souls are generally immaterial beings, which live on as spirits after the death of their bearers (human beings).

After the separation from individual bodies, souls partly change into shadow spirits (umbrae et animea) or good spirits (manes). With reference to the vulgar descriptions "souls of the blessed" and the "souls of the damned" Amo affirms that the souls in this case are not equal to the spirit of human beings, but it rather forms the third part of the humans, besides the spirit and the body. He does not however go into details.

Long before Amo African philosophers who put their thought in writing especially Tertullian and Origines occupied themselves with the spirit-body or body-soul dualism. So Amo merely takes up a metaphysical problem that was widely known to his African antecedents. Even his materialistic view points to a parallelism not only with the old Egyptian Ptahotep and Imhotep, but also with African oral tradition of metaphysics.

Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972) was the first contemporary thinker who places materialism at the central point of his elaborate research in "Consciencism," [42] without explicitly referring to Amo. In this he placed mater as the first reality that through inner experience is taken up in the consciousness. With consciousness he understands the condition of acquisition of an organism as the object of human imagination. While materialism serves as the effective transformation of nature from the foundation of knowledge, socialism for Nkrumah, has only

42 Kwame Nkrumah, Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-colonization, 1970 New York.

the task of drawing the consequence from this transformation for the development of the society.

So he develops his own socialistic philosophy named Consciencism which claims the existence of matter as absolute and independent reality in theoretical respect and should help to bring about social revolution in Africa in practical respects. He gives to Consciencism the task of transforming the same Western, Christian and Moslem knowledge which influence Africans so that they will be integrated into the African personality.

Nkrumah understands personality as the collective humanistic principle on which the traditional system of values is built. That is first, the responsibility of all for the community, the clan, which was the only trans-familial institution; secondly; the principle of egalitarianism which the traditional society without classes and strata or the dualism between exploiters and the exploited, rulers and the ruled; a system that was directed to the general interest, that was fundamentally changed as a result of colonial administration, education, etc.

Amo is not comparable to Aurelius Augustine who helped to bring Christianity to a universal philosophy of religion. But like hardly any philosopher before him, Amo was able to deal with other cultures and people excellently. Now it depends on the contemporary philosophers to take up this philanthropic universalism.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION: AMO AND HIS AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN POSTERITY

Although Amo did not in any way directly influence intellectual debates in and about Africa, the interest of contemporary intellectuals in his thought is enormous. But until now no systematic study has been done on his teaching that is worth naming.[1] The exposition that has been done in the present book is aimed at closing this research hole. That Amo received a relatively late reception in Africa is mostly because of the century long influence of colonialism that caused a forced and almost unbridgeable rift in African intellectual history.

The modern school systems in line with Western standard were already introduced by the end of the 19th century. Thus autonomous scientific researchers began with the foundation of universities in Africa at the beginning of the 1960s. As academic discipline, philosophy belonged nevertheless to the foundational subjects. Still it remained for about a decade under the dominance of pastors and priest-professors, who thought a sort of philosophy that was founded on myths, mysteries and general rules of life and was therefore described as ethnophilosophy. A new generation of non-clerical thinkers fought against this way of thinking till the 1980s. They projected a type of philosophy that was in accordance with universal standard. But this struggle is limited to a few countries of West, central and East Africa.

The thinkers described as Ethno-philosophers wanted to be seen as the only apologists of traditional culture, and in doing this they outlined a sort of African philosophy which is sourced from oral tradi-

1 It is appropriate to refer to the Togolese Emmanuel Edeh Yawovi whose philosophical dissertation was the first to be dedicated to the thought of Amo. The exact title is: Die Grundlagen der philosophischen Schriften von Amo, "Essen, 2003 (English: "The foundations of the Philosophical Works of Amo.")

tions. Hence their interest lies less in reflecting on individual thought as in the collective and inherited traditions.[2] The lay universalists on their side separated themselves from all forms of mythologies, religion and collectivism and defended a philosophy that is mostly based on individual opinions.

In this regard the effort at reconstruction of a philosophy based on single thinkers from ancient Egypt to Numidia and Carthage to the present day is thus a relatively new programme. For it was only in the last twenty years that researches started to reflect on historical personalities, including those from the African diaspora, who are linked to African philosophy as its pioneering spirits. This led to the fact that universally recognized thinkers like Imhotep, Ptahotep, Echnation, Philo (c. 25 B.C. – 50 A.D), Lucies Apuleis (c. 125 – 180), Tertullian (c. 160 – 220), Plotinus (205 – 270), Origines (c. 185 – 254), Aurelius Augustine (354–430), Averroes (1126–1198), Ibn Khaldun (c. 1332–1406), etc are today taken as African Philosophers.

While for hundreds of years, these later thinkers were not often identified as Africans on account of their influence in the European and Christian world, Amo's specificity lies in the fact that he remains an isolated philosopher without recognizable influence on Western intellectual world. That he played an active part in the development of the most important intellectual epoch of Europe is undisputed. But there is hardly anybody who has been interested in his courageous and

2 See details in Marcien Towa, Essai sur la problématique philosophique dans I 'Afrique actuelle, Jaundae, 1971 ; Dismas A. Masolo, African Philosophy in Search of Identity, Bloomington, 1994; Jean-Godefory Bidima, "La philosopie négro-africaine, paris 1995; Paulin J. Hountondji, The Struggle for Meaning. Reflections on Phiosophy, Culture and Democracy in Africa, Ohio 2002; Jacob Emmanuel Mabe, Mundlinche und schriftliche formen philosophischen Denkens in Afrika. Grundzuge einer Konvergenzphilosophie, Frankfurt/M.u.a 2005; Heinz Kimmerle, Afrikanische Philosophie im Kontext der Weltphilosophie, Nordhausen, 2005.

variegated critique of the great master thinkers (Aristotle, Descartes, Thomas Aquinas, etc.). However, there are more and more Africans who honour his unbelievable pioneering work, and appreciate him as an example.[3]

It would be dishonest to misuse Amo's name in ethnocentric disagreement in which one consigns him to European thought because of his intellectual import. No doubt he received a socialization which should be attributed geographically and historically to European Enlightenment. This does not however change the biological reality that he was an African. Nevertheless the ideas of Amo should not be assigned to one single continent. For he was never happy to present himself as a European or an African, but more as a human being among human beings and for the whole of humanity. Thus his philosophy meets universal requirements.

Due to humanistic reservation it is right to genetically connect Amo to African intellectual world because of his geographical origin. From the point of view of the history of ideas he can then be viewed as a mentor or a fore-runner both for Negritude and the already outlined Pan-Africanism. Negritude is the neologism that was introduced in scientific terminology by the Martinique Aimé Cesaire (*1913–2008) and the Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906– 2001). It means nothing but perception and acceptance of being black.[4] It originated at the beginning of the 1930s as a literary-poetic form of articulation of the problems of intellectuals of African descent who were living in France.

3 See Christopher Nwodo, "The Explict and the Implict in Amo's Philosophy," in Peter Bodunrin (ed.), Philosophy in Africa: Trend and Perspectives, Ile-Ife, University Press of Ife, 1985, p. 27-40. Francis I. Ogumodede, "The Scholasticism of William Amo: The 18th century Ghanaian Philosopher in Diaspora," in West African Journal of Philosophical Studies, 2 (1999), p. 57-73.

4 Citied in Elika M'bokolo, L'Afrique au XXe. Siécle. Le continent convoité, Paris 1985, p.350.

Not least, it concerns an ideological movement, with which the colonial situation in Africa was also thermatized as a racist phenomenon for the first time. The beginning was that many Africans above all in France were victims of discrimination, oppression and discouragement because of their skin colour. They did not, however doubt their right to exist but rather tended to accept the reality of the blackness of their skin, and not to take it as a reason to suffer.

Senghor and Césaire were inspired by the movement of emancipation of African Americans in the second half of the 19th century which was transformed into Pan-Africanism.[5] Before the birth of the concept Négritude, René Maran (1887–1960) already described in his novel Batouala, published in 1921, the day to day life in a village of the French colony Oubangui-Chari as well as the earlier dominant view of those living there about the "whites." In addition there were different press organs in which Caribbean and African Students presented the history of violence against Africans since the age of slavery in 15th century.

Especially Césaire endeavoured to localize the cause of the problems in the nature of European civilization itself which in his view is marked by imperialism, Nazism, Fascism, Feudalism, oppression and slavery. With this conceptual analysis of Western culture Césaire initiated a theoretical debate which marked African thinking for decades.[6] Since

5 To the pioneering figures of African diaspora in America belong among others Uncle Tom (1852), Claude Mac Kay (1889–1948), Langston Hughes (1902––1967). Not least the movement of "Negro renaissance" through "Spiritual, Works, Songs and Blues," also contributed to this.

6 For details see M.Towa, "Aimé Cesaire, prophéte de la révolution des peuples noires, " in Abbia 21 (1969), p. 49-57 ; from the same "Les pur sangs (négritude césarienne et surréalisme) in Abbia, 23 (1969), p.71-82 ; G. Ngal: "Le théâtre d' Aimé Césaire, une dramaturgie de la décolonisation," in Revue des science humaines, 140 (1970), p. 613-636.

then the Africans recognize that colonialism is like ill health which one can only fight at its root. In this way, the budding intellectuals began to explore the foundation of European culture in the hope of recognizing the specific motives and theoretical backgrounds of colonial delusion after 1945.[7] The manuscript which Frantz Fanon (1925 – 1961) published in the year 1952 Black Skin; White Masks had a similar suggestive effect.[8]

But 200 years previously, Amo had clarified the cruel situation of blacks held as salves without any human right in European kings' courts and Electors' courts in the same way. The idea of Amo on human rights is therefore similar to Pan-Africanism and Negritude, for they do not only conceptualize philosophically the problem of being black in a white dominated world, but they attempt to strengthen the self-consciousness of the blacks. Through their connection with Amo the two movements gain more historical, ethical and epistemological importance.

Despite all critique of the modern Western civilization, it is clear from the example of Amo, that the meeting with it does not necessarily weaken the fantasy or the creative spirit of each African as it is often said. One should however emphatically warn against a blind and naïve imitation of the West. For this can not only have as consequence the dethronement of African life and way of thinking, but also encourage disinterest of Africans and other blacks in Europe and North and South America in the intellectual inheritance of Africa. In other words

7 See Lilian Kesteloot, The Intellectual Origins of the African Revolution, Washington 1972.

8 F. Fanon, Peau noire, masques blancs, Paris 1952, Fanon was a medical doctor and a psychiatrist by profession. Through his writing he embodies the prototype of the intellectual in the fight against colonial violence and European racism. He criticizes the passive resistance of many alienated Afircans. The same author, The Wretched of the Earth (Les damnés de la terre), Paris 1961.

there is nothing which can triumph against the reason of the African as his personal autistic weakness in the face of Western civilization.

In sum all great master philosophers of African origin have hardly had their lasting effect in Africa but rather in Europe. There their teachings were further explored and preserved. In Africa, the number of those interested in Imhotep, Ptahotep, Echenaton, Ramses, Amasis, Manethon, etc is very limited. Without the flourishing of Egyptology in Europe all of them would have fallen into oblivion. And that is so with Plotinus, Euclide, Apuleius, Tertulian, Origines, Augustine, Clement etc. whose teachings are researched more in Europe than in Africa. Unfortunately even contemporary philosophers hardly escape this negative tendency.

Up till now the European reception of the Enlightenment has almost done without Amo. Even in Germany the sympathy for his philosophy still remains marginal as before. Not even his name figures in philosophical lexicons, handbooks and course books and other important reference books. That is connected among other things with Eurocentric tendency to pass in silence or to suppress historical truth that calls into question Europe's demand to dominate.

Amo was occupied with the question which can be enlightened in the perspective of intercultural philosophy today. Not least of all, his personality should be taken up as an important moment of crystallization in Europe's meeting with the foreigner. It is very strange that German authors who have made their marks in intercultural philosophy (Heinz Kimmerle, Franz-Martin Wimmer, Rham Adam Mall, etc.) hardly refer to Amo. Now Amo should find the place that belongs to him in intercultural ethics, hermeneutics, aesthetics, ontology and metaphysics at last. The removal of Amo alone shows how incomplete and full of lacuna not only modern German and European intellectual history is, but also the universal historicity of philosophy itself.

This book ends with the following words of Johannes Gottfried Kraus in his laudatio during the award of degree to Amo on 24th May 1733 in Halle:

"Great was once the prestige of African both with reference to talents as with regards to scientific endeavours and Church organizations. It produced many extraordinary men through whose profound studies the wisdom of the world and also God's erudition were grounded. According to the judgement of the past and present, nothing in terms of cleverness in civil life and taste surpassed D. Terentius from Carthage. Plato, however seemed to become alive again in the Socratic conversation of Apuleius from Maudura under so great applause as in the early centuries but which divided the learned in parties; a party of the followers of Apuleius dared to quarrel with Ciceronians for leadership in rhetorics. On the other hand, oh what great men came out of the Christian teaching in Africa! It should be enough to name the very important Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Optatus Milevitanus and Augustine, the part of whose souls are in competition with their versatile knowledge. With what faithfulness and steadfastness did the African Doctors of the Church struggle for the purity of religion? Their memorials, their documents, their martyrdom and councils testify to this. It is unjust for the African Church when it is taught that it has always said yes. Although a great revolution began with the breaking in of Arab masses in Africa, but this power could not extinguish in any way the light of the spirits or of science. On the orders of the peoples to whom sciences appeared to have gone to, the liberal arts were cultivated, and after the Moors had crossed to Spain from Africa the old writers were at the same time taken to the place and were of great help in cultivating the sciences and began to save them before they were forgotten. So, African scientists could refund what they had received in much older days. In our time, however, this part of the world should be more fruitful in other things but in learning. That it is not exhausted with talents, that should be proven here by the example of

the highly renowned master of philosophy and the Liberal Arts, Anton Wilhelm Amo, African from Guinea."