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## POSTCOLONIALISM AND THE PROSPECT OF POLITICAL DEONTOLOGY: PLATO, KANT AND SCHOPENHAUER IN A PRE-CRITIQUE

ПОСТОКОЛОНІАЛІЗМ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ДЕОНТОЛОГІЇ: ПЛАТО, КАНТ І ШОПЕНГАУЕР В ПОПЕРЕДНІЙ КРИТИЦІ

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### **Urgency of the research.**

Postcolonialism is a rich theory that offers the opportunity for a wide discussion that expands to Ethics and Politics. Nonetheless, as every other theory, it must be seen within the possibility of a dialectical manner.

**Target setting.** Certain peoples have been exploited for years. Other peoples have become their exploiters. This paper aims to argue for and against the ethical and political dilemmas that are involved in this situation.

**Actual scientific researches and issues analysis.** The paper deals with an analysis of where the problem of colonialism is a one-sided issue that cannot be examined philosophically. Thus, we take into consideration three philosophical theories that hopefully will add insights to the interpretation of colonialism and postcolonialism.

**The research objective.** The

### **Актуальність дослідження.**

Постколоніалізм - це багата теорія, яка дає можливість широкої дискусії, яка поширюється на етику та політику. Тим не менш, як і будь-яка інша теорія, вона повинна розглядатися в діалектичній манері.

**Постановка проблеми:** Деякі народи експлуатуються протягом багатьох років. Інші народи стали їх експлуататорами. Цей документ має на меті дискутувати за та проти етичних та політичних дилем, які беруть участь у цій ситуації.

**Аналіз останніх досліджень та публікацій.** У роботі розглядається питання про те, де проблема колоніалізму є односторонньою проблемою, яку не можна розглядати філософськи. Таким чином, ми враховуємо три філософські теорії, які, сподіваюсь, додадуть розуміння інтерпретації колоніалізму та постколоніалізму.

**Постановка завдання.** Мета

objective of this research is to discern reasonable arguments in the particular philosophical discussion rather than resort to a prior ethical interpretation.

### **The statement of basic materials.**

In this paper we have tried to introspect on the philosophy of these three philosophers who take on different analyses on ethical and political issues. However, their approaches become useful in offering hermeneutical tools for the exploration of the issue under discussion. The basic material is to refer to their views from particular books which include the most related to the issue parts of their theories. Most of all, to make a connection between their theories in the light of understanding the theoretical consequences of postcolonialist research.

**Conclusions.** For Kant, Schopenhauer and Plato, different perspectives add to the awareness of the problem under discussion. While political deontology seems possible to some extent (as in the theory of Plato), it remains important that people and nations should be mobilized by free will and common decision in order to achieve political freedom. Also, there is noted certain emphasis on the fact that postcolonialism, as well as colonialism, may be ignoring some practical elements of the ethical reality and extract them in a form of *petitio principii*. What this paper tries to restore is the logical sequence of the argumentation in favor or against.

**Key words:** postcolonialism, critique,

даного дослідження полягає в тому, щоб виділити обґрунтування аргументів у конкретній філософській дискусії, а не використовувати попередню етичну інтерпретацію.

### **Виклад основного матеріалу.**

У цій роботі ми намагалися розглянути філософію цих трьох філософів, які підтримують різний аналіз етичних та політичних питань. Проте їхні підходи стають корисними для надання герменевтичних прийомів для вивчення обговорюваного питання. Основний матеріал - це посилання на їхні погляди з окремих книжок, що включають в себе найбільш пов'язані з цією темою частини своїх теорій. Більше всього, щоб встановити зв'язок між їх теоріями в світлі розуміння теоретичних наслідків постколоніалістичних досліджень.

**Висновки.** Для Канта, Шопенгауера та Платона різні точки зору покращують усвідомлення обговорюваної проблеми. Попри те, що політична деонтологія є певною мірою можливості (як у теорії Платона), залишається важливим, щоб люди та нації були мобілізовані вільною волею та спільним рішенням для досягнення політичної свободи. Також відзначається певний акцент на тому, що постколоніалізм, як і колоніалізм, може ігнорувати деякі практичні елементи етичної реальності та витягувати їх у формі *petitio principii*. Те, що цей документ намагаються відновити, є логічною послідовністю аргументації за чи проти.

**Ключові**

**слова:**

|                                                          |  |                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Kant, Schopenhauer, Plato, political, deontology.</i> |  | <i>постколоніалізм, критика, Кант, Шопенгауер, Платон, політичний, деонтологія.</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Postcolonialism is a context of theories which, among other things, allows us to critically revisit basic philosophical concepts, such as the concept of the political, of participation, justice, morality, deontology, universal values, identities and so on. Postcolonialism, in this light, should not be seen only as the study of the consequences of control and exploitation on certain peoples but rather more dynamically as a unique chance to relate (by not crossing the Rubicon of characterizing a priori their actions as right or wrong) the fact that historically peoples have tended to exploit and control by exerting hegemony, with the transgression of basic political demands. However, in our approach, morality will not be detracted from the political element; on the contrary, with the aid of the philosophies of Plato, Kant and Schopenhauer, it will be incorporated to the political but in a as least as possible idealistic scheme. Postcolonialism, thus, will have to be contemplated critically in the perspective of a historical evolution.

Immanuel Kant does not share the belief that mankind follows a general plan of Nature. Human beings do not live either purely by instinct like animals neither follow a commonly consented programme as rational citizens of this world [1]. But Nature has a means to make evolution possible: that people compete one another within society and that competition becomes, at the end, the cause of a legal order. Kant calls that “an antisocial sociality”, meaning their tendency to live together inside society, a tendency nonetheless that is combined with a rigorous resistance that continuously threatens to destroy this same society [2]. An analogous situation, with what happens within societies, takes place among nations. This “lack of communication”, as Kant calls it, among nations and states will have to eventually lead them to a historical phase whether collective power, collective will and collective law and order will become feasible [3]. The result will be for man and his societies to leave behind “brutal freedom” and “freedom without law” and to proceed to a world of peace, virtue and order. This collective political Being, an ecumenical and cosmopolitan political association, will be educating its citizens towards the good. Kant seems to understand a procedure where evolution will not be possible without prior confrontation among people. In that light of interpretation, postcolonialist theories would only be trapped in a chronicity that has no practical aftermath other than an analytical or hermeneutical orientation.

The other point that he makes, a point equally critical to the later theory of postcolonialism, is that there are deep reasons such as sloth and cowardice that make some peoples, who have long before been liberated from other forces, to remain immature, thus offering the opportunity to new patrons to take over [4]. Kant recognizes that there is a rational understanding of man that this world is offered to his exploitation, leaving other beings at the command of his will. However, it should be considered as absolutely inconceivable to exploit other human beings [5]. This very direct point concludes with the emphasis on the fact

that such peoples, who have been deprived of political freedom and have been objects of exploitation, have become frightened and have declined any thought of attempt of mature political existence in the future. As the philosopher of Königsberg stresses out, such peoples “have loved their immaturity” and thus immaturity has become a [political] nature that renders them incompetent of using their own minds for their own good. In this intense level of critique of colonial practices, Kant leaves some room for amelioration. Freedom, he upholds, will have to lead these peoples eventually to the proper level of political enlightenment. Revolution will not be as drastic as the gradual formation of enlightened minds through evolution and education. The key to that is the free, unimpeded and public use of discourse in every situation. In fact, revolution is not acceptable in any of the cases when there is an established State and law [6]; the only thing is that one can phrase his opposition to the status quo. The right for free speech is indispensable in this liberating political process [7]. While the solution sounds simple if not simplistic, Kant practically argues in favour of a *modus operandi* where a nation educates itself by their own means and forms a common will to put themselves under the law. Justice is absolutely dependent on laws. But that takes time. Nonetheless, it must be noted that in Kant’s theory, this immaturity of certain nations is not only false and detrimental; it is also degrading. And there is no other way for a rational being such as the human being than to conquer justice and reason himself, by his own means.

For Kant man is bound to labor and conflict in this connection to society. Throughout history man has developed the art of sociality as well as political security. But in this historical evolution, Kant remarks, there began inequality among people [8]. The German philosopher remains optimistic about the advancement of human societies. In his thought, human reason always has a propensity towards freedom [9], and that is a secure indication of better future societies, provided that people also strive for it with their free will. Kant is aware of the fact that development does not comprise a potential if principles and action are not combined together. Therefore, in every state there are the basic principles which need to be implemented: a) the liberty of each individual as a human being, b) his equality with other members of his society, c) his autonomy as a citizen [10]. The fundamental value in this discussion is the proposition that man remains *sui juris*, a lord of himself [11]; that means serving the community but not be subservient to it. That would, thereby, mean that man cannot become an item of exploitation within a colonial system. Having said that, Kant clarifies that man’s happiness depends on individual variables; therefore only justice can be predicted and administered through laws that are common for everyone within the community [12].

In the critique of Schopenhauer to Kant, Kant seems to separate between duties of law and duties of virtue, or in other words, between justice and philanthropy, in a forced and unnatural manner. For Schopenhauer justice is one of the virtues [13]. As Schopenhauer makes evident in his exegetical argumentation, all human beings are inclined to injustice and violence, because their needs and desires enter consciousness immediately and thus they have the right of first occupancy (*jus primi occupantis*). While the sufferings of others,

that may be caused by our injustice and violence, enter consciousness on the secondary path of the representation, thus indirectly through experience. It seems quite clear that Schopenhauer places emphasis on the phenomena of the consciousness in his attempt to explain the practices of malice within human societies. But if that is true as a hypothesis, and if that is indeed a consequence of a procedure of representations in the human mind, then any effort to alter a politically unfair situation would rather sound meaningless or vague. The philosopher from Danzig maintains that if one's disposition is susceptible to compassion, it will restrain him from using another person's sufferings as a means for the attainment of own ends. Schopenhauer further believes that principles and abstract knowledge are by no means the original source of morality. However, he affirms their indispensability for a moral course of life. Without principles man would be at the mercy of antimoral tendencies [14]. He finds it mostly important that justice as voluntary has its origin in compassion. That is how injustice or wrong always consist in injuring another [15]. The concepts of justice and right are negative, in the sense that they practically mean "do not take from one his own". On the other hand, he stresses that the concepts of right and wrong are antecedent to any positive legislation. Justice is, after all, all about not doing injury according to Schopenhauer [16]. To support this view, he gives the following working definition: "the amount of injustice in my conduct is equal to that of the evil I thereby inflict on another divided by the amount of advantage I thereby obtain; and the amount of justice in my action equals that of advantage which the injury to another would bring me divided by the amount of harm which he would thereby suffer" [17].

Wrong in his theory, without divergence, consists in injury to another, whether to his person, freedom, property or honor. It is deduced that every wrong is a positive attack on someone, a deed. But there are also actions which may be omitted, thus leading to wrong. Schopenhauer describes the context of this deontology as such: "Duty is an action by the mere omission of which an injury is done to another, that is, a wrong is committed". Does that denote that political deontology, as described by postcolonialism, is a possible desideratum, based in the non omission of fair acts? Such an action (as described in the definition of duty) must have been undertaken to be carried out if, and only if, the moral agent has bound or pledged himself. In this strictly logical condition it follows that all duties depend on an obligation prior to them [18]. Quite interestingly, Schopenhauer poses the issue of certain so-called duties that are not really such. For instance, he discusses gratitude. In his words: "gratitude cannot be called a duty, since its omission [according to the definition above] causes no harm to another and hence is not a wrong" [19]. It could be deduced that this is a serious pre-critique to postcolonialist idealism: since no prior commitment for the benefit of the colonized nations was made, it is inferred that there stands no such duty or obligation. In the case of gratitude, the consequences of an unjust action are eliminated and the benefactor cannot be anticipating a reward as such was never promised. This, of course, changes the whole context of the interpretation of motivation. Schopenhauer believes that the law of motivation is as strict as that of physical causality; also that there are

two ways of doing wrong: violence and cunning [20]. In another example that he brings, regarding the limitations of a deontological response, he remarks that just as in spite of general peace, the law allows everyone to carry a weapon and to use it in case of self defence, so does morality also allow the use of a lie (as an example of a particular immoral action) for the same purpose. With the exception of this case of self defence against violence or cunning, every lie is an instrument for wrongdoing [21]. But that means that in the case of colonial practices, certain immoral practices may be used for a kind of self defence in a broader sense, which might mean making the exploiting nation stronger, richer and safer, safeguarding themselves from the violence or cunning of their opponents. Schopenhauer is aware of the fact that eventually right is really based on might [22].

Arthur Schopenhauer firmly suggests that Ethics is not a science that states how one ought to behave. On the contrary, it is concerned with how people actually behave, due to the fact that the concept of “ought”, the imperative form of ethics, applies to theological morality and deontology. Thus, there remains no other way for discovering the foundation of ethics than the empirical, more specifically the investigation of whether there are generally any actions to which we must attribute genuine moral worth. Therefore there are no ethical constructions “a priori”, no absolute legislation “in abstracto”. Principles, as the particular philosopher affirms, are ridiculed at every step by experience [23]. Apart from that, he doubts whether the just and lawful acts of mankind often have a moral origin. He does not deny the existence of “genuine morality”, nonetheless he wishes to moderate the expectations of the moral tendency in man and of the natural foundation of ethics. That implies as a natural connotation that political deontology cannot really be applied.

Schopenhauer mainly refers to rights in his essay *On the Basis of Morality*, while discussing Kantian Ethics, where he primarily upholds that duty is distinct from obligation, in the sense that every duty grants a right. For the German philosopher the fundamental incentives of human action are egoism (which desires one's own weal), malice (which desires another's woe) and compassion (loving kindness, which desires another's weal, with nobleness and magnanimity) [24]. Egoism is the essence of the human being; egoism is boundless in the sense that man is imbued by the desire to preserve his existence, to keep it free from pain and suffering, to achieve the greatest possible amount of well-being and pleasure. Where egoism, this “antimoral force”, as Schopenhauer calls it, is not opposed by any external force or by a genuine moral incentive, it pursues its purposes without reserve. Through the infinite numbers of egoistic individuals there is an inevitable *bellum omnium contra omnes* (a war of all against all) [25]. Malice and cruelty constitute moral depravity, far greater than egoism. Schopenhauer persists in acknowledging how human beings are most frequently in error over the true motives of their own actions as they are over the motives of others. Moral worth lies exactly where there is no self-interest but a pure motive for other people's well being [26].

But let us now turn to ancient philosophy and see the potential pre-critique to postcolonialism by the Athenian Plato. The argument that Socrates offers in

the first book of Plato's *Republic* is the claim that people are often fooled about who is a good person and who is evil. But this is essential as people are inclined to making their friends those who are considered good and also inclined to rejecting those who are considered bad. Not only that but they also tend to do good to people they consider good, as they wish to make them their friends, while they may cause harm to others who they consider as evil [27]. Thrasymachus offers the counter argument that a ruler considers his own benefit solely and his subjects are supposed to serve and obey him. Only the vested interest of the stronger person, the ruler, is to be considered as just, as the ruler has the power to inflict his decision on the people [28]. According to this criterion, what is conventionally just is formed through an analogy between political power and obedience to it.

On the other hand, Socrates offers an argument that poses the question of those who have the power to rule and of their obligation to care for those who are ruled. In analogy he explains that similarly to a doctor who cares for his patients or a ship commander who is responsible for the lives of his sailors, the ruler needs to assume that responsibility for those who are governed [29]. When Plato discusses the role of the guardians, in book three, he upholds that the guardians are the "creators of the freedom of the city", meaning more than the mere protection of it [30]. Furthermore, in book four, he maintains that the guardians should not be striving for their own happiness and welfare only but for that of the city as overall eudaimonia is axiologically more important than the eudaimonia of a small number of people [31]. This consequentialist point of view leads to the understanding of an anticolonial argument while it lays emphasis on the fact that fair government has to do with a deontology that is strictly derived from the character of the governors. Political power should go hand in hand with philosophy in order for people to become able to construct a safe and fair Polity [32]. Only that will stop cities from evil government and will make possible individual as well as public welfare. Plato insists all over the *Republic* that proper government is made possible through the recognition of absolute values for whose implementation the guardians are responsible. However, he also insists that certain human beings are born with more natural potential over others and they should receive the best that education has to offer them in order for them to become the protectors of the city.

For Kant the conclusion is that political freedom is favourable to the freedom of spirit of a certain nation but still poses insurmountable obstacles. A lesser degree of freedom will allow the spirit of the people to expand and fulfil all its potential. That means that while the rational agents will be using their intellect and reason, at the same time they will be willing to discipline themselves under the common law [33]. But he also remarks that between theory and practice there is an intermediate stage where connection is lost. That stage should be covered by man's critical power, in order for him to discern whether conditions are suitable from the passage to theory to practice [34]. He wishes to make evident that the moral capability for an action should be precedent because only then the law of the human will becomes the determining factor [35]. For Kant, political philosophy ought to be practical and consider

people's real historical powers. Schopenhauer, in his own critique, distinguishes the significance of the awareness that practical Ethics do not allow any optimism for deontology based on rational principles. Therefore, it is incomprehensible that one would seek from certain values to persist in human societies as they are. Plato remains the most idealistic of all: he insists that the polis is created with power and episteme, with philosophy and might. But it has a rational and moral course that allows certain deontology to be implemented within people's lives as long as they realise that some are of higher potential. For the three philosophers, all in all, personal responsibility becomes the starting point of their pre-critique to postcolonialist theories: man has a historical route. He, solely, can be held responsible for the establishment of his political course.

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