capitalism, so the argument runs, the state and its capitalist economic substructure are conflated, and 'instrumental' action threatens to drive out any remaining traces of 'communicative action'. Habermas suggests the creation of a dialogue between men of goodwill, through which men will once again be able to debate the nature of the good life – a dialogue which is to be characterised by a genuine exchange of views, and an absence of coercion. However attractive in theory, Habermas' proposed solution simply fails to take into account the fact that (as Marx pointed out) capitalist societies are characterised by intellectual and political domination, as well as economic domination, all of which prevent the creation of a genuine social dialogue about the nature of the good life. Habermas seems to be taking for granted the correctness of the notion of a classless society in which the removal of material conflicts would make possible a genuine dialogue, a genuinely human life. To expect such a dialogue within a capitalist society is, to say the least, naive. Connerton could have pointed out that 'real, existing socialism' is not characterised by a super-abundance of possibilities for communicative action, as the harassment of Bahro and the Charter 77 dissidents, and of the 'alternative' universities in Poland and Czechoslovakia makes clear.

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

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

STEPHEN SALTER

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

Apart from the fact that its author is a professor of philosophy in Ghana, it is really only the first part of this book (Chapters 1-4) that justifies its title. But anyone who wants to know what an African philosopher can say about philosophy and Africa will still find plenty in it to keep him going, though much of that is rather dull. Imagine an average Anglo-American philosopher, and imagine what he is likely to say about philosophy and Africa. That is roughly what you have in the case of Wiredu of whom it is characteristic to recommend 'a certain kind of training that will produce minds eager and able to test claims and theories against observed facts and adjust beliefs to the evidence, minds capable of logical analysis and fully aware of the nature and value of exact measurement'. (pp 15-16) It sometimes seems as if all Wiredu wants of philosophy is that it should help people to be physically comfortable. But his book is not just a plea for the healthy ideals of a scientific society; much of it is devoted to discussing traditional philosophical questions in the theoretical manner in which they have traditionally been approached by phiosophers. Wiredu writes on marxism, ideology and utopianism (Chapters 5 and 6), on mysticism (Chapter 7) and on truth (Chapters 8-12), which he holds to be opinion. 'Nonsense', he maintains, 'is nothing but one man's opinon forcefully declared by another to be defective in a particular way.' (p 117)

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

'mystic' is a highly opaque term that has too frequently been used to refer to people who often say quite different things. Wiredu uses phrases like 'the language used by mystics' and 'the unity which they are supposed to experience'; but these expressions are backed up by no detailed exegesis. 'I will not multiply quotations from mystics', says Wiredu, who actually only cites (without references) two sentences from Eckhart and a part of a sentence from Ruysbroek. It should be urged in response that for any useful discussion of mysticism quotation is essential. At the beginning of his own discussion Wiredu refers to a brochure of the Theosophical Society which alludes to 'the universal experience of enlightened seers'. According to Wiredu the allusion is 'a reference to what is commonly known as mysticism'. (pp 99-100) It would have been better for Wiredu to have asked whether there is a distinct phenomenon rightly called mysticism.

I imagine that many philosophers will read Wiredu in order to find out what he says about truth. It might therefore be worth adding in conclusion that this is often less than illuminating. The following argument is typical: 'If truth is categorically different from opinion, then truth is, as a matter of logical principle, unknowable. Any given claim to truth is merely an opinion advanced from some specific point of view, and categorically distinct from truth. Hence knowledge of truth as distinct from opinion is a self-contradictory notion.' (p 115) But there is a difference between having an opinion and being right. And when an opinion has been advanced it may be both that the truth has been stated and that we can know so.

BRIAN DAVIES O P

THEY STAND TOGETHER, The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves (1914-1963), ed. Walter Hooper. *Collins.* 1979. pp 592. £8.95.

From 1914 until his death in 1963 C. S. Lewis kept up a more or less regular correspondence with the man he regarded as his "first friend", Arthur Greeves, and many of Lewis' letters and a very few of Greeves' survive, and these are now published in full in this volume, together with explanatory historical material provided by the editor, Walter Hooper. It is plainly a major source for the understanding of Lewis' life and character. Lewis felt that he could write more freely to Greeves than to anyone else, so this is a peculiarly intimate record of his development, his changing interests and reactions to things, and his various domestic and personal problems. Even apart from their value as a historical source, many of the letters also contain worthwhile observations of a literary or of a moral, religious nature, which are sufficient to give this book a real, if uneven, interest in its own right.

The editor has, as always, worked faithfully and has done us an excellent service, except that, like most editors, he is inclined on occasion to gloss things which need no gloss, and to pass by silently on the other side when the reader really would like some assistance. Thus, for instance, a reference to "Kingsley's *Water Babies* is glossed: "Charles Kingsley, *The Water Babies* (1863)", which most readers could probably have managed without; but no comment at all is vouchsafed to the reader who finds himself wondering what on earth is going on in Letter 195 in which Lewis offers simultaneous congratulations and condolences to Greeves about something or other which has evidently been a heroic sacrifice to Greeves, but whose nature escapes us entirely. Maybe the editor knows no more about the matter than we do; but since he normally displays an enviable omniscience, it would have been reassuring to be informed that for once he too was stumped. On the whole, he is lavish in his provision of biographical material; for example, anybody who is mentioned in the letters, from Heads of Colleges to taxi drivers, is given a potted biography in the notes, and can be tracked down in the Index.

It is a pity that the publishers, as so often, could not be bothered to print the four or five Greek words properly. This insult to the reader spoils what is in other ways a very well produced book.

SIMON TUGWELL O P