# The Role of Philosophy in the African Context Traditions, Challenges, and Perspectives

# Introduction

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> "At the same time, I am well aware that I could not do justice to the subject without offending those " professional friends of the African" who are prepared to maintain their friendship for eternity as a sacred duty, provided only that the African will continue to play the part of an ignorant savage so that they can monopolize the office of interpreting his mind and speaking for him."[1]

## Introduction

There has been tremendous evolution in systematized human knowledge since its beginning in early philosophical speculation about the nature of being. Philosophy gradually became the foundation of diverse theoretical and applied disciplines, including human, natural and physical science, mathematics, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Subsequent specialization of philosophy has facilitated not only more precise definitions and understanding of nature, but also the search for ideals for human existence. In addition, Philosophy remains the watchdog of both theoretical and applied sciences today. In the twentieth century, philosophy was considered to be the tool for clarification of misunderstandings of the world through the analysis and systemization of language.

The following questions about philosophy in Africa still linger: What is the role and value of philosophy in contemporary Africa? What is the relationship between philosophy and understanding within African culture? Answers to these questions albeit unsatisfactory have been attempted. A vital aspect of the discourse on philosophy in Africa, however, entails the tendency to attribute the title 'Philosopher' to people trained in Philosophy while ignoring other rational and critical thinkers. Such African philosophers have been left with nothing to do but be critics of the highest brow. Perceived inapplicability of philosophy is further underpinned by a resounding public 'stink eye.' While philosophy has been condemned many times in the past, the discipline has always found a role to play. What will be its role in Africa in the 21st Century?

## The rationale of another look at Philosophy in Africa

Africa is undergoing rapid social and political transformations that require philosophical reflection, yet philosophy is frequently relegated. Education systems in Africa are geared towards employability and advancing technology. Education in Africa does not adequately incorporate methods and content that would work for young minds to reason and solve complex human problems. Partly this situation is caused by a general suspicion that philosophical formation generates independent minds which many within the status quo find difficult to control, perceiving it as a source of future trouble. Many governments are thus averse to encouraging the development of philosophy both as a discipline of study and social practice.

Secondly, politics in much of Africa since independence is driven by the desire to get power. Power, in turn, is based on personal or even regional agenda disguised as development (*maendeleo*) with practically no attempt to grounding this on any ideological traditions, preferences and the vision of a better future. Often the drivers of politics in Africa are raw power, wealth and tribal dominance in the guise of development. This attitude leaves most of the continent without issues, vision or direction to debate and make an informed choice.

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[1] Jomo Kenyatta, *Preface to Facing Mount Kenya, The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu,* Mercury Books, London, Third Impression, 1965, xviii.

The aggressively growing media sector, both print and electronic, is dominated with insufficient investigative capacity and common-sense reportage and analyses. This shortcoming has made it difficult for commentators on African politics to engage and analyze events and facts. This critical aspect could have gone a long way in helping the African voter evaluate the basis of ethico-political judgment on what is useful or otherwise. Thus, ideological preferences and commitment have been sacrificed.

A notable problem facing philosophy in Africa is that of context and practice. The nature of philosophy programs offered at institutions of higher learning, public, religious as well as private, have tended to combine philosophy and religious studies. Whereas this is understandable given the difficult economic times experienced globally, this has had a negative effect on the development of philosophy at both theoretical and practical levels. This limitation has also sacrificed professionalism in the discipline. The simplified method adopted has been the approach where ideas and thoughts of ancient, modern and contemporary schools are faithfully reproduced without any evidence of their relevance to the current situation of the people. This method leaves Philosophy departments at institutions of higher learning in Africa, to a great extent, irrelevant and out of place with no demonstrable contribution to the greater society.

As if this is not bad enough, the role of language in philosophy is critical. In most of the continent, formal education was introduced and continued to be conducted in the three languages left behind by the colonizers, among these are: English, French and Portuguese. On the other hand, the majority of the learners' first language is the one spoken within their local area. Thus, philosophical concepts and theories have not found their proper translations in these African languages a situation that makes it difficult for African thinkers to develop and express philosophical thoughts formulated in foreign languages into these local languages.

With this panoramic view of issues affecting philosophy in Africa, we need to focus on some specifics.

**An in-depth look at the fundamentals**

Once in a nursery school, a teacher gave an assignment to the children to write a composition on a pet of their choice. The following day, when the teacher finished marking the assignment, she noted that Tom and Harry, the twin brothers had written an identical composition, and so enquired who between the two had copied from the other. The twins explained that they did not copy from each other, but rather, they wrote about the same dog in their home. In the same regard, human knowledge in one way or the other has to have some similarities in terms of the questions asked, the problems faced, the preferred methodologies, as it is always related to three major objects: God, man, and the cosmos.

On the other hand, one would note that similar problems have been continuously addressed by philosophers in the African continent, just because the continent has a similar historical, cultural and economic background and situation. While reading the articles presented in this book, it will not escape the attention of the reader that specific issues keep coming up, with varied intensity. This variety in itself makes the book comprehensive in approach to philosophy in Africa. Many different starting points, but often leading to some convergence in terms of solutions.

The book has the honor of presenting some seasoned African philosophers such as Masolo, Wanjohi, and Mbae whose expertise and long experiences in research and reflection is put to good use in their presentations. However, the reader is as well treated to young, vibrant

upcoming African minds to whom only the sky is the limit in terms of a speculative search for truth. The presenters have set a new tone by replacing the old pessimistic, and problematic face of Africa with a jovial enthusiastic one full of prospects and dreams for the future. No problem is too big for the younger generations to tackle and to hope for a solution. They thus admit the existence of instability, underdevelopment, corruption and many other problematic cases often attached to the profile of the continent. Several of these problems have been extensively examined here, in their complexity. However, all this is presented with an air of serenity and optimism. This time round philosophy is presented to us in a new key, as an indispensable tool, necessary for confronting the existential situation of Africa. It is a whole new mouthful of fresh air!

There is a new phenomenon of an attempt at addressing the problems of Africa to find rational, logical and critical solutions, an attempt which is putting philosophy to good use as the young philosophers fight the infamous objection that "philosophy does not put food on the table."

Any philosophy, in a broad sense, should present its ideas in a logical form. It would have a theory of knowledge for every philosophy has as its first objective to know. Its knowledge, logically presented should be about some being, existence, and action; which means a metaphysics of some sorts. The human person is both the thinker and the beneficiary of his thoughts, in terms of improving his life and increasing in virtues, therefore a kind of anthropology, strictly linked to an ethics; finally, an appropriate methodology always accompany a philosophy, whether it is empiricist, rationalist, idealist, positivist, pragmatist, or phenomenologist.

This book has made a fascinating contribution to various areas of philosophy. Much effort has been put into presenting African philosophy in a new key, with new sets of questions and problems, tending to move from the traditional tones and arguments. However, the most interesting theme that has been addressed by several contributors is that one on ontology in the African philosophy. The entry point most accessible to the thinkers is the path of myths and magic. Here is where the heart of African philosophy resides. There is a need to pay more attention to this area. However, as we have pointed out earlier, there are hanging questions that still need to be bravely faced and clarified by the African scholar if we want to create a more stable and robust African ontology.

Let us take some time to give serious consideration to an aspect of the African ontology. This ontology is based on and excavated from the African myths. However, what are these myths? There are times when we have an impression that the African scholar is in difficulty justifying or founding such an essential aspect of philosophy on "myths." Again, developing further what we had started with, in the last two hundred years, as positive sciences have taken control of human knowledge, myths have been given a different connotation. Myths are unscientific. They cannot be proven or scientifically demonstrated. Generally, modern society, urged by modern sciences dismiss myth as untrue and unreliable. However, just a minute, myth tells positive science, you just came here the other day, you are still too young to understand these things; we, on the other hand, have been around for thousands of years, and we have seen it all; we have diligently led humanity through the worst of its history. There is nothing under the sun for which we lack an explanation, not like you who barely have a handful of information, and still continuously change your mind about what you already established as true.

While we are on matters positive science, it is not only myth that could be identified as science's casualty. In modern times, to a great extent, positive science has proposed herself as the only source of reliable and tested knowledge. Religion and its content have more often than not been dismissed, discredited and bundled together with myths as being uncertain and unreliable. Philosophy as such, notwithstanding that it is the mother of all sciences (historically speaking), has been vigorously fought by positive science. The offshoots from a philosophy that was sympathetic to positive science, such as empiricism and positivism have themselves been very skeptic about religion and metaphysics.

So, it is unfair for anybody to blame the negative connotation bequeathed to myths on colonialism or Western scholarship as such. Even the West has had its share of battles with the new sciences to correct their excesses and monopoly of human knowledge. African philosophers have the duty and obligation to rehabilitate myths without giving anybody any apologies. It is only when we do this, that we will have a solid foundation on which to build an African ontology.

In its origins, myth comes from the Greek word "*mythos*" which means a story or speech. Given that the Greeks initially were oral people, like many others, they narrated their thoughts in stories and music, and it plays both as a means of communication and conservation of the knowledge. Among many other classics, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which are parts of Greek mythology have been over the years taught in literature classes in Europe without any prejudice, and generations of students have learned many things from them. From the Red Indians of the Americas in the west, to the Japanese, Chines, and Indian people in the east, just as Jews and the Arabs, without forgetting the peoples of Africa, there have always existed varied forms of stories about the origin of the earth, of mankind and of all sorts of creatures within the earth. There are stories about why people behave in certain ways or construct habitations in a particular manner. These stories indeed are the first most significant indicator that humans are rational. They are an attempt by humans to give explanations regarding all that surround them, all that happen to them and all that they are. There was never at any time, during the development of these myths, any intention by the authors or originators of these stories to mislead people or to give an inaccurate account of things. Apart from a tiny section of what some creation stories have, the vast majority of their content is still to be disapproved by positive science. No adequate tools have been invented to check the truthfulness or falsity of the ancient narratives, for example about the origin of life or that of man. We would be foolish to throw away all this vast wealth of knowledge just because positive science tells us that they have no means of proving the facts contained in the creation stories. The intent and the value each of these narratives has on the political, social, religious and economic life of a people is indispensable. In the contemporary world, it is fashionable to live a life free of myths. However, myths are the human way; it schools man to face life and death; it gives grounds for being moral and ethical. Myths give man good reasons why he should respect creation and give nature time to deliver its goodies to us and the other creatures. Doing away with myths requires that we do away with religion, taboos, social order, our origins and all the other critical ingredients that make man, human. Therefore, myths, as they are called, are an indispensable source of knowledge, especially where science is unable to supply. Furthermore, these myths provide the only reliable starting point for the philosophy of nature, anthropology, and ontology.

As mentioned earlier, every Philosophy has to have a methodology. Unfortunately, we are still facing many challenges in this area. We need to take a general look at the system of education

extensively followed in the African continent. In many universities within the continent, in addition to what was stated earlier, the two major and dominant disciplines have always been the positive sciences, such as medicine, engineering, architecture and others in the one hand and the social sciences such as sociology, commerce and political science on the other. There is always the faculty of law also present. These disciplines are majorly pragmatic, and they were created to solve the existential and survival challenging issues. The vast majority of the students and faculty in these universities belong to these disciplines.

Apart from the already mentioned shortcomings as regards teaching method and content, the research methodology that has been in most cases proposed for philosophy students to follow has often been empirical and sociological in nature and orientation. The structure requirement for every postgraduate thesis, as a rule, has to include *background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypothesis, research questions, justification and significance of the study*, *scope of the study*, *limitations of the study*, *ethical issues*, *theoretical framework*, *literature review* and others. These are standard procedures that are part of social science methodology, which, while guaranteeing the formation of competent professionals and experts in their respective fields, help do an in-depth study for a greater understanding of the African situation and context. A philosophy student, on the other hand, is put at a disadvantage because this format and the methodology is ill-suited for speculation and deductive processes. This approach has resulted in philosophy works that are bordering with social anthropology, whereby the authors tend to be more descriptive and looking for applicability and contemporary relevance of the philosophical questions rather than philosophical questions from contemporary issues. Until and unless we separate philosophy from social sciences, with its interests, objectives, and methodology, our people will never come to experience what abstract, logical and critical process of the human mind is all about.

If ontology in African Philosophy has to have as its starting point the African myths, then the methodology has to be hermeneutic in nature. Preference for Hermeneutics as a methodology in our context is informed by what it has delivered over the years, of its implementation in various disciplines. Hermeneutics as a method has undergone the necessary development, thus over time revealed its potentiality as a tool to be used to reach being. Starting from Schleiermacher, where the tool was mainly used to interpret text, (especially in exegesis of sacred and profane literature); moving on to Dilthey who turned hermeneutics into a tool of mediating an understanding of historical events; and finally, Heidegger and Gadamer who define hermeneutic as a tool meant to excavate being itself from human condition. This method of doing philosophy will help find the sources of philosophy in the African settings: sources of ethics, of epistemology, of metaphysics, as well as those of language, art, and signs as privileged areas to excavate being as such.

Although we consider myth as a starting point for the study of African ontology, these myths are generally not exposed out there for the enquirer to see. They only come as a provoked explanation of some other more visible phenomenon. Such phenomena would be encountered in the form of a dance, or a song, or a ritual, or a name or an artwork. The phenomenologist is not interested here in unearthing something long extinct. The philosopher spends the effort because, behind the acts, there is a force that is still present and active in the life of the people. The phenomenologist does not follow a methodology in some manner of a historian narrating an event whose effects are no longer felt, if not only some remote memory. When the philosopher lacks the proper tool, a significant experience will pass him by without notice. Hermeneutic as a

method can bring back past experiences to the present. It turns remote none-primordial events into immediate primordial experiences. Both Jomo Kenyatta in his book, *Facing Mount Kenya* and Chinua Achebe in his book *Things Fall Apart* presents originary myths and oracles that are indispensable for one to understand the social structure and conduct of the Kikuyus of Kenya and the Ibos of Nigeria respectively. The narratives in both books, in themselves, are at best stories about people, especially those who lived in the past whose life has no immediate influence on us today. It is the element of interpretation (hermeneutic) that will bring out the continuous thread liking the present activity to the source, the archetype. Paul Receaur gives this principle at the basis of a hermeneutic method: "If I can understand worlds which have disappeared, it is because each society has created its instruments for understanding in creating the social and cultural world's in which it understands itself."[2]

**An area that needs urgent attention of African philosophers**

As will soon be shown, the book contains a wide variety of topics of great relevance to Africa. Conspicuously, though, there is not much on the area of Ecology and Environment. Yet, along with all those pressing issues discussed, the African continent is deeply affected by environmental issues. As we speak, there are reports of prolonged droughts causing famine and death around the continent; ferocious torrential rains are destroying entire cities within the continent; there are severe issues of air, land and water pollution that are affecting the health conditions of millions in the continent. The African environment is an area that needs an urgent reflection.

It is philosophically viable to tackle the environmental problem because this problem contains in itself several key issues in philosophy: man and his nature, the question of God and creation, and the philosophy of nature as such. We could recall what we mentioned elsewhere:

> The problem started when man created a strong separation between himself and the rest of creation. Man emerged from nature, cut the umbilical cord and created a new relationship between himself and the rest of nature. He became the creator, the conqueror and the ruler, the owner, and the consumer. The rest of nature became the source of man's insatiable gratification. Nature became the obstacle to man's self-realization, an obstacle that man needs to conquer, subdue and dominated. Then man turned the rest of creation into an infinity of resources he can exploit for his needs, food, comfort, and recreation. The way the rest of creation is was not good enough, its speed and capacity to supply were not fast enough for man whose attitude has become, "I want it now, and I want it all." Man has pushed the rest of creation beyond its limits. Man has manipulated nature's mechanisms so that it may give more and give it faster.[3]

Addressing the environmental issue could clarify many philosophical questions we are raising about the origin, nature, and destiny of man. Just as we do not lack examples of environmental impact on the African man, we do not lack a model of right relationship build on mutuality between man and nature in Africa. The respect for nature is so deep that coexistence and sharing of nature's providence are extravagant in Africa. A philosophical reflection in this area would help integrate technology, economy, and development within the African naturalistic framework.

**The structure of the book**

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[2] Ricoeur, Paul, The Task of Hermeneutics, Philosophy Today, 17:2 (1973: Summer)

[3] The Ecology Problem, on this link.

The general theme that has inspired all the articles in this book, that is, "The Role of Philosophy in the African Context," including its culture, challenges, and perspectives. However, diting the work, we found it necessary to follow a different kind of classification. The first part of the book focuses on African Philosophy as such. In this section, the reader should expect both the old and the new. The debate about the possibility and nature of philosophy in Africa, the definition of African Philosophy; trends in African philosophy, especially as represented in Ethnophilosophy, and such other familiar themes in African Philosophy. However, there are also some pleasantly surprising approaches that show some effort to move African Philosophy beyond its familiar territory.

The second part of the book focuses on Philosophy and Peace in Africa. This part of the book reflects the concern with the ethical standards, political activities, the rule of law and particularly the administration of justice. Under this theme, we grouped such issues to do with gender, youth, minorities, extremist and violent radicalization. There are several attempts to give philosophical solutions to social, political and economic challenges in the continent. This part and the following section are mainly colored with an optimistic tone, even though the issues addressed here are the ones which often keep Africa gloomy and depressed.

The third part of the book focuses on development, and it is the most propositive of all the areas treated in the book. Development is defined, analyzed and questioned. The role of technology in an African context is also discussed. The proper relation between Africa and the donor countries is addressed. The section proposes the need to have an education system that is capable of producing new knowledge and of advancing the economic, social and cultural needs of the continent.

The fourth and final part of the book is dedicated to education. Here again, there is a mixture of the new and old. For years Philosophy of Education has been at the forefront of philosophical reflection in Africa. Some of the contributions have proposed once again similar lines of thought. On the other hand, this section produces as well some very new aspects that will enrich the discussion on education in Africa. There is a blend of Critical Thinking, Pedagogy and Epistemology harmoniously interacted with each other. Notable as well is the almost chorus call to introduce Philosophy into the curriculum so that higher quality of learning may be enhanced in African schools.

All in all, the book appears to have been occasioned by the need to spell out the role of philosophy in Africa and to situate it within the African continent, taking into account the cultures and challenges therein.

**Appreciations**

The articles that constitute this book are proceedings of an international Philosophy Conference that was held at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in April 2017. The Conference was primarily the initiative of CMIUCAP, (Conférence Mondiale des Institutions Universitaires Catholiques de Philosophie). We, therefore, first of all, thank COMIUCAP leadership, especially Prof. João J. Vila-Chã, of Gregorian University and the President of the organization; along with him, we sincerely thank Prof. Dr. Joseph C. Agbakoba of the University of Nigeria and assistant president of the organization. They cordially assisted us with technical and financial advice and encouragement as we went through the complicated stages of preparation, up to the realization of the conference itself to its happy ending.

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa graciously accepted to host the conference, incurring most of the expenses that such academic activities entail. The administration willingly owned the initiative, putting to our disposal the university infrastructures, personnel, and funds. CUEA's contribution played a determinant role without which this book would have been a pipe dream. The VC during that time, Prof. Justus Mbae and the DVC Academics, Prof. Kaku Sagary Nokoe, both worked tirelessly and generously to make sure that the conference was a success. They sincerely express our gratitude to them. Both the Directorate of Research, Innovation, and Graduate Training (DRIGT), and the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) played a leading role in taking charge of all the details of the organization of the conference, from the formulation of the theme, to the call for papers, elaboration of the program and finally the initial editing of the texts that were shortlisted for publication. We sincerely that all the members of these to Departments for their vital role in the production of this book.

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# Part I
## African Philosophy

# African Philosophy: Relevance, Utility and Impact

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*Abstract*

The African continent has not seen the relevance or felt the impact of philosophy. The much touted "Africa Rising", "African Renaissance", or "Agenda 2063", which summarize the reality and aspirations of the African continent cannot be said to be driven by philosophy, western or African. Many of those who have heard about African philosophy, have not gone beyond the now tired debate on whether African philosophy exists. So, it is still valid to ask the question of the relevance and impact of African philosophy on the lives of the people of Africa.

After half a century of political independence, the ordinary African today is still struggling to meet the basic necessities of life and has neither the time nor the inclination to engage in idle philosophy. For these people, there can be no justification for a study which contributes nothing to development (often conceived to be socioeconomic). For a long time, African traditional thought (Ubuntu) played an important role in providing a world view, a frame of reference, values and practical guidelines for the life of individuals and society. But in this era of globalization, Ubuntu is no longer adequate or appropriate for modern Africans whose lives have changed significantly. The vacuum left by Ubuntu needs to be filled with modern African philosophy. For that to happen, philosophy must be carefully and intentionally crafted to address important challenges and help find solutions to the problems that beset Africans. It cannot afford to remain, like Western philosophy, a mere theoretical engagement. I argue that the future of philosophy in Africa depends on its relevance and that modern philosophy can learn much from Ubuntu in this respect.

**Key words: African Philosophy, Ubuntu, Relevance, Utility, Impact**

## Introduction

The question of the existence of an African philosophy mostly plagued numerous African scholars thus, necessitating them to amicably reply to it. In this sense, the concern birthed a two-fold retort, comprised nature along with definition. Over time, this enquiry has become fatigued, thus, opening the floodgates to another bottleneck of the relevance of African philosophy. Appertaining to this embryonic concern, there has been the irksome disquiet of what is the place of African philosophy even after half a century plus of political independence in many of the African countries. To this, many have hastily ended up perceiving, thus, balkanizing African philosophy as a discipline of struggling for an African identity; absolutely, this ought has been the scenario, which ought not to be exclusive of further relevance that come along with it.

These opening remarks are meant to proffer a recourse mode of *weltanschauung* that ought to possibly be of benefit to Africa and Africans in their usage of African philosophy; this is the hermeneutics of Ubuntu philosophy. It is only through an interpretation of the African heritage that is greatly represented in their outlook that can generate meaning. African philosophy being an offspring of colonial frustration, through an honest interpretation of this situation, an apropos understanding of who Africans are shall be looming. This can be of more sense more so in the contemporary epoch that Africa is caught within the clutches of globalization which it cannot afford to ignore. Through hermeneutics of all that constitutes Ubuntu philosophy (politics, economics, religion and morality) relevance, utility and impact of an African philosophy first to its people and secondly to the globe will be inevitable. The values that typify us as Africans should be incorporated in the entirety of this process; human beings live because of being guided by certain values on which their assorted actions ride on. Albeit values mutate, there is that which is core to them that makes it to have a sui generis trait for it to carry on existing to accord meaning to our actions, which exemplify our values. It is these values that too call for interpretation by those who subscribe to them so as to permit the outsiders to understand that which they live for; interpretation, therefore begins from within to without, it might be construed as an *ad extra* phenomenon. After these preliminaries, I now wish to delving into the subject-matter of African philosophy and coalesce on H. Odera Oruka's philosophy as an amalgam of this bourgeoning philosophical tradition.

**African Philosophy**

African philosophy has been tinctured by both the enquiry of its definition as well as its nature. Owing to this fact, prodigious endeavours have been focussed towards the debate on African philosophy by varied scholars interested in this inchoate realm of study. This debate that kicked-off as early as the 1940's has spawned some incendiary, fascinating as well as imperative philosophical deportments.

We can delimit four core themes in African philosophy from Hegel's *Lecture on the Philosophy of World History* 1830-31[4] to the authorship of Tempels' text, *La Philosophie Bantoue* in 1945.[5] These issue are, namely: the denial, represented by Hegel, Hume, Kant and Westermann; this repudiates the existence of an African thought system that could qualify as philosophical, evolutionary theory which invented as well as defined the nature of the primitive African mentality along with a civilized Western culture, represented by Lucien Levy-Bruhl, all that exists as Western civilization is but a stolen legacy from Africa; the so termed as Western civilization with its superior and developed science and technology appositely belongs to Africa, represented by Cheikh Anta Diop, Henry Olela and George James and eventually, the subject that allows a plurality of thought in the world; Africa's manner of thought is one amongst many, although of a lower gradation (quality), here we encounter proponents such as Robin Horton, Placide Tempels, John Samuel Mbiti as well as Alexis Kagame.[6]

Furthermore, there happens to be an enunciation as well as appraisal of sage philosophy or philosophic sagacity as an approach to African philosophy. The rationale as to why this approach seems to be conspicuous is due to its relevance in this context; it is impartially apt as an

[4] Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. , 1956).
[5] Cf. Placide Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1945).
[6] F. Ochieng'- Odhiambo, *African Philosophy: An Introduction* (Nairobi: The Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, 2012), p. ix.

arbitrator for ethnophilosophy and professional philosophy. It retains the *Africanness* in ethnophilosophy on one hand along with *professionalism* in professional trend on the other.[7] Moreover, Osuagwu contends that, if African philosophy has to be genuine philosophy, then it has to maintain both its *Africanity* as well as *philosophicality* as its essential portrayals, for in them it receives both its particularity and universality.[8]

One way to consider the term philosophy is to construe it as that which is connected to a logical proposition followed by reasoning that proffers us with an insight into the ontological root of an idea or knowledge. Eventually, the justification and validity for such ideological premise seems to derive assumptions from Western philosophers. The instinct that allows for such universality is mainly derived from the Eurocentric attributes of philosophy in general. The very nature of reason as the core premise for the ontological underpinning of philosophy has been employed against the African thought process.

> At the centre of this debate is the concept of reason, a value which is believed to stand as the great divide between the civilized and the uncivilized, the logical and the mystical . . . passed between the two camps: Western and non-Western.[9]

Oruka was sufficiently articulate to grasp the predicament with Western philosophy in this realm. Deeming the contentions appertaining to the African philosophy, three fundamental oppositions surface as per Oruka's analysis:[10] the nature of African philosophy is bound by 'philosophical unanimity,' philosophy must be written in order for it to be valid and the term *philosophy* is only applicable when knowledge retains European orientation in its racial formation. African philosophy, thus, has been isolated due to its fundamental distinction from the philosophical proposition derived from Western concept. In opposition to such hierarchy, Oruka introduced his ideological proposition in the brand of Sage philosophy.[11]

Sage philosophy became a part of extant African philosophical progression due to the call for a refined set of ideological tools that would cater for what is purely African; in tandem with this concern, the culmination of Oruka's undertakings on this issue appeared in his ground-breaking text, *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and the Modern Debate on African Philosophy* (1990). Albeit in contemporary deliberations appertaining to African philosophical thought seems that philosophy is something that calls for a rediscovering in Africa, the reality is that the definition of philosophy itself encounters arguments due to the Eurocentric spring that provides its components as well as the intention that comes with its corollaries. Nonetheless, in reference to Sage philosophy, it came into being as a new-fangled introduction to the trend of African philosophy that was being overridden by the preponderant tenets of religious and political ideals of the colonial outlook.

Sage philosophy deals with the ideas and thought generated by wise men and women of the African community who are invested with creating critical insights into everyday life experiences.[12] When we allude to critical insights we recognize that it has subversive reference as

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[7] *Ibid.* , p. vi.
[8] Innocent Maduakolam Osuagwu, *A contemporary History of African Philosophy* (Owerri: Amamihe Publications, 1999), p. 46.
[9] D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 1.
[10] Cf. H. Odera Oruka, 1990.
[11] Sabrina Binte Masud, "Revisiting Oruka's African Ideology", *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 6 (SEPTEMBER 2011), pp. 874-886.
[12] *Ibid*.

the thinking processes that generate this sort of philosophy do not adhere to the dominant Eurocentric philosophical trend. The philosophical attribute of the thought process in Sage philosophy stems from communal ideologies and are fixated on reflecting truth on the basis of what is applicable along with rational for those who seek the knowledge. The silhouette of thinking ought to be deemed as a sequel of communal realities that then ties the ideological stances to cultural ascriptions.

Sage philosophy is a brand of knowledge imparted by men or women who are free thinkers. In certain senses, they might be deemed to be assorted from the European conception of philosophy since they may be illiterate from a Western outlook as are almost at all moments free from the influences of Western philosophy. The tradition is oral and created through observation and then processed by individual perception.[13] Herein lies the essential criticism anti the African thought process in the debate regarding whether only written epistemology ought to be allowed to hold the crown of philosophy or not.

Owing to its oral foundation, the trend of Sage philosophy has acquired plethora of criticisms. Nevertheless, Sage philosophy is a documented proof against the Eurocentric belief that African ideology is rooted on mythical premise as well, it is incapable of rendering critical thinking. Sage philosophy is the philosophical thought that flaunts us, of how much African ideology in its traditional form is based on independent thought patterns that entail critical attributes of communal consensus.

Sages are meant to be individuals who are capable of construing the various layers of human experiences and they are supposed to draw inferences and make propositions cohesive. In fact,

> there is a general attitude harboured even in learned circles that a sage is one wise person in an illiterate or technologically undeveloped community whose residents depend much on the oracular sayings of seers to keep up with the mysteries and surprises of life.[14]

A person is a sage in the philosophical sense only in the extent that he is consistently concerned with the fundamental ethical as well as empirical themes and questions relevant to the society and his aptitude to proffer insightful panacea to some of those issues.[15] The reference to the ethical constitution of the sage's thinking process draws its premise from the relevance of morality.

An African thinker usually envisions an idea only on the basis of what element is going to enrich his culture and community. He seeks to find knowledge and relate it to ramifications. Whereas, Eurocentric philosophy can remain disconnected and be considered knowledge as an entity that subsists on its own worth. Thus, the epicurean philosophy can seldom be comprehended and accepted by the African mind-set since such individualism surpasses the purview of the nature of African philosophy.

Further criticism have been levelled against African philosophy: John Samuel Mbiti's (1990) text represented the philosophical dimensions of African ontology but failed to break out of the limitations that are imposed on African philosophy. He at the end of his discussion in *African Religions and Philosophy* provided meaningful as well as insightful information but not a strong

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[13] *Ibid*.
[14] H. Odera Oruka, *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and the Modern Debate on African Philosophy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), p. xvii.
[15] *Ibid*.

synthesis that could have overridden the accusations against African philosophy that it was founded on mythical and metaphorical attributes of the African thought process.

Though Mbiti's single concern has been to unveil 'philosophy' beneath African traditional religious concepts, practices and languages, he does not indicate his own theoretical justification and definition of religion or of religious experience.[16] Oruka on the other hand, asserts that in reference to the traditional criticism against African philosophy, "Postulating that logic, science, critique and such like things are un-African and typically occidental is unconscious brand of perpetuating imperialism, an assorted sort of imperialism, academic and intellectual imperialism."[17]

The development of contemporary African philosophical ideology has been an attempt to dispute the colonialist attitude regarding the African philosophy. Therefore, it is not surprising that Oruka's work has been criticised in this regard as he attempts to offer legitimacy to African philosophers as critical thinkers free from the communal bindings in the category of traditional wisdom. The contention pertaining to Oruka's work stems out of the Eurocentric perspective that Africans are not capable of creating, learning or retaining philosophy.

Oruka countered all these criticisms through his work. He has proven the fact that Greek tradition started off as oral philosophy. The Greek idea was transformed into the written form at a later date than its origin. It might seem mythical in nature but African philosophy is deeply rooted in logical processing and the inferences are drawn, informed by coherent propositions. Oruka defines philosophy based on its function as he refines the aspects of it by measuring it from *strict sense* and *debased sense*.[18] When referring to *strict sense,* he is intending to represent the hidden assumptions, implications and contradictions in human experience. In the *debased sense,* philosophy represents contours of worldview or cultures.[19]

This compartmentalization of the definition of philosophy leaves room for arguments. Which definition then is applicable when it comes to the discussion(s) of African philosophy? In comparison to the traditional idea of philosophy, African ideology cannot have legitimacy due to the criticism as it reverts back to the fact that African thought stems from mythical interpretation of experiences and understandings. African philosophy, thus, has to be defined from the *strict sense* as in this sense, African philosophy is work of an African philosopher (proponent) or specifically work tackling an African theme, formulated by a non-African but who is versed in African cultural intellectual history.[20]

Nonetheless, this definition calls for a modification in the qualification of the term "work" so that it reads "philosophical work." Moreover, he accentuates the fact that African philosophy can address any universal issues. The ritualistic attribute of the cultural aspect therefore seems to constitute the philosophical basis. In such case it seems African philosophy can only be understood from the *debased sense*. The contention then becomes evident that African philosophy is basically ethno-philosophy, thus, by making African philosophy more a subgenre

[16] Cf. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, *Op. Cit.*
[17] Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, *Op. Cit.* , p. xxiv.
[18] S. O. Imbo, *An Introduction to African Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), p. 25.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.* , p. 112.

as it is stated, “Communal outlooks about magic, cosmology or ethics do not properly constitute philosophical thinking."[21]

Oruka goes against this notion as he does not accept the assumption that the mythical nature of African ideology should exclude it from gaining acceptance as a philosophy. In order to understand the array of African philosophy, the attribute of the critical configuration that exists within the insights of the Sage philosophers has to be accepted and ought to be intensely researched.[22] The concern for the Sage-research as Oruka asserts is not really to purport that sagacity is by definition philosophy, however, it is a concern to look for philosophy within sagacity, that is, to get to their *overlap*.[23]

After presenting such a comprehensive overview of African philosophy, one would ask, what next, where do we go from here? In my closing remarks I would say the following: Africa is being faced with a host of quandaries: political governance, religious governance, socio-economic problems, marriage and family issues, education *et cetera*, which might only be addressed by a hermeneutic of Ubuntu philosophy. For Africans and Africa to encounter meaning in the contemporary era of assorted culture, interpretation is inexorable. A hermeneutic of Ubuntu philosophy, thus, is the only hope for a sensible African existence; we are (Africans) therefore called upon to interpret our Ubuntu perspective with succinct intentions for the re-birth of Africa and Africans.

Our African languages should play that splendid role of being a custodian of our Ubuntu philosophy; the cherishing of our African languages can preserve and perpetuate our rich values, customs, taboos, traditions and religion. As it might be true to many, much has changed as culture is dynamic, however, hermeneutics is relevant for comprehending the past in terms of the present. We should be in a position to experience the past in the present, so that there might be meaning drawn from the unity of history.

We pursue history in so far as we ourselves are historical. It is this history (Ubuntu philosophy) that the Africans ought to return to via hermeneutics as they cannot escape from it as such in spite of being faced with the conspicuous reality of globalization. History has a part of truth which it gives us. In a similar vein of thought, Africans have a history that they ought to employ for their definition of the future. History makes us part of the truth; it is detached and actual. The truth should not remain there; it is the task of hermeneutics to unfold it, to pick it up and bring to our primordial experience. I imagine this to be the path philosophy in Africa will have to take for the future.

[21] *Ibid*.
[22] Masud, “Revisiting Oruka's African Ideology”, *Op. Cit*.
[23] Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, *Op. Cit.* , p. 36.

# Naturalizing Culture and The Pitfalls of Domination
# An Overview of the Role of Philosophy in Africa in the Twentieth Century

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The theme of this conference could not have come at a more crucial time – crucial because we are almost compelled to think about it. We feel compelled to think about philosophy, and its role in our lives, because these are the times when the humanistic sciences, also called simply as the humanities, are threatened in many places across the globe by organizations and governments that traditionally have supported them or have been at the apex of their growth over the past nearly a century. On June 8, 2015 the Japanese Minister of Education Hakuban Shimomura issued a dictum in a letter to all Japanese universities and colleges ordering them to eliminate all programs in the humanities and the social sciences. As a result, by September of the same year more than 26 of Japan's 60 universities announced that they would reduce or altogether eliminate their academic programs in these disciplines in order, according to the dictum, to focus on disciplines that "better meet society's needs." In other words, according to the Minister, society's needs are not served by philosophy, literature and the classics, history, the study of religions, or by linguistics and languages. The Minister's letter directed Japan's institutions of higher education to take active steps to abolish these programs or convert them to scholastic opportunities in the natural sciences. This condemnation of the humanities reminded me of the times in our own country when candidates for lectureship positions in any one of these humanistic programs would be asked to explain what value their discipline had for development.

The latter was defined only in skewed materialistic terms. In Japan's case, the subjects affected included Law and Economics, not just your traditional humanities subjects as listed above. Of the 26 universities agreeing to comply with the ministerial dictum, 17 would no longer recruit students to study them. The Minister claimed in his letter that his idea was utilitarian in vision and in line with the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's drive to reassert Japan's economic and political stature in the world. This vision says in part that "rather than deepening academic research that is highly theoretical, we will conduct more practical vocational education that better anticipates the needs of society," and that students in those subjects should instead be directed to study software programming for bookkeeping.

The universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan's two in the top 100 in world rankings of universities and colleges, rejected the directive while Mr. Takamitsu Sawa, the President of Shiga University wrote in an op-ed in Japan Times that the order was outrageous and anti-intellectual. He wrote that "Academics contribute to the creation of an intellectually and culturally enriched society...We see it as our duty to produce, enhance, and transfer in-depth and balanced accounts of knowledge about nature, human beings, and society. Thus, the [humanities and social sciences] make an essential contribution to academic knowledge as a whole."

Just this year, the American Philosophical Association, the African Studies Association, alongside other humanities-based professional organizations, sent out an alert that the Trump Administration had drawn up a national budget blueprint that would eliminate the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) along with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), International Education Programs such as the popular Fulbright Program, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and other international scholarship programs from which international educational exchanges have depended. These eliminations underscore the belief that knowledge as produced in the humanities and the social sciences, or as advanced through exhibits of historical and cultural achievements of people across the world are no longer deemed significant to how humans view each other through their respective achievements, or that such views or knowledge no longer matter. Yet it is through such knowledge and forging of mutual respect of diversity of respective contributions to the global human heritage that we can make significant steps toward eliminating discrimination as we increase mutual respect across nations and across cultures.

A similar outcry has been heard in this country, Kenya, when politicians have made irresponsible statements to the effect that subjects in the humanities and the social sciences are no longer considered important to how higher education should be understood and financed at public universities and colleges. What we should be thinking about in the order of priorities is, then, whether subjects like philosophy have any role at all in our lives alongside other humanities subjects. We are drawn to think, therefore, what would happen to a world of technicians who cannot think critically and systematically, or write clearly and cogently about what they do, let alone about much else. We do not have to go far at all to look for answers to these questions from the utterers of such statements in the first place. While it is true that everyone thinks because it is our nature to do so, much of our thinking, left to itself, can be biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, or down-right prejudiced. The quality of our life and that of what we produce, make, or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking can be costly, both in money and quality of life. But excellence in thinking does not come by nature; it must be systematically cultivated through the teaching of the right subjects that address different aspects of thought and showing where they habitually go wrong, and how to detect such missteps in thought. In other words, critical thinking is the art of demonstrated or habitually exercised ability to analyze and evaluate thinking with a view to improving it. So, who is a well cultivated critical thinker? What is she or he deemed to be capable of doing that others may not be able to do? From our own classroom lessons and habits, we learn that a well cultivated critical thinker is she or he who does the following:

- raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively;
- comes to well reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- thinks with open mind within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and, finally,
- communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

In short, critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking while being open to critiques from others in the form of dialogue that helps to grow knowledge in general. It requires rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use while being open to the humble realization of the natural human limitation and fallibility. It

entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcoming our native egocentrism and sociocentrism. It requires no overemphasis that these are the parameters upon which the recognition of the Other as an equal interlocutor rises in a manner that brings us all to the same level in a concerted rejection of prejudice. They are the parameters upon which we come to recognize and to respect what we and Others produce – whether they are material goods, or knowledge about the human condition in its different settings. Not only are these parameters of human intellectual needs obvious, they also make us realize that the humanities and the social sciences are the drivers of that acutely critical framework within and around which we place other critical human endeavors in our pursuit of knowledge of and solutions to problems arising from empirical research and inquiries. Like I said above, these abilities do not come to us naturally. Rather, they are acquired through systematic teaching in the humanities, and their value is in the management of life generally where they make us better human beings who use reason well and communicate clearly and effectively. And because we do not teach such skills early enough such as in high school from where their application would have longer life, we must incorporate them into the early stages of college life by directing all students to take Logic or Critical Thinking as required undergraduate education.

In addition to the above expectations for a critical thinker, we must also teach our young students to recognize why we need to reason well. Reasoning well, we must make them recognize, has a few but critically important characteristics.

- All reasoning has a *purpose*. Every good thinker must keep their purpose clearly before them at all times, and to check periodically whether, as they go about their task, they are still within the focus of their purpose, and that it is kept clear of other, possibly related purposes;

- All reasoning is an attempt to *figure something out*, to solve a problem, or to settle a question, all of which must be stated clearly for the train of thought to be kept on track;

- All reasoning is based on some *assumptions*. While we cannot even start to run our ideas without them, they must be identified clearly and to be assessed for justifiability. We must check at all times whether we are just describing our assumptions, or whether we are exhaustively contrasting them to or with other assumptions;

- All reasoning is done from some *point of view*. We must teach our young critical thinkers to identify their point of view from which their reasoning begins, and make them recognize other points of view with the aim of identifying their strengths and weaknesses as we impress upon them the value of fairness when it comes to considering different streams of thought and the value they bring to the table of knowledge.

- All reasoning is based on either *data, correct and accurate information and evidence*, or plausible justification. We must teach our young thinkers to avoid over-generalizations and statements that are unjustifiable with any form of evidence or sound reasoning;

- All reasoning is expressed through and shaped by *concepts and ideas*. We must teach our young thinkers to identify their key ideas and concepts and urge them to define and explain these clearly as only distinctly clear ideas and concepts will separate our thoughts from others.

- All reasoning contains *inferences*, and we must teach our young thinkers to draw only those inferences that flow from the syllogisms that they have validly worked with on the basis of the criteria listed above. We must press upon our young thinkers that honesty in thought, as anywhere else, is paramount and must count above what we desire and like. They must draw

only those conclusions that are entailed by the premises we have honestly developed in the corpus of our well reasoned texts or justified and well supported assumptions.

- Similar to the above, all reasoning leads to some *implications and consequences*. We must teach our young thinkers to trace carefully the implications or what follows directly from their reasoning, and that they should consider carefully all such implications, sifting positive ones from those that may be negative.

If these things matter to the cultivation of the human spirit and general intellectual well-being, then we need the humanities and the social sciences today far more than we probably did three decades ago as everywhere there are signs of huge drops in our children's abilities to think clearly and critically well by deploying the criteria of good reasoning, not just here where I detect such drops when I open up digital versions of local newspapers, but where I live and teach as well as I compare quality of assignment essays between now and twenty years ago. The irony is that these drops are in line with the rise in popularity of use of digital technology as the primary medium of communication.

That much for critical thinking and its values. Then think for a moment what kind of a people wants to live without claiming a heritage from their past, and without hoping to leave something for future generations. Those who call for the elimination of the humanities claim that it is fine not to have a heritage when they make utterances that call for the elimination of the teaching of history as part of the humanities or the social sciences. Indeed, many of us know that the human achievements of our common past tell us much about earlier cultures both in their differences and in their similarities. A study of the literature of the past, both as its direct recording or its reenacted representations gives us a glimpse into the problems of those who went before us, into their preoccupations, and into their aspirations as filtered through the words of scholars as well as those of story tellers who reframe the events and values of their times in artistic forms. The study of the novel and drama enable us to have a glimpse of society's spirit, so to speak, of both the happy and the trying times. Novelists and play writes earn their fame from their ability to represent such times with accuracy and captivating styles, and our country has enjoyed a good number of both. From the study of such documents, in addition to archives where they exist, we learn both about the culture of the past generations and something about the human spirit as it struggled with such perennial issues like justice, leadership, struggles for territory, settlements, loyalty, and collective care and responsibility as well as respect for or abuse of human rights. Above all, we learn where and why our ancestors may have made mistakes. In other words, through the study of history we get into dialogue with our ancestors across the ages. In the study of past cultures, both recent and ancient, we see the roots of our own. Only after we have looked at the fate of the humanities and the social sciences as a package can we then proceed to ask the question: what can philosophy in particular do for us?

**The role of philosophy**

It goes without much labor in the understanding that the role of philosophy in the context of the tradition such as is inherited by our brothers and sisters in religious institutions has always defined itself, and that is that philosophy is, as is for the same virtues of critical thinking that we listed above, required for the exfoliation, by human reason, of theological enigmas that form the basis of their core training in the humanities. That there, philosophical training is required to prepare the mind for the acceptance of those truths which are presented to awareness through revelation. Thus philosophy, in that regard, is pursued as a medium through which the limits of

reason are to be realized and appreciated. This was the teaching of St. Augustine in the patristic period, but also the position of more recent thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard. Our own African religious personnel and other theologically inclined thinkers inherited this relation between philosophy and theology long before the matter of the nature of philosophy became a subject of critical interrogation and self-examination by African thinkers. To be a successful convert is to accept this bifocal idea of truth and of its sources. Paradoxically, European missionaries trusted that while African converts could be taught to handle revealed truths, it was doubtful that they had the mental capacity to handle those truths that lay within the realm of human powers. Depending on who you ask, the now-famous or infamous book by the White Father missionary Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*,[1] attests to this skepticism about Africans' philosophical ability.

Once published, Tempels' work precipitated a discursive return to the European pasts that had directly denied historical relevance, let alone philosophical ability, to Africans. Hegel's phenomenological erasure of Africans from the historicity of the world appeared to justify the physical and spiritual occupation of Africa as a viable European project whose accomplishment further required the assistance of social science. In The Invention of Africa, V. Y. Mudimbe traces the birth of the idea of "Africa" through the collaboration between the three European knowledge producers – anthropologists, missionaries, and the colonial administrators, with each group producing an epistemological slice of Africa. Here is what Francis Abiola Irele says of the situation:

> Associated with the cultural malaise of assimilation was the negative image of Africa that was constantly projected by the Western texts on which was based much of the education of the Francophone African elite. The ideological thrust of these texts is exemplified by the work of Pierre Loti (1888)[2] and other writers associated with the so-called colonial novel. Their perspective helped to propagate the idea of Africa as a landscape whose inhospitable nature was reflected in the savage disposition of its indigenous populations (Fanoudh-Siefer 1968).[3] This literature was the symbolic expression of a European ethnocentrism that had been given philosophical respectability by HEGEL , who excluded African continent from his conception of the world historical process and the unfolding of the universal mind, the foundations of his philosophical system.[4]

Other contributors to the literature in the same category as Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Introduction*[5] referred to by Irele and all proponents of this ideology included Arthur de Gobineau (Essai sur l'inégalité des races humanines, 1884; Lucien Lévy-Bruhl ( Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures, 1912, and La mentalité primitive, 1922). The publication of Bantu Philosophy provoked a counter discourse at the center of which was the supposed reclamation of philosophy to and for the African mind. In what has been pejoratively

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[1] See Tempels, Placide, La philosophie bantoue (Elizabethville: Lovania, 1945), English translation, Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959.

[2] Loti, P., Le Roman d'un Spahi, Paris, Calman-Levy (English transl. M.L. Watkins, The Romance of Spahi, New York: Rand, McNaly and Co., 1890.

[3] Fanoudh-Siefer, L., Le Mythe du nègre et de l'Afrique noire dans la literature francaise de 1880 à la deuxième guerre modiale (The Myth of the Negro and of Sub-Saharan Africa in French Literature from 1800 to the Second World War), Paris: Klincksieck. (The most comple study of the construction of the African image in French literature.)

[4] Irele, F. Abiola, "African Philosophy: Francophone," in Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward Craig, London and New York, Routledge Publishers, 1998, p. 109.

[5] Hegel, G.W.F. von, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1975. Revised edition 1989.

referred to by Paulin J. Hountondji as ethnophilosophy, this counter discourse found a new role for philosophy: it became the defining characteristic of humanity. In other words, the idea suddenly was that Africans would not be human enough unless they had a philosophy, and they could be shown to be human only because they had philosophy. To give Hountondji some credit, philosophy had hitherto never been used to serve this humanizing role. The corpus of philosophical thought had not, until then, been synonymous with popular beliefs, nor had it been anonymous like ethnophilosophers claimed it was. Yet, historically speaking, the brand of philosophy that centers in our discourses, the one we inherited from our Western colonial education, arose precisely to challenge popular beliefs by demanding that they be subjected to critical examination so that only those among them that could withstand this examination be left to thrive – not because people believed them, but because they were rationally obliging. In other words, beliefs would no longer be appealing because they were given by the power of any tradition, but only because they were appealing to good reason.

Ethnophilosophers were now challenging this Socratic understanding of philosophy by suggesting that common beliefs already represented filtered concepts about reality and experience. What was not obvious, according to the ethnophilosophical project, were the conceptual grids to which different beliefs were related. The task, then, was for the trained philosopher to describe the beliefs by relating them to specific philosophical concepts that revealed their assumptions. Thus, while the Socratic quest demands the primacy of reason as the foundation of belief, African ethnophilosophers reversed these relations as philosophy was viewed to be concealed in, or to emerge from popular beliefs. In other words, philosophy was naturalized to the extent that it required no arguments. To be sure, we have some wonderful beliefs in Africa that can save the world and the earth if we could elaborate and give them philosophical foundations. I know, for example, a communal belief that shedding another person's blood is an abomination regardless of the circumstances, self-defense or war included. But it is only recently that I have been involved with a work whose author identifies and interpretively elaborates philosophically the deontological principles that seem to explain this belief in relation to what she called alternative justice mechanisms for conflict resolution and lasting peace building.[6] This interpretation differs essentially from the work done by ethnophilosophers. Rather than describe the beliefs or practices as systems of deontological moral theory, she analyzes the core of what constitutes a deontological moral theory and suggests it as a lens through which to understand uses in ordinary language of some terminologies with moral content and their uses in resolving conflictual situations that would otherwise not be grasped from both theoretical and practical standpoints.

Let me make another exception of a movement and some of its well known proponents. This is négritude as defined and expounded by Léopold S. Senghor from Jean-Paul Sartre's pioneer characterization of it as a philosophical reawakening in new times of ancestral voices previously dimmed and zombized by the discourse of colonial domination. Again, to quote from Irele,

> Senghor's conception of négritude both enlarges upon Sartre's definition and gives it a new orientation. Rather than a contingent factor of black collective existence and consciousness as with Sartre (for Senghor this aspect corresponds to what he calls 'subjective négritude'), the concept denotes for Senghor an enduring quality of being constitutive of the black race and exempt from

[6] Lanfranchi, Benedetta, Judging Crimes Against Humanity in Acholi: A Philosophical Interpretation of the Use of Acholi Traditional Justice Mechanisms in the Aftermath of the War in Northern Uganda, Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Africa, SOAS, University of London, 2015.

> the exigencies of the historical process...hence Senghor's definition of négritude as 'the sum total of African cultural values' (1970).[7] His theory of négritude takes the form of an exposition of the African's distinctive manner of relating to the world. Appropriating Lévy-Bruhl's notion of 'participation', Senghor accords primacy to emotion as distinctive of an African mode of access to the world [where emotion becomes] a mode of apprehension, a 'capturing of integral being – body and consciousness –by the indeterminate world'.[8]

Here is a difference between Senghor and the ethnophilosophers: not only did he (together with Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas) interpretively or abstractly coin the term négritude as a characteristic of a humanistic expression, he also owned the elaboration of what he believed about it and its conceptual ramifications under the exploitation of the anti-Cartesian movement in the France of his time – as shown also in the writings of his contemporary and friend Henri Bergson – to be the differences between Western knowing and black Africans' way of knowing. Ethnophilosophers, by contrast, claimed no ownership of anything. They could not conceptually distance themselves from the groups whose beliefs they reported and of which they were often part. (European scholars doing ethnophilosophy, including Tempels himself, usually adopted the ethnographer's distance, and reserved their skepticism regarding the rational quality of the beliefs they described.)

In a suggestion for a different reading of one of the key claims of négritude, Irele contends that Senghor was articulating an alternative theory of mind. But this suggestion raises a problematic, racialized theory of the nature of minds, thereby endorsing Lévy-Bruhl's notion of essential, natural differences between a Western "white" mind, and the minds of non-White "primitive" peoples. According to V.Y. Mudimbe (1988), the legacy of Lévy-Bruhl "[posited] a radical difference between the West, characterized by a history of intellectual and spiritual reasoning, and 'primitives,' whose life, Weltanschauung, and thinking were viewed as having nothing in common with the West."[9] Like I have said before, Tempels's Bantu Philosophy was part of this legacy of a radical differentiation that was racialized by Senghor, making the difference a natural rather than a cultural one. In other words, while Irele defends the natural character of the differences claimed by Senghor, Mudimbe thinks they are cultural but naturalized by the racist discourse of French scholars like Lévy-Bruhl and de Gobineau.

**Philosophy and historical challenges**

While it remains historically significant in itself and as a context, the clamor for freedom and autonomy is no excuse for bad theories. The twentieth century is far more challenging than we have thought about and tried to deal with as we have tried to eke a place within it for ourselves. The challenges lie in just how we have dealt with some of the century's equally notable problems beyond those of identity, or whether or not our cultures have in them in-built philosophies. Some of the more pressing questions relate to how we have dealt with such issues like human rights, justice, poverty, democracy, responsible leadership, disease, or emerging cultural challenges like human sexuality and sexual orientations, among others. What have philosophers offered as intellectual visions or insights on these problems? In other words, to what extent have we

[7] Senghor, L.S., "Negritude. A Humanism of the Twentieth Century", in W. Cartey and M. Kilson (eds.) The African Reader: Independent Africa, New York, Random House, 1970.
[8] Irele, op. cit., p. 110. See also Senghor, L.S., "De la Négritude: psychologie du Négro-Africain (On négritude: The Psychology of the Black African), Diogène, Vol. 37, 1962.
[9] Mudimbe, V. Y., The Invention of Africa:Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge, Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1988, p. 135.

responded to the challenge of insisting, from both sociopolitical and moral standpoints, that the negative sense of freedom – freedom from – cannot be pursued in isolation from the positive sense of it – i.e., freedom to? But we all know our well documented failure to transition from the negative form of freedom to the positive form of it. What sense does it make to demand freedom from colonial domination only to subject citizens to the oppressions of autocratic rules? Don't we know well that it is positive freedom that gives negative freedom its appeal as a prerequisite? Don't we know further that it is positive freedom that gives worth to the philosophy of difference? In other words, would we not assume that self-determination, or autonomy to pursue own ends without undue external interference as social and political goods are the foundations of cultural difference? Why should we not expect that political and cultural freedom at the national level would deliver freedom to individuals and communities to live their everyday lives and to pursue their short-and long-term goals in a peaceful manner, and in accordance with good reason? But our postcolonial histories, especially in the first three decades of our attainment of political freedom from European control, have told a different story as authoritarianism and dictatorship, both civilian and military, soon became the show of our difference, that we were more prone to violent ways than to democratic systems. Suppression of dissent, arrests and detentions without trial, de facto single-party systems, and other manifestations of intolerance of pluralist expressions became markers of our difference. So, how could we handle philosophy? Or were these manifestations of authoritarianism the revelations of the unanimity installed by ethnophilosophy? And how would we morally justify State-sponsored murders and genocides that highlighted the quest for the politics of unanimity? Sometimes former colonial powers were firmly behind African political atrocities as their economic interests in our resources drove them to take sides in African politics, usually destabilizing national and regional politics by creating factions that went to war with each other within and sometimes from across national borders. As a result, only a few individuals identified and anointed by the West claimed monopoly over the right political vision. We became awash in contradictions as our leaders became philosophers and demanded unflinching loyalty. Knowingly or not, they adopted and demanded, under the banner of national unity, precisely the kind of unanimity of thought as once claimed by the proponents of ethnophilosophy. Or how else does one read Kenneth Kaunda's "Humanism in Zambia," or Julius K. Nyerere's "Ujamaa"? One after another, these leaders-turned-thinkers formulated their nationalist views on internal and international politics which they not only made the official ideologies, but to which they also demanded unquestioned adherence by everyone.

Dissent was regarded as unnatural, and culprits were punished with either death or long prison terms after sham or no trial at all. These regimes were particularly anti-intellectual, so many African intellectuals and thinkers fled to seek refuge abroad. Contrary to the pretentions of ethnophilosophy, the politics and practice of herding people, indeed whole nations, into single vision was not in consonance with precolonial systems or traditions of statecraft or of knowledge-making in general. The explanation, or justification, which was not necessarily right, and which stands as antithesis to what I have said above, was that the national unity once viewed as crucial and pragmatic in the quest for freedom from colonialism now had to be extended, forcefully, and consolidated, for the interests of the national political party, the organ of political oppression.

Irele rightly points out that in addition to critiquing its unphilosophical character, Hountondji may have been opposed to ethnophilosophy for its promotion of undemocratic ways of doing

things.[10] In the "Preface" to this new edition of the book, Hountondji himself asks, apparently in reply to some of his critics:

> ...what is it to be an African? Is it belonging to a race, in this case the black race, if we decide to restrict ourselves to black Africa? Should one, to be an African, share in a common culture and adhere to the value system or systems conveyed by this culture? Must one profess a given religious of political credo?[11]

Quoting Fanon in reply to his own questions, Hountondji says as follows: "No attempt must be made to encase a man, for it is his destiny to be set free."[12] "I have never assumed that such a person should necessarily be a great African philosopher," he says, "but on the other hand, I see no reason why she or he should a priori be denied being a philosopher and being an African. The realm of the thinkable is immense."[13] The critical question is whether being African, and critical thinking are incommensurable disjuncts. According to Irele, although the African philosopher's mind has largely been molded by the principles of Western philosophy, he or she is still confronted by a vast number of issues that stem both from her or his encounter with global issues and from the fact that the realm of her or his experience is defined equally by the experiences of African peoples whose core of problems also relate to traditional beliefs and modes of thought and modes of existence. On account of this dualism, he says, "the philosopher in Africa is compelled to undertake an examination of the implications of this dualism for [her or] his discipline and for [her or] his practice of that discipline with specific reference to the African situation."[14] This is not new to African intellectuals in other disciplines. African writers and literary critics were thrust into this self-reflection by the same colonial experience, or, as Mudimbe puts it, by the same colonizing European text as the philosopher was, so we need to find why the philosopher's mind continues anachronistically to be caged by the characteristics of Western themes as well as intellectual and spiritual reason. The challenge is for all, in both secular and religious worlds, and, this time around, the challenge needs to be taken on in ways different from those of ethnophilosophers and ethnotheologians of the Sixties and Seventies. In other words, what we need is no longer a hellenization of African thought, but the other way round, without shame or fear. The challenge is to design and teach philosophy courses in philosophy that focus on African themes and philosophers, and to challenge African students of philosophy to think critically of African situations and experiences, including African texts. With works formerly unavailable due to language barriers now increasingly available in translation, or French-speaking philosophers increasingly writing in English, there is more than enough to draw syllabi and critical analyses on for pedagogical objectives and practices. In addition to these, there are philosophical texts written in different styles in African languages from which Africa-focused courses can be taught. My mind cannot help but point, for examples, toward works such as those of the Tanzanian (then Tanganyikan) thinker and writer Shaaban bin Robert. His works, all written in Kiswahili, have remained largely unknown beyond courses in African Languages due to lack of interest in local intellectuals – as a result of which they have remained untranslated

[10] See Irele, Francis Abiola, "Introduction," in Paulin J. Hountindji, African Philosophy: Myth and Reality, second edition, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1996.
[11] Hountondji, Paulin J., African Philosophy: Myth and Reality, Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1996, p. x.
[12] Ibid., p. x. Reference to Fanon is to Fanon, Frantz, Peau noire, masques blancs, Paris: Seuil, 1952, p. 187 (English transl., Black Skin, White Masks, by Charles Lam Markmann, New York, Grove Press, 1967, p. 230).
[13] Hountondji, Paulin J., African Philosophy: Myth and Reality, p. xi.
[14] Irele, F. Abiola, "Introduction," in Hountondji, Paulin J., African Philosophy: Myth and Reality, cit., p. 10.

for a broadened local readership. Where translations have been attempted, the translations have been misleading because of Western bias against the idea of the possibility of indigenous African philosophers.[15] Indeed, we have knowingly surrendered to Western domination because Western scholars have known how to assert themselves even when they have been wrong on African issues. Like we do with all things produced in Africa or by Africans, we value Western thinkers over our own, and continue to view ourselves as extensions of the Western world as the only world worth talking about. The matter is most acute in philosophy where the idea of African philosophy finds its most staunch skeptics among African scholars of philosophy who regard work by African philosophers as side-shows to Western philosophy which, in their minds, is the main act of the discipline. The irony is that the vast majority of these self-doubting Africans are neither players in the main act, nor are likely to be recognized by anyone as observers of that act worth talking about. Rather, we have negated ourselves even when we had more urgent matters at our doorsteps to think and talk about.

Here is my challenge to the African philosopher, especially she or he who is of social inclination: need we not figure out why the African state exists or operates with no stated orientation or goal toward which it aspires, and against which it should be constantly judged? Should we not ask why political parties are not discernible one from the other on account of clearly defined and stated goals to which we can hold them accountable? Without asking these questions, and demanding answers for them, we will be accomplices to the collapse of the African state and to the social stagnation of which we have become victims. This failure distinguishes us from the generation of African scholars who, ironically, were trained by and in the colonial system but stepped out to question and challenge its relevance for African societies. In this respect, we compare poorly even to our "philosopher-kings" who tried to coerce us into following their ideas without questioning. They had ideas, and gave us something to think about, even if at high costs in some instances. We are proposing none.

We inherited and stepped into the management of state institutions from their colonial managers who were the implementers of the visions and objectives defined by the political agenda at home. The debates at the time over the relevant and appropriate ideological orientations for the nascent nations and societies reflected conceptions and practical concerns about the model societies we thought best suited for our young nations and their circumstances. Also discussed at the time was the relevance of different academic disciplines in our institutions and the need to adjust them to different goals made possible by the attainment of independence. Sometimes we followed colonial prejudices in these evaluations, but that was because the institutions themselves were designed to produce knowledge as defined by the colonial program.

The Africanization of our institutions was spearheaded particularly by the Humanities while the sciences, including the social sciences, lagged behind in these important transformative undertakings. The writing and teaching of African literatures and histories took visible leading roles while the study of African religions and philosophy took off with promise under the influence of such scholars like John Mbiti and others. But, like I have said above, this influence has failed to survive the attack on ethnophilosophy and the emergence of critical philosophy, or what the late Oruka called academic philosophy. In some cases, the blow dealt on

[15] Word circulates that there exists an English translation of *Kusadikika: Nchi Iliyo Angani* as "Kusadikika: The Country in the Air." This reported English title carries a literal translation of the subtitle, with the result that it misrepresents the book as a tale of fables rather than a translation based on the content of the book which is a prescriptive speculation or theoretical characterization of an ideal state.

ethnophilosophy has led to the failure to Africanize the philosophical curriculum and a retreat into the belief that the word "philosophy" is synonymous with the adjectives "European" or "American." It is not.

**Nature, or culture?**

But our failure has not been due solely to self-doubt. When we have tried to be self-assertive, we have done so by claiming that our ways were natural to us as opposed to being informed by historical and cultural circumstances. I do not know what is and what is not debatable in places like a Catholic university, but my thought right now is that the naturalization of culture as done by, say, Senghor, has not been done evenly. How, for example, does one explain to the villager why they should view their daughter's sexual orientation as a lesbian to be wrong, or that their son's choice of gay lifestyle is wrong? Should we tell them merely that these choices are "unnatural"? And what about their polygamous lifestyles? Are they wrong too? And if so, how should we explain why we believe them to be wrong? Is it a sufficient moral argument to say that such practices are condemned by God? As philosophers, we are called upon to understand life in all its expressions and absurdities, its confusions, its frustrations, its high and low times, and in its ambiguities. We are called upon to abandon the one-box-fits all explanations into which everyone must fit, which might only tell those reading us that it is our explanations, or descriptions that might be distorted after all. We are, as philosophers, called upon to reflect upon life in all its facets, which may mean "as it presents itself in the experiences of those who are alive. We cannot chase away people whose experiences do not fit into our boxes. The wisdom that philosophers are called upon to love accrues only from confronting experiences in their expressive plurality. Here is what a contemporary philosopher, Robert Nozick, says:

> One form of philosophical activity feels like pushing and shoving things to fit into some fixed perimeter of specified shape. All those things lying out there, and they must be fit in. [So] You push and shove the material into the rigid area getting it into the boundary on one side, and it bulges out on another. You run around and press in the protruding bulge, producing yet another in another place. So you push and shove and clip off corners from the things so they'll fit and you press in until finally almost everything sits unstably more or less in there; what doesn't gets heaved far away so that it won't be noticed.... Quickly, you find an angle from which it looks like an exact fit and take a snapshot; at a fast shutter speed before something else bulges out too noticeably. The, back to the darkroom to touch up rents, rips, and tears in the fabric of the perimeter. All that remains is to publish the photograph as a representation of exactly things are...
>
> [....] why do [philosophers] strive to force everything into one fixed perimeter? Why not another perimeter, or, more radically, why not leave things where they are? What does having everything within a perimeter do for us? Why do we want it so? (What does it shield us from?).[16]

Yes, admittedly, philosophers seek not only to understand life, but to understand it in a manner that makes sense. This is not surprising, and that is natural not only to philosophy but to reason in general. Perhaps one of the few natural things. This is one of the biggest challenges for the philosopher, namely that she or he devotes her or his life to understanding the nature of human existence only to realize that she or he cannot make sense of things, and that life itself cannot be made sense of. Unfortunately, it is the philosopher who gets frustrated by this realization more than most people are, because they just do not get to this realization, or because they are not called upon to face this gargantuous task.

[16] Nozick, Robert, Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, p. xiii.19.

The philosopher is afflicted by this fear, not just for him-or-her-self, but also on behalf of others. But why think and write on behalf of others? Why do philosophers think and write in impersonal fashions as if they themselves had no concerns as individuals? Why do they project their concerns upon others? May be this is the vocation of reason itself, namely that reason speaks in the form of freed universality that engulfs all, the Cartesian res cogitans. But is this not the very point that is so challenged by what we just said above, namely that the cogitative subject is always embodied and therefore subject to the social realities of culture, class, race, and gender?

Just as a reminder to the socio-historical reality of these contingencies, Charles Mills, a Jamaican-born Canadian philosopher, reminds us to reflect on the contrast between what European philosophers called the "social contract", on the one hand, and what became of the historical European expansionism across the world, on the other, or to think of race relations in the racially mixed post-eighteenth century world. His contention is that there was never a social contract, and that European philosophers, let alone the architects of the subsequent European modern state, never imagined people different from themselves when they drew up the idea of equality in the use of reason in participating in civic duties. Rather, therefore, it was a racial contract. In the colonies, and in all white-led governments and social systems across the globe, black people were disenfranchised without exception, thus making a mockery of the view that the mainstream philosopher appeals only to the "abstract reason" of the reader rather than to her or his needs and desires. The days when Western perspectives were presented as if they were the ultimate truth on every matter they addressed are long gone. Like we said in the introduction, it is now – in the multicultural age we live in – obvious that every "reason" is only from a point of view. But there is no doubt that every "reason" requires a sound supporting argument. What Bertrand Russell said so well about the perceptions of objects applies also to the more complex matters of life and human existence in general.

Most of us are here by chance, and so to think that only we would have the last word for all people for all times would seem to be an exaggerated and unwarranted glorification of ourselves and our times. Many things don't make sense in the world of philosophy, and I think the idea that one incidental person could settle all matters of reason once for everyone and for all times is either overblown or simply false. One day a former student of mine, a non-traditional student who is just a few years younger than I am, walked into my office at lunchtime and said he had a question to ask me. He said: "There was this gay couple who wanted to wed, so they went to a baker to make them a wedding cake. But upon learning that these guys were gay, the baker declined to make the cake, citing his disapproval of that kind of practice... What do you think about this situation?, my former student asked me. "Should the baker decline to serve these guys?" Our conversation went quite well, I think. We live in a civilized world of reason where we are expected to give sound reasons for what we believe, even if it means differing soundly.

The only reason I tell this story is that it was an improbable topic of conversation sixty years ago, not in an office with the door wide open as is conventional policy where I work. The improbability of having such a conversation sixty years ago would not have been true only in Africa, but also in the West. But today they are open questions for open debate – in the classroom, in the Company office, on the bus, name it. In fact, a university office, or classroom, would be the perfect place to have this kind of conversation. But just think of how, some one hundred years ago, let alone in the eighteenth century, someone would have answered this kind of question in the name of reason or intellect alone, for everyone and for all times.

The Eighteenth century, or even just seventy years ago, is a very long time from the point of view of today's speed of cultural change. So when we describe culture in racial terms like Senghor did, we risk doing ourselves double jeopardy. Culture is a wonderful thing, but we are likely to understand or appreciate it far less if we encapsulate its specific manifestations into a skin, when we naturalize them. Like both Friedrich Nietzsche[17] and Bertrand Russell[18] once observed, a philosopher usually borrows from far more resources than she or he would like to admit: from the social and cultural milieu in which she or he happens to have grown up and with which she or he must be in conversation at all times. These are the temporal and topical circumstances that give her or him the temperament that she or he works so hard to hide behind the guises of "reason or intellect alone." Where does all this leave us? As Wittgenstein put it, "Working in philosophy .... is really a working on oneself, on one's own interpretation. On one's way of seeing things (And what one expects of them.)"[19] To conclude with a recall of Hountondji's remark, "The body of the thinkable is immense!"[20] So, while it is true that philosophy took the leading charge in the regeneration of African identity, as J-P. Sartre explains it in "Orphée noire" (1948), in response to the history of domination, it might be time now for philosophy to rectify how this regeneration is to be redirected . And that will be done meaningfully only if philosophers direct their attention to explaining and debating, analytically or interpretively, the world as it is experienced by Africans, and African experiences of the world. In other words, it is upon us to make philosophy relevant to us. It is no longer helpful to engage in attempts to show that there is something called African philosophy which must be different from anything else out there. The only thing that is our own are our own experiences, our problems and our joys, and they generate what Hountondji refers to when he talks of "the body of the thinkable," and he says, rightly, that "the body ... is immense," meaning that it is not just one concern, nor about one problem. Rather, the number of concerns, and that of the problems will reflect the unfathomable number of directions and complexity of human life and experiences. We owe it to ourselves to think about, to try to understand, and to explain these experiences to ourselves, and it shouldn't matter who out there gets attracted to our discussions of our problems. This, as I have pointed out elsewhere,[21] is what Langston Hughes meant in the paragraph of the essay that famously became the Anthem of the Harlem Renaissance.[22] In other words, "an honest expression of our individual selves without fear or shame." Let us do good philosophy, but let us do it about us, for us. Hountondji has echoed this old sentiment in a critique of the "extroverted" nature of the knowledge we produce.[23] The reason every Westerner feels like they are all experts on what we say and do is that we try to do their philosophy when we do not have a compelling reason to do it at the expense of our own.

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[17] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*

[18] Russell, Bertrand, "Philosophy's Ulterior Motives", in Russell, Unpopular Essays, London: George Allen, 1950, pp. 64-5.

[19] Wittgenstein, Lugwig, Culture and Value, G.H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, eds. English transl. Peter Winch, Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1980, p.47.

[20] My exclamation!

[21] See Masolo, D. A., African Philosophy in Search of Identity (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 3.

[22] Hughes, Langston, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," in The Nation, 23 June 1926.

[23] Hountondji, Paulin J., "Producing Knowledge in Africa Today," in African Studies Review, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1995), pp. 1-10.

# Thematization of Inter-subjectivity in the African Context

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**Abstract**

*This paper argues that Africa has a valuable treasure chest of insight to offer the world in relation to debates on inter-subjectivity if only the negative perception of its value is corrected with a positive one. If that is done it will be noticed that in the African world view man is not envisaged as an isolated being like the Leibnizian monad. He is rather born of his parents' love; he grows and develops in the gravitational field of their affection; he asserts his own independence only to fall in love and provide himself with his own hostages to his fortune. It is thus impossible, in the African context, for man to escape interactions with other people because from his birth to his death he lives in the field of interactions. Put simply, the African world view envisages men as social animals and the primordial basis of their community is not the discovery of an idea but a spontaneous inter-subjectivity. This is popularly expressed by the slogan "I am because we are, and we are because I am." This paper therefore demonstrates how inter-subjectivity is thematized in the African culture by first correcting the negative concept of African culture with the positive concept of culture from the African point of view, showing how inter-subjectivity is rooted in the African culture, and finally showing how inter-subjectivity shapes the African life.*

**Key Words:** *consciousness, subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, African world view, submissive subjectivity, submissive man, thematization, togetherness.*

… [*Western society*] *seems to be very concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing out on their spiritual dimension. We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationship. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa "giving the world a more human face".*

(Steve Biko, *I write what I like*, (Heinemann, London 1978), 46)

## Introduction

The theme of the conference is on the role and value of philosophy in contemporary Africa. I think the first question that arises with regard to the topic is the good of it? I will argue that its value is not merely negative, but also that the discovery and articulation of its positive function calls for originality and creativity. I shall use the issue of inter-subjectivity which is paramount to our times, to show that once taken positively, Africa has a special contribution to make to the world in the field of human relationship. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift from Africa is that of "giving the world a more human face".

I hinge my argument on the fact that in the western philosophy many scholars, the likes of Husserl and Bernard Lonergan struggled to show how inter-subjectivity can be understood. In their contribution none ever thought the African culture has a rich understanding of the concept. I therefore strongly push home the point that the African notion of inter-subjectivity loosely referred to as 'ethics of 'ubuntu', as it relates to the concepts of ontological being and identity, can add a new perspective to the debate of true identity and what it means to be a human person in relation to other human persons.

Hence, the paper argues that in the African world view man is not envisaged as an isolated being like the Leibnizian monad. He is rather born of his parents' love; he grows and develops in the gravitational field of their affection; he asserts his own independence only to fall in love and provide himself with his own hostages to his fortune, that is, he gets back into the same system of bing tied into family bonds. It is thus impossible, in the African context, for man to escape interactions with other people because from his birth to his death he lives in the field of interrelations. Put simply, the African worldview envisages men as social animals and the primordial basis of their community is not the discovery of an idea but a spontaneous inter-subjectivity. This is popularly expressed by the slogan "I am because we are, and we are because I am." This paper therefore demonstrates how inter-subjectivity is thematized in the African culture by arguing that one of the most distinctive features of African philosophy is the element of sociality which, in many cases, has given rise to such concepts as African personality, African identity, African solidarity and many other virtues that attest to the humanistic character of man and his fellow men. Virtues like patience, optimism, mutual sympathy and empathy are eminently characteristic of the African way of life and certainly point to a peculiar mode of existence that extends the realm of the individual potentialities to embrace the life of others and their concerns.

**Removing the Merely Negative Conception of African Philosophy**

As said above, with regard to the theme of the conference, the role and value of philosophy in contemporary Africa, I think the first question that arises is the good of it? This, however, already poses a challenge if one were to consider the debates surrounding the identity of African philosophy. Indeed many have cast doubts on whether there is a relationship between philosophy and understanding within African culture. The publications and debates concerning the reality of philosophy in Africa are a reflection of the often complex cultural and political history of Africa in the tides of the twentieth century. And this seems to confirm Hegel's remarks: "Philosophy is but time impressed in thought".[1] It is in philosophy that the spirit of a given age is centralised and crystallized, and, according to Max Müller, philosophy goes beyond this function of reflecting and representing the *Zeitgeist*, and attempts to offer a spiritual and action programme for the future of the age's climate of thought, thereby exposing its innermost possibilities.[2]

If I may borrow from Bernard Lonergan's words in his work *Topics in Education*, where in attempting to answer the question of the value of philosophy he answered it with an analogy of Herbert Butterfield's response to a similar question regarding the value of history. Butterfield was a distinguished English historian who revised the previous interpretation of English history.

[1] Max Müller, Existenzphilosophie, (Von der Metaphysik zur Metahistorik, 1986) p 19. quoted in Joachim Mugalu, *Philosophy, Oral Tradition and Africanistics,* in *European University Studies,* Series XX Philosophy, vol./Bd. 460, (Berlin, New York: Peter Lang), 15.

[2] *Ibid.,*

In his History and Human Relations,[3] he asks whether it would make any difference if people knew no history at all, and he answered that people could probably get along just as well as they do now in the conduct of their affairs public and private even if there were no history. The trouble is, says Butterfield, there is a great deal of history that is bad history, that has disastrous effects in all directions, and this makes history a matter of the greatest practical importance: bad history must be replaced by good history. A similar negative value has been claimed for African philosophy. Consequently no more would be expected of it than such a negative value, pulling out the weeds and correcting wrong ideas. We know that there are now legends, stories, history and especially historicity of African philosophy.

**The Influence of the Negative Conception of African Philosophy**

Philosophy is a reflection on the human situation at an ultimate level. It is fundamental thinking about the human situation. Human beings have had their own philosophies. Even Africans had their philosophy which expressed their harmonized view of the world. As Friedell writes, "All things have their philosophy, more than that: all things are philosophy. Man must seek out the idea that lies hidden in every fact, the thought whose form it is."[4] But since the African way of thought could not be accommodated within European systems of thought, it was considered non-logical. Lévy-Bruhl called the attitude of the Africans 'pre-logical', a term by which he meant to characterize a kind of thought which does not refrain from inner self-contradiction, a kind of thought in consequence of which "objects, beings, phenomena can be, in a fashion unintelligible to us, both themselves and at the same time something other than themselves".[5] At the end of his life Lévy-Bruhl renounced his theory of 'prelogicism' and thus furnished a rare example of scholarly integrity. In his posthumous notes he asks himself how he could ever have conceived so ill-founded an hypothesis,[6] and he comes to the conclusion that "the logical structure of the human mind is the same in all men."[7]

Lévy-Bruhl's insight and recantation, however, left a gap. Till then Europeans had been able to subsume whatever was unintelligible to them under such vague headings as 'pre-logical' or 'mystical'; now there was no longer any system at their disposal to make the unintelligible intelligible to the non-African. Many prominent non-African scholars found a reason to deny Africans not just intelligence but anything that makes them humans. Thus, Hegel wrote that "In Negro life the characteristic point is that consciousness has not yet attained the realization of any substantial objective existence in which the interest of man's volition is involved and in which he realizes his own being... so that knowledge of another and a Higher than his individual self, is entirely wanting. The Negro exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state must lay aside all thought of relevance and morality... there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character."[8]

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[3] Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations,* (London: Collins, 1951), see pp. 171-72, quoted in Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Topics in Education – The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education,* Editted by Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 3-4.

[4] Egon Friedell, *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit,* (München, 1946, vol. I) p. 3. quoted in Jahnheinz Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of Neo-African Culture,* translated by Marjorie Grene (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1958, English translation Faber and Faber 1961), 26.

[5] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *Les fonctions mentales dans les societies inférieures,* (Paris, 1910) , p 77 also quoted in Egon Friedell, 97

[6] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *Carnets,* (Paris, 1949), 60 also quoted in Egon Friedell, 97.

[7] *Ibid.,* 73 also quoted in Egon Friedell, 97

[8] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History,* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1956), 93

## The Renaissance Ideal of African Philosophy

At the beginning of his posthumously published work *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*,[9] Edmund Husserl made a point that I think means a lot to us. He urged that 'western man' can be conceived simply as an anthropological classification, a technical term in anthropology, a geographic designation of a civilization; or, on the other hand, it can be conceived as the Renaissance conceived man. The Greeks of fourth-century Athens took current words in their culture – *epistémé, Sophia, alétheia* – and gave them a meaning, imposed upon them a shift of meaning, with the result that the words came to signify something of which the average Athenian had no notion whatsoever. The Renaissance discovery of the ancients retrieved an idea of man that involved the negation of merely traditional power and merely traditional norms, and the affirmation of human reason and human freedom as the ultimate principles in individual life and in human society. According to Husserl, the ideal of man as endowed with reason and freedom, and as destined to base his life and the life of human society upon reason and freedom – upon reason as opposed to merely traditional norms, and upon freedom as opposed to merely traditional power – was the ideal that captured the Renaissance.

The implementor and carrier of that ideal was philosophy. But since African Philosophy is questionable before some scholars, many of them would not accept that philosophy can do the same for Africa. The present flood of literature on Africa tends to deny that the Africans themselves have a part to play. Africa is entering world history, they say. There is a flow of books and articles dealing with this process in its political, economic, sociological and psychological aspects. But all these expositions have in common a single conviction; they are all persuaded that one single pattern of cultural change is forming. Through the influence of Europe, it is believed, Africa is adapting herself, giving up her traditions and adopting foreign ideas, methods of work, forms of government and principles of economic organization. The time of transition, whether short or long, is thought to be a time of crisis which will confront all Africans with the decision either to accept modern civilization and survive, or to perish with their own traditions. Some observers believe in a gradual, as others in a sudden, transition, but all agree that a fully Europeanized Africa will be the end product of the process. Europe is alleged to provide the model, Africa to copy it; Europe to be spiritually the giver, Africa the receiving partner.[10]

Since Europe is held to be the teacher and Africa the pupil, Europe is to decide when Africa is ripe: ripe for faith, ripe for action, ripe for freedom. Europe is thought to know what is good for Africa, better than Africa herself. Admittedly, Europe offers different and rival doctrines – democracy, communism, Christianity or atheism – and in choosing between these the pupil may gain status for herself – a process which is usually regretted; yet this alters nothing in the general pattern. Whether Africa accepts the doctrines one recommends or those one warns her against, she must give up her own traditions: there are no other possibilities to be considered.[11]

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[9] Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy,* trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 7-16. Quoted also in Lonergan 1993, 10-11.

[10] Jahnheinz Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of Neo-African Culture,* translated by Marjorie Grene (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1958, English translation Faber and Faber 1961), 11

[11] *Ibid.,* 12

Thus the question of the future of Africa becomes the question of the existence of an African culture. Although the example of Japan teaches us that a people can appropriate modern technology and modern forms of organization without abandoning their traditional culture; that modernity can be assimilated to a non-European culture without destroying it; it is denied that something like this could happen in Africa. Janheinz[12] cites the objections raised by Jaspers in his contention that Japan and Africa are not comparable, since their cultures lie on different levels. According Janheinz, Jaspers argued that history has shown two great advances. First, after the age of myth, which includes pre-history and the history of the great early cultures, reflective thought began between 900 and 800 B.C. in Greece and Asia Minor, simultaneously but independently.[13] It was this advance that really set history in motion, transformed it and determined its direction.

Janheinz further presents Jaaspers' second advance as the age of science and technology, which now in its turn is everywhere taking the lead and transforming all mankind. Japan, like Europe, is said to have been affected by the first advance and thus to be a land of higher culture, while Africa is only just being brought into the main stream of history. Jaspers thesis does not even allow these primitive peoples a chance of adaptation. He foresees for them no adjustment, but only their extinction or the fate of becoming mere raw material to be processed by technological civilization.[14]

The question whether in confronting Western culture Africa reacts differently today from the way she did in the past, involves once more the question of the existence and nature of an African culture. Malinowski sees culture not as something static but as something that is constantly changing. In his view, all new objects, facts and forms of life in Africa are the results of European pressure and African resistance. The African, he believes, is seduced by the enticements of Western Civilization, and accepts new forms of life with an ultimate aim of wanting to be, "if not European, then at least a master or part of the devices, possessions and influences which in his eyes constitute European superiority."[15]

Malinowski's functional theory of cultural change sees in the revival of African traditions an unhealthy and 'sophisticated' nationalism, a product of psychological retreat before European pressure, 'modern myth-making.' Such thinking for sure leaves Africa with nothing positive but copying of the west. Against this I argue here that for anything positive to be appreciated from Africa such negative thinking about Africa which gives the wrong legends, stories and historicity of Africa must be corrected first. The negative thinking must be bracketed so as to leave us with the natural/indigenous elements of Africa. I will use the notion of inter-subjectivity as an example of the distinctiveness of the African culture by undertaking an exposition of African achievement in human relations as an expression of African ideology, values and philosophy. This is intended to show that there is something that can be called specifically African culture. But before I do this I wish to say a word on how recent researches have bracketed the negative value of African philosophy for a moment.

**The Discovery and Articulation of the Positive Function of African Philosophy**

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[12] *Ibid.,* 12-13

[13] *Ibid.,* 13

[14] Karl Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte,* Frunkfurt am Main, 1955), 78, quoted in Janheinz, *Muntu,* 13

[15] Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Cultural Change,* (New Haven-London, 1945-7), 157. Also quoted in Janheinz, *Muntu,* 14.

In this section I argue that the value of African philosophy is not merely negative, but also that the discovery and articulation of its positive function calls for originality and creativity. In recent years the world has become more and more conscious of the great and increasing contribution to literature and philosophy which has derived and continues to derive from "black" Africa, either directly, or indirectly. I present a brief background on how research workers buried themselves in useful investigations of special subjects and avoided every sort of generalization in order to bring out its positive functions. Thanks to them, now there have appeared a number of series of systematic presentations from particular, strictly limited areas, each of which reveals to us the material for and the possibility of seeking their common denominator.

The first example is Bantu Philosophy of Placid Tempels. Temples, a Franciscan who had been active as a missionary in the Congo since 1933, owes his knowledge to the observations of many years. He analysed the conceptions of the Baluba from their statements and their behaviour, and with an alert mind and a sensitive imagination felt his way into the thought of the Bantu, tracked out their system of thought and finally presented it as an integrated whole.

The second example is that of the French enthnologist Marcel Griaule who spent many years studying the Dogon, a people who live in the great bend of the Niger. In October 1946 Ogotommêli, an old but vigorous sage and hunter who had been accidentally blinded, summoned the ethnographer and expounded to him, in conversations which lasted thirty-three days, the world system, metaphysics and religion of the Dogon; "a world-system, the knowledge of which completely invalidated all the conceptions we had formed about the mentality of the Negroes or the primitives in general."[16] Ogotommêli set forth his knowledge systematically, in a poetic language rich in images; the ethnographer had only to write down what was dictated to him and translate it into French. Encouraged by his success, Griaule's collaborator Germaine Dieterlen investigated the religion of the Bambara and was able to exhibit a similar system in her 'Essay on the Bambara Religion.'[17]

Alexis Kagame, himself a Bantu, provides us with another example in his book called *La philosophie băntu-rwandaise de l'Être*. Kagame compiled this extensive work, which was published by the Royal Academy of Sciences in Brussels and won for him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome. The study of western philosophy impelled him to analyse the system of thought which the priests who initiated him –'nos vieux initiateurs' – had taught him and to define each concept in comparison with Western conceptions.

These entirely different authors, from different motives, presented the philosophical systems of different peoples who live far apart from one another. And for all the differences in detail these systems agree basically with one another. Our interest in them within this paper is not to present their agreements or differences as this is beyond the scope of this paper. I was just pointing out how their efforts managed to give us some basic concepts that are indispensable for understanding of the African culture and philosophy. Their works serve a good response to the debate concerning the existence and nature of African philosophy which has been a major theme in the philosophical investigations in Africa for a long time. This question of African philosophy ranged from examining the conditions of possibility of such a philosophy (Mudimbe)[18] to

[16] Marcel Griule, *Dieu d'eau,* (Paris, 1948), 9. Also quoted in Jahnheinz Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of Neo-African Culture,* 98

[17] Germaine Dieterlen, *Essai sur la region bambara,* (Paris, 1950),

[18] Mudimbe, V.Y., *The Invention of Africa, Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge,* Bloomington, 1988, Ix.

establishing the various specimens of this philosophy, in case this latter does exist (Bodunrin)[19]. The complexity of this question was further reflected in the multitude of philosophical seminars and conferences that were devoted to this subject. Examples are: Lubumbashi (1972); Kinshasha (1976); Addis Ababa (1980); Wiesbaden – Germany (1978); Nairobi –Unesco (1980); Dakar (1989)[20], etc.

As Joachim Mugalu points out the philosophical scenery, however, did not become more levelled as a result of these conversations. The nature of the discourse instead became more complex and controversial, with the evolving, and, subsequently, consolidating of extreme positions. Such was, for instance, the relationship between the ethnophilosophical current on the one side, and the critical school on the other.[21] This saw African philosophy classified in various ways. Notable among the classifications we can distinguish between: i) the traditional wisdom literature; and ii) contemporary African philosophy. The traditional sapiential literature covers that body of the cultural heritage which was principally didactic and experiential in nature. This includes proverbs, maxims, myths, beliefs, narratives, etc. The various world-views may likewise be classified within this category. The totality of this information characterised and influenced a person's being-in-and relating-to-the-world. Mugalu calls it in Luganda language '*Amagezi g'abedda*' – 'The wisdom of the ancestors.'[22]

The expression 'African Philosophy' in Contemporary African Philosophy is used to designate the totality of publications by Africans or Africanists, whereby these works are situated in an African context, or have some reference to Africa, and are, in one way or another philosophical in nature. This is a very wide definition. The difficulty of providing a more precise definition arises from the controversy concerning the subject. The different schools of philosophy, or rather, of doing philosophy, offer a broad spectrum of the philosophical literature, in both the wide and the narrow perspective of the concept of philosophy.

**Effects of Negative Conception of African Culture**

Like African philosophy, African culture has also experienced a lot of negativity. We could easily ignore them and continue as usual. The problem however is that they present a bad culture that has disastrous effects in all directions as said before. It is imperative this bad culture has to be removed first and replaced with a good culture. That is what I address in this section by showing how negative culture can stifle a culture for myopic reasons.

Culture is the set of meanings and values inherent in a way of life.[23] All cultures are humanly constructed, contingent, and capable of both development and decay.[24] Culture is local and very concrete. Its meanings are felt, intuited, and acted out in rites, symbols, and language.[25] Lonergan understands culture empirically, rather than normatively. A normative view of culture assumes that some one particular culture is that against which all others are to be measured and, thus, projects a rigidity and permanence upon laws and institutions that history shows to be

[19] Bodunrin, P. O., "The Question of African Philosophy", In *Philosophy, The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy,* edit. By Renford Bambroug, vol. 56, 1981, 161

[20] Heising, Johannes: Entwicklung und modeme Philosophie in Schwarzafrika, Frankfurt am Main, 1990. 21ff.

[21]Mugalu, Joachim, *Philosophy, Oral Tradition and Africanistics,* 17.

[22] Cf. Mpuuga, William: Amagezi g'abedda, Kisubi, 1991

[23] Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *A Second Collection*, edited by William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrell, S.J. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 183-184; PGT 15, 50.

[24] Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *A Second Collection*, 184.

[25] Ibid., 102-103.

illusionary.[26] An empirical perspective acknowledges that there are many cultures and attends to the meanings and values that inform a particular human community as it lives life in continuous development or in decline.[27]

Meaning is intrinsic to any culture.[28] In a discussion of the writings of Pitirim Sorokin, Lonergan agrees with Sorokin's distinction of three types of culture: sensate, idealistic, and ideational, and correlates the three types to three degrees of self-appropriation.[29] However, Lonergan distinguishes the social from the cultural.[30] The social refers to the ways people interact to express their customs, government, laws, business, technology, and religions. The cultural refers to ways people understand and find meanings in their social interaction. Beyond mere living and operating (social), people seek the meaning and value in their living and operating (cultural). Cultures have histories. "It is the function of culture to discover, express, validate, criticize, correct, develop, and improve such meaning and value".[31] There are also the dilemmas of modern culture that need to be addressed.[32] One such dilemma, I think, is naïve cultural jingoism.

Naïve culture jingoism, we may call, the claim that accords primacy to one's naïve values and norms exclusively and deprives culture its meaning as an ontological presupposition for the moral and spiritual enhancement of a people and instead it is used as a yardstick for measuring or as a device for suppression and at times the destruction of other cultures.[33] Instead of confining itself to a specific milieu, naïve culture jingoism very often assumes rather aggressive and pervasive dimensions which literally overwhelm and actually destroy the very endeavour made by other cultures in their attempt to merely assert themselves. As Nyasani puts it "the aggressor culture, in lording over the other … begins to see himself as the author and prescriber of norms, as the custodian of human heritage and as the foster and promoter of a civilization which in effect only happens to be his own civilization, that radically repudiates and resents other civilization."[34] With such a view, culture is both diluted and perverted in the sense that culture, rather than being a tool of self-liberation, now becomes a tool for downright enslavement and indeed a tool for subjugating others. Thus David Hume can afford to write:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something

[26] Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *A Second Collection*, 283.
[27] Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *Method in Theology,* (Lodon: Darton, Longman & Todd Limited, 1971 reprinted 1975), xi).
[28] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 78.
[29] Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being,* In *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Understanding and Being,* Edited by Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 221, [273]).
[30] Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *A Second Collection*, 102.
[31] Bernard J. F. Lonergan *Method in Theology,* 32.
[32] Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *A Second Collection,* 102-103,183-187, 233; Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being,* 221 [273]; *Method in Theology* xi, 78.
[33] Joseph M. Nyasani, "The impact of different cultures on the image of man within a cultural milieu" in *The Quest for Man: The Topicality of Philosophical Anthropology,* Joris van Nispen and Douwe Tiemersma (eds.), (Van Gorcum, Assen/Maastricht, Netherlands, 1991), 27-34 at 29.
[34] Joseph M. Nyasani, "The impact of different cultures on the image of man within a cultural milieu", 29.

> eminent about them in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant differences could not happen in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negroe slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity, tho' low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA indeed they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.[35]

This is how Hume conceives the black man, as good-for-nothing individual who is incapable of any visible human achievement since nature has dictated so. Without accepting that human cultures have meanings as intrinsic components[36] we will only be looking at culture normatively and hence easily conclude like Malinowski that cultures other than our own cultures are there to follow and learn from ours which are standard cultures. While we acknowledge the changing circumstances that cultures go through we also acknowledge the constitutive meaning that accompanies it. This is reflected in men's minds and hearts which have to be worked on to effect and hold allegiance and loyalty from them. Otherwise Nyasani says, "the wholesale adoption of a new culture which may be at first innocuous and limited in scale manifests contradictions as soon as the new culture begins to settle and to take root."[37] Indeed cultures are meant to be liberating power for mankind through natural interactive encounters and mutual cross-fertilization and not through culture-imperialism or culture-intoxication as has been in colonial Africa.

There is, according to Nyasani, "no gainsaying the fact that a particular cultural milieu does have a fundamental significance on the way man projects himself both within his immediate and alien surroundings."[38] For him culture is often responsible for the arousing of certain impulses that give rise to activities that either re-culture or de-culture man. Each culture has its own beliefs that cannot be forfeited because of their social utility. Thus, we encounter a number of such beliefs in the African culture.

When we talk of African culture we mean the resource of shared meanings and interpretations which members draw from to mediate the contingencies of their everyday lives. Thus, the African culture provides a context that we can use to find meaning and purpose. In Africa it is difficult to dissociate nature and culture. As some scholars put it "For Western man, culture is conceived as man transforming nature into his image and resemblance. To cultivate nature means to modify it for [man's] benefit. A cultivated man is one who does not behave spontaneously and naturally. For the mythical African, to cultivate nature is similar to cultivating an acquaintance. For [the African] doing means always re-doing, (he) knows only a global reality over which he does not have any radical initiative and in which nature and the supernatural are closely

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[35] David Hume, *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (London, 1758), vol. 1, 125n. Also quoted in Joseph Nyasani *op cit.,* 30.

[36] Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *Method in Theology,* (Lodon: Darton, Longman & Todd Limited, 1971 reprinted 1975), 78.

[37] Joseph M. Nyasani, *op cit.* 30.

[38] Joseph M. Nyasani, "The impact of different cultures on the image of man within a cultural milieu" in *The Quest for Man: The Topicality of Philosophical Anthropology,* Joris van Nispen and Douwe Tiemersma (eds.), (Van Gorcum, Assen/Maastricht, Netherlands, 1991), 27-34.

associated with each other."[39] The African world view fairly secures the place of myth although its fabric is undermined by foreign intruders. Without the intruders religion's horizon dominates the African worldview. Hence, for a member of a particular group, culture is a way of belonging to and feeling at home, knowing how to behave according to the acceptable norms of both the self and society.[40] It is from this perspective that we are looking at inter-subjectivity as a good example of learning what can be specific to the African culture. We seek to understand it from the African traditional ontology.

**African Traditional Ontology**

Teodros Kiros in his review on "Paget Henry and African ontology"[41] argues that ontology is the study of Being, existence and becoming, and Africans have long held their commitment to Ontology far longer than their Western counter parts. African Ontology as part of African philosophy, he suggests, has continued to organize African life since it came into being as early as 2500 years ago. He cites Ancient Egyptian thinkers as having given "the world its first systematic ontology symbolized by the idea of Nun, the liquid ether, from which emerged the ancient Transcendent, Atum Ra, who in turn functioned as the Supreme reality, the originator of space and time, and thus the universe."[42] Atum Ra was considered the divine grounding of the universe, the cosmos, earth and sky, and human order itself.

Teodros summarizes Henry's daunting task of presenting African Ontology: "The vision that informs traditional African philosophy that generates its fundamental questions is a religious one".[43] According to both Teodros and Henry "it is precisely the religions' horizons which provide the ontology and the ontology itself can be further engaged through the devises of analytic philosophy. African religions and the ontologies are similar to Eastern Philosophy, where the religion informs the philosophy, and the philosophy in turn generates the ontology. Indeed, Brahmin, a supreme reality, functions exactly like Atum Ra in Egyptian/African philosophy."[44] Brahmin and Atum Ra are the originators of the Universe. One could extend this insight to include numerous other African Ontologies.

African scholars now tell us that in the African traditional ontology man is not merely a passive element in the rhythm of nature, but an actor who with the help of the specialists (diviners, witch-doctors, etc) can play an active part in nature. Thus, man participates in the mysterious force which keeps the universe going.[45] Man is inserted into the ontological dimension of a world

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[39] See G. Gusdorf, *Mythe et Metaphysique*, Paris 1953, 110, quoted in Joseph Nyasani *op cit.*, 31.

[40] Coetzee, P et al, *Philosophy of Values: A Study guide 3 for PVA 100-8 African Philosophy*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1998:21)

[41] Teodros Kiros, "Paget Henry and African Ontology" http://www.fusionmagazine.org/paget-henry-and-african-ontology/

[42] Theophille Obenga, "Egypt: Ancient History of African Philosophy" in *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Ed. Kwasi Wiredu, Blackwell Publishers, quoted from http://www.fusionmagazine.org/paget-henry-and-african-ontology/

[43] Paget Henry, *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*, (New York: Routledge, 2000) p 21, and 23. *See also, An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

[44] Teodros kiros, "Paget Henry and African Ontology"

[45] Joseph M. Nyasani, "The impact of different cultures on the image of man within a cultural milieu", 29.

which, Ruch, Anyanwu and Nyasani argue dominates him but also feeds and sustains him.[46] Members of an African community, they say, are linked with each other and with the world around them by ontological and living links. Man can exercise an influence on these links by effective symbolic actions.[47] From this, the African scholars infer that since the whole of life is dominated by the active influence of these living links and life-forces, every aspect of the traditional African's life is interspersed with symbolic acts: the wedding ceremony, the funeral rites, the 'strengthening' of the king's life, etc.[48] According to Nyasani, "to set aside the culture of symbolic representation in communication, robs a people of their natural disposition towards deciding on alternatives with regard to their established mode of communication."[49]

**The Ontological Significance of the 'I' and 'We' in African Philosophy**

The notion of identity has always been central to the human person's understanding of self and the relation of that self to the rest of the Kosmos. To be able to identify and place one's self within the world is a crucial element of one's wellbeing. Ontologically, it shapes the image we have of ourselves, as well as our relation to others, and ultimately informs our understanding of the place we understand ourselves to occupy within the whole of the Kosmos. The advent of postmodernism has caused the once firm foundations of identity to become somewhat uncertain.

Africans draw their identities by embedding their existence on a luminous, self-creating and self-organizing Supreme Being who gives Africans the attribute of existence, so that they can give a rational accounting of their existence and the cause of their existence. Their identity is deeply linked with the self-generating Supreme Being who consciously created them by sharing his powers with them and all the other beings, including animals and plants with which they share the world. On this view all beings are created by the Supreme Being and all these beings have dignity and corresponding rights, which cannot be violated. These sacred dignities are the source of African Existential seriousness. These mythopoeic articulations of African Existence are simultaneously mythical and rational, descriptive and analytical, poetic and discursive. Their very mythicality is the source of a rationality which mystified a litany of Western Anthropologists and some reductionist Africans, who themselves jettisoned these ontologies as ethnophilosphy, and rejected their philosophical status.

Teodros praises Paget for brilliantly restoring the purity and power of these mythopoeic ontologies, which are also articulated in analytic proverbs as in classical Ethiopian Philosophy.[50] These ontologies are sources of African identity. Through them Africans are given complete individual ontologies, which also link them to the communities in which they grow and mature. On this view the African conception of the individual is imbedded in community and the community itself is composed of ontologically complete individuals who move from the I to the We, and when necessary from the We to the I. African ontological vocabularies empower individuals to speak as free individuals critically and lovingly.

Thanks to Paget Henry, these ontologies are now reclaiming their eminent philosophical value. These African narratives of creation are the precise sources of African ontologies. Being, as a

[46] See E. A. Ruch and K. C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy,* (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1984), 225; See also Joseph M. Nyasani, "The impact of different cultures on the image of man within a cultural milieu", 29-30.
[47] *Ibid.,*
[48] Joseph M. Nyasani, *op cit.* 30.
[49] Joseph M. Nyasani, *op cit.* 30.
[50] Teodros Kiros, *Zara Yacob: a Philosopher of the Heart,* 2005, 23

Supreme Reality, which created itself and the universe cannot be understood outside the Cosmo-ontologies. The African self-understanding is that individual Africans are only because the Supreme Being is sharing his Ashe with all those whom he created. Teodros and Paget agree that in the African ontology "individuals exist to the precise extent that they partake in the ASHE of the Supreme Being who endowed them individually with the attribute of existence by which they propagate the human species as biological beings."[51] They do not see any duality in this narrative because Being and beings, Subject and object interpenetrate. Individual beings are only because they partake in the ASHE[52] bestowed on them by the creator Being. In their view "the ego is pervaded by the Supreme Being who expands African horizons of being by embedding them in a being who gives Africans a sense of their immanence. On this view, Transcendence and Immanence interpenetrate in the generation of a spiritually conscious African personality."[53] Moreover the African personality is deeply spiritual and this spirituality is precisely what is needed to control the material excesses of the ego's desires. The excesses are regulated by the abundant spirituality, which guides moral action. OKRA[54] is to the African Soul as is Reason to the soul. OKRA is equally universalizable as is Reason, except that OKRA is a product of the South and has not been given the attention it deserves by Northern philosophers. Otherwise, OKRA just as easily could be the organizing principle of individual souls on a Global scale.[55]

**Categories of Understanding the Notion of 'Self'**

Research indicates that studies of, and approaches toward, an understanding of the notion of 'self' have generally fallen into two broad categories.

These are, (1) subjective approaches that seek to validate individual identity by drawing on data obtained from within the individual (psychology and spirituality are two of the most commonly known approaches in this regard) and (2) objective approaches that seek to validate how the individual constructs his or her identity through observing the subject in relation to his or her surroundings and influences. These could even be observable biological influences such as brain function, or social interaction with other persons or the environment (sociology and neuroscience are the two most commonly known approaches in this regard). However, both of these approaches have a common problem: the reliability of foundational knowledge; it can no longer be assumed that persons understand and attach the same meaning to what a certain discipline, or community, or faith, considers unquestionably true.

**The deficiencies of the individual subjectivist and objectivist approaches**

Both the subjective and the objectivist approaches to consciousness, which are discussed above, rely on the observation of passive knowledge (I am, or I know, or I feel). It is passive because it is either an observation of something that is (physical shape, biological functioning of the brain etc.), or a reflection on something that exists apart from the observer (a memory, a feeling, a thought etc.). Passive knowledge is simply too easy to emulate and recreate for it to offer any plausible approach to undeniably verify one's true individual identity. What is required is some form of engagement with the notion of identity that is more than just an observation of, or

[51] Teodros Kiros, "Paget Henry and African Ontology"
[52] Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, ASHE is generative powers which the creator God shares with the animal kingdom, which includes a python, a viper, a snail, an earthworm, and a woodpecker. Ibid, 23
[53] Teodros Kiros, "Paget Henry and African Ontology"
[54] OKRA is an Akan word meaning soul.
[55] Teodros Kiros, "Paget Henry and African Ontology"

reflection upon, passive data. What is required is some form of active engagement with the reality of being truly human.

In essence, what is required is 'being in relationship with', which is active, rather than just 'being', which is passive. Relationships are living, dynamic, fluid and constantly changing. A relationship cannot be fundamentally 'characterised' or quantified, neither can it be wholly experienced or explained. Relationships require 'generous' discoveries and a constant reinterpretation to glean elements of truth, 'truths that may change from moment to moment.'

This is what inter-subjectivity in the African context gives; our thesis fits here in that Africa has a valuable treasure chest of insight to offer to the world in relation to debates on inter-subjectivity. The element of true humanity, or 'humaneness', from the perspective of the African ontology' is fully present in the African ethics of 'ubuntu'. This ethics relates to the concepts of ontological being and identity. As Steve Biko (1978), before his death argued that they [Western society] seem to be very concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing out on their spiritual dimension. We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationship. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa "giving the world a more human face".[56]

When the problematic of inter-subjectivity emerged in response to the growth of the social sciences a century ago Husserl offered the first explicit systematic discussion in his phenomenology. He used the term inter-subjectivity to represent the psychological relation between people in contrast to solipsistic individual experience, emphasizing our inherently social being. Neither he nor the scholars after him ever thought of the African contribution to this problem. One of the most distinctive features of African ontology is the element of sociality which, in many cases, has given rise to such concepts as African personality, African identity, African solidarity and many other virtues that attest to the humanistic character of man and his fellow men.[57] Virtues like patience, optimism, mutual sympathy and empathy are eminently characteristic of the African way of life and certainly point to a peculiar mode of existence that extends the realm of the individual potentialities to embrace the life of others and their concerns.

Nyasani, Senghor and Sekou Toure all agree that "Negro African society puts more stress on the group than on the individual, more on solidarity than the activity and needs of the individual, more on the communion of persons than on their autonomy."[58] Sekou Toure describes it even more appropriately by saying that "Africa is fundamentally communocratic. The collective life and social solidarity give it a basis of humanism which many peoples might envy. These human qualities also mean that an individual cannot imagine organizing his life outside that of his family, village or clan."[59]

Thus it can now be attested that in the African world view man is not envisaged as an isolated being like the Leibnizian monad. He is rather born of his parents' love; he grows and develops in

[56] Steve Biko 1978

[57] Joseph M. Nyasani, "The Ontological Significance of 'I' and 'We' in African Philosophy", *I, We and Body, Writings on Philosophy of Difference,* Edited by Heinz Kimmerle (Rotterdam: Verlag B. R. Gruner Amsterdam, 1989),13-23.

[58] Leopold S. Senghor, *On African Socialism,* Transl. Mercer Cook, (New York: 1964), 93-94; Quoted in Joseph Nyasani *I, We and Body,* 13.

[59] Sekou Toure in *Presence Africaine.* Nos. 24 and, February-May 1959. Quoted in Joseph Nyasani *I, We and Body,* 13.

the gravitational field of their affection; he asserts his own independence only to fall in love and provide himself with his own hostages to his fortune. It is thus impossible, in the African context, for man to escape interactions with other people because from his birth to his death he lives in the field of interactions. Put simply, the African world view envisages men as social animals and the primordial basis of their community is not the discovery of an idea but a spontaneous inter-subjectivity. This is popularly expressed by the slogan "I am because we are, and we are because I am."

**African Concept of Person**

In many parts of Africa, man is conceived as a corporate being. He is a particular expression of the clan or community to which he belongs. He is a being-with-others. He lives with others and for others. The expression 'for others' must not be understood as connoting instrumentalization of the human person. It means rather that a man is a person through sharing himself and his possessions with others, or through communion with others.

Engelbert Kofon thinks otherwise that this concept of a person cannot exactly be identified with that in modern dialogical personalism which also conceives man as a being-with-and-for-others, capable of dialoguing with other human beings.[60] The main difference, he suggests, lies in the fact that the former is a specification of the latter. For whereas man in dialogical personalism could survive in any community of human beings as long as he is in communion with them, in many African communities, to survive as a person, man must realise his being-with-and-for-others in a particular, unique society: his extended family which comprises all those to whom he is related by blood, living and dead. The dead members of the family are believed to be still living; so they are actually 'the living-dead' as Professor J.S. Mbiti calls them.[61] He writes that they "solidify and mystically bind together the whole family."[62]

Though man has to realise himself in his family or clan, he does not have to live within the clan area. What is required is that he be in a kind of spiritual communion with the other members of the clan. It is only too obvious then that a person could live within the clan area and yet be cut off from it, while another living outside could continue to be in the clan spirituality. According to Kofon, a person conceived as a biological individual extremely conscious of his rights and basically egoistic is alien to the Bafut (a powerful and warlike people from Cameroon) thought.[63] Rights essentially belong to the whole extended family, or with regard to certain possessions, the whole ethnic group.

Traditionally, a person has always been considered as the biological individual plus his kin. This corporate person, many African communities think and talk in terms of the plural for everything is our thing. Everything he has belongs to him and to others in his family. This is equivalent to saying that he is free to use what he has but must be ready to share it, if need be, with others. This is not necessarily the spirit of Christian charity but basically an inherited existential attitude necessary for survival in communities where each individual is very dependent on others.

Briefly, the individual is a sacramentum communitaris. He carries with him, mystically, the whole community. When he acts, it is he together with the community that acts. His friends and

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[60] N. Engelbert Kofon, *Polygyny in Pre-christian Bafut and New Moral Theological Perspectives,* in *European University Studies,* Series XXIII Theology, vol./Bd. 453, (Berlin, New York: Peter Lang, 1974), 32.
[61] Cf. J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 107
[62] *Ibid.,*
[63] Engelbert Kofon, *Polygyny in Pre-christian Bafut and New Moral Theological Perspectives,* 33.

enemies become friends and enemies of the community. Any young man who cuts off from his family – in the African sense – and becomes a person in what is more or less the Western sense, cuts off from life. He is no longer a person in the African sense. If he is to survive to some degree, he must quit the village and begin his bogus type of existence somewhere else. No matter how prosperous he becomes, he will forever feel something missing in his personality. It is only by re-establishing that link with his kith and kind – which actually is part of himself – that he can once more be a person, his full self. The individual's ties with his family are usually so strong that any violent severing of these often causes psychic disorders or psychosomatic illness. A great amount of the work done by medicine-men and diviners consists in trying to discover the missing link in their patients' personalities and recommending what should be done to get things back to normal.[64] The causes of psychic disorders and psychosomatic illnesses lie mostly in the patient's beliefs and world-view.

The concept of person presented above is evolving. Until experts pronounce themselves on the matter, it seems reasonable to suggest that the African concept of person may have grown out of the close continuous contact between family members who needed one another to survive. Gradually then each would have come to realize that to be oneself, one needed one's 'brother' and that what one had belonged also to one's 'brother.' The idea of person in African cultures is evolving principally due to Westernization and changing social structures. "A given set of values" Professor B. F. Skinner points out, "may explain why a culture functions, possibly without much change for a long time; but no culture is in permanent equilibrium. Contingencies necessarily change."[65]

Genuine evolution of the idea of person must aim at correcting the abuses and exaggeration which resulted from the original concept. Thus our mentality must be subjected to the new realities. People are no longer as materially dependent on fellow members of the family for survival as they were before. The individual is gradually becoming more independent of his clan, and so his possessions are becoming more and more his possessions. There is therefore a growing sense of independent ownership, but with a readiness to share whatever one has with a 'brother' in need. The "Ours" mentality in the past was so exaggerated that the individual seemed to have only a right to use what he had (jus ad rem) but not full personal ownership (jus in re) so that he could dispose of it as he wished. It was impoverishing in its extreme forms. And today, this is still the case in many parts of Africa. Young men who by dint of hard work have risen above the ordinary village standard of living, have a hard time trying to correct this attitude.

The "Ours" mentality, which is very praise-worthy, is really sapping if exaggerated. Industrious young men and women, exasperated in the village, now prefer to work away from the village, but, unless they become egoistic, still continue to support other members of the family back in the village. As long as they do that they are still considered in communion with the rest of the family. In the past a person was big or small depending on the size of both his nuclear family

[64] Paraphernalia and superstitious overtones aside, there is no doubt, as Dr. E. F. Torrey brilliantly shows, that some of them do a good job. In fact he thinks they carry on a profession similar to that of Western psychiatrists. (CF. E. F. Torrey, *The Mind Game: Witchdoctors and Psychiatrists,* (New York: Bantam books, 1973). "The techniques used by Western psychiatrists are, with few exceptions, on exactly the same scientific plane as the techniques used by witchdoctors. If one is magic then so is the other. If one is prescientific, then so is the other,"

[64] CF. E. F. Torrey) Briefly the principle states that a therapeutic effect will be produced in a disordered personality if the therapist can "make the correct interpretation" or "find the right name" of the disorder.

[65] Cf. B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* (New York: Bantum Books, Inc. 1972), 122.

(wives and children) and extended family, the relationships he acquired with others through marriage, the position he held in the village (chief or noble), wealth and profession (native doctor, diviner etc.). That is fast changing because new values have been introduced into the villages. Wealth is the principal determinant of greatness, but to a great extent, this is consequent on education and active participation in the running and shaping of society.

**African Sense of Community**

The conception of man as a particular expression of a particular community leads to a feeling of togetherness among the members. The friends and enemies of any one member, his joys and sorrows, become those of the community. This deep sense of extended brotherhood and family solidarity expresses itself in various social activities – birth, marriage and death celebrations, for instance. Drinking societies, village feasts and market days draw the people together to express their unity and feeling of brotherhood. Communal engagements like house-building, farming and grass-cutting (for thatching) test the solidarity of the members. Those who do not take part risk being ostracised. That rarely happens because the shared knowledge and experience of the insufficiency of the individual are usually strong reasons for co-operation with others in society. Often, however, it is the feeling of brotherhood that predominates. "One hand cannot tie a bundle" is a popular African proverb. It reminds Africans of the insufficiency of the individual, stresses the need for co-operation and reveals the achievement that results from co-operation.

**Conclusion**

In brief it can be concluded that the issue of inter-subjectivity is paramount to the African ontology. The African concept has valuable treasure chest of insight to offer to the world in relation to debates of inter-subjectivity. Through it the major geo-political issues of the people around the shrinking globe can understand each other and relate in unity to their shared world. How can the rich and the poor see eye to eye on global ecology; how can former colonial powers and former colonies work together for peace and mutual benefit; how can populations with incompatible politics, ideology, religion and economic interests co-exist? We do not adequately grasp how people understand each other even in dyads, let alone in international communities. But the element of true humanity or humanness from the perspective of African ontology relates well the concepts of ontological being and identity. It imparts a clear and precise understanding of the way consciousness develops and interrelates with other aspects of the universe, which includes all the vast depths of not only the physical, but also the psychological, spiritual, cultural and sociological 'Kosmos'. The human person is seen as an organic hierarchy. Any change in this organism will affect all the parts; no aspect of a structure can be altered without affecting the entire structure; each whole contains part and is itself part of a larger whole. The whole is always more than the sum of the parts precisely because it provides the means by which the parts are held together. Without this principle, one would be left with isolated parts, or only 'heaps' instead of 'wholes'. The essence of the African approach is that it stresses that true identity can never be validated simply by appealing to one level of being. The nature man and the spirit world constitute one fluid coherent unit. The spiritual and not the material, physical world is pre-eminent in the minds of Africans. This is what forms the true basis of inter-subjectivity.

# *IRUGA: A Translation of Plato's Symposium into Gĩkũyũ*

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**Abstract**

The translation of Plato's *Symposium* into Gĩkũyũ language is offered as a methodological contribution to African philosophy. There was a time when such people as Hegel, David Hume, and Levy Bruhl declared African philosophy non-existent, given that, according to them, the African is not rational and is devoid of logic. This view was dethroned with the publication in 1945 of Placide Tempels' *La Philosophie bantoue*. This book showed that not only are Africans capable of philosophy, but indeed have a philosophy. After this discovery, scholars, both Africans and non-Africans, started to write rather energetically about African philosophy from different perspectives. This author is among those who have contributed to this philosophy in his book *The Wisdom and Philosophy of African Proverbs: the Gĩkũyũ World-view.* In this work the author locates the source of authentic African philosophy in African languages, especially in proverbs. Up to now writing about African philosophy has taken place in foreign languages such English, French, German, Italian, etc. Some of us feel that it is now time to write African philosophy in an African language. To do that, however, we need philosophical tools. To obtain those tools it is necessary to render philosophical concepts such as essence, existence, substance, accident, cause, effect, absolute, uniqueness, object, end, etc. into an African language. The translation of Plato's *Symposium* into the Gĩkũyũ language is an attempt at the creation of such tools, as one will see in the accompanying glossary (to appear with the full paper). What helped me do this work is the existence of two dictionaries, namely *English-Kikuyu* and *Kikuyu-English.* The two are edited by T. G. Benson from materials compiled by A. Ruffell Barlow, a lay missionary who worked among the Gĩkũyũ. I want to appeal to African philosophers whose languages possess dictionaries like these to start writing in their mother tongues. For philosophers who lack these tools, their priority should be to create them. In this endeavour, Bible Societies can profitably be consulted, without forgetting the linguists teaching in our universities. To write in our mother tongues will endow African philosophy with more maturity, and will create a necessity of our work being translated into other languages just as it happens in European and other languages. If this takes place, we Africans shall enhance our dignity, and feel as equals among equals.

## Introduction

This dialogue of Plato is also called *Banquet.* I have used this title in my translation. The purpose of the dialogue is to explore the nature and object of love. There are ten characters in the dialogue, Socrates being one of them. One by one, each character gives their answer as to what love is and its object. One notices that the ideas on this topic get more and more refined as one goes along, and this refinement reaches its apogee in Socrates. For the purpose of this paper, I shall only use the contribution of Socrates, and that selectively. [However, the appended glossary embraces the whole dialogue.]

In summary, Socrates, through his interlocutor lady Diotima, says that love is the desire to possess something good such as beauty, intelligence, courage, etc., in order to attain happiness as the ultimate object.

The justification for translating this dialogue of Plato into an African language is in order to make African philosophy come of age. There was a time when Africa used to be called a dark continent, and without philosophy. This myth was overthrown when in 1945 the Belgian missionary, Placide Tempels, published *La philosophie bantu* which demonstrated that after all Africans have a philosophy. This was followed by African and non-African scholars writing massively on African philosophy, but in French, English, or some other non-African language up till now. I personally feel that the time has come to write philosophy in African languages. However, before we can do that, we need to be able to render philosophical concepts into our languages as the appended Gĩkũyũ glossary shows.

In producing this glossary, I was helped by the two dictionaries quoted in the bibliography. I am therefore appealing to African philosophers who would like to use this method to avail themselves of such dictionaries in their languages, and if they do not exist, to campaign for their creation.

However, dictionaries do not necessarily contain all the words of a language. To meet this limitation, recourse can be had from a group of people versed in the language. Through their exchange of ideas, they can come up with the term they are looking for. An example of this is given by a group of Gĩkũyũ scholars who wanted to render the words 'consonant' and 'vowel' into their language. Using the analogy of how traditionally women made a basket (*kĩondo)*, they were able to get the words for these concepts, which have become popular in that language. But I am afraid that this may not be possible in future, given the little value and emphasis accorded African languages in the school curriculum. So African philosophers have an added responsibility of convincing their respective governments of the importance of their indigenous languages. If African languages are accorded the importance they deserve, I foresee scholars starting language associations for the promotion of the former, and others, especially philosophers, coming up with journals in which to exchange ideas of their discipline in an indigenous tongue. Given such a situation, it will be possible to evaluate each other's work, translations included.

Early missionaries helped render our languages into writing, using the Roman transcription. We African scholars (and in particular we philosophers) must take over from where the missionaries left off and develop our languages even further. Certainly, this is one way (and I would call it the best) of making philosophy practical. What follows now is Socrates' contribution to the dialogue rendered into Gĩkũyũ.[1]

| | Kikuyu | English | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 201d | (1)'Reke ngũtige na thaayũ [Agathoni] na ngerie gũtaarĩria ũhoro wa Wendo ta ũrĩa ndaiguire kuuma he mũtumia wa Mantinea, wetagwo Diotima. | (1) 'Now I shall recount to you all a discourse about Love which I once heard given by a woman from Mantinea, who was called Diotima. | 201d |

[1] We are sincerely grateful to Fr. Cyrus Karuthi Mwangi, without whose help we could not establish the authenticity and acuracy of the translation of this text.

(2)Kwarĩ na maũndũ mangĩ manene eekĩĩte. Hĩndĩ ĩmwe mbere ya mũrimũ wa mũthiro hindĩ ĩrĩa andũ a Athenia maarutaga magongona nĩ geetha ndũgooke-rĩ, nĩaahotire kũũtĩrĩrĩria mĩaka ikũmi.

(3)No ũndũ ũrĩa ũtũkonĩĩ rĩu nĩ atĩ aarĩ mwarĩmu wakwa wa maũndũ ma Wendo. Ngĩhũthĩra maũndũ marĩa Agathoni na nĩĩ twaiguithanĩria ta kĩambĩrĩria kĩa ũhoro, nĩngũgeria gũtaarĩria wega o ũrĩa ndahota ũrĩa anjĩĩrire.

(4)Ta ũrĩa ũtwonirie wega, Agathoni, nĩtwagĩrĩrĩirwo nĩ kwamba kwonania wega Wendo nĩ kĩĩ mbere ya kwarĩrĩria ũhoro wa
201e maciaro maguo. Ũndũ ũrĩa mũhũthũ mũno nĩ gũcookera ciũria na macookio macio ta ũrĩa twekire na mũtumia ũcio.

(5)Ciugo iria ndahũthĩire ngĩaria naake ciakuhĩrĩrĩirie mũno iria Agathoni anjarĩirie na cio. Ndoigire atĩ Wendo nĩ ngai nene mũno ĩrĩa ĩbatiĩ gwĩtwo thaka. No nĩandutire mahĩtia nĩ gwĩciiria atĩ Wendo nĩ mũthaka na nĩ mwega ta ũrĩa nderĩĩte Agathoni.

(6)Ngĩkĩmuuria, "… ũrenda kuuga atĩa, Diotima?" Wendo nĩ mũcong'i na nĩ mũũru? Naake agĩcookia, "Ndũkagwete maũndũ ta macio. Ũgwĩciiria atĩ kĩndũ gĩothe gĩtarĩ gĩthaka no mũhaka gĩkorwo kĩrĩ gĩcong'i?"

(7)Naake Socrato agĩcookia, "Ĩĩ, nĩ guo
202a nguona." Diotima agĩthiĩ na mbere akĩũria: "Na kĩndũ gĩothe gĩtarĩ na ũũgĩ nĩ kĩriitu?" Kaĩ ũtooĩ atĩ kũrĩ meciiria marĩ gatagatĩ ka ũũgĩ na ũrimũ?"

(8)"Ũrenda kuuga atĩa?" Socrato akĩũria. Naake Diotima akĩmũcookeria, "Mũndũ gwĩtĩkia maũndũ na ma no akaremwo nĩ kũheeana gĩtũmi kĩa mo.

(9) Nĩ ma atĩ meciiria ma mũthemba ũcio matingĩĩtwo ũmenyi tondũ gũtirĩ ũndũ ũtarĩ gũtumi ũbatiĩ gwĩtwo ũguo; no ningĩ no gũkorwo kũrĩ mahĩtia kũwĩta ũrimũ.

(10) Ũngĩĩta meciiria mekũhuutia ũũma ũrimũ atĩa? Ũhoro wa ma nĩ atĩ gwĩtĩkia

(2) She was an expert on that subject and on many other subjects too. There was one occasion in particular, before the plague, when she procured for the Athenians, after they had performed sacrifices, a ten-year postponement of that disease.

(3) She it was who taught me the whole subject of love, and it is the things she had to say about it that I shall try to recount to you, starting from the conclusions that Agathon and I reached together but speaking now on my own as best I can.

(4) As you demonstrated, Agathon, one should first define who Love is and what he is like, before talking about his characteristic activity. 201e 'I think it will be easiest to 201e
proceed as did my visitor from Mantinea with me on that occasion, by question and answer.

(5) I said much the same sort of things to her as Agathon said to me just now, that Love was a great god and that he was love of what is beautiful. She set about refuting me with those arguments that I have just used against Agathon, demonstrating that according to my own account Love was neither beautiful nor good.

(6) 'And I protested. ''What do you mean, Diotima? Are you actually saying Love is ugly and bad?''

''Watch what you say!'' she exclaimed. ''Do you really think that if something is not beautiful it has to be ugly?''

(7) 202a''I certainly do''. ''And something that 202a
is not wise is ignorant, I suppose? Have you not noticed that there is something in between wisdom and ignorance?''

(8) ''And what is that?'' ''Correct belief. I am talking about having a correct belief without being able to give a reason for it.

(9) Don't you realise that this state cannot be called knowing – for how can it be knowledge if it lacks reason? And it is not ignorance either – for how can it be ignorance if it has hit upon the truth?

(10) Correct belief clearly occupies just such a middle state, between wisdom and

maũndũ na kinyi nĩ guo ndeeta ũrimũ o ro rĩu--ũndũ ũrĩ gatagatĩinĩ ka ũũgĩ na ũrimũ.

(11) Na niĩ ngĩcookia, "Ũguo nĩndeetĩkia."

"Kwoguo tiga kuuga atĩ kĩndũ gĩtarĩ gĩthaka nĩ gĩcong'i, na kĩndũ gĩtarĩ kĩega nĩ kĩũru.

202b Tiga gwĩciria atĩ tondu Wendo ti mwega kana mũthaka, no mũhaka ũkorwo ũrĩ mũcong'i kana mũũru, no ũrĩ hau gatagatĩinĩ."

(12)Ngĩcookia ngiuga, "O na kũrĩ o ũguo-rĩ, andũ oothe metĩkĩĩtie atĩ we nĩ ngai nene."

(13) "Rĩrĩa woiga andũ oothe-rĩ, ũrenda kuuga arĩa matamũũĩ, kana o na arĩa mamũũĩ?"

(14) "Ngwenda kuuga andũ oothe oothe."

(15) Hĩndĩ ĩyo Diotima akĩgũa na mĩtheko, akiuga,

202c (16) "Hĩ, Socrato, ndikũona ũrĩa angĩĩtwo ngai nene nĩ andũ arĩa moigaga atĩ we o na ti ngai o na hanini."

(17) Na niĩ ngĩũria, "Acio nĩ a?" "Ũrĩ ũmwe na niĩ ndĩ ũrĩa ũngĩ." "Ũrenda kuuga atĩa"? "Nĩ ũndũ mũhũthũ mũno; no uuge atĩrĩ, kana ti guo, atĩ ngai ciothe nĩ ngenu na nĩ thaaka? Womĩrĩria gwĩciiria atĩ kũrĩ o na ngai ĩmwe ĩtarĩ ngenu na thaka

(18) "Aca! Aca!" "Kuuga ngenu ũrarĩrĩria gĩkeno kĩrũmu kĩa ũndũ mwega na mũthaka?" "Ĩĩni."

202d (19)"No giithĩ ndũetĩkĩra atĩ tondũ Wendo ndũrĩ na wega na ũthaka atĩ nĩ kĩo wĩriragĩria indo ici." "Ĩĩ nĩndetĩkĩra." Na atĩ kĩndũ gĩtarĩ na wega na ũthaka gĩtingĩkorwo kĩrĩ ngai?" "Ũgo nĩ ma." "Nĩũgũkĩona atĩ ũrĩ ũmwe wa arĩa metĩkĩĩtie atĩ Wendo ti ngai."

(20) "Kaĩ Wendo ũkĩrĩ kĩĩ," ngĩũria. "Kindũ gĩkuuaga?"

(21) "Ti guo o na hanini." "Kwoguo ũkĩrĩ kĩĩ?" "Kũringana na kĩgerekanio gĩakwa hau kabere, ũrĩ gatagatĩ ka indo iria ikuuaga na iria itakuuaga."

(22) "Kai ũkĩrĩ kĩndũ kĩa mũthemba ũrĩkũ, Diotima?" "Nĩ ngoma nene, Socrato; kĩndũ

202e gĩothe gĩĩtagwo ngoma nĩ nuthu ngai na

ignorance''. ''

(11) That is true'', I said.202b''Don't then 202b
insist that what is not beautiful has to be ugly, and what is not good has to be bad. Similarly with Love. When you yourself admit that Love is not good and not beautiful that is no reason for thinking he has to be ugly and bad. He is something between the two''.

(12) ''At any rate surely everyone agrees that he is a great god''.

(13) ''By 'everyone', she went on, ''do you mean all who know, or do you include those who are ignorant?''

(14) ''I mean absolutely everyone''.

(15) Then she laughed.

(16) 202c''How could Love be acknowledged 202c
to be a great god by those who say he is not a god at all?''

(17) ''Who are they?'' I asked. ''Why, you for one, and I for another''. ''How can you say that?'' I demanded. ''Easily'', she replied. ''Answer me this. Don't you say that all gods are happy and beautiful? Would you go so far as to say that any god was not?''

(18) ''No, by Zeus, I would not''.

''And don't you mean by the happy those who are in possession of what is good and beautiful?'' ''Certainly''.

(19) 202d''Yet in the case of Love you have 202d
agreed that it is through his lack of good and beautiful things that he desires those very things he lacks?'' ''Yes, I have''. ''So how could one be a god who has no portion of what is beautiful or good?'' ''Not possibly, as it now appears''. ''Do you see then'', she said, ''that you also do not believe that Love is a god?''

(20) ''In that case'', I said, ''what might Love be? Is he mortal?''

(21) ''No''. ''What then?'' ''As in the previous instances'', she said, ''something in between mortal and immortal''.

(22) ''What is he then, Diotima?'' ''He is a great spirit, 202e Socrates. All spirits are 202e
intermediate between god and mortal''.

nuthu mũndũ."

(23) "Kĩndũ kĩu gĩĩkaga atĩa?" "Gũtaũra na gũtwara ndũmĩrĩri kwĩ ngai kuuma kwa andũ, na kuuma kwĩ ngai gũthiĩ kũrĩ andũ, mahooya na magong'ona kuuma kũrĩ andũ na mawatho na iheeo kuuma kũrĩ ngai.

(24) Tondũ nĩ mũthemba wa gatagatĩĩnĩ, ngoma ĩnyiitithanĩĩtie cierĩ ta ndaraca, na ĩkagiria thĩ na igũrũ ciatũkane maita meerĩ. Na njĩra ya kĩndũ kĩa mũthemba ũyũ nĩkũonekaga ũragũri wothe wa athĩnjĩri
203a ngai thĩĩnĩ wa magong'ona, mambura, gũthemengwo, ciama, na ũrogi.

(25) Ngai ndarutithanagia wĩra na andũ maitho kwa maitho. Ũkuruhani na ũkinyanĩria wa ũhoro gatagatĩ ka ngai na andũ, hĩndĩ ya toro kana ya gũũkĩra, wĩkagwo kũhĩtũkĩra kwa ngoma.

(26) Mũndũ ũrĩa ũrĩ na ũhoti wa maũndũ macio nĩ mũndũ wa kĩrooho, naake mũndũ ũrĩa ũhoti wake ũrĩ wa ũthondeki wa indo tu, nĩ mũndũ wa gũũkũ thĩ. Ngoma nĩ nyingĩ na cia mĩthemba mĩingĩ, na ĩmwe yacio ĩĩtagwo Wendo.

204a (27) "Ũũma wa maũndũ nĩ ũyũ: Gũtirĩ ngai yendeete kũũhĩga, tondũ ikĩrĩ njũgĩ, na no ũgũo andũ arĩa aangĩ oogĩ, angĩkorwo marĩ kuo. O na ningĩ andũ irimũ matiendeete ũũgĩ tondũ thĩĩna wa ũkĩĩgu ni ũyũ atĩ mũndũ ũtarĩ ũthaka kana wega, kana ũguũku nĩeiganĩĩte biu, na mũndũ wothe ũtetĩkĩĩtie atĩ nĩagĩĩte kĩndũ kĩna nderiragĩria kĩrĩa atetĩkĩĩtie atĩ ndarĩ."

(28) "Ngĩkĩũria atĩrĩ, 'Arĩa mendeete ũũgĩ nĩ a, angĩkorwo ti arĩa oogĩ kana irimũ'"?
204b "Kaana nogacookie kĩũria kĩu. Hatarĩ nganya nĩ arĩa marĩ gatagatĩĩnĩ, na Wendo nĩ ũmwe wacio.

(29)Ũũgĩ nĩ kĩndũ kĩmwe gĩthaka mũno, na Wendo nĩ wendi wa ũthaka, na nĩ ta kuuga atĩ Wendo no mũhaka ũkorwo ũrĩ wendi wa ũũgĩ, na kwa ũguo ũrĩ handũ gatagatĩ ka ũũgĩ na ũrimũ.

(30)[…] No harĩ meciiria maku makonĩĩ
204c Wendo, hau hatirĩ ũndũ wa kũhũũrĩrwo

(23)''What is the function of a spirit?'' I asked. ''Interpreting and conveying all that passes between gods and humans: from humans, petitions and sacrificial offerings, and from gods, instructions and the favours they return.

(24) Spirits, being intermediary, fill the space between the other two, so that all are bound together into one entity. It is by means of spirits that all divination can take place, the whole craft of seers and priests, with their sacrifices, rites 203a and spells, and all prophecy and magic. 203a

(25) Deity and humanity are completely separate, but through the mediation of spirits all converse and communication from gods to humans, waking and sleeping, is made possible.

(26) The man who is wise in these matters is a man of the spirit, whereas the man who is wise in a skill or a manual craft, which is a different sort of expertise, is materialistic. These spirits are many and of many kinds, and one of them is Love''.

(27) 204a ''The truth of the matter is this. No god pursues wisdom or desires to be wise because gods are wise already, and no one who is wise already pursues wisdom. But neither do ignorant people pursue wisdom or desire to be wise, for the problem of ignorance is this, that someone who is neither fine and good nor wise is still quite satisfied with himself. No one desires what he does not think he lacks''. 204a

(28) ''But who then are those who pursue wisdom, Diotima'', I asked, ''if they are neither the wise nor the ignorant?'' 204b ''Even a child would know the answer to that by now'', she replied. ''It is those who are in between, and Love is one of them. 204b

(29) For wisdom is a most beautiful thing, and Love is love of the beautiful, so Love must be a philosopher, and a philosopher is in a middle state between a wise man and an ignorant one.

(30) […] ''Judging from what you say, I think you believed 204c that Love was that which is 204c

rũhĩ. Tũgĩcookera ũrĩa uugire igũrũ rĩa Wendo, tukũona atĩ nĩũringanĩirie Wendo na kĩndũ kĩrĩa kĩende handũ ha na kĩndũ kĩrĩa gĩcamaga Wendo. Nĩkĩo wĩciiririe atĩ Wendo nĩ mũthaka mũno.

loved, not that which loves. This is the reason, I suppose, why Love appeared to you to be supremely beautiful.

(31) Hatirĩ nganja atĩ mworoto wa Wendo nĩ kĩndũ gĩthaka, kĩororo, kĩhingu, na kĩagĩrĩire gwĩtwo gĩkenu. No kĩndũ kĩrĩa gĩcamaga Wendo nĩ kĩa mwanya mũno, ta ũrĩa ndarĩĩkia gũtarĩria."

(31) But in fact the one which is really beautiful and delicate, flawless and endowed with every blessing, is the beloved object, while the one which loves is by contrast of an entirely different character, such as I have just described''.

(32) Na niĩ ngĩmũria, "Ta kĩnjĩĩre, we mũraata wakwa, tondũ ciugo ciaku nĩ cia gwĩtĩkio-rĩ, Wendo wĩkaga andũ atĩa ongorwo ũguo nĩ guo ũhaana?".

(32) ''All right, Diotima'', I replied. ''You are very persuasive. If Love is as you say, what need does he supply in the lives of people?''

(33) "One, ũguo nĩ guo ngũgũthomithia rĩu, Socrato. Mũmbĩre na kĩhuumo kĩa
204d Wendo nĩ ta ũrĩa ndarĩĩkia gũtaarĩria, na ningĩ kũringana na wee Wendo nĩ wendi wa ũthaka. Ĩtũngĩũrio ũũ: Wendi wa ũthaka ũhĩmbĩirie kĩĩ, Socrato na Diotima? Kana kũũria na kini: 'Mũrooto wa Wendo ũrĩa ũiguuagwo nĩ mwendi wa ũthaka nĩ ũrĩkũ'?"

(33) ''That is the next thing I will try to teach you, Socrates'', she said. ''I 204d have just described Love's nature and parentage. Also, he is love of beautiful things, according to you. But what if someone asked us, 'What does it mean, Socrates and Diotima, to say that Love is love of beautiful things?' Or to put it more clearly: what does the lover of beautiful things actually desire? 204d

(34) Ngĩcookia ngiuga, "Mũorooto wake nĩ kũgĩa na indo thaka." "Kuuga ũguo nĩ gwĩta kĩũria kĩngĩ, na nĩkĩo gĩĩkĩ: Mũndũ ũrĩa ũkumbatĩirie ũthaka-rĩ, e na uumithio ũrĩkũ?" Ndoigire atĩ ndingĩhota gũcookia kĩũria kĩu narua.

(34) ''To possess them'', I replied. ''But your answer raises yet another question: what will he gain by possessing beautiful things?'' 'I said I certainly could not give a ready answer to that question.

(35) Agĩkiuga atĩrĩ, "Nĩtũgarũranie cuigo
204e citũ, na handũ ha 'ũthaka' twĩkĩre 'wega'. Socrato, mũorooto wa Wendo wa mwendi wa wega nĩ ũrĩkũ?" Ngĩcookia, "Gũkumbata wega." "Naake mũndũ ũrĩa ũkumbatĩĩte wega-rĩ, nĩ kĩĩ kĩega akoona?"

(35) ''Well'', she said, ''suppose one changed the question and asked 204e about the good instead of the beautiful: 'Come now, Socrates, what does the lover of good things actually desire?''' ''To possess the good things'', I replied. ''And what will he gain if he possesses them?'' 204e

(36) "Ndĩroona kĩũria kĩu gĩ kĩhũthũ: akaagĩa na gĩkeno. Tondũ hiihi gĩkeno kiumanaga na gũkumbata wega, na mũndũ arĩĩkia gũcookia ũguo, ciũria
205a nĩciathira. Gũtirĩ bata wa gũthingatia kĩũria gĩĩkĩ: 'Mũndũ endaga gĩkeno nĩkĩ'?"

(36) ''Ah, that is an easier question to answer: he will be happy''. ''Yes'', she replied. ''The happy are happy through the possession 205a of good things, and there is no need to ask further why anyone wishes to be happy. 205a

(37) "Rĩu nũkũona ta wĩrirĩria na Wendo ũyũ ũrĩ kũrĩ andũ oothe, na atĩ hingo ciothe andũ oothe nĩmeriragĩria gũkumbata wega kana atĩa?" "Ũguo nĩ guo ndĩrenda kuuga: indo ici cĩerĩ irĩ kũrĩ andũ oothe."

(37) ''About this wish, this desire – do you think it is common to all? Do all humans wish always to possess good things, or what?'' ''Yes'', I replied, ''it is as you say a wish common to all''.

(38) “Socrato, ongorwo harĩ kĩndũ kĩmwe andũ oothe mendete-rĩ, nĩkĩ kĩgiragia tuuge atĩ andũ oothe mena Wendo, no tũkoiga atĩ amwe me na Wendo na arĩa aangĩ matirĩ?”

(39) “Hiihi gĩtũmi nĩ kĩrĩkũ?” “Gũtirĩ bata wa kũgegeara. Ũũma nĩ atĩ nĩtũnyiitaga wendo wa mũthemba mũna tũkaũũtua Wendo guo mwene--ũria ũri mũnene mũno, na hĩndĩ ĩyo tũkahe mawendo ma mĩthemba ĩyo ĩngĩ marĩĩtwa.

(40) Wahota kũũhe kĩgerekanio kĩngĩ kĩa mwarĩrie ta ũcio?” “Ĩĩni. Kĩhumo gĩa kiugo marebeta nĩ gũthondeka tu, na gũthondeka, ta ũrĩa ũũĩ, nĩ kwa mĩthemba mĩingĩ. Gĩĩko gĩothe kĩrĩa gĩtumaga kĩndũ gĩũke kuuma tũhũ nogĩĩtwo marebeta, na cĩĩko ciothe thĩĩnĩ wa mũthondekere wa indo cia gwacũhio na mooko nĩ ta marebeta, na arĩa oothe maciĩthondekaga mageetwo atungi a marebeta.”

(41) “Ĩĩ. No matiĩtagwo atungi a marebeta, no nĩmaheeagwo marĩĩtwa mangĩ. Kuuma maũndũ moothe megiĩ ũthondeki, rũhonge rũmwe rũrĩa rũrũmbũyagia ũini nĩrwamũre na rũkaheo rĩĩtwa ‘wothe’. Rũhonge rũũrũ rwĩtagwo marebeta, na arĩa marũrũmbũiyagia magetwo athondeki a marebeta.

(42) Ũguo nĩ ma.” “O na Wendo no ũguo. Rĩĩtwa wendo rĩhĩmbĩirie mawĩrirĩria moothe ma wega na gĩkeno. Ũguo nĩ guo Wendo kĩhoti-oothe na wa kũguucĩrĩria ũhaana biũbiũ). No wĩrirĩria ũyũ wĩonanagia na njĩra nyingĩ. Andũ arĩa mendeete mbeeca kana hinya wa mwĩrĩ kana ũũgĩ, matiĩtagwo eendani, no andũ arĩa meena merirĩria merekeire o njĩra imwe tu meetagwo rĩĩtwa rĩĩrĩ rĩa wendani.”

(43) Na nĩ ngiuga, “Ũrĩa ũroiga ũrooneka ũrĩ ũndũ wa ma.” Naake agĩthiĩ na mbere akiuga, “Kũrĩ woni (theory) uugaga atĩ eendani ni andũ arĩa maraacaria nuthu yao eene, no nĩ ngĩona mũraata wakwa-rĩ, Wendo ti kwĩrirĩria nũthu yaku kana kĩndũ

(38) ‘‘Why is it, then, Socrates, that if in fact all people always love the same things we do not describe all people as being in love, instead of saying that some are and that others are not?’’

(39) ‘‘I wonder about that myself’’, I replied. ‘‘There is no need to wonder’’, she said. ‘‘The reason is that we are picking out one particular kind of love and giving it the name which applies to all, but for the other kinds of love we use different names’’.

(40) ‘‘Can you give me another example?’’ I asked. ‘‘Yes, there is this one. You realise that the word ‘poetry’ [originally meant ‘creation’ and that ‘creation’] is a term of wide application. When something comes into existence which has not existed before, the whole cause of this is ‘creation’. The products of every craft are creations and the craftsmen who make them are all creators’’.

(41) ‘‘That is so’’. ‘‘But you also know’’, she went on, ‘‘that they are not all called creators. They have other names, and only that one part of creation which is separated off from the rest and is the part that is concerned with song and verse is called by the original name of the whole class, which is poetry, and only those to whom this part of creation belongs are called poets’’.

(42) ‘‘That is so’’. ‘‘Well, the same is true of love. In general the truth is that for everyone, all desire for good things and for being happy is ‘guileful and most mighty love’. People who turn to love in one of its many other forms – money-making or athletics or philosophy – are not then called ‘lovers’ or said to be ‘in love’. It is only those who ardently pursue one particular form who attract those terms which should belong to the whole class: they alone feel ‘love’, or are ‘in love’, or are ‘lovers’.

(43) ‘‘You are very probably right’’, I said. ‘‘Yes, and you will hear it said that lovers are people who are looking for their own other half. But what I say, my friend, is that love is not directed towards a half, or a whole either, unless that half or whole is actually

o kĩrĩkũ, angĩkorwo nuthu ĩyo kana kĩndũ kĩu o na kĩrĩ kĩgima ti kĩega. Andũ makoragwo meharĩirie kũrengwo mooko kana magũrũ mangĩmenya atĩ cĩĩga icio nĩ ndũaru.

(44) Nĩĩ ngĩona ũũma nĩ atĩ andũ matiĩgwatagĩrĩra indo ciao tiga hiihi na njĩra ya kũringithania ũndũ mwega na kĩndũ kĩao, na ũndũ mũũru na kĩndũ gĩtarĩ kĩao.

206a (45) Wendo woroteete o kĩndũ kĩrĩa kiega tu. Nĩũgwĩtĩkia?" "Hatarĩ nganja." "Twakĩhoota kuuga cararũkũ atĩ andũ mendeete ũndũ mwega?" "Ĩĩ." "No giithĩ tũtibatiĩ kũongerera atĩ mũoroto wa Wendo nĩ gwĩkumbatĩra kĩndũ kĩega?" "Ĩĩ." Na to kũgĩa na kĩo kahinda gaaka, no nĩ hĩndĩ ciothe?" "Nĩ ma." "Na njĩra nguhĩ, Wendo nĩ wĩrirĩria wa gũkorwo na kĩndũ kĩega hingo ciothe." "Nĩ ma biu."

206b (46) "Rĩu tondũ nĩtwonania na njĩra nginyanĩru atĩ Wendo nĩ kĩĩ-rĩ, nĩtwagĩrĩirwo nĩ kwĩũũria nĩ na njĩra ĩrĩkũ na cĩĩko irĩkũ andũ maagĩrĩirwo nĩ kũonania wĩrirĩria wao mũnene wa Wendo. Ũndũ ũyũ nĩ ũrĩkũ? Wahota kũnjĩĩra?"

(47) "Korũo no hote, Diotima, ndibatiĩ gũkorwo ngĩigua wĩkĩrĩrwo mũnene ũũ nĩ ũndũ wa ũũgĩ waku kana gũũka cukuru yaku kwĩruta ũndũ ũyũ guo mwene."

(48) "Nĩngũgĩkwĩra. Wĩra ũyũ nĩ gũciara kĩndũ gĩthaka, na gũciarwo kũu nĩ gwa kĩmwĩrĩ kana kĩrooho." "Ũrĩa ũroiga nĩũkwenda gũtabutwo tondũ ndiranyiita."

(49) "Nĩnguuga ũguo na kini na njĩra nyumbũku." Socrato, andũ oothe kũrĩa gwothe maarũma marĩ njeme ya gũciara na njĩra ya kĩrooho kana kĩmwĩrĩ, na maagimara nĩ maiguuaga wendi wa gũciara ciana, na no mũhaka meeke ũguo thĩĩnĩ wa ũthaka na ti thĩĩnĩ wa ũcong'i.

(50) Maũndũ maya moothe nĩmakonainie na ũũngai. Thĩĩnĩ wa ũciari, kĩndũ gĩa

something good, since people are quite prepared to have their own hands or feet amputated if they believe that these parts of themselves are diseased.

(44) So it is not, I think, part of themselves that people cling to, unless there is someone who calls what belongs to him and is his own the good and what does not belong to him the bad.

206a (45) The fact is that the only 206a thing people love is the good. Do you think there is anything else?'' ''By Zeus, there is nothing else'', I said. ''Well then'', she went on, ''can we say without qualification that people love the good?'' ''Yes'', I replied. ''But shouldn't we add that what they love is that the good should be theirs?'' ''We should''. ''And not only that'', she said, ''but that the good should always be theirs?'' ''Yes, we must add that too''. ''Then we can sum up'', she said. ''Love is the desire to possess the good always''. ''That is very true''. 206a

206b (46) ''Then since this is always what love is'', she said, ''can you tell me 206b how those who pursue it go about it? What are they doing that the zeal and drive they show can be called love? What does this activity really consist of? Can you say?'' 206b

(47) ''If I knew the answer, Diotima'', I replied, ''I wouldn't be so admiring of you for your wisdom, or coming to you to learn these very things''.

(48) ''Then I shall tell you'', she said. ''It is giving birth in the beautiful, in respect of body and of soul''. ''I need an interpreter to tell me what you mean'', I said. ''I don't understand''.

(49) ''Then I shall speak more clearly'', she replied. ''All human beings are pregnant, Socrates, in body and in soul, and when we reach maturity it is natural that we desire to give birth. It is not possible to give birth in what is ugly, only in the beautiful.

(50) I say that because the intercourse of a man and a woman is a kind of giving birth. It

gũkua nĩkĩheeagwo hinya wa kwaga gũkua. Na guo ũndũ ũyũ ndũngĩĩkĩka hatarĩ waganĩrĩrĩru, na ũcong'i ndũaganĩrĩire na
206d kĩndũ o kĩrĩku kĩa ũũngai, no ũthaka nĩ waganĩrĩrĩire na guo.

(51) Nĩkĩo Ũthaka ĩrĩ ngai ĩrĩa ĩramataga maũndũ ma ũciari, na nĩkĩo mũndũ ũrĩa ũraigua wendi wa gũciara angĩtũngana na Ũthaka nĩaiguaga ũhooreri na gĩkeno kĩa ũhuurũko irĩa itũmaga ũciari woneke.
(52) No rĩrĩa ũcong'i ũrĩ hakuhĩ maũndũ makagarũrũka. Hĩndĩ ĩyo Ũthaka ũgakũnja ũthiũ na ũrĩ na kĩeha ũgecookia na thĩĩnĩ, ũkenyiihia na ũkaremwo ni kũnyiitana na guo, na ũkaiga ruuo ngoroinĩ. Kwoguo
206e mũndũ ũrĩa wĩna wendi mũhiũ nĩaguucagio na hinya nĩ Ũthaka tondũ nĩũhotaga kũhonokia mũndũ kuuma ũgũmĩri wa maruuo make.

(53) "Socrato, mũorooto wa Wendo ti ũthaka ta ũrĩa ũreciiria." "Mũorooto ũcio ũkĩrĩ ũrĩkũ?" "Nĩ gũciara na ũthaka." "Na ma?" "Nĩ guo, ndiraheenania. Rĩu-rĩ, nĩkĩ gĩtumaga gũciara gũtuĩke mũorooto wa Wendo?

(54) Gĩtũmi nĩ atĩ gũciara nĩgũkuhĩrĩĩrie
207a mũno gũkorwo ho hingo ciothe na kwaga gũkua. Angĩkorwo, ta ũrĩa twĩiguithanĩirie, mũorooto wa Wendo nĩ gũkũmbatĩria wega hingo ciothe-rĩ, no mũhaka wĩrirĩrie gũtũũra hingo ciothe hamwe na wega, na gũtĩrĩ ũndũ ũngĩ tũngiuga tiga no atĩ Wendo nĩ wendo wa gũtũũra hingo ciothe na wa wega."

(55) 'Maũndũ maya moothe ndeerutire mahinda mwanya mwaya rĩrĩa Diotima aaheeaga kĩrĩra kĩa Wendo.'

is something divine, this process of pregnancy and procreation. It is an aspect of immortality in the otherwise mortal creature, and it
cannot 206d take place in what is discordant. 206d
Now, the ugly is not in accord with anything divine, whereas the beautiful accords well.
(51) So at this birth Beauty takes on the roles of Fate and Eileithyia. For this reason, whenever the pregnant being approaches the beautiful, it is in favourable mood. It melts with joy, gives birth and procreates.
(52) In the face of ugliness, however, it frowns and contracts with pain, and shrivelling up it fails to procreate, and it holds back its offspring in great suffering.
This is the reason why, for a pregnant being
now ready to give birth, 206e there is much 206e
excitement at the presence of the beautiful because its possessor will deliver the pregnant one from great pain.

(53) For the object of love, Socrates'', she said, ''is not, as you think, simply the beautiful''.
''What, then?'' ''It is procreating and giving birth in the beautiful''. ''All right'', I said.
''It certainly is'', she replied. ''But why is the object of love procreation?
(54) Because procreation is a kind of
everlastingness and 207a immortality for the 207a
mortal creature, as far as anything can be. If the object of love is indeed everlasting possession of the good, as we have already agreed, it is immortality together with the good that must necessarily be desired. Hence it must follow that the object of love is also immortality''.

(55) 'All these things Diotima taught me on the occasions when she
spoke about love.

## CIUGO NDITŨ (GLOSSARY)

Absolute, *-ta konainie na kindũ kĩngĩ, -ĩ iiki*
Absolutely, *hatarĩ gũthuutũkania*
Admiration, *wĩkĩrĩro; gĩtĩĩo*
Acknowledge, *-ĩtĩkĩra*
Agonize, *girĩka, tuurwo mũno*
Aim/object, *mwerekero*
Alleviate, *hooreria, horohia; kiria, kirakiria*
Allude (to), *huutĩria ũndũ/ũhoro igũrũ*
Altar, *ihakĩro, kĩgongoona*
Ambition, *wendi wa maũndũ manene*
Analogy, *ngerekano*
Annihilate, *niina biũ*
Aphrodite, *njamba-ng'a*
Apprehend, *kumbata, nyiita, hungura*
Associate, *nyiitanĩra na, nyiitithania, kuruhana na*
Astronomy, *ũũgĩ wa maũndũ ma njata*
Avenge, *rĩhĩria*
Be active, *hũgahũga*
Be concerned, *rũmbũiya; gĩa na kĩeha; huutania na*
Be supple, *-a kũhoceka*
Buffoon, *mũthekania*
Bully, *mũnyamaarania*
Call to account, *haara*
Cast a spell on, *gegearithia*
Cause, *gĩtũmi; kĩhumo*
Chaos, *mũharagano*
Character/habit, *mũtugo*
Characteristic, r*ũũri, mũtugo, ngũũrani*
Characteristics, *maũũthĩ*
Charm, *ũmba; ongerera ngoga*
Comedy, *ithaako rĩa mathekania*
Compare, *ringithania; iganania*
Comprise, *hĩmbĩria*
Contemplate, *kwĩrorera*
Crafts, *ũthondeki wa indo na mooko*
Daintiness, *ndĩngĩrĩ*
Dare, *ũmĩrĩria; ĩgũmĩra; ũgita*
Dazzle, *ĩkĩra maitho nduma, ona marundurundu*
Delicate, *-ceke; hĩnju; nyoroku, -orooro*
Deluge, *mũiyũro; kĩguuũ*
Devotion, *ũthĩngĩcĩri*
Directly, *maitho kwa maitho*
Disappointed, *-ta keneete, -ĩrirĩĩte*
Disconcert, *conora; raakaria*
Discreditable, *-a thoni*
Disdain, *mena, ira, nyira, rurũka*
Disgrace, *thoni, njono*
Distress, *ĩkĩra kĩeha*
Disunion, *nyamũkano, njatũkano*
Do exercise, *nogora ciĩga*
Edify, *gũkenia ngoro*
Effect/result, *maciaro, nyumi, maumĩrĩro*
Eloquence, *ũthaka wa mĩario*
Endurance, *ũkirĩrĩria*
Ensnare, *taha; nyiita*
Excellence, *wega, ũthak*a
Expert, *njoorua, kĩmenyi*
Exraordinary, *-a magegania, -a mwanya*
Fade, *hooha*
Fall prey to, *tahwo*
Favour*, wendeku, kwendeka, wagĩrĩru; ũtugi*
Fertile, *noru; ti thaata*
Fig for one's promise, *kĩrĩĩkanĩro gĩtahingio*
Finely got up, *-ĩthondekeete, -ĩgemeetie mũno*
Flourish, *thegea*
Frost, *mbaa*
Get hold of, *nyiita, kumbata*
Giant, *mũtatĩ wa mũndũ*
Good Heavens! *Hĩ*!
Gymnastics, c*iĩko cia kũgandũra mwĩrĩ*
Hail, *mbura ya mbembe*
Harmony (Music), *ũiguuano wa mĩgambo; ũnyiitanĩru, ũnyiitithania,*
Honourable, *-a gũtĩĩka; -thingu*
Immortal, *-takuuaga*
Impulse, *njeme*
Indifferent, *-tarĩ ũyũ kana ũcio; -tarĩ-ega na –tarĩ –ũũru*

Industrious, *-a kĩo, -a kwĩrutanĩria*
Infatuation, *wendo mũnene,*
Initiate, *toonyia, ingĩria*
Institutions, *maũndũ megiĩ mĩikarĩre*
Intelligence, ũ*guũku*
Intermediate, *-a gatagatĩinĩ*
Keep on tenterhooks, k*waga kumbũra, kũhitha ũndũ*
Last, mũkuha
Maintain, *kuuga ũnyitĩrĩirie*
Mean (v.), *kũrĩĩkia, nĩ ta kuuga*
Mean (adj.), *-a giithĩ*
Mental vision, *woni*
Merit, *wega, wagĩrĩru*
Moderation, *ũgerereri, ngererero*
Morals, *mĩtugo mĩega kana mĩũru*
Muse, *ngai ya kũheeana meciiria*
Music, *ũhũũri inanda; ũini*
Natural, *-a ndũire,-tarĩ-a magegania*
Nature, *mũmbĩre*
Necessarily, *no mũhaka*
Necessity, *ũbatari*
Noble, *-tũũgĩru*
Notorious, *-a igweta rĩũru*
Odd, *-a mwĩtũkio*
On the spur of the moment, *hubu*
Ordinary parents, *aciari a ndũire*
Overcome with passion, *tubunyĩka*
Pangs, *ruuo*
Panygeric, *kũraha, gũkumia*
Partake of immortality, *aga gũkua*
Partnership, *ũgwatanĩri*
Pay out, *conora?*
Perfect, *hingu; nginyanĩru*
Perpetuate, *twarithia na mbere, iga ho*
Physical beauty, *ũthaka wa maitho*
Plain, *-taũku, umbũku, menyeku*
Plainly, *hatarĩ ũhinga; kwaria na kini*
Poet, *mũtungi wa irebeta* (sing); *marebeta* (plur.)
Porch, *gĩthaku*
Postpone, *tĩĩrĩria, tĩĩria*
Pour libations, *gũitĩra ngai/ngoma maguta/njoohi*, etc.
Precisely, *ki, kii; nĩguo, noguo; ng'a*
Pretend,*-ĩtua ta, -ĩhaanania na,-ĩgerekania na*
Primeval state, *maũndũ ma kĩhumo*
Principle, *mũthingi; kĩhumo; kĩhooto*
Privilege, *mũnyaka; uguni; uteithio*
Process, *wĩki, ũtwarithia wa maũndũ*
Project/plan*, mũbango*
Protest, v., *kararia, rega*
Pull up, *tithia, rũũgama, tindima*
Pundit, *njoorua*
Quality, *mũhaanĩre/mũhuuanĩre; mũtuĩkĩre*
Real, *-a ma*
Recognize, *kũũrana*
Reconcile, *nyiitithania, igwithania*
Relate*, egemana na; gana (rũgano); kuruhania*
Remarkable, *-a magegania*
Reprobate, v., *menereria*
Resourceful, *-a wara, ũmenyi*
Rhythm, *gũtherera*
Ridicule, *nyuga*
Roll over, *-ĩgaragaria*
Sculpture, *mbica ya kũmbwo, gũturwo, gwacũhio*
Secure, *rũmia, nyiitĩrĩra*
Self-control, *wĩgiria, wĩrigirĩria, wĩkaania*
Set about, *arũka (ta kũruta wĩra*)
Severity, *ũgũmĩri*
Sexual matters, *maũndũ megiĩ kũmenyana kĩmwĩrĩ*
Shameful, *-tarĩ rũbutu, thoni, njono*
Skilful,*-ũgĩ wa ciĩko; njoorua*
Slight/make fun of, *nyarara*
Solemn, *-a gwĩkĩrĩrwo, -agĩtĩĩo/gũtĩĩo*
Solve, *rugũra, taũra*
Sophist, *mũrangĩrĩria kĩhooto*
Stigma, *gĩcambio*
Strictures, *hinya wa kũhinga/ kwĩhinga*
Superhuman, *-a igĩrũ mũno*
Suppose, *ĩciiria, ĩgereria*
Take risk, *-ĩĩkĩra, -ĩtoonyia mũtinoinĩ*
Tanner, *mũthondeki wa marangi*
The One, *Ĩmwe*
The Whole, *Waruothe*

Theory*, rĩciiria, woni*
Throw into a trance*, tũma mũndũ aringĩke*
Throw into ecstay, *kenũrũrũkia*
To be inspired, *gũtoonywo nĩ rĩciiria*
To pickle (fruit), *kũrinda*
Tragedy, *ithaako rĩa kĩeha/ndirũ*
Understanding, *ũũgĩ, ũmenyi*
Unheard of, *-tarĩ ooneka, aiguuo, ekĩka*
Unique, *-ĩhaana, -a mwĩtũkio*
Universe, *thĩ na igũrũ; thĩ yoothe*
Unreservedly, *hatarĩ kũũria kĩũria; carũrũkũ*
Virtue, *ũthingu*
Warn, *kunyĩra ũhoro; -ĩrĩka; he mũkaana; -ĩĩkunya gũtũ*
Wax, *neneha, kũra*
Well-connected, *-a kũmenyekana*
Winter, *hĩndĩ ya heho, mbarabu*
Without qualification, *carũrũkũ*
Withstand, *ũmĩra, ĩtiirĩria, goma*
Wrestle, *kũrũndana*
Wretched, *-tarĩ kĩene, -a tũhũ (mwagi, mũnyamaari)*

# Thinking from an African Stand Point: The "Ntu" System of Thought

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*Abstract*

Africa's massive interaction with the external world has often kept many Africans ignorant of the knowledge on life, nature, God and humans, which was developed and accumulated on the African soil for millenniums. This continuous state of ignorance seems to have conditioned many Africans not to think by and for themselves. Thinking in this context has mostly been oriented towards catching up with products of thought processes developed in different socio-cultural environments. The tendency of always trying to catch up with those considered as more developed puts Africans in a disadvantageous position where indigenous knowledge is often dismissed and regarded as not worth transmitting to future generations. It is nonetheless a fact that knowledge is linked to socio-cultural environment that produced it to respond to particular situations. Though knowledge produced elsewhere eventually becomes a human heritage, it has to be synchronized with knowledge produced locally. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of thinking Africa from Africa as a stand and starting point, taking into account some of the knowledge developed in the African continent for millenniums. The paper proposes the systemic worldview of African traditional philosophical thought as a valuable framework for such a stand point. This systemic worldview of African traditional philosophical thought will be theoretically examined using as springboard the "Ntu", a fundamental concept in languages classified as Bantu. The "Ntu" refers to the primordial reality perceived as the one and universal cosmic force from which all existence (human, thing, space, time and modality) emanates by differentiation. The paper examines the science that lies behind this perception of reality as one. If all reality is one, and only becomes diverse by differentiation, then this calls for a moral imperative of care, relationship and socio-cosmic responsibility on every person towards every person and everything that exists.

**Key words**: Africa, systemic worldview, cosmic force, African traditional thought, Ntu, Bantu.

## Introduction

The production of knowledge in Africa has, for a long time, remained in borrowed spaces, outside African soil. This trend has rendered Africa and her elite unable to adequately address her challenges at a conceptual level. The conceptual inadequacy in addressing Africa's challenges has led, for instance, to the adoption of models of social organization based on specific values, such as accumulation of external wealth and the maximization of profits, which generally, benefit a minority at the expense of the majority. These models of social organization termed liberal, be it in economics or politics, are vehicles of specific values that are fundamentally at odds with an African society whose organization has, for millenniums, been based on the maximization of spiritual and social capital that tend to promote human qualities and *la joie de vivre*. In the face of the increasing socioeconomic disparities and

political violence fueled by borrowed models of social organization, which threaten to lead the world to assured destruction, Africa has to reclaim her models for her survival and the survival of planet earth. Africa's positioning in the 21st century and the future of our planet may depend on Africa's appropriation of her values and system of thought. An introspection is necessary for the appropriation of these values and system of thought. An internal assessment of Africa by Africans could help to determine how African values and system of thought could conceptually contribute to the production of our knowledge and viable models of social organization in Africa. It is hard to think that a continent that has seen the first steps of human adventure in history and which has pioneered human civilization more than ten thousand years before other civilizations, would have nothing to offer in the face of common challenges of human survival in the planet. In looking for solutions for mutually assured construction and survival of the African continent and planet earth, the seniority of Africa in human historical adventure has to be put to use. Using an exemplar of the African thought system, this paper proposes some pathways towards the thinking framework that could generate functional African models of social organization. The paper first addresses methodology related issues for understanding the African system of thought; then it briefly explores the original terrain of African thought. Thirdly, the paper reflects on the traditional system of thought before finally dwelling on the *Ntu* thought system as an illustration of the African thought system.

**Methodology for understanding the African System of Thought**

One of the methodologies to understand the African thought system is to start with its conception of the origin and structure of reality which are mostly found in African founding myths[1]. These myths reveal a cosmogony and cosmology where matter and spirit, the visible and the invisible are not only complementary but fused[2]. The unified vision of reality deriving this cosmology and cosmogony informs a particular way of thinking and behaving where matter is often looked at through the lens of spirit. Success in the material or phenomenal plane is a shadow of success in the spiritual or *noumenal* plane. The two worlds, material and spiritual, mirror each other. Similarly, the totality of reality is a continuum of interactions between the whole and its parts, the invisible and the visible[3]. Nothing in life happens by chance, neither is it a standalone event. All events in the world and in a person's life are interrelated and affect the destiny of both the world and human beings. All things are structured and function as components of the one essence. This sort of theory of the totality and its parts runs through African myths, legends, tales, arts, proverbs and sayings[4].

To understand African thought system, it is therefore important to understand its theory of reality as expressed in symbolic thoughts and analogies aiming at explaining complex principles in the interaction between matter and spirit[5]. But the recourse to spirit does not affect the inner coherence of explanations that tends to match the coherence in the structure of reality. Even when the recourse to magic is made in a given explanation, it is for the

[1] Jaja, J.M. (2012). Myths in African Concept of Reality. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 6 (2), 9-10.

[2] Some, M.P. (1999). The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose Through Nature Ritual, and Community. New York: Putnam. See also Imhotep, A. (2007). Bantu Cosmology & the Origins of Egyptian Civilization Notes. (Available from this link)

[3] Amen I, R.U.N. (1990). *Metu Neter, Vol. 1 : The Great Oracle of Tehuti and the Egyptian System of Spiritual Cultivation*. Brooklyn : Khamit Media Trans Visions, Inc.

[4] Wanjohi, G. J. (1997). *The Wisdom and Philosphy of the Gikuyu Proverbs: The Kihooto World-View*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa. See also Bujo, B. (1997). *The Ethical Dimensions of Community*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

[5] Bassong, M. (2007a). La Methode de la Philosophie Africaine. Paris : L'Harmattan. See also Bassong, M. (2007b). *Esthetique de l'Art Africain – Symbolique et Complexite*. Paris : L'Harmattan.

purpose of highlighting the *noumenal* source of reality which may not be subject to material demonstrations. This is the case in the myth of origin of the *Pyramid Texts* (2600 B.C) which postulates a Meta-Universe that transmuted itself, by some sort of alchemy, into the current universe[6]. In indigenous Africa, this Meta-Universe is referred to as the Supreme Mystery that gives birth to the universe[7]. It is interesting to note how this explanation corroborates the scientific explanations of the electromagnetic force of the origin behind the expansion of our Universe. In this sense the African system of thought tends to be mytho-scientific[8], because Africans discovered very early that to explain reality comprehensively, there is need to combine intuition and science[9].

It is not unusual for the African interpretation of reality and subsequent overall approach to life to be misjudged because of its mystical cosmology and metaphysics[10]. Without going into the details, the misjudgments tend to be either Lévi-Bruhlian or Kasperian[11]. When they are Lévi-Bruhlian, they categorize African thinking as primitive and pre-logical; meaning that it still has to evolve to be logical as its Western counterpart. The Kasperian misjudgment leads to the prediction that Africa and her ways of life are condemned to extinction in lieu of the advancing western modernity. It is needless to say that these misjudgments and many other similar ones about the African system of thought are prisoner of their own prejudice. Besides, they are representative of a brand of thought according to which Africa's conception of reality and approach to life needed to develop outside their own inner dynamism to be like their Western or Asiatic counterparts. Fortunately, this brand of thought is inconsequential, because many aspects of the African worldview have shown their resilience and relevance in a world that is increasingly fragmented and polarized between the haves and have-nots, believers and non-believers, civilized and non-civilized.

Beyond the polarization of our world, Africa, as a continent of the origins, has a thought system that focuses on spirits and the mystical. But its conception of reality is not synonymous with anti-intellectualism and not against subsequent technological advancement or innovation[12]. A mystical approach goes beyond physical causality, which would be the easiest to determine. It rather interrogates the invisible cause behind the visible causes to look for more durable and healthier solutions that promote mutually constructive interaction between human, non-human and nature's entities. There is an understanding in this approach that physical causes are triggered by a metaphysical cause. Linkages, bridges, harmonies are established, between the outer and the inner world and all sorts of opposites; day-night, good-evil, black-white, etc. All these elements are important and contribute to the symphonic harmony of the universe. From this perspective, which goes beyond polarization, technology is not understood as means to conquer nature through the feverish use and consumption of machines. Rather, from the perspective of this thought system, technology is meant to heal or mend human being's broken relationships with nature and all that exists in it, in order to

[6] Obenga, T. (1990). La Philosphie Africaine de la Period Pharaonique: 2780-330 avant notre ere. Paris: L'Harmattan.
[7] Mosha, R. S. (2000). *The Heartbeat of Indigenous Africa: A Study of Chagga Educational System*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
[8] Amen I, R.U.N. (1990).
[9] Bassong, M. (2007a).
[10] Okoro, C. (2011). Science and traditional African value system: Essay of development. In *African Journal of Philosophy*, 13 (2), 1-8 (available at this link).
[11] Songolo, A. (1981). Muntu Reconsidered: From Tempels and Kagame to Janheinz Janh. In *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 10 (3), 92-100.
[12] Okoro, C. (2011).

allow them to realize their purpose in life[13]. In the next section, the original terrain of the emergence of this thought system, which aligns with nature, will be discussed.

**The Original Terrain of African Thought**

A little incursion into African antiquity illustrates the methodological approach mentioned above. Ancient Egyptian cosmogony, written about 2600 years B.C., before the existence of any Greek, Hindu or Chinese philosophies, explains how the ancient Africans (Ancient Egyptians) conceived the origin of the universe and all that exists[14]. There was an acknowledgment in the *Pyramid Texts* that the primordial reality, (which the Ionian Anaximander (620-546 B.C.), student of Ancient Egyptian cosmogony, later called *Apeiron*) is an uncreated, limitless and undetermined undivided matter[15]. Ancient Egyptians understood this matter as force or energy that encompasses potentially everything. They understood it as the overarching universal matrix where everything is in the archetypal state. They called It the *Nun.* This was referred to as the *Nous* by the Ionian Anaxagoras (500-430 B.C.). In Bantu languages, it is referred to as *Ntu*. It is worth noting that each of the three words just used to refer to the universal matrix starts with "N", like Nature. Silence, water, darkness, limitedness and oneness characterize this overarching and undifferentiated reality. The roaring movement within the universal matrix increasingly becomes conscious of itself; this leads to and enables the emergence of *Ptah*, the divinity which is the form that energy takes through the action of mighty *Ra*. The latter is the divinized power of the sun.

With this process of self-transformation, the one overarching reality enters the phase of multiple manifestations. The process of self-transformation corresponds to the process of self-awakening of the primordial Energy-Matter which actualizes what existed in potential and ignites the advent of multiple forms and realities. Using the word, known as *Nommo* by the Dogon of Mali, or *Logos*, by the ancient Greeks, mighty *Ra* then calls to existence things and beings in pairs of opposites. Epitome of light that breaks though the darkness, *Ra*, is "the physical-spiritual life-force which awakens all 'sleeping' forces and gives physical and spiritual life"[16]. For the ancient Africans, the process of self-transformation is a subtle intent of the primordial Energy-Matter, through its own evolutionary movement that leads it to exit from the state anonymity and archetypes to various manifestations. The various manifestations of the primordial Energy-Matter are disclosed in the experiences of human and non-human activities. These manifestations find their meaning and purpose in their reference back to the subtle unifying intent of the primordial Energy-Matter. It is in their aspirations to become one again that the manifested reality harmonize with the creational intent.

Ancient Africans' utilization of divinized principles, such as *Nun, Ptah* and *Ra*, to explain the origin of the universe is an illustration of the African mytho-scientific approach of reality[17]. Myth complements and does not replace science. It is a pedagogic narrative of science that makes science more palatable. Myth also points to the complexity that lies within what may appear as mere evidence. This approach of reality marks a fundamental difference between the civilization created by ancient Africans and its adoption by ancient Greece and other parts of the globe. For ancient Africans, reality cannot be simply approached or explained by what is obvious. There is the subtle part of reality that does not lend itself to evidences only. This

[13] Some, M.P. (1999).
[14] Diop, C.A. (1991). *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*. New York: Lawrence Hill Books.
[15] James, G.G.M. (1954). *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy*. New York: Philosophical Library.
[16] Jahn, J. (1961). *Muntu: An Outline of the New African Culture*. New York: Grove Press, Inc. p. 105.
[17] Diop, C.A. (1991).

subtle part of reality is the realm of abstract principles, of subjective and spiritual explanations that connect with the whole spectrum of reality, visible and invisible. The original terrain of African thought thus set, the traditional thought system becomes more intelligible. The former helps to understand why, in the latter the reality is considered as an indivisible-dual whose completion is only in the harmony of the opposites. Everything in the universe is thus meant to converge towards mutual reinforcement where the role of the human being is pivotal.

**African Traditional System of Thought**

In the African traditional thought system, the population of spirits and forces can sometimes obliterate their fundamental unicity and their link to matter. For instance, in Tempels' (1952) theory of forces, in African traditional system of thought, it is possible to dwell more on the diversity and hierarchy of forces in the universe and omit their ultimate Supreme origin. However, their single Supreme origin does not negate their diversity, but acts like a reminder that they are of the same source and one[18]. But in the reference of the multiplicity of forces to the Supreme divine origin, the law of primogeniture applies. The later means that those who are born earlier have greater vital force than those who are born later. The vital force differs as one is situated in the higher or lower scale of forces. The older one is, the higher the position in the scale of forces. The higher one is in the scale of forces, the closer one is to the ultimate Supreme Vital Force or the *Ntu;* the source of power. The scale of forces varies from the lower to the higher with mineral, vegetal, animal, at the lower end; and human and the divine at the higher end[19]. The recourse to magic in this context consist in taping on the energies of these forces in order to strengthen one's vital energy without disrupting natural harmonies. Harmony, balance or justice in the order of the universe is an absolute value. Harmony, balance or justice, known as *Maat* by the ancient Africans, consisted in aligning self with divine plans. Aligning self with divine plans is a prerequisite for a powerful action. The oracle or the diviner is key in assisting in this alignment. Placed high in the scale of forces, the diviner is able to intuit divine plans and help people find their purpose in life for their actions to be impactful (Somé, 1999). Finding one's purpose in life makes it possible to pose actions that are transformative, because one is aligned with divine plans, and supported by spirits or divine agencies. Action in the visible sphere has therefore to be rooted in the invisible sphere in order for it to be positively transformative. Unwanted occurrences in the visible world are often a sign that something needs to be "fixed" on the invisible plane[20].

Among traditional Africans, especially the Bantu, the main purpose of the human enterprise is thus to fortify one's vital energy so as to influence events in one's favor, without upsetting the natural harmony. Since forces in the universe are held together like in a spider's web, the power to influence events, things and beings in one's favor would depend on one's ability to connect with and mobilize other forces. However, at all times, the law of primogeniture or hierarchy of forces is to be respected as one mobilizes the forces. In this sense, lower forces cannot influence higher forces, save if the lower force is inhabited by the higher forces[21]. According to Temples (1952) and Mbiti[22], everything that exists is meant to strengthen the vital force of the human being, who is "made of a fragment of everything that existed before

[18] Vernicos, G.C (2002). Les Droits Originellement Africains. The article is available through this link.
[19] Tempels, P. (1952). *Bantu Philosophy*. Orlando: HBC Publishing.
[20] Some, M.P. (1999).
[21] Tempels, P. (1952).
[22] Mbiti, S. J. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy.* New York: Praeger Publishers.

him"[23]. Since everything is meant to strengthen his or her vital force, existential anxiety is not the experience of the human being in traditional African. His or her experience is rather that of homeliness in the world; "an experience of inner peace and quietude"[24]. Even the dead, who through death have acquired greater knowledge of natural forces but have their vital force diminished, seek to enter into contact with their living posterity in order to influence their vital force[25]. In this sense, technological advancement would only make senses if it increases or strengthens the human beings' vital force. So, in African traditional system of thought, the universe "is not a chaotic tangle of unordered forces blindly struggling with one another"[26], but an ordered and purposeful process of regeneration.

True knowledge consists of intuiting divine plans, understanding how the universe is ordered, thus developing "the intelligence of forces, their hierarchy, their cohesion and interaction"[27]. Likewise, "the highest wisdom consists in recognizing a unity in the order of things in the universe"[28]. The beginning of intuiting divine plans is to understand that God is Force and Energy par excellence, the Origin and Mover of all other forces. This First principle of forces corresponds to what the Ancient Africans called *Ra*. Following the law of primogenitor or hierarchy of forces in the human plane, the elders and ancestors are better placed to understand how the universe is ordered. It means that they are better place to understand "the operation of the general laws of cause and effect between living forces" or their ontological influences[29]. This is so because the elders and ancestors' knowledge proceeds from God or Nature, not just from artificial references, like books. The knowledge and intelligence of the books is different from the wisdom of life[30], which is understanding of connections between beings and things in the universe. While the intelligence of books is learnt for the purpose of making things, the wisdom of life is developed in the contact of things and being. As a result of this contact, the wisdom of life instills an appropriate behavior towards the things and beings it relates to. The knowledge of elders and ancestors is thus ontological, related to the internal and essential working of things and beings, as opposed to only factual and empirical. The elders' and ancestors' knowledge is built throughout the years in their presence to and observation of the way the universe operates.

The way the universe operates has been at the center of the preoccupation of traditional system of thought. One of the major observations in this system, is that the larger fabric of life is beyond human control[31]. The uncontrollable operations range from internal biological metabolism to the regulation of seasons. But despite this lack of human control, these operations are perfectly coordinated by what seems to be a Universal Automaton Pilot[32]. Because of the assurance of this perfect and successful coordination, the tendency in this thought system is to seek the intervention of the Universal Automaton Pilot in humanly controllable and uncontrollable life functions. This search explains the recourse to magic.

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[23] Hampâté Bâ, A. (1989). "The Living Traditions", in J. Ki-Zerbo (Ed.), *General History of Africa: Methodology and Prehistory*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, p. 65.

[24] Mosha, R. S. (2000), p. 9.
[25] Tempels, P. (1952).
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[28] *Ibid.*, 120
[29] Ibid., 75.
[30] Jahn, J. (1961).
[31] Amen I, (1990).
[32] Ibid.

The purpose of magic is to make possible what is humanly impossible. Such purpose prescribes the cultivation of self-discipline which does not depend on external policing. The valorization of inner life in this context is much higher than the display of external worth.[33] Self-discipline and inner life enable access to divine dimensions, to read the book of the secrets of nature and transcend natural limits.

Science in traditional African thought system is sister to magic in that it is concerned with the craft of how to mold and prepare the person internally for greater access to the active principles in the universe. Science in this perspective is not a utilitarian craft allowing to make external objects for human consumption. It has a bigger scope consisting in preparing the person internally for the understanding of active principles and agents, visible and invisible, that operate in the universe[34]. The understanding of the interaction between active principles or natural forces further prepares the person to capture these forces when need be in order to improve life.

In this sense, success, for example in one's professional career, is not just dependent on developing external skills, but on developing one's inner vital influences coupled with the invocation of tutelary spirits associated to the learnt craft. The mastery of the active principles in self or others is meant to ensure success in any sort of external undertakings. Active principles and agents are understood as sources of energies in everything and in every being. As an illustration, speech is one of the most powerful active agents in African magic. When it is properly used, it enables its user to mobilize available energies at the service of life.[35]

Unfortunately, this way of understanding and engaging the universe was the most fought against during the colonial period; external entrants recognized that it was traditional Africa's source of power. It gave Africans the confidence and psyche to resist subjugation. To conquer and overrule Africa, this confidence had to be compromised as radically as possible. Today, the traditional way of understanding and engaging the universe is still subject of ingrained suspicion by Africans and non-Africans. The current education system and religious faith have stood in the way of its development. Thinking from an African stand point is considering and reviving the legitimacy of this form of knowledge and wisdom. The next section explores more this wisdom by looking more specifically into the *Ntu* system of thought.

**The Ntu System of Thought**

The Ntu, which designates the One cosmic Supreme Vital Force is a constant reminder that African thought system perceives and strives for unity of being in the midst of diversity of beings in the universe.[36] Striving for unity keeps diversity on check to avoid chaos, dispersion and disintegration. In African cosmogonies, chaos is a constant threat, though necessary, in the universe where order has to prevail. The constant struggle between order and disorder, the forces of consolidation and expansion, positive and negative energies, is part of the unavoidable dynamics of opposites, which has to end in harmony. Harmony will always prevail when there is convergence towards the Ntu.

When the prefix U is added to the root Ntu to become UNtu, the African thought starts entering the realm of the multiple, but still designates the essence of being a part of a bigger whole, and the relational virtue of the essence of being. In a spiral manner, this bigger whole

[33] Some, M.P. (1999); Mosha, R. S. (2000).
[34] Tempels, 1952
[35] Hampâté Bâ, A. (1989), 63.
[36] Tempels, 1952

gravitates from the small family unit, to the larger community and, ultimately, the cosmos. When the prefix MU is added to the root Ntu to become MuNtu, the essence of being is further diversified into the human being. This is not just "any" human being. It is a human being who intentionally relates to his or her source, the Ntu. Because of this intentional relation to Ntu, the Muntu, is wise, rational, and endowed with the responsibility of ensuring the prevalence of order over chaos. His or her responsibility is important because the scale of forces places him or her closer to the ancestors, the divinities, Ra, Ptah and Nun.

The understanding of the rational person, over the years, is meant to evolve to the point of grasping the oneness of reality, and its multiple derivations. The philosophy of UbuNtu, "I am because we are", is an expression of this system of thought which only conceives the multiple in reference to the one and unique reality. This system of thought is fundamentally and constructively pluralistic and all encompassing.[37] The universe is its model. It also proposes the universe a model of social, political and economic organization. In this model various individual beings, things and functions are not isolated entities but complexly interrelated and complementary for the sustenance of harmonious living. Committing an injury at any level of the organization has a repercussion on the whole, hence the importance of exercising scrupulous care.[38] Individual and communal actions have a repercussion in the cosmic and trans-cosmic order which in turn affects them.[39] When misfortunes, calamities and tragedies become frequent it is always a sign that a balance has been lost between the forces of order and disorder, in favor of the latter. For the health of the society, the injuries inflicted have to be redressed by a restoration of relationships respectful of the scale of vital forces - cosmic, spiritual, human, animal, vegetal, and mineral forces. The restoration is done through rituals involving compensations, for equal forces, and ontological purification for higher forces.[40]

In the Ntu system of thought, therefore, the social order is a continuation of the supra-natural order.[41] A restoration in the social order amounts to a restoration in the supra-natural order. The *Muntu* emerges in this system as the one who can conjure other forces in the universe to create a just and cohesive social, political and economic order. The advent of a just and cohesive order requires striving not for individual gains, but mutual reinforcement and convergence of all forces of nature to achieve a balance and harmonious *Ntu* state. This movement of convergence and mutual reinforcement is for the purpose of leading towards shared benefits of human progress. It is also likely to support an environment of order for that sustainable progress against the chaotic self-cannibalizing tendencies of entropy and individual survival based on might.

The universalist vision of the *Ntu* system of thought introduces a dynamic, coherent and generous way of approaching life. *Increasingly*, many modern scientific discoveries, especially in the fields of biology and quantum physics confirm the knowledge the Africans have had for more than 6000 years about the relationships between forces of life – human beings, spirits and the universe. The "Gaia hypothesis", for instance, is close to this universalist vision when it considers the earth and its inhabitants as a unique system fed by the energy from the sun and auto-regulated by law.[42] Other scientists like Fritjof Capra, Stephen Hawking, Gabriel Oyibo, Erwin Laszlo recognize that the universe is an integrated

[37] Vernicos, G.C (2002). Les Droits Originellement Africains. The article is available at this link.
[38] Tempels, 1952.
[39] Mosha, 2000, 9.
[40] Tempels, 1952
[41] Bisseck, N.M. (1999). Mbog: la Cosmovision africaine universaliste dans le contexte de la mondialisation. This article is available at this link.
[42] Ibid,20.

whole containing dynamic forces or energies in constant interaction. The universalist vision of the *Ntu* challenges the mechanistic vision of the world and the usual ways of doing science. Elements of nature formally considered as isolated in the mechanistic vision of world are now considered as inseparably related as "indivisible-duals".[43]

The awareness of being one reality through various manifestations places a great responsibility on human beings' level of care of all that exists. Care given to all that exists is care given to ourselves. Showing *Ubuntu* or goodness is therefore an imperative, because it is self-care. We are reinforced as we reinforce all that is around us.

## Conclusion

Thinking from Africa's stand point is an examination of African thought system using the *Ntu* as an illustration. The purpose of the paper was an attempt to bring out the concept or vision of reality as it appears in African thought and the implications of such a vision in the organization of human life. The assumption is that the awareness of African thought system could improve the process of institution building, human education and interactions with nature, because such process will be rooted in the psyche of the origin. From an external point of view from Africa, understanding the African thought system could also open up a way of thinking and organizing a life which is all encompassing. The understanding of this thought system could make it possible to stop dismissing it as invalid because of its unusual reference to forces and spirit. The fact that some of the categories of this thought are being corroborated by modern science is a sign that the African thought system has more to reveal regarding the genesis and structure of the universe. The paper makes the point that the African thought system, its cosmology and cosmogony are a part of human knowledge which has not been sufficiently explored, and Africans ought to rise up to the research that can make this contribution possible.

[43] Amen I, 1990

# The Future of Sage Philosophy in Africa

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## Introduction

In this brief presentation, we share with you how to use indigenous knowledge to solve theoretical and practical issues that confront us from time to time. This theory is known in African Philosophy as sage philosophy, and is one of the six trends in contemporary African philosophy. The way sage philosophy is presented in Africa and the objectives it sought to fulfill are new for philosophy in Africa. However, sage philosophy is not unique to African culture and any other culture for that matter. In view of the foregoing, we seek to demonstrate the role played by sage philosophy in the history of philosophy in Africa and speculate on the possibilities for the future.

## Understanding African Philosophy

African Philosophy, many believe, is a philosophy born out of a struggle, not only about its identity, but also about its content and methodology. Before we proceed, we want to reflect upon some remarks that may seem preliminary in understanding the meaning in African philosophy.

One of the most basic points of disagreement concerns what exactly ***it is that*** the term 'African Philosophy' stands for, or, what is it that qualifies the *content of the philosophy* or the *identities of the philosophers to be called African?* What are our reasons for raising these questions? Of course, these have already been imputed by several works advocating ethnophilosophy as the only legitimate form of African philosophy. To such position 'African philosophy' may mean any of these:

a. Themes that are distinctively African such as African concept of time, personhood, ethics, feminism, even African ontology etc.

b. Methods that are uniquely and distinctively African.

These two conceptions would imply that African philosophy is any kind of philosophical *work engaged in by Africans* or by *people of African descent.* Does this not smack of

exclusionism? However, the term 'African philosophy' need not imply exclusionism. It should be used in a simple sense by which it implies inclusionism and hence consistent with the universality of philosophy.[1] By this is meant that philosophical issues, truths or methods are of universal relevance or applicability for whoever cares to appropriate them regardless of one's race or nationality.

Although the concept African philosophy is used in different ways by different philosophers, a lot of time is spent in doing very useful work in metaphysics, epistemology, moral philosophy, political philosophy.[2] But, an equal amount of time and space is consumed reflecting on the debate that is concerned with the nature of African philosophy: whether in fact something like African philosophy exists.[3]

Debating the meaning or existence of African philosophy is neither a waste of time on the part of African philosophers nor unique to the history of philosophy.[4] It cannot be a legitimate basis for criticizing the way African philosophy has so far progressed.[5] The issue of the very meaning of philosophy is itself a perennial problem for philosophy. Therefore, discussing the very meaning of philosophy in general and African philosophy in particular is indeed a philosophical exercise. This point is ably expressed by Abiola Irele in the introduction to Hountondji's book, African Philosophy: Myth and Reality.[6]

The implication of these considerations is that, the term 'African philosophy' is controversial in many ways. It means different things to different people. Some would even say that some cultures have a capacity to, while others are incapable of a philosophy. This is an important concern that is at the core of the subject of this paper on sage philosophy.

However, we can attempt the small question of definition albeit controversially. A philosopher could be (an)individual(s) who devote a good deal of their time reflecting on fundamental questions about human life or the physical universe in such a way that this devotion culminates in some systemic evaluation of reality, what we call a philosophical tradition. But we could take a philosophy to be a coherent set of beliefs. This may or may not necessarily develop into some system of sophisticated explanation that aims at understanding the unity of the worlds' phenomena, the nature of the world and the place of human beings in that world. Then few, if any, cultures lack a philosophy. Africans, like any other people, must have been reflecting and continues to reflect on the fundamental questions about their lives and universe, their place within the universe and consequently developing various cosmogonies, cosmologies and ontologies that constitute their philosophical traditions.

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[1] Oruka, H. Odera. *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy*. Nairobi, Shirikon Publishers, 1990, 107-110.

[2] Masolo, D. A. *Self and Community in a Changing World*. Bloomington; Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2010; Oruka, H. Odera. *Punishment & Terrorism in Africa*, 2nd edition. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1985; Oruka, H. Odera. *The Philosophy of Liberty*, 2nd ed. Nairobi, Standard Textbooks Graphics and Publishing, 1996; Wiredu Kwasi. *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1996; Appiah Kwame Antony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 2006; Gyekye Kwame. *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on African Experience.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997; Kresse Kai. *Philosophizing in Mombasa: Knowledge, Islam and Intellectual Practice on the Swahili Coast*. London, Edinburgh University Press, 2007

[3] Hountondji, J. Paulin. 1996. *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, 2nd edition. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1996; Masolo, D. A. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994; Wiredu Kwasi. *Philosophy and an African*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1980; Mudimbe V. Y. *The invention of Africa: gnosis, philosophy, and the order of knowledge*, ndiana University Press, 1988.

[4] Oruka, H. Odera, 1996, 166-167.

[5] Oruka, H. Odera, 1990, 168.

[6] Hountondji, P. 1996, 7.

African philosophy, in a simple sense, can be understood to mean any intellectual philosophical work either on any experience in Africa or by an African.[7] So, anything of philosophical work on any experience or reality in Africa, by its philosophical status, is work in African philosophy since it is a philosophical reflection in or on Africa. The race or nationality of whoever engages in the activity is irrelevant to this extent. In deed many non-African philosophers have immensely contributed and still contribute to the development of contemporary African philosophy such as Claude Sumner, Barry Hallen, Gail Presbey and Kai Kresse, among many others. Moreover, any philosophical work by an African regardless of the origin of the topic or thought-content qualifies as African philosophy. This is justifiable by some basic facts. One, Africans being human must have issues of common interest and concern with fellow human beings. Two, intellectual history is characterized by lending and borrowing of ideas. Therefore, no race or region can legitimately monopolize the ownership of ideas or deny others the appropriation of ideas they generate.[8] African philosophy therefore is a tradition of philosophy developed in Africa either by locally generated or appropriated foreign generated knowledge.

**The Practice of Philosophy in Africa before the Controversy**

Philosophy in Africa has a rich and varied history dating to ancient Egypt. The concept *ma'at,* that loosely translates to *justice, truth*, or simply *that which is right;* was developed and widely in use in ancient Egypt.

Philosophy in Africa then evolved through the birth of Christianity and Islam. Influential names in the history of philosophy include Plotinus, an Egyptian, who in the 3rd Century CE founded the school of Neo-Platonism. We can also mention St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) whose works underpin Christian theology in a significant way through concepts like the original sin and divine grace.

If that period belongs to antiquity, more recently, one can mention the Ghanaian Anthony William Ammo (17th Century Ghanaian philosopher who lived and worked in Germany). We can also attribute African philosophy to the literate traditions of Ethiopia that stand out in history. We have in mind the work of the 17th-century philosopher Zera Yakub and his disciple Walda Heywat whose writing is comparable to Rene Descartes. Equally one cannot fail to mention the Islamic traditions in Cairo and Timbuktu including names like Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Rushd and Averroes.

During the struggle for independence, 19th-20th centuries, we can affirm without fear of contradiction that Pan-Africanism expressed strong anti-colonial philosophical positions that stood in contradistinction to western thought. In a significant way, this influenced modern African thought. Before Pan-Africanism, Negritude stood out in defense of Black identity, pride and values. In a significant way, these streams of thought were committed to the elucidation of a discourse aimed at telling an African story in a manner that mirror, what Thales, Anaximander, Protagoras and Socrates did in Ancient Greece.

**Six Trends in African Philosophy**

Formulated by a Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka to explain the various positions available in identifying philosophy in Africa. These are;

a. Ethno-philosophy
b. Professional African Philosophy
c. Sage Philosophy

[7] Oruka, 1990, 19, 112

[8] Hountondji 1996, 177; Wiredu Kwasi, "On Defining African Philosophy." In Tsenay Serequeberhan, *African Philosophy: the Essential Readings*. New York, Paragon House, 1991, 91-92.

d. Nationalistic-Ideological
e. Literary Artistic
f. Hermeneutics

In this paper, we are not going to examine these theories in African philosophy. We are only concerned with sage philosophy, but mention ethnophilosophy and professional African philosophy to the extent that it would enable us to properly situate sage philosophy within the theories of contemporary African philosophy.

**Ethnophilosophy**

It is concerned with recording the beliefs found in African cultures. Such an approach treats African philosophy as consisting in a set of shared beliefs, values, categories, and assumptions that are implicit in the language, practices, and beliefs of African cultures; in short, the uniquely African worldview is presented as African philosophy. This perspective holds philosophy as an item of the communal rather than an activity by an individual. This kind of philosophy is spontaneous, collective, intuitive and unanimous; in other words, it lacks logical and individual thinking and analysis.[9] Therefore, ethnophilosophy, in the evolution of the debate on the nature and existence of contemporary African philosophy, either denied the existence or downplayed the possibility of critical individual philosophy in Africa.

**Professional African Philosophy**

Professional philosophy is the view that philosophy is a particular way of thinking, reflecting, reasoning, and interpreting the universe. To these, African philosophy is a professional position taken by those trained in the content, method and conceptual skills in philosophy. They deny that there is a spontaneous philosophy that can legitimately be postured as uniquely African as claimed by ethnophilosophy. The uniting thread among all professional philosophers is the view that ethnophilosophy misrepresents African philosophy. Their immediate task and intellectual duty therefore is to remedy this error or misrepresentation by ethnophilosophy.

To the professional African philosopher, so it is argued, the question "What is philosophy?" is affirmed univocally in among other cultures as "European, Middle Eastern and Asian, and yet denied or it is assigned a different meaning when it comes to Africa. They find this disturbing and point an accusing finger at Western cultural propagandists.

However, critics point out that all its proponents are men and women trained in the West. That what they are fighting for is not intellectually an honest course of advancing an African agenda since they know very little about Africa. Their theoretical schemes and methodologies of evaluating reality are all western. Therefore, the critics would dismiss professional African philosophy as western philosophy masquerading as African philosophy.[10] Therefore they do not qualify to defend African culture, which they need to be educated in.

It is from the unpalatable positions of ethnophilosophy and critics of professional African philosophy that sage philosophy emerges as a response and reconciliation of the two positions.[11] By proving that Africa has people who were not Western educated or trained in Western philosophy but capable of critical individual philosophy, sage philosophy invalidated both the position of ethnophilosophy and critics of professional African philosophy. However, it should be noted that the fact that the initial sage philosophy

[9] Oruka, 1990, 13-16
[10] *Ibid*., 18-20, 36-37
[11] *Ibid*., 16, 36-37, 52, 131

interviews were conducted among mostly illiterate people should not be construed to mean that it is a philosophy of the illiterate. This was done mainly to present a somewhat more authentic African philosophy that could not be attributed to borrowing from western philosophy.[12]

**Sage Philosophy**

Sage philosophy consists of the expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community. It is a way of thinking and explaining the world that fluctuates between popular wisdom or general common sense truth, and didactic wisdom.

As an approach to African philosophy, Henry Odera Oruka first introduced philosophic sagacity to the international community in 1978, during the Commemoration of Dr. Anthony William Amo Conference held in Accra, Ghana.[13]

According to Oruka,

> Sage philosophy consists of the expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community and is a way of thinking and explaining the world that fluctuates between *popular wisdom* (well-known communal maxims, aphorisms and general common sense truths) and *didactic wisdom* (an expounded wisdom and a rational thought of some given individuals within a community). While popular wisdom is often conformist, didactic wisdom is at times critical of the communal set up and popular wisdom.[14]

The gist of this theory is the claim that though there may not have been professional philosophers in the academic sense, traditional Africa had men and women of wisdom who fulfilled both the professional and social functions associated with philosophy i.e. the prescriptive and analytic functions. Since sagacity derives from the word sage, the absence of a professional discipline called "philosophy" in non-westernized traditional African societies should not be used as a hindrance to the individuals known in native African cultures as such from fulfilling the professional and social functions comparable to those performed by philosophers in both ancient (as it were in ancient Greek society) and modern Western cultures.

**Aims of Sage Philosophy**

1. To identify individuals in traditional Kenya, Africa, who are wise in the didactic sense and thereafter put their thoughts in writing. The point here is that there are individual sages in society who make valuable statements that are worth the attention of professional philosophers.[15] You note that Sagacity's prime role is to provide ''raw data'' for further philosophical reflection by professional philosophers.[16]

2. To mediate between ethno-philosophy on the one hand and professional philosophy on the other.

3. To put down the views of various sages with a view to coming up with a systematised Kenyan national culture

4. To assist African intellectuals in researching on, understanding, tabulating and

[12] Oruka, 1996, 181-182
[13] Oruka, 1990, 13-22
[14] Oruka, Odera H., ed. *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy.* Nairobi: African Centre for Technology Studies, 1991, 33.
[15] *ibid*. xvii, 36.
[16] *ibid*.

exposing elements of African culture. This role confines the African intellectual to think and reflect about the demands of thinkinking about the socio-economic development of the community-poverty, hygiene, illiteracy among others. Sagacity's role here is to demonstrate that genuine development must be pursued in the light of the concrete circumstances of the community especially in the process of designing and implementing development policies and programs. This is because, Oruka believes, the sages understand their people's culture and the nature of their problems better than most people.[17]

**African Philosophy Today**

Since the 1978 conference, a lot has been written on the theory both by its admirers and critics alike. Some of its harsher critics have explicated what to them are major flaws which make sage philosophy as a theory in African philosophy unsustainable. Our main concern in this paper is not with this category of thinking. Our focus is to expose some pertinent issues that have to date remained implicit in this theory. In particular the development of philosophic sagacity as a mere idea in the project, its methodology and to assess the possibility of its future. Our presentation of philosophic sagacity is thus divided into three sections. The first explicates three strands (or shades) of philosophic sagacity. Research representative of the three strands is identified. In section two, we seek to show that when Odera Oruka initiated philosophic sagacity in the 1970s, contrary to what many may have thought, he had in mind several aims. These aims will be shown to be consistent with the three strands. Based on the three strands we demonstrate the state of sage philosophy today. Finally and coupled with Odera Oruka's aims, we move to claim that each of these three aspects is reflected variously in Odera Oruka's works, but he did not himself create this neat categorization.

**From Sage Philosophy to philosophic sagacity**

An interesting dimension has emerged in African philosophy in which it is claimed that everything African and philosophical, and conversely, all that is philosophical and African, is reducible to philosophic sagacity. Prof Ochieng'-Odhiambo has also advanced this argument.[18] He holds that the concept of philosophic sagacity is actually not new, since Oruka himself used it in his early works.[19] He identifies three stages in the evolution of sage philosophy, namely, pre-1978, 1978-19, and 1984-1995.

The first phase, pre-1978, saw the use of sagacity to mean philosophy in its normative sense, not technical and theoretical sense. That there existed African philosophers in the same way Socrates was a philosopher without writing anything down or expressing serious opinion on discourse about nature and reality.

The second phase spans the period 1978-1984, and 1984-1995 forms the third and final phase.[20] In all these stages it seems that Oruka was too preoccupied with situating African philosophy among black Africans. This far, Oruka neither made efforts at reconciling the inconsistencies in the project, nor even recognized them, a point that is partly responsible for the misunderstanding and misrepresentations inherent in sage philosophy. That what Oruka was interested in was the rebuttal of ethnophilosophy and to demonstrate that 'African

[17] Oruka, 1990 61–62
[18] Ochieng'-Odhiambo, F., "The Tripartite in Philosophic Sagacity", in *Philosophia Africana* 9, no. 1 (Mar.) 2006, 17-34.
[19] Ochieng'-Odhiambo, F., The evolution of sagacity: the three stages of Oruka's philosophy, in Philosophia Africana 5, no. 1 (Mar.) 2002, 19-32
[20] *Ibid.*

mythologies should not be substituted for African philosophy.'[21] In this phase, Oruka is concerned with explicating the notion of sagacity in African philosophy.

The second phase equally witnessed softening of heart towards ethnophilosophy. It was perceived to be one of the useful and tolerable trends or theories that could fairly and adequately account for philosophy in Africa. Though not a very good reason, Oruka casually says that ethnophilosophy is acceptable because it '… has an important role to play in African philosophy'.[22]

The above statement reflects Oruka's own position that, '…between the folk-philosophy and the written critical discourse, sage philosophy comes as the third alternative, a demonstration that traditional Africa had both, folk-wisdom and critical individualized philosophical discourse.[23] Oruka is painfully acknowledging the commitment and role of sagacity in creating a critical philosophy as theoretical discipline with not only the normative function but also critical, epistemological and logical functions of philosophy, while not interfering with grounded epistemology which is the property of the community safely in the hands of ethnophilosophy.

The third phase, post-1983 witnesses another shift by Oruka from philosophic sagacity back to sage philosophy. In a paper, 'Sagacity in Development'[24] a clear meaning is delineated with regard to philosophic sagacity. He uses sagacity specifically to imply the wisdom of *named specific* individuals. It is this last period that Oruka makes attempts at distinguishing the various usages of the word sagacity as being at the core of any future efforts in the practice of philosophy in Africa. First, it can refer to popular wisdom in which the community claims ownership and for which no known particular individual is responsible for its truth claims. This could be written or oral. Second, the term sagacity could refer to the didactic wisdom of known individuals who claim ownership and are responsible for the ideas, are able to rationalize and defend its truth claims. It is in the latter, for Oruka, that lay African philosophy, since to recognize and affirm African wisdom, is to logically recognize, and affirm the existence of individuals in Africa who hold this wisdom hence pointing to the existence of African philosophers. The issue is now to identify these philosophers. Moreover, the issue is no longer whether it exists but to seek to cultivate a history of discursive thought on African peoples, cultures, history and sociological evaluation. This task has been left to contemporary thinkers, both Africans and Africanists, trained and committed to the cause and future of African philosophy.[25]

According to Oruka, sagacity in African thought should be distinguished from traditional wisdom, which looks at African philosophy from a collective participatory thought, at one level, and, as the critical initiative of some known individuals[26] (Oruka, 1990:47-48) at another. A folk sage operates at the level of traditional wisdom. He/she is concerned with collective thinking of the community. Hence, he/she is very good at *describing* the traditions, beliefs, and practices of the community. The folk sage knows the application, use and value of societal knowledge. S/he knows the different techniques of knowledge generation, validation and appropriation and can interpret the culture of the community extremely well. These individuals defend very strongly societal knowledge base whenever it is threatened.

[21] Kai Kresse's interview with Odera Oruka in the Epilogue of Sagacious Reasoning H. Oruka in Memoriam (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishers, 1997, 34.
[22] *Ibid*., 34
[23] Oruka, 1990, 65
[24] *Ibid.*, 57-65
[25] Masolo 1994, 194.
[26] Oruka, 1990, 47-48.

A philosophic sage on the contrary is a graduated folk sage. He/she operates at a higher level of reasoning. The demands of a philosophic sage are such that in addition to being a good historian of the community's culture, one must be adequately rational and critical in making observations, and passing independent judgements. This position entails that one is able to recommend beliefs, customs and knowledge claims that can be validated by reason and reason alone. Herein lies African Philosophy.

However, this distinction is not watertight.[27] Our daily life experiences of normal social discourse reveal that people do not understand that what is seen as folk wisdom may have been once the didactic wisdom of a respected sage before it lapsed into common knowledge. Similarly, one may want to point out that it is not the case that all philosophers are didactic on everything in society. One may be very good at rationalizing and evaluating moral issues while quite ignorant on matters sports and entertainment, or nutrition. We can thus say that the dividing line between the two, folk and philosophic sage lies in how each of these appropriates societal knowledge and wisdom. One consumes it wholly. Another questions its utilization with a view to justifying it, modifying it or even rejecting it altogether. On the overall, most people tend to hold that a sage is an exceptionally wise person. Consequently, he or she has to be consistently concerned with the ethical and empirical problems arising in his or her community with the intention of finding insightful solutions to these. We could not agree more.

**Sagacity, and the Future of Philosophy in Africa**

The foregoing has pushed discourse on sage philosophy to an entirely new level where its claims have been modified that it is competing for attention. Ochieng'-Odhiambo has identified what he calls s*hades* of philosophic sagacity in which there is a claim that the entire discourse in African philosophy can be explained through the prism of any of the shades in philosophic sagacity. These shades are; academic, cultural-nationalism, and epistemic.[28]

**The Academic shade**

This represents the intellectual confrontation between ethnophilosophy and professional philosophy on the question of definition and nature of African philosophy. Technically, this was an easy escape route that provided the then budding African philosophers with a punching bag in the absence of any credible philosophical literature of the moment. The immediate impact of this shade was to leave a trail of literature that is so critical of ethnophilosophy to the extent of making unrealistic demands concerning the nature of African philosophy.[29] The demand and precondition for a philosophy for Africa during this period was individuals who were critical about the elements of culture and its dynamics whether this ties in and agrees with what is culturally accepted remained a different question altogether.

**The Cultural-Nationalist shade**

This is concerned with post independent African societies, especially the question of the negative impact of Western culture on Africa. According to Ochieng'-Odhiambo, the second phase in Oruka's research on sage philosophy underpins this thought.[30] Granted, this effectively takes over the duty previously performed by ideological nationalistic theory. It advocates for African nationalism, at the local cultural level, national and continental level in

[27] Oruka, 1991, 33-36.
[28] Ochieng'-Odhiambo, 2006, 24-30
[29] Hountondji, 1996, 45-47
[30] Ochieng'-Odhiambo, 2006, 21

which there is a 'progressive modernizing of African ideologies, values and institutions, within the framework of African culture.

**The Epistemic phase**

This aspect is concerned with storing traditional knowledge in African through the interpretive ability and with assistance from trained researchers in philosophy; it focuses on traditional cultural themes, practices, and the cognitive structures. The inquiry is on forms of knowledge creation, generation and validation as well as techniques involved in appraising moral issues in society. This aspect of philosophic sagacity is involved in the generation and sustaining discussions on African themes through texts that reflect this reality. Sages are engaged on ethical as well as empirical issues as they occur and influence social practice. At best, this aspect can qualify African moral philosophy more than what the author thinks its duty should be, that is, epistemology. The trouble with this aspect is its over reliance on mythologies. It is not clear what aspects of myths have cognitive value and which ones do not.

**Challenges and Prospects for the Future**

Oruka's theory of sage philosophy may seem a very serious invention for Africa. But it is not. Among other efforts it stands out in the desire by African thinkers to utilize local knowledge, tools and schemes of ordering nature in focusing at societal moral issues. Other efforts include: Aime Cesaire's *Negritude* before him; Placide Tempels' *ethnophilosophy*; Marcel Griaule's *Convesarions with Ogotemmeli* (1965); and, Barry Hallen & John Olu Sodipos's *Knowledge, Belief & Witchcraft*.

So what marks the success of Odera Oruka's effort? The secret lies in the consistency of his demands of liberating philosophy from the shackles of religion and mythology. He did this not only by providing theoretically sound basis of evaluating African cultural values and ideals, but also by making physical demands to separate myth from rational thought as well as separating religion and culture from philosophy.

Sage philosophy was conceived as part of a general reaction to the position of classical missionary and anthropological traditions regarding traditional Africa that dominated the first three decades of the twentieth century. This classical anthropology denied any form of abstract thought to traditional Africa, and the African was described as savage with a primitive mentality.[31] Marcel Griaule responded to this description by presenting a study of the Dogon. The tool of analysis was Ogotemelli a leading traditional sage. The moral of the story is that if one wants to understand Africans one should use locally available systems of epistemologies. This study by Griaule made an important statement: That, an African culture when well explicated can produce a metaphysics upon which principles determining social order, law, customs, rituals and the respective institutions were based. This was a great discovery. Griaule attached such great significance to his ''discovery'' that he believed would put to rest the claim of classical anthropology.[32]

But this is not convincing. Robin Horton[33] was quick to point out that, the seeming similarity in African thought and western thought was misplaced. He holds that in fact both groups (scientific and traditional thinkers) seek to explain the visible world in terms of the invisible world. However, in the case of traditional thinkers, the explanations are essentially through use of the actions of gods and spirits. The scientists on the other hand use theoretical entities

[31] Cf. Mudimbe, 1988; Hountondji, 1996; Oruka, 1990 and Wiredu 1980

[32] Griaule Marcel, Conversations with Ogotemmêli: an introduction to Dogon religious ideas, Oxford University Press, London, 1965

[33] Horton, R., 1967, 'African Traditional Thought and Western Science', in *Africa* 37, 1-2: 50-71 and 155-187.

like atoms and waves. True. We cannot disagree. But is there evidence that all African explanations use spiritual entities? This is a pointer to the fact that methodologically and theoretically, we have not done enough in exposing and evaluating the conceptual underpinnings of this theory. In many situations, it presents theoretical ambiguities. For instance, it is possible to hold that the metaphysics presented by subjects of sage philosophy is taken for granted. The subjects, it is said, present anonymous thoughts, some kind of unanimous possession of an entire people. This and many others are issues for ironing out.

Does this deny the possibility of individualized, critical, second-order thinking? According to Odera Oruka, no. He believes that the existence of traditional sages in Kenya is proof enough that this sort of thinking is a permanent feature of African societies.34 It should be clear now why the focus of sage philosophy was on the views of traditional sages. The reason is that in Odera's mind, the entire course of its development, sage philosophy set out to prove that focusing rationally on indigenous knowledge is the way for development in Africa. Odera has done this very cunningly: utilizing indigenous experts least likely to smuggle foreign elements into African thought system while remaining relevant to the demands and changing dynamics of society.35

Critics point out that the actual philosophical work in producing a coherent philosophical position in this exercise is done by the academic philosopher. Secondly, wise sayings within a culture depending on one's framework and analytic tools can produce different and even contradictory systems of thought. In Kenya we have a Swahili saying *haraka haraka haina baraka* (Hurry, hurry has no blessings) and *pole pole ndio mwendo* (slow but sure, you will reach your destination). In choosing these two, we mean to demonstrate that patience pays. But we could choose contradicting proverbs and the result will be different.

Other critics unconvinced insist that sagacity smacks of anthropological fogs, the same crimes leveled against ethno-philosophy. That, this so-called sagacious reasoning is just some form of individualized ethnophilosophy! But this criticism is not justifiable. Unlike ethnophilosophy, sage philosophy whether in the form of folk sagacity or philosophic sagacity, refers to thoughts of individually known persons. It is individualized knowledge with subjects to defend its truth claims. Furthermore, sagacity does not claim, as ethnophilosophy does, that it refers to a philosophy of everybody (1990: 17).[36]

## Conclusion

In the face of rapid westernization of Africa, and the growing absorption of entire population into a western web of science and technology, and the resulting disappearance of traditional sages, what is the future for sage philosophy? The answer depends on whether we can recast the original objectives and goals of sage philosophy. If we are looking for traditional African sages, (the Platos, the Immanuel Kants, David Humes), then the future is very bleak. They are not in plenty of supply today! If we are looking for indigenous knowledge upon which we can erect project one, achieve, project two, achieve, etc etc, then the future is open and bright. The former focuses on individuals. They will one day disappear. The latter focuses on systems of knowledge that is localized. Knowledge is a continuum and in exhaustible. The latter will improve the theoretical and methodological deficiencies in sage philosophy. It will renew the spirit of the project. It will confront new challenges by

[34] Oruka, 1990, 5-6.
[35] Presbey, G.M., "H. Odera Oruka on Moral reasoning: Rooted in the East African Prophetic Tradition", Paper read at the American Philosophical Association Symposium on "Sage Philosophy: Celebrating the Life and Works of Odera Oruka." Los angeles, California, 1998, 10. See also Oruka, 1990, 61-62.
[36] Oruka, 1990 17

revising the existing tools, theoretical, methodological or otherwise. This is the task of philosophy, everywhere and perennially.

# Part II
# Philosophy and Peace in Africa

# The Epistemic Essentials in the Search for Political Trajectory
## A Philosophical Quest for Cognitive Foundations of Politics in Africa

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### Introduction

Politics, Aristotle contends, is the master science by virtue of it being the means by which human beings endeavour to create and organize societies for their individual and collective good. It is both the art and science whose aim is to unite the divergent interests of people into a harmonious set of goals. Because of their individual uniqueness, human beings have different existential needs, and each has a different idea and preference of how these needs should be satisfied. These ideas and preferences do coincide in certain respects, but they also do conflict sharply in other respects. This seems to be an ineluctable fate of human society. Whenever these individual characteristics conflict and become disharmonious, the danger of social turbulence is not only eminent, but most of the times, becomes real. The end result, in most cases, is full blast social disharmony, leading to chaotic eruption of violence and other attendant social ills. To avert this, a mechanism for countering the disharmonious antecedents of chaos and social disequilibrium must be established. Politics, as the "science and art" of organizing society, is the tool for bringing the incessant social vicissitudes characteristic of social life, into harmony. Politics is, here, understood as the means to solve social problems, and as the tool for establishing in an otherwise, chaotic situation.

Despite the recognition of politics as a potent tool for structuring a well ordered and harmonious society, there are still, some opinions associating it with the occurrence of disharmony, and it is, therefore, often regarded as the main architect and propellant of social evils. Prosecuted and convicted as the main culprit in the most heinous cases of human misery, politics has not always received a welcome consideration within human society. With the condemnation as the chief enemy of human kind, politics has been treated either with adversarial caution, or with disdain, and those involved in the practice have been regarded in unwelcome ways. Either they are social deviants, seeking a panacea for the justification of their deeds, or are good people who, somehow, do not mind being bad. As a concept, then, politics is fairly "loaded" in meaning. The mention of it elicits unsavory thoughts of biasness and partiality, as well as "images of trouble, disruption and even violence on the one hand, and, deceit, manipulation and lies on the other.[1] As a host to several misconceptions and such unsavory associations as being "… 'nothing more than a means of rising in the world'…[or as] "the systematic organization of hatreds'," 2 making it the subject of popular disdain, politics is regarded by many people as the cause of, rather than the solution to social problems. This is the familiar image of politics in Africa, where

[1] A. Heywood, *Politics*. (London: Macmillan Foundations, 1997), P. 4.
[2] Ibid.

it is associated to disruptive violence, deceit, manipulation and lies.3 From independence, African politics has been a trial of different ill-fitting models, ranging from single-party political regimes,4 to military governments, and to trials (or mistrials) with certain ideals and practices of democracy. The result, mostly, has been inefficiency and repression in governance, occasioning conflict and social instability. To date, there is still the tension between repressive rule, attempts at military rule (though the military model has largely reduced), and a search for a citizen-driven form of politics. Nothing seems to define the African political orientation quite succinctly, and any model still seems allowable in Africa, even if the general pretensions are democratic. Several reasons can be cited for this kind of confusion, and among these reasons, in my opinion, is the fact that a fundamental characteristic of politics, the epistemic element, is lacking, in African politics.

Most African countries are fifty years into territorial independence, yet they have not yet found a befitting political paradigm, for their socio-economic development. Why this is the case is a question worth attempting to answer. In this article, I shall investigate into this epistemic question, arguing that politics, from its teleological concerns, is highly philosophical in character, yet the point of departure is no less philosophical than the end. In politics, epistemology and moral philosophy find convergence, for one provides the propelling and strategic elements for achieving societal desires and goals, while the other provides the target vision of societal goals and desires. There is a tacit understanding that the aim of politics is attainment of social equilibrium and wellbeing for humans. The epistemic/conceptual antecedents of this, however, need to be defined, if it is to be achieved, at all. As Brian Magee rightly remarks, "… the chief obstacles of progress are conceptual: they consist in our failure to view our society with sufficient truthfulness, compassion and irreverence [sic]; to be sufficiently concerned for those less fortunate than ourselves, to formulate demands for change with sufficient creative imagination; and to pursue them with sufficient forcefulness and courage."5

Some of the principle Magee identifies as conceptual (e.g, truthfulness, compassion, reverence and courage), belong to the moral dimension, but (intuitively perhaps) they do have epistemic foundations.

**Relation between Politics and Epistemology**

*The Plurality of Conceptions of Politics*

The ambivalent character of politics seems to stand on the way to an all-encompassing, yet precise definition of politics. In recognition of this, perhaps, Andrew Heywood[6] distinguishes four conceptions of politics: 1) Politics as the art of governance, in which those in power impose authoritarian values in the society, controlling the behavior of people, and determining who gets what, how, and when. 2) Again, politics is the art of engaging in control of public, decision – making through participating in a focused organization such as a political party. This conception leaves aside all private institutions such as the family, religious bodies, and government bureaucracies. Such organizations are, largely, considered apolitical, in the sense that their involvement in any political issues is considered contrary to their *raison de être*. 3) Politics is, also, the process of continuous harmonization of constantly conflicting interests, which keep emerging in human life, each day. It is a process of solving social issues through dialogue, rather than violence and coercion. The harmonization process is continuous because of the contingent nature of human problems; they keep changing as

[3] Ibid.
[4] G. M. Carter, *African One-Party States*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).
[5] Brian Magee. *The Democratic Revolution*. (London: The Bodley Head, 1964), P. 33.
[6] Andrew Heywood. *Politics*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), Pp. 4-12.

well as recurring in different circumstances, taking new perspectives, always. Politics, then, must continuously device new ways of dealing with these problems, and so, politics is seen as a *process*, rather than *a state of affairs*. 4) Lastly, politics is the struggle for power to control and enjoy the society's resources. This conception of politics entails a relationship of subjugation of one section of the society by another. The dominant and controlling attitude here is that one must get whatever one wants by every possible means available.

The first and fourth conceptions regard politics in *consequentialist* terms. Politics is seen in terms of its effectiveness, which is manifested in how people's behavior accord with the wishes of the ruler(s), or how an individual or group of individuals is able to achieve his/her/its wishes through the subjugation and exploitation of a section of the society. The problem with this conception is that, apart from being repressive, and therefore, contrary to the fundamental quest of the human spirit for transcendence and self – actualization, thus, offending against the human nature, itself, it also creates a stagnant non-dynamic society, whose progress is cyclic rather than lineal. The same ideas espoused by the predecessors are the very ideas cherished by future generations. The possibility of formulating new ideas is muzzled by the anachronistic authoritarianism that, the lust for power to control and enjoy the wealth and privileges of the society, engenders. The second and the third conceptions are rather, *proceduralist* in view. They regard politics both in terms of the process and the outcome, and are less problematic, compared to the first and the fourth conceptions outlined above. The slight difficulty I see with the second conception is its restriction of political engagement to "organized public institutions" such as political parties, and leaving aside such private organizations as religious organizations, and government bureaucracies. Our natural orientation makes us want to assume some degree of responsibility for the decisions that create certain fundamental events of our life. One need not belong to an organization like a political party, in order to exercise this capacity. To deny people opportunities for directing their life on account of some accidental conditions, such as, belonging to a profession, or to a religious organization, is to sin against human nature.

Despite the many conceptions of politics, there is always some conception which looks more like the right conception than the rest. That, in my opinion, is: the process of continuous harmonization of continuously conflicting human interests, and of formulating and executing decisions binding on the entire population of a *community* or *society*. This definition is a hybrid definition, coined from the works of Andrew Heywood's *Politics*, and Munroe Eagles and Larry Johnstone's *Politics: An Introduction to Democratic Government*. I find this hybridization appropriate since, while it covers what is essential to social organization, it also accords with the ideals of human transcendence and self – actualization. Politics is a harmonizing *process*, whose aim is creating order and meaning to human life, in an otherwise, disorderly and meaningless situation. The distinction between a community and a society in the definition of politics, above, is significant, given the demographic composition of contemporary territorial boundaries we inhabit today. A community is a homogenous and cohesive group of people, united by a common language, culture, religious and moral norms, and governed by common customs and traditions.[7] The membership of a community is "more or less total (one belongs or one doesn't), and often requires commitment, some participation or performance of duty. Communities are conservative in the sense of attempting to maintain the integrity of what is held in common, and collective in the sense that the welfare of each member is of interest to the others."[8]A society, on the other hand, is a loose conglomeration of individuals, each concerned with his/her private pursuits, only converging occasionally,

[7] Munroe Eagles and Larry Johnston. *Politics. An Introduction to Democratic Government*. (N.Y.: Broadview Press, 1999), P. 21.
[8] Munroe & Larry, ibid. P. 22.

when their individual interests *happen* to coincide or conflict. One may choose to be consciously present in a society, or just to flow along with the rest, disinterestedly. "On a very basic level, the difference … is that community is personal and familiar, while society is impersonal and … [*somehow*] invisible."[9]

> [In] …many contemporary states [there] are societies containing more than one community or [there] are no longer communities … that is, a shared set of values, norms, ore beliefs no longer unites all members. In these societies, normative debate is necessarily persistent, as various groups, communities, and subcultures attempt to influence decision – makers about the right choices for society at large.[10]

Any normative conception of politics, such as is argued for here, must address such concepts as liberty, equality, fairness, the common good, and the like. These are aspects of a society's life which cannot be shoved aside no matter our attitude towards them. Given their centrality to any form of social organization, political discourse must have something to say about their conceptual clarity. "This means taking terms that in everyday use are very general and making them more specific. Instead of ambiguity, we look for precise, definite meanings."[11] This is the function of philosophy, specifically, epistemology. Understanding normative concepts in political discourse is not an obligation of political philosophers or political scientists alone. As averagely enlightened citizens, too, we are obligated to

> … use the critical faculties of our reason and the analytic skills they allow us to develop in order to increase our understanding of each other. We seek precision, coherence, and consistency in the use of normative terms like 'freedom' or 'justice' so that we will understand the normative outcomes involved in their use – whether this is to promote a political position, advance a policy decision, or propose legislation that will bind each of us. The better we understand what is at stake in these matters, the better we will be able to judge if they are consistent with our interests or with our conception of what ought to be.[12]

It, just, doesn't look possible that politics can do without epistemology, even from the most non-elitist considerations. This is why Eva Erman and Niklas MÖller are wrong in their contention that Democracy cannot be grounded in epistemic principles.[13] In this article, the authors criticize what they refer to as the "*pragmatist epistemic*"[14] project, associated with Robert Talisse and Cheryl Misak. Erman and MÖller disagree with Talisse and Misak's contention that a grounding of (democratic) politics on moral principles is problematic in the light of reasonable disagreements members of a society are bound to have over any given matter. They summarize the pragmatist epistemic argument in this way: "…the core pragmatist epistemic argument for democracy is this: all of us, as believers, are committed to a number of fundamental epistemic principles. These epistemic principles in turn entail a number of interpersonal epistemic commitments. From these epistemic commitments, a commitment to democracy follows."[15] The authors do not attempt to deny the significance of epistemic commitment to (democratic) political ideals. Their quarrel with Talisse and Misak is that the two make commitment to epistemic norms the sole basis for commitment to political ideals, arguing that one may very well accept the reasonableness of taking a course of action, but still decide not to follow that course of action. To them, therefore, epistemic commitment to principles in itself, does not engender a response of action by an individual. To the extent that the authors argue against divorcing the moral component from the *decision*

[9] Munroe & Larry, Ibid. P. 23.
[10] Munroe & Larry, Ibid. P. 40.
[11] Munroe & Larry, Ibid. P. 41.
[12] Munroe & Larry, Ibid. Pp. 42 – 42.
[13] Cf. E. Erman & N. MÖller. "Why Democracy Cannot Be Grounded in Epistemic Principles," in *Social Theory and Practice.* Vol. 42. No. 3 2016.
[14] E. Erman & N. MÖller, Ibid. P. 450.
[15] Erman & MÖller, Ibid. P. 454.

to act on conceived political ideals, the authors are right. However, to continue on this basis, and deny epistemic principles any role in grounding political ideas, the authors are wrong. In practical human life, epistemic principles are the antecedents to moral principles, and almost, invariably, yield into moral principles.

*The Conceptual Element*

Epistemology, simply described, is the theory regarding the process through which the human mind annexes ideas, and uses them for production of further ideas which, may or may not, result into action. Epistemology investigates into both the nature and the ability of the human mind in acquiring knowledge, and the nature of the object of knowledge itself, its significance, and/or use, as it attempts to establish the validity of that knowledge. Epistemology attempts to outline the principles of knowledge, as they relate to human action. Epistemology is, therefore, concerned with the conceptual basis of human action.

There is, from an epistemological perspective, a difference between an *idea* and a *concept*. In this difference, lies in my opinion, a great part of the problem that ails contemporary political practice, in particular, within the African continent. Brian Cronin's explanation of the difference between an idea and a concept seems to me clear, comprehensive, and adequate, and I shall rely on it to try and explain what I see as the problem with politics in Africa. An idea, according to Cronin, is a universal, abstract formula in which intellection grasps the "*intelligible relation between*"[16] objects. An idea, is the means through which the intellect connects the interactive dynamism between concrete, particular objects in the world and the human cognitive capacity. The idea, then, has a direct relation to the world, since it is a means towards apprehending the world. It is abstract and universal, "…but can be applied to an infinity of concrete or particular instances,"[17] actually existing in the world. A triangle can be expressed in an abstract definition (idea), but can also be realized in an infinite number of triangles of different physical properties, actually existing in the world. A chair can be expressed abstractly in a universal definition, but this universal definition can be applied to an infinite number of concrete objects, called chairs, of different shapes, sizes, and colours. There are several kinds of ideas: "… laws, relations, intelligibilities, unities, qualities, quantities, classifications, virtues, numbers, are all ideas."[18] A concept, on the other hand, is an idea that is "…formulated explicitly and expressed in words or symbols or definitions."[19] As we encounter cases and pay attention to them, usually, a simple insight is gained about them at first. But after that initial grasp of the meaning of the case in question, we continue to think about it, putting it clearly into words which we formulate as definitions. One formulates a concept only when he/she reflects upon an idea and formulates it in a definition.

> Ideas come first but are quickly followed by concepts. Concepts are formulated ideas. Most people have an idea of what constitutes a circle and would be able to distinguish between a circle, an eclipse and an ovoid. But may not be able to define a circle, correctly; when you formulate a definition of a circle explicitly, then, you have the concept of the circle. Both idea and concept are products of intelligence… Both concepts and ideas are universal and abstract. It is intelligence that expresses them in a formula or definition.[20]

An idea and a concept are similar in virtue of their origin (intelligence), universality, and abstractness. This similarity seems, largely, responsible for the confusion which makes the two terms be employed interchangeably, as if they are synonyms of a common object.

[16] B. Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitional Theory and Epistemology*. (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, 1999), P. 73. The Italics in the quotation are mine.
[17] B. Cronin, Ibid. P. 73.
[18] B. Cronin, Ibid. P. 74.
[19] B. Cronin, Ibid. P. 74.
[20] B. Cronin, Ibid. P. 74.

However, a concept, strictly speaking, is an orientation of the mind towards meaning. "We can have strings of concepts which cluster together to form a theory or explanation. … But normally concepts are a stage in the process towards knowledge of the real when we need to be quite clear about what we are talking about."[21] If we wish to be sure of the phenomena or issues we are concerned with, or that others understand our position in regard to them, we shall of necessity, formulate them into definitions. Concepts are "…the means by which we *understand* correctly the working of the material world. Any … discipline requires concepts, but they are not the object of the … [discipline] in question; they are the means the … [discipline] uses in order to know the concrete."[22] To understand why certain forms of behaviour are considered right and others wrong, we need to formulate the concept of right and wrong in a definition, and be able to relate the concepts to concrete behaviour. The same applies to our understanding of society, music, football, etc. Politics, as a discipline, requires formal definition of concepts, just like any other discipline. Herein lies the concern that epistemology has with politics. Epistemology must provide the conceptual antecedents politics depends on for its operations.

It is, roughly, about a decade or slightly more, now, since the question of the relationship between epistemology and politics took to the center of academic discourse. Politics has, traditionally, always been studied together with morality, being conceived of as an application of moral principles to real human life situations. Plato and Aristotle were champions of this ethical conception of the politics, and were robust in their belief that politics without morality is like a boat floating in water to no specific direction. This made politics and moral philosophy be regarded, almost as two sides of a coin. The interest in the relation between epistemology and politics, however, gained currency when human reason seemed to have discovered that without proper and adequate knowledge (epistemic foundations) of the principles of right conduct (ethics), people are likely to go wrong in very fundamental ways of organizing society (politics). Epistemology defines the moral principles that politics applies in organizing human existence. The recognition that we are likely go wrong in fundamental ways of our existence if we don't adequately consider their conceptual foundations is called "falibilism." It is the epistemic norm that our beliefs on a subject matter could be wrong, at least, in principle, and therefore, any absolute position on any matter must be regarded as inappropriate, and thus, be avoided.[23] That we can err both in knowledge and action is a significant point to note in political action. Knowing this, one must hesitate, and not act before reflecting on the foundations and strategies of his/her action. A number of conflicts (in political organizations) arise from cognitive dissonance.[24] People run into conflict with each other because they hold opposite opinions about the meaning and significance of the same issue. A recent trend in democratic thinking (deliberative theory of democracy), has recognized this as a serious matter, and has recommended the process of deliberation (epistemic justification of reasons for adopting a line of thought and action), as the way to solve this problem.

The question of the relationship between epistemology and politics, however, is a fairly controversial one within the academic discourse. As we have indicated, above, there are those who are opposed to any epistemic pretentions at dealing with political issues. There are, too, those who argue for an inseparable connection between epistemology and politics.[25] Human

[21] B. Cronin, P. 75.
[22] B. Cronin, P. 75.
[23] E. Erman and N. MÖller, Ibid. P. 470.
[24] J. Habermas (P. 15)
[25] Eva Erman and Niklas MÖller sound ironically anti any connection between epistemology and politics. The irony is in the fact that they accept the significance of commitment to epistemic norms in the influence of one's

activity, invariably, springs from knowledge, whether sensory or intellectual. For every conscious human act, there is an underlying epistemic influence. There is always a question of the involvement of the mind, applying certain principles of cognition. As John Wilson argues, in every enterprise, it is very difficult to avoid consideration of what it means to do well, or to achieve the best results in it. The mind will always strive towards the best results in any enterprise. For that reason, it becomes imperative that "…if anyone is (even potentially) interested in any enterprise, one needs an idea of what rules of it are, what goods it is supposed to produce, what sort of virtues and other equipment one needs for doing it well."[26] This is the path to excellence in any human pursuit, be it a purely theoretical pursuit, or a purely practical pursuit, or a hybrid; theoretic – practical pursuit.

The role of philosophy in political discourse, as in any other human enterprise, is at the very basic, to help in conceptual clarity. To be conceptually clear about an issue has the advantage of preventing one from "…getting into a muddle and allowing …[one's] prejudices and fantasies to emerge unchecked into action."[27] Action follows knowledge, and any confusion in knowledge will result in confusion in action. One can, by accident, stumble upon some plausible action, but the foundations of this action would not be rationally explained, or even be explainable. Epistemology as a discipline within philosophy, helps us access principles upon which action can be rationally grounded and explained.

**The Idea and the Concept in Political Discourse**

The epistemological distinction between an idea and a concept can be transposed to the political discourse. There are, primarily, two ways of looking at politics. From the conception that humans as political beings by nature, every person engages, or can engage in politics. Every activity one carries out has a political mark on it since it is an activity aimed at finding a good life within a social setting. From this point of view, every human being has an "idea" (a very general understanding) of politics, and can comment on matters affecting him/her, and can make more or less reasonable decisions on matters regarding his/her wellbeing. From a very general perspective, every person knows his/her basic needs, and seeks to fulfill them. Some people seek to fulfill these needs only for themselves as individual persons, while some seek to fulfill these needs, for themselves as individuals, and also for other people, who may, due to certain contingent reasons, not be able to do this for themselves. This is the beginning of leadership, as whoever seeks to fulfill the basic needs both for him/herself and others, becomes the leader of those for whom he/she seeks to fulfill (or to provide a means of) these needs. Political leadership would entail the ability to seek to provide the means for fulfilling the needs (whether basic or otherwise), of the whole society. This does not require any specialized training. It requires one only to have an idea of what is needed in his/her society, and by whom, and the means to attain it. This is a very rudimentary conception of politics which any person can obtain and attempt to put into action. This requirement, however, runs into trouble when various needs are at conflict, or when the means for fulfilling these needs are no longer sufficient or effective. At this point, some intellectual engagement is required to clarify what is needed and the best means to acquire it. Certain conceptual explanations must be done, if the new emerging concerns are to find appropriate solutions. Here, we transit from merely *the idea of politics* to *the concept of politics*. It requires deliberate epistemic clarification and analysis of ideas, to formulate concepts which will construct theories applied in political leadership.

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political activities, yet the very title of their article screams: "Why Democracy Cannot Be Grounded in Epistemic Principles."

[26] J. Wilson, *What Philosophy Can Do*. (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1986), P. 6

[27] Ibid., 16.

It seems inevitable, then, that the idea of politics, as a starting point, has to give way to the concept of politics, if a society is to progress, and relevant and remain meaningful. Human existence is characterized by the phenomenon of incessant change and the complexities it brings with it whenever it occurs. Every situation of change presents opportunities which can be categorized into good or evil. Political situations change quite frequently, and this calls for constant evaluation of the social dynamics which occasion these situations of change. Without a clear conceptual backing to analyze the implications of these changes, a society is bound to run into some very serious difficulties. Politics requires reason in order to be meaningful. Significant to case for conceptual epistemic clarification is "the people" as a political concept. This is the first crucial element to define, particularly, in the contemporary political scenario, where the "community" has been systematically replace by its surrogate – the "society." Granted the nature of community, creating a homogenous political attitude does not pose much difficulty. But to do this for a society, in the contemporary meaning, where communities have turned into non – viable political units due to globalization, is a rather hard task. What the society presents to us today, is the idea of "the people," rather than the concept of "the people." But for politics to achieve its aims, "the people" must see and regard themselves as a unity. There must be a transition for the idea to the concept of "the people."

## The Political Community

*From the Idea to the Concept*

According to the Athenian model of democracy, "the people" as a political unit, is "given". It is a result of nature since it arises out of the natural tendencies of males and females to consort each with the other.[28] The people here is conceived of as a community of like individuals, connected by blood and common culture; what Aristotle calls *ethne*.[29] This is a community in the strict sense. It is a member of this political unit that Aristotle calls, the citizen, whose definition is: "...one who chooses to rule and be ruled with a view to a life that is in accordance with goodness."[30] One could then be an Athenian, both by birth and descent, without being an Athenian citizen. Citizenship in Athens was determined by blood ties, which gave the *right* to participate in the affairs of the state, conferred by the *privilege* of being born an Athenian male and ownership of property. Without the first requirement of blood ties, however, the others don't count. Citizenship was an office carrying significant social responsibilities.

The Ancient Athenian conception of "a people" is a *realist* understanding of a people, which assumes the people as an objective reality, already constructed and given by nature. Every individual born into this setting, naturally fits within its framework, for being human, they are social/political "by nature." This is a rather static understanding of what we call a political community, and does not allow for drastic differences in intellectual orientations within the same society. People are homogeneous in mind and pursuits, with very little variations in basic wants and leisure preferences. Such a community is pretty fragile, due to its inward looking attitudes, and can suffer damages of anachronism without realizing it. Aristotle was aware of this weakness, and instead of maintaining this concept of society, sought to combine it, somehow, with what I call the *phenomenological* conception of society. According to the phenomenological conception, "a people" is not an objectively given ontological reality. It is a social phenomenon contrived by a deliberate effort, and gains objectivity only through an

[28] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics.* Bk. I. (Trans. W. D. Ross). in the *Basic Works of Aristotle*. (New York: Random House, 2001(1994) ).
[29] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Bk. I.
[30] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Bk. I.

intellectually conscious process of formulating its foundations, structures, and attitudes. A people comes as a result of intellectual/epistemic involvement with the reality of disparate human beings living in the same environment, and pursuing their ends through the means commonly provided for them by nature. Aristotle, thus, insists on the formation of character through habituation, to produce a citizen whose qualities will tantamount to those of the good man.

The phenomenological element latent in Aristotle's conception of the political community manifests itself in an interesting aspect of his description of the citizen. It is an element, the analysis of which, has quite a significant bearing on our understanding of the nature or what we call "the political community" today, considering that the notion of a political community is today very different from what it was during Aristotle's time. This is the element of *choice*. Aristotle intimates that the citizen as a member of the political community, *chooses* his/her goals and the means to attain these goals. The significance of this lies in the fact that the choosing citizen must have knowledge of the goal he/she desires, in order that he/she may choose it. But to choose it, the citizen must have, at least, an idea that this goal is achievable. Some vague idea of the means to achieve it must be present in his/her mind. This residual epistemic act grounds the element of participation, in political processes, for each individual that is capable of manifesting it. The very idea of participation in decision making at whatever level of political engagement calls for some rudimentary form of epistemology. It is not possible to identify an end without the epistemic process of reflection on alternatives, nor is it possible to start a pursuit without identifying, through an epistemic process, the means to employ in this pursuit. Even though the elements of choice of the end and the means to the end are, categorially, within the province of moral philosophy, they invariably, employ the epistemic process of deliberation to gain clarity of vision in regard to the goal, and rightness of strategy to attain the goal in vision. For a citizen to know what goodness consists in, and the right means towards it, he/she must be involved in some epistemic exercise of identification and formulation of concepts.

In constructing a people, the element of participation must be made a fundamental norm for forming the political character of citizens. A people is only a people when it sees and regards itself as one. There must be an explicit knowledge in all individuals, regarding their self-understanding as members bound to each other by some ideals, accepted and embraced by all as forming the basis of their existence as members of a society. This is not something that *happens* to people in the process of their day to day living and experiences. As we shall see a little later, it entails some deliberate effort to accomplish. It depends, largely, on the epistemic capacities of a people, and an openness to construct a rational basis for society. Participation, then, is a significant norm that helps in determining epistemic capacities of citizens, but also helps in forming and directing to the right course, those very epistemic capacities as well as the attendant moral character. It is, as it were, a process of civilizing people's political attitudes. If we are looking for a participatory political paradigm, then the epistemic basis must, first, be put in place. Politics that fails to determine and establish an appropriate epistemic basis, goes wrong, quite fundamentally. Aristotle had envisaged a political community anchored on these parameters, having admitted that *sophia* was superior to *phronesis*.

In the contemporary political environment, as has been mentioned above, the idea of the people carries a diametrically different meaning from its Greek conception. It does not entail an objectively given monolithic ethnic understanding it had within the Greek milieu. "The people," today, is an extremely diverse, almost formless phenomenon, sometimes not connected at all to the Aristotelian requirement of taking part in the process of ruling. This development has had far reaching ramifications for the concept of citizenship, and for

political theory in general. As J. J. Rousseau suggests, a people in modern thinking, is not given by nature, but is *constructed*, in a process which is strenuous and long-drawn. "There is for nations, as for men, a period of youth...before which they should not be made subjects to laws... ."[31] Just like individual humans mature from infancy to youth and then adulthood, the formation of a people, in the political sense, also stretches out through a similar process of maturity. "A people", then, is not ready-made, and must be carefully worked out till it is ready.[32] The growth of a people is epistemic, for a people is a people, because of a consciousness of belonging to a community of a shared intellectual heritage, which defines their identity, as members of a group. Political obligations of a people form part of their identity, and this becomes integral to the way they view and interpret their relationships to each other, internally as members of that community, and externally, as neighbours of other territorial peoples. The political conception of "a people," then, involves a conception of a deliberate rational – and not a spontaneous and arbitrary process of contrivance.

In the *Apology*, Socrates interrogates Athenians' commitment to the ideals of the good life, based on their regard for the youth as the current "building blocks" of future society. He finds Athenians wanting in this concern. Constructing "a people" involves constructing individuals, a process which, to Socrates, begins at youth. This intellectual process extrapolates into a metaphysics, the abstract notion of a people, which is heuristic in structure. It involves a self-discovery of the nature of a political community by the individual citizens through a process of receiving and giving information, and a back and forth self-correcting mechanism, which creates inherited intellectual commonalities which individuals translate into practical living strategies in response to various political experiences. Thus, political traditions are established and bequeathed to succeeding generations.

Without some form of epistemic dynamism, not tradition can be formulated and no culture would appear as a means of interpreting and responding to reality. This is what, in Harbemasian terms, would be referred to as "communicative action," in which rationality manifests itself as the pivot upon which the self-formation of a community revolves. Jürgen Habermas argues that "in contexts of communicative action, we call someone rational, not only if he is able to put forward an assertion and, when criticized, to justify his action by explicating the given situation in the light of legitimate explications. We even call someone rational if he makes known a desire of intention, expresses a feeling or a mood, shares a secret, confesses a deed, etc. and is then able to reassure critics in regard to the revealed experience by drawing practical consequences from it and behaving consistently thereafter."[33] Forming "a people" involves the deliberate awakening of their reason and orienting their epistemic capacities towards reasonable judgment and action. When people learn the power and value of reason, they start to live rationally and they start to become rational. "…we call a person rational who, in the cognitive-instrumental sphere, expresses reasonable opinions and acts efficiently; but this rationality remains incidental if it is not coupled with the ability to learn from mistakes, from the refutation of hypothesis and from the failure of intervention…"[34] This is the self – perfecting nature of knowledge, which reviews itself through introspection. It is a process of assessment of ideas and concepts, resulting in a shared common intellectual heritage.

**Why an Epistemic Process is Needed in the African Politics**

*A Theory of Society*

[31] J. J. Rousseau. *Social Contract*. Bk. II. Ch. VIII. 1974.
[32] J. J. Rousseau. *Social Contract*. Ibid.
[33] Habermas, P. 15
[34] Habermas, P. 18

In his seminal work, *A Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. I, Jürgen Habermas tries to construct a rational foundation for what he calls "communicative action." He poses an important question regarding the possibility of legitimately projecting the communicative action as a rationally normative mechanism.[35] This same question can be legitimately asked about politics, too: can we, legitimately, project the political order as, a normatively, rational mechanism? Considered from an empirical point of view, like Machiavelli and Hobbes, do for instance, the normative imperatives do not play any significant role in political discourse and/or practice. The empirical conception of politics does not consider politics as an all-encompassing social phenomenon. It sees politics as a subsystem of society, among other subsystems, rather than as a "whole."[36] It, therefore, does consider the morally practical question of legitimacy, thus, veering away from establishing the foundations of political activity on rational/epistemic basis. Politics, in this conception, remains a matter of "tact" and shrewd skillfulness.

In Africa, politics has, for a long time now, adopted the empirical, consequentialist model, which disregards any morally practical principles, in favour of a disinterested mechanistic manipulation of society. Knowledge and success in politics is measured by how an individual is capable of acquiring and maintaining power, and to use it effectively to achieve whatever aim he/she wishes. Actions and consequences arising from this use of power are not subject to a rational explanation. A lie, or an unreasonable excuse can justify any action, beyond which, brutal force is the ultimate justification. This has made the State, in Africa, something to be suspicious of, and in many cases, something to fear. The unsavory and near – adversarial regard of politics that obtains in most of Africa, is largely, due to this phenomenon. The State is seen as an irrational, repressive organ, preying on the helplessness of the unorganized masses, who, ironically, depend on the same State for their survival and safety. The people, failing to get State protection, become disillusioned and start to distrust the individuals who run the State, a distrust which spreads to the ethnic communities (tribes) from where these individuals come. The general suspicion is that members of the ethnic communities these leaders come from must be treated in a better way, due to certain commonalities shared between them and the leaders. This becomes the cause and beginning of social disunity.

From a fairly recent historical perspective (colonial history), one finds reason to associate the social disunity in Africa with the events which took place in Africa, towards the end of the 18$^{th}$ Century. The turn of this century witnessed the African continent being partitioned among European countries, each taking a chunk of the continent, to control and extract resources from. The effects of colonialism in Africa are many and diverse, but of direct interest to this discussion is its partitioning. Colonialists created arbitrary boundaries across African populations, separating some communities, which originally were one, into two different groups through territorial boundaries. This divisive act was done within the created internal boundaries, too, with different communities being restricted to certain areas of residence, and being barred from "straying" to areas inhabited by other communities. This event had the effect of creating and entrenching an adversarial consciousness among the African people, by dividing them along "tribal" cleavages, and creating narratives of difference in social heritage along those cleavages. This was not meant to serve the African people, but the colonialists. This fact must be made known to Africans succinctly.

[35] J. Habermas, *A Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Vol. 1. Trans. Thomas McCarthy. (Frankfurt: Beacon Press, 1984), P. 3.
[36] Habermas, P. 3

The colonial experience in Africa left it a divided continent, whose consciousness as a people needed to be redone anew, if it had to set common societal goals. Africa's development cannot, therefore, succeed upon the trajectories indicated by the colonialist countries which occupied it before its independence. Colonialism deliberately disjointed African communities, and by this, created the current disharmonious political circumstances in Africa. For Africa to regain itself, it has to reinvent itself from the colonial shambles. In my opinion, Africa must start redrawing its socio-political trajectory from the point of departure of constructing a *theory of society*. Without a proper theory of society, no attempts at social organization shall bear any meaningful benefits for Africans. Laying the basis of the African society must be an epistemic process which takes into account the social and cultural uniqueness of Africa. This is the task of philosophy and sociology. The two disciplines must converge at some epistemic point of definition and formulation of the concept of society, on which the concept of politics shall be hinged.

**Deliberative-Consociational Politics and the Epistemic Process**

*The Paradigm Search*

The epistemic basis of a political community has been recognized as a significant element, especially, in democratic discourse. Deliberation and consensus have been identified as hallmarks of a well-functioning and a well-ordered political community.[37] Over the last two decades, or so, political discourse has considerably focused on the epistemic dimensions of deliberation and consensus building as the driving force of any social organization. Deliberation, in my opinion, is hinged against a tacit conception that political activity cannot be arbitrary, i.e. arising out of people's whims, or that it ought not lend itself to a rational and procedural explanation, that it is a matter of expediency and a shrewd determination of what works for particular situations. Political activity must stand on moral principles which are epistemologically well defined. Just as the natural sciences express their principles of operation in conceptual definitions, politics must also express its operative principles in conceptual definitions. The abstract concept of politics is necessary if principles/norms of reasonable political practice are to be formulated and be set as standards for judging what is politically right or wrong.

Of all human pursuits, politics cannot be arbitrary. It has to be pedestaled on rock hard conceptual foundations, which must endure all forms of arbitrary pragmatism. As Jürgen Habermas rightly claims, conflicts are based on cognitive dissonance,[38] and political conflicts are no exception. Getting solutions to cognitive conflicts must take recourse to cognitive principles and processes, which involve the epistemic process of search for understanding. The role of politics is to provide understanding of, and subsequent solutions to political cognitive problems. This involves argumentation and clarification of the meaning of political terms and what they portend for actual political enterprise. One understands political arguments only to the extent that one understands the enterprise of politics itself. Here, "… reasoning and argumentation find a place as central elements within the … [political] enterprise."[39] The determination of the enterprise of politics, itself, is an epistemic activity. One who does not have the capacity to initially grasp the idea and later formulate the concept of politics, is unlikely to know the enterprise of politics, and even if he/she attempts to engage in what would be called politics practice, he/she would be operating at cross purposes with the functions and goal of politics. Given the epistemic dynamism underlying politics, its

[37]Cf. J. Rawls. *Political Liberalism*. (N.Y.: Colombia University Press, 1993(2005)).
[38] Jürgen Habermas. *A Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. 1. Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Thomas McCarthy, trans. (Boston: Beacon press, 1984), P. 15.
[39] Jürgen Habermas. CA. vol. 1. P. 32.

foundations and elements must conform to a rational basis for it to function properly and optimally. Short of this, it seems to me, politics will lack vision, and will be misdirected to matters outside its nature, as a rational enterprise.

A model of politics which may benefit the Africa continent involves the epistemic element of deliberation. In deliberation, people strive to form a common will, through assessing the opinions and reasons of each other. For process aims at a mutual agreement on a decision-which binds people as a collectivity, and instills a sense of obligation in them, severally, as individuals. This is what I understand by deliberative-consociationalism. Consociationalism does not mean, in this context, a sharing of power among groups of people who are ethnically disparate, but a form of collective political action arrived at through mutual agreement base on collective reasoning. It involves a reflective endorsement of common values and norms, and not a forced adherence to decrees and edicts. It is not simply "… a question of instilling the right orientations– values and norms…,"[40] but a process which takes, as primary, the intellectual involvement of an individual in the process of organizing his/her life. Anything short of that "… fails to appreciate the constitutive role of reflective endorsement in the value of a life,"[41] and is likely to stagnate the development of people, both as individuals and groups. "…one's growth will be stunted when one is given no choice in the first place, either because of being kept in ignorance or because one is terrorized…" (Feinberg 1973, 22). Joel Feinberg is emphatic that, "freedom to decide on one's own while fully informed of the facts … tends to promote the good of the person who exercises it, even if it permits him to make foolish or dangerous mistakes" (Ibid.). Inability to grasp or synthesize information reduces chances of informed decision-making, thus destroying any meaningful conception and exercise of sovereign powers, necessary for achieving transformation for society. As Michael Kauffman rightly remarks, "…without unleashing and harnessing the dormant intellectual, productive, and creative capacities of the…masses,"[42] no society can, meaningfully, achieve existential goals.

"When we use the expression, 'rational,' we suppose that there is a close relation between rationality and knowledge. Our knowledge has a propositional structure; beliefs can be represented in the form of statements. …rationality has less to do with the possession of knowledge than with how speaking and acting subjects acquire and use knowledge."[43] We must note here, though, that knowledge and action have some similarity: both are fallible. A false knowledge will, almost invariably, lead to wrong action, and action that is said to be irrational. In this connection, then, persons who act, take the character of their action, which in turn, takes the character of the knowledge possessed. Thus, both persons and actions can be said to be either rational, or irrational. As Jürgen Habermas argues, then, there is a close relationship between knowledge and rationality, such that the rationality of an expression has a close affinity to and in fact, "…depends on the reliability of the knowledge embodied in it."[44]

The epistemic character of politics lies in the fact that its effects are explainable, or at least, are falsifiable in the sense that they are *truth sensitive*. They can be justified (regardless of whether the arguments in their favour are valid and the propositions true propositions or not). What is key, here, is the ability to ground them using more or less valid reasons. In justifying them, we presume a certain quality that must exist in knowledge: reliability. In the deliberative model of democratic politics, consensus seems to be the hall mark. "…consensus

[40] Castles, 2006, P. 15.
[41] Cohen, 2008, P. 261.
[42] Kaufman. 1988, P. 61.
[43] Habermas, P. 8
[44] Habermas, P. 8

– bringing of argumentative speech, in which different parties overcome their merely subjective view and, …assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld,"[45] has an epistemic basis and content, for it is a product of rigorous communicative intentionality, which aims at decoupling mental content of participants, and placing it forth as the standard of decision – making. The disparate lifeworlds get objective expression through reasoned argument, and therefore, become points of reference for all concerned, to consider in arriving at an action. Here, an epistemic action, ("S," acting on the rational conviction that "P"), is brought to light through and epistemic process of concept and judgment formation. This requires what we call, "instrumental mastery", i.e. mastering the instruments of bringing about political effectiveness. Normatively, politics in Africa requires this process: politics in Africa ought to engage in "therapeutic critique,"[46]that is the act of clarifying systematic self-deception, which relies on argumentation and mutual reason-giving.

Political action must be oriented toward some end in view, for "only actions directed toward some end-in-view can be reasonable, or unreasonable…"[47] Considered from any perspective, an arbitrary political action is a fairly dangerous action. It leads to socio-economic and civil desolation. African politics, by and large, is still at the arbitrary level. One might take issue with this generalization, and I, very well understand and appreciate its weakness(es) and implications. However, one would not pick a great quarrel my suggestion that the muddle which has, for a long time, bedeviled the African political terrain, as has perhaps been the case elsewhere in the world, has been due to the arbitrary and non-epistemic approach to political problems.

**African Politics and the Consociational Paradigm**

In constructing a political paradigm, there is need for developing a theory of rationality that is constructed a long a "…a goal – directed action, that is, problem – solving action…"[48] As has been alluded to elsewhere in this chapter, objectivity of concepts is a product common meaning. The arbitrariness commonly experienced in African politics is due to the lack of common meaning in political discourse and the resultant practice. There is, however, no known attempts to construct meanings, commonly accepted as reasonable in African politics. There is, what I wish to term, " a disordered political epistemology," which, except by accident, invariably leads to disordered political action characteristic of all forms of social ills.

For rational beings, what is the case always has, primarily, two dimensions – the concrete and the abstract. Even though the concrete reality is the first we come into contact with in the process of our existence, its reality begins to manifest itself only at the intervention of the processes that reveal the abstract dimension of the world. It acquires meaning, which constitutes its reality, only when its abstract aspect has been grasped through an epistemic process, and made to identify its relational significance to humans collectively and severally. The human political world gains and objective dimension "… only through counting as one and the same world for a community of speaking and acting subjects,"[49]i.e. a community of persons concerned with discovery and/or creation of common meanings through a deliberate epistemic process. Without a common concept (which, ineluctably, is abstract) of the world

[45] Habermas, 10
[46] Habermas. CA I. P. 21.
[47] Habermas, P. 12.
[48] Habermas, P.12
[49] Habermas, Pp. 12-13

and what takes place in it and how it affects people collectively and individually,[50] agreed on by all affected, be it the world of politics or otherwise, human life is bound to be worse than that of wild animals. It, then, becomes significant to remember Aristotle's contention that the proper and natural position of a human being is somewhere between good (a God) and evil (a beast). The difference depends on politics, and in our case, the principles upon which this politics is based. Politics within the bounds of sound epistemic principles elevates humans higher than the intermediary position where he/she belongs and takes him/her close to a god. Arbitrary politics, or politics done without regard to epistemic principles, reduces him/her to the level of a beast.[51] Aristotle seems to have got his analysis right in this characterization of humans. What went wrong is his method of getting the god-like human. He imagined that phronesis (political wisdom), was different from and inferior to sophia (theoretic wisdom).[52] This is a wrong conclusion, in my opinion. To say that political wisdom is inferior to theoretic wisdom is like saying that the orange fruit is superior to the roots, trunk, and the branches of the orange tree, simply because the fruit give us the orange juice which tastes good to our taste buds. Pronesis is a consequent of sophia, just as the orange fruit is a consequent of the roots, the trunk, and the branches, and the relationship here is not that of superiority or superiority.

In Africa, the social currency seems to override the validity claims, at all times. What the society endorses as good practice, politically, will almost invariably, stand against norms of validity.

Politics, just like other human enterprises such as business, management, engineering, art, medicine, and law, "…places reliance on the presentation and critical assessment of 'reasons' and 'arguments'…."[53] Any appropriate political theory and practice must subordinate "…the eristic means to the end of developing intersubjective conviction by the force of the better argument."[54] Politics must subordinate itself to logical/epistemic validity, primarily, as the justificatory paradigm, which confers legitimacy to consensual validity, too. Political utterances appeal to normative validity, and since norms, by their nature, are formulations of rational discourse, they are, therefore, epistemic in origin and character.

**Conclusion: Colonialism and the epistemic basis of African politics.**

The belief that the African cannot make rational inquiry, or at best, can engage in feeble or inferior attempts at rational inquiry, seems to have taken root, not only in western discourse, but also in the African's reckoning of him/herself. The African politician keeps his/her eyes open for new models developed in the West, with a willing and almost servile readiness, to emulate. Discourse in African politics seems still directed by Western benchmarks.

The African political theorist must stand back, think of the African political reality from the African existential circumstances, and determine/construct the epistemic basis, which properly advances the African social and political organizational needs. African political practice needs a sound and relevant epistemic basis for it to achieve the aims of citizen participation. The current world political order has become less and less authoritarian, and

[50] Habermas, P. 13
[51] Anthony J. Parel. "The Comparative Study of Political Philosophy" in *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies Under the Upas Tree*. Anthony J. Parel & Ronald C. Keith (eds). (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992), P. 16.
[52] Anthony J. Parel, Ibid. P. 17.
[53] Habermas, P. 32
[54] Habermas, P. 38

has embraced the cognitive dimensions of deliberation/discourse and consensus building. This demands an epistemic basis, allowing citizens to operate from a deliberative standpoint.

**THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN ADDRESSING PEACE-BUILDING CHALLENGES IN KENYA.**

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to interrogate the role of philosophers in addressing peace-building challenges in Kenya. Peace is a priceless necessity for the well-being of any given society. The presence of peace implies many good things like, tolerance, peaceful co-existence, and harmony among others. Despite the fact that it is the most valuable public good, peace appears to be mostly elusive good. This can clearly be demonstrated perhaps, by the continued presence of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and the recent inter-ethnic war between the Marakwets, the Pokots in Kerio Valley and, the on and off ethnic tensions in some parts of our country Kenya. It is crystal clear that lack of peace-building has been and remains a great set-back many years after we gained independence, since many conflicts such as land question, negative ethnicity, squatters, and youth unemployment remain unresolved to date. This in turn has resulted to tensions, lack of development, and loss of human life, human suffering, and discrimination and ethicized society among other factors. It is unfortunate that, this situation has not been arrested by our subsequent political leaders, who like the colonialists continue to perpetuate conflict instead of peace for their own selfish gain. On the other hand, we cannot speak of peace-building without mentioning conflict whether real or imagined. It is because of conflicts we have Peace-building, bearing in mind that conflicts are inevitable aspects in human existence. Hence, peace-building is the identification and support of measures needed for transformation towards more sustainable peaceful relationship and structures for governance, so as to avoid a relapse into conflict. In attempt to address the role of philosophers in addressing peace-building challenges, this article adopts structural conflict theory as its theoretical framework of analyzing peace-building. The structural conflict theory operates on the premise that conflicts occur because of the particular ways in which societies are structured and organized. This theory looks at the social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustices, poverty, disease, exploitation and inequality among other factors as the main sources of lack of peace in the society. The importance of structural conflict theory is that, it holds that, conflicts can be solved by successfully by adjusting unfavorable social structures of the society. Hence, this makes this theory suitable to analyze theoretically the role of philosophy in addressing peace-building challenges. Last but not least, this article takes into consideration some of the challenges of peace building, the relationship between peace-building and conflict, the contribution of philosophers towards addressing peace, and the role of philosophers in addressing peace-building challenges using philosophical lenses.

*1.0 Introduction*

Peace building often spoken as an aftermath of conflict, and seen as human attempt to prevent a relapse into conflict situation; is a new phenomenon that has continued to draw a lot of interest among scholars of peace, peace advocates, other scholars and stakeholders concerned about peaceful co-existence among human persons in the world. The worldwide concern to sustain peace is the driving force behind peace building. One of the main aims of peace building is to correct unjust social structures which are the main contributing factor to

lack of peace. Besides this peace building is a relatively new field and this calls for urgent attention from philosophers to look into the essence of peace building and its place that is, its role and value in the human condition. It is in this regard, this article seeks to look into the role of philosophers in particular Kenyan philosophers in addressing peace building challenges that appear to be persistent in areas like Baringo, Kerio-Valley and Trans-Mara among other areas.

*1.1 Defining peace building and conflict*

### 1.1.1 Peace building

The term peace building refers to the identification and support of measures needed for transformation toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships and structures of governance, so as to avoid a relapse into conflict.[1]

This implies that, peace building process requires that "structures must be found that remove causes of war and offer alternatives to war in situations where war might occur."[2] Peace building therefore, does not rely on pre-war structures that contributed to war, but it requires the formation of new structures out of the existing components of civil society in a post-conflict environment.[3]

At the present moment, peace building is seen as the best post-conflict prevention strategy that can be used to prevent a recurrence of war. This is due to the fact that conflict is seen and accepted as an inevitable aspect in human relations. It then follows that we cannot speak about peace building without mentioning conflict whether real or imagined. It is because of conflicts we have peace-building.

### 1.1.2 Conflict

Conflict refers to the process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected something that the first party cares about.[4] Conflicts are inevitable aspects in human relationships that can have either constructive or destructive results.[5] As a matter of fact, conflicts in themselves are neither good nor bad; our responses to conflicts either makes the experience of conflict constructive or destructive. The destructive aspect of conflict is what is referred to as violence, the negative response to conflict that leads to wanton destruction of lives and properties.

### 1.1.3 Stages of conflicts

Violence has its roots on destructive aspect of conflict or negative response to conflict. This can be shown by the five stages of conflicts that is, pre-conflict stage; confrontation; crisis; outcome and post-conflict as postulated by Fisher *et al*.[6] The post-conflict stage is what involves peace-building. These stages are as follows;

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[1] J. Galtung Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peace building. In J. Galtung (Ed.), Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research (pp. 297-298), Vol. II. Copenhagen, Denmark: Ejlers. 1976, pp. 296.

[2] J. Galtung, *Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peace building,* Op. Cit., p. 296.

[3] Y. Kemper, *Youth in War-to-Peace Transitions: Approaches to International Organisations.* Berlin Germany: Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management.2005, p. 10.

[4] K. A. Thomas, *"Conflict and Negotiations Process in Organisations", Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology,* 2nd Edition. Volume iii Palo, Alto; Consulting Psychologist Press 1992.

[5] J. f. David, "Peace and Conflict Studies in Africa: An Overview of Basic Concepts" in G. B. Shedrack (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.2007.

[6] S. Fisher et al, Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action, cited in G. B. Shedrack (ed.) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2007.

1. The pre-conflict, is the first stage when goals between two or more parties are incompatible, which could lead to open conflict. At this stage, the conflict is not well known because both parties try to hide it from the public, but their communication is weak.
2. The confrontational stage, is the second stage whereby conflict becomes more manifest by covert or overt behaviour. Both parties devise strategies on how to face each other.
3. The third stage is the stage of crisis, at this level, conflict is at peak. This stage is characterised by war, and intense killing that leads to destruction of lives, properties.
4. Outcome stage, it is generally assumed that all conflicts pass at this stage, thus either one side wins another loses. Cease fire may be declared or one may surrender, or there must be a third-party intervention.
5. Post conflict stage, at this stage violence has either ended or significantly reduced, and the parties have gone past the crisis stage. It is the stage of addressing the causes of conflicts, and other factors that may have contributed. If they are not addressed there is a likelihood the conflict cycle may be repeated once again.

It is this final stage, post-conflict that involves peace building. Boutros-Ghali the former Secretary General of the United Nations in 1992, in a Report entitled, *An Agenda for Peace*, emphasizes the importance of post-conflict peace building so as to prevent a recurrence of conflict. Peace building as a concept intends to construct a new environment which seeks to avoid the breakdown of peaceful conditions.[7]

*1.3 The need for peace building in Kenya*

Handling of peace building in some parts of Kenya has been a problem for some time. The presence of peace building indicates that some members of the society are involved to a certain extent in the promotion of peace. The success of peace building leads to reconciliation, tolerance, development, stability, peace and so on. By resolving conflicts successfully peace building can solve many problems it has brought into surface. However, the situation of peace building in areas like Baragoi, Baringo and Kerio Valley among others is very lamentable due to constant relapse into war despite numerous peace efforts, and concerns are being raised about the challenges of peace building such as resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and squatters; land question; negative ethnicity; youth unemployment; livestock rustling; culture of impunity and so on. For instance, the recent violence in Kerio Valley between the Pokots and the Marakwets based on cattle rustling has been persistent despite various peace interventions and agreements. As thinkers and members of the society, philosophers' role in addressing peace building challenges has an effect in peace building processes. Peace building challenges in Kenya require the intervention and participation of philosophers particularly, Kenyan philosophers.

*1.4 Theoretical explanation of peace building challenges in Kenya*

The present situation in some parts of Kenya like Kerio Valley and Baringo can be termed as violent hot spots, thus, they can be described in terms of Hobbes, state of nature because life is solitary, brutish, nasty and short because of deplorable inhuman conditions in those areas. Peace appears to be very elusive despite numerous efforts that continue to be made to sustain peace. Peace building challenges can be explained in the context of structural conflict theory. Structural conflict occurs because of particular ways in which societies are structured and

[7] B. Boutros-Ghali, *Agenda for Peace. Preventive Diplomacy, Peace Making and Peace Keeping*. Report of the Secretary General. United Nations, New York, 1992.

organized. This theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustices, poverty, disease, exploitation and inequality among others as sources of conflicts.[8]

According to Marxist dialectical school of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel, conflicts are tied to economic structures and social institutions. Conflicts occur as a result of exploitative and unjust nature of human societies, domination of one class by another. The exploitation of proletariat by the bourgeoisie who own the means of production in capitalist society is the main source of conflict. The solution to this kind of conflict is overthrowing of the bourgeoisie by the proletariats so as to create a socialist order.[9]

The importance of structural conflict theory in explaining the peace building challenges in Kenya, is that it points to the fact that structural conflict is as a result of particular ways in which societies are structured and organized, and that, peace building is a continuous process that never ends since it is based on human relationships which are never static, but which are always dynamic. Hence, this calls for discovery of unjust structures that will help in the removal of causes of war and offer alternatives to war in situations where war is likely to occur.

*1.5 The historical contribution of some philosophers towards peace*

Philosophers have never been immune to conflicts, as members of the society they experience conflicts and are affected by conflicts. Philosophers have and continue to interrogate the essence of conflicts, its nature and role in the human condition; this can be seen in their attempts to explain conflicts as well as solve them as they seek to promote peace. Philosophers in various epochs have attempted to address peace in the context of their respective social milieu as can be seen in some aspects of their philosophies.

Plato analysis on what really entails an ideal city begun with his recognition of a harsh political reality, and his analysis of the problems of his time, in a way that he anticipated contemporary urban problems. According to Plato, the city, was really two cities: one was rich, and the other poor - at war with each other. As a solution to problems of peace in the city, a wise and competent ruler was needed.[10] This wise and competent leader had to be a philosopher king. In *The Laws,* Plato advocated that leaders should be concerned with peaceful activities. Peace for Plato, is the final aim of human existence and reward for virtuous activities.[11] Moreover, he advocated for monarchy as the best form of government, and saw democracy as the worst form of government. His dislike for democracy was partly due to his upbringing and partly to the way Socrates was ill treated at the hands of Greek democracy.[12]

Some of the early Christian philosophers like Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas saw peace as something natural to man as a creation of God. Augustine conceived the state as an external coercive order, which is necessary for preservation of peace and order within the human society. The function of the state was not to make people truly good but to take away from them the power to do harmful or criminal acts.[13] Augustine asserted that true peace

[8] S. A. Faleti, Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan in Shedrack Baya Best (ed*). Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*. Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2006, p. 41.
[9]Ibid.
[10]H. B. Mitchel, *Roots of Wisdom. A Tapestry of Philosophical Traditions 6th Edition*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Australia 2011, p. 336.
[11] Plato, Laws, I 628, VII, 803.
[12] M. M. Makumba, *Introduction to Philosophy*, Op. Cit., p. 64.
[13] L. Mattei, and P. Wambua ,*A Guide to Christian Ethics and Formation in Moral Maturity, Philosophical Series/2*. CUEA Publications, Nairobi.2000, p.269.

cannot be attained here on earth, however, despite this being the case, there is nonetheless a universal desire for peace among all people, even people who are wicked seek to create peace and order despite their wickedness.[14]

Aquinas looked at man as a social being who lives among his fellow men in the state. The function of the state was to enable man attain his full realization of peaceful existence and co-existence with his fellow men in the society which will eventually lead to good relationship with God.[15] The primary function of the state in Aquinas' conception according to Stumpf, was to safe guard the common good by "keeping peace, organizing the activities of the citizens into harmonious pursuits, providing for the resources to sustain life, and preventing, as far as possible obstacles to the good life."[16]

John Locke one of the proponents of social contract influenced by the then political events in England and France, saw the need for peace (social order) by strongly advocating for the establishment of government in order to prevent anarchy and self-destruction. The need for peace can be seen in the setting up of objective laws that can help to settle disputes and protect infringement of rights of any member of the society. In his *Second Treatise of Government*, Locke states that a political government originates from her citizens consent with one another in order to eliminate certain deficiencies in the state of nature, and thereafter, obey the government as long as it does not dishonour what it has been contracted to do. People consent to abandon the state of nature and form a political society under the common power for the sake of peaceful co-existence seen in the preservation of property.[17]

Hobbes having experienced 30 years of war (1618-1648) and civil war in England[18], held that for a peaceful society to exist, every member of the society has no option but to give up his or her rights to one ruler. They do so by means of social contract so as to come out of state of nature.[19] Hobbes describes the state of nature as brutish, short and nasty, which is characterised with conflict and violence. In this state man is a wolf to other people (*homo homini lupus*). To escape this situation, men create the commonwealth through social contract, so as to maintain peace. It is this social contract that delivers people from the evils of the natural state of nature to peace.[20] Social contract therefore, is an agreement between individuals who specifically, for the sake of peace willingly make unconditional and irrevocable transfer of their rights and powers to the Sovereign (Leviathan).

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel asserted that for peace to prevail in the society a classless society must exist. Marx and Engel conceived conflict as a result of class struggle between the rich and the poor whereby, the rich exploit the poor. Peace can only occur in the society through a revolutionary transformation of the society to create a classless society. This implies that in a classless society there would be collective ownership and control of the means of production and a rational ordering of the society.[21]

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[14]Augustine, *De civi, dei,* X, 12.
[15]M. M. Makumba, *Introduction to Philosophy.*Paulines Publications Africa, 2005, p. 65.
[16] E. Stumpf, *From Socrates to Sartre and Beyond. A History of Philosophy*, McGraw-Hill, Inc, Revised 5th Ed. New York USA, 1998, p. 180.
[17] J. Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, Peter Laslett (ed.) Cambridge England, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 95-103.
[18]H. B. Mitchel, *Roots of Wisdom. A Tapestry of Philosophical Traditions 6th Edition*, OP. Cit., p. 362.
[19]T. Hobbes, *The Leviathan* in English Philosophers from Bacon to Mills, Edwin A. Burtt (ed). Random House, New York, 1939.
[20]B. N. Moore and K. Bruder, K, Philosophy the Power of Ideas 6th ed. Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited New Delhi, 2005, p. 316.
[21]M. M. Makumba, *Introduction to Philosophy*, OP. Cit., pp. 69-70

*1.6 The role of Philosophers in addressing peace building challenges*

Peace building may be seen as a new concept and method of avoiding recurrence of war as it seeks to foster sustainable peace. Philosophers as members of their respective societies have not been left behind in the attempts to foster peace. Conflicts are inevitable aspect in human relations. This phenomenon of conflicts in particular, post conflict situations has led to the wide interest to peace building. Peace building is a relatively new approach meant to address conflict and foster peace; being new it has very limited literature that can provide information for effective peace building. This reduces peace scholars' ability to learn from their mistakes or experiences of other peace building programmes. This situation is a challenge not only to scholars and other stakeholders interested in peace building but also philosophers, so that they can come up with new programmes that can help foster peace building. Philosophy can help in addressing some of these challenges in the following ways;

**Peace building through education:** As thinkers, philosophers can be very instrumental in fostering peace building in their respective societies particularly, in learning institutions as teachers and administrators. They can also develop or come up with strategies that will help in sustainable peace through research. Besides this, they can also organize workshops or seminars so as to educate other members of the society.

**Peace advocacy:** Philosophers can promote peaceful atmosphere by being actively involved in non-violent activities, human rights protection, speaking against practices that are a threat to peace (negative ethnicity, cattle rustling, unemployment, unfair government policies).

**Problem solvers:** As problem solvers philosophers can help find long lasting solutions to some of endemic problems of conflicts. This can be through creating awareness of some of the root causes of conflicts, addressing these root causes and coming up with strategies that can effectively help in peace building.

**Acting as Mediators:** Through Productive dialogue, they can be instrumental towards positive peace building and this in turn, can help to foster peace and bring to light some of the root causes of conflicts that led to war. The role of mediation needs to be continuous so as to foster peace.

**Promoting peaceful co-existence:** This can be done by trying to ensure that various conflict parties or potential conflict parties can tolerate one another. This can be done by organizing workshops and seminars.

*1.7 Conclusion/Recommendation*

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate that philosophy has a role to play in addressing peace- building challenges in our present day society. Philosophy has been actively involved in promoting peace in various epochs. Peace building is a new approach in post-conflict situation that calls for active participation of philosophers. This paper recommends (the way forward) that

- There is a need for philosophers to play an active role in the promotion of peace
- Philosophers need to form partnership with the government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders so as to bring about the best practices that help to avoid negative conflict and at the same time foster a peaceful environment
- Philosophers need to promote and teach members of the society conflict resolution and management
- Philosophers commitment to peace building activities
- Philosophers should promote good governance by advocating for accountability, transparency, respect of human rights, fairness and equity.

# Philosophy and Youth Empowerment in Africa: The Problem, the Potential and the Promise for Non-Violent Social Change

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**Abstract**

Many civil organizations and private institutions envisage that the youth can be a positive force for development when provided with knowledge and opportunities to thrive. However, these development initiatives have not adequately address what type of empowerment the youth require in order to be agents of positive, non-violent social change. This paper argues that philosophical dialogue is largely missing in the youth empowerment agenda. It addresses the issues of youth empowerment with special attention to Lonergan's philosophy, specifically his transcendental epistemology of affirming oneself as experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and acting in order to show how development in cognitive and moral epistemology has philosophical implications on youth empowerment. It argues that youthfulness is potentially geared towards idealism and that this potential to think logically is largely unexplored hence the inadequacy of the youth to think philosophically about solutions to the current problems. Thus, the paper recommends that institutions empowering the youth ought to enhance[1]the youths' capacity to play active roles in critically thinking about solutions by engaging the youth in philosophizing in order to generate critical solutions that can be acted upon, evaluated and redesigned. It therefore concludes that the youth are more inclined towards idealism and creating ideal societies, families, organizations etc. It is this drive that makes the youth potentially philosophical hence the need for existing higher learning institutions, ecclesiastical institutions, civil organizations and governments in Africa to enhance and harmonize the philosophical genre in the youth.

## Introduction

The question of youth empowerment has been largely debated in international platforms with scholars such as Obonyo[2] emphasizing that a society excludes itself when its youthful population is marginalized. Development experts insist that 'young people disconnect from society and lack important skills for meaningful employment when they are not engaged in education systems or labor markets. Historically, it has been shown that high numbers of unoccupied youth can cause social unrest as seen in the Middle East and Africa'.[3] African youth are particularly vulnerable due to rampant human rights violations.

International development experts further assert that 'youth engagement in sociopolitical aspects and economic aspects is critical for the development and stability of countries, region

[1] *Seeds of Peace Africa (SOPA) International,* - Nairobi city (Kenya). -This text can be quoted as follows: Theresa A. Otieno, "Philosophy and Youth Empowerment in Africa; The Problem, The Potential, and The Promise". In: João J. Vila-Chã (Org.), *The Role of Philosophy in Africa: Context, Traditions, Challenges and Prospects*. Seventh World Congress of Comiucap (Nairobi, Kenya), April of 2016.
[2] Obonyo, Raphael. *Conversations about the Youth in Kenya.* Nairobi: The Youth Congress Kenya, 2015.
[3] International Labor Organization, 2014

and continents. Whether youth are enrolled in school, work, are receiving training, underemployed or unemployed has important implications for future economic growth and development and stability. This is because the world's largest population is composed of young persons aged 18 to 24 who in 2015 were 1.2 billion, accounting for one out of every six people worldwide. Out of this population, 20% of all youth in the developing world are not in education, employment or training'.[4]

The African continent in particular has the world's youngest population making Africa the world's youthful continent. According to The Economist, 70% of the African population is unemployed and this population consists mostly of the youth who make up 60% of all unemployed Africans. 'About 40% of young people who join rebel movements are motivated by lack of jobs. Frustration with employment, education and opportunities for political participation and governance have created ripe conditions for hate preachers to target the youth for radicalization to violent extremism.'[5] Lack of education and employment opportunities are largely attributed to corruption and human rights violations. Children and youth account for 80% of the East African regional population. Kenyan youth in particular form at least half the population of the entire country.

'A youthful population that is largely marginalized from decision making and deprived of its basic needs is a ticking time bomb. Political turmoil, civil instability, crime and insecurity often results from oppressed young people.'[6] This poses a constant threat to peaceful coexistence as they often resort to violence. Negative ethnicity and political intolerance in Kenya are evident in daily interactions including social media. The intolerance risks escalating into massive and uncontrollable criminal violence that if not critically arrested and addressed, may lead to increased maiming, loss of life and destruction of property. Whereas the magnitude of intolerance among individual youth is a reflection of ethnic intolerance at the national level, the manifestation requires proactive mitigation that should lead to harnessing the anger and resultant energy towards peaceful coexistence, constructive and enhanced development activities as opposed to violent and destructive engagements. Kenyan youth are particularly predisposed to violent rebellion against political establishments. Furthermore, terror attacks and radicalization have taken roots in Coastal and North Eastern regions of Kenya.

As noted by His Holiness Pope Francis during his visit to Africa, poverty and lack of opportunity in Africa is driving migration particularly to Europe, leading to many deaths of young people. Young Africans continue to face major contextual challenges in the realms of higher education, employment, health, peace and security and participation in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them, both in rural and urban settings.[7] This exclusion in decisions making processes impacts their struggle for livelihoods hence affecting their worth and dignity in the society.

Given these prevailing youth conditions, development organizations intervene through youth empowerment programs. Interventions range from creating employment opportunities in form of alternative livelihoods, health and education, leadership and governance. However, the main focus of most youth empowerment initiatives lies in creating employment opportunities for the youth. Government initiatives such as Kazi kwa vijana, National Youth Fund, Uwezo fund and the National Youth Service in Kenya were established to create employment opportunities for the youth through micro-enterprises. According to Obonyo,

[4] *Ibid*.
[5] UNDP Report 2015, 5
[6] Obonyo, Raphael, "Neglected Youth a Ticking Time Bomb" *Daily Nation*, (December, 30, 2010) Follow link.
[7] United Nations Program on Youth Report 2010/2011. The report is available on this link.

these interventions, while well intended, have failed due to rampant corruption and lack of meaningful involvement of youth in conceptualization, development and leadership of the programs.[8] This implies that young people have no place in the society including the thinking and philosophical arena.

International bodies such as the International Labor Organization and the United Nations, intergovernmental institutions such as the African Union recognize that indeed youth unemployment is the main issue. Socio-economic conditions have improved though not considerably since interventions began. This is partly because youth participation in decision making, policy formulation and implementation is minimal.

This paper seeks to examine the process of youth empowerment by exploring the problem, the potential and the promise that exist in a philosophical approach of youth empowerment. It comprehends that the creation of jobs is one but not the only way in which the youth ought to be empowered. It looks at the philosophical potential of the youth in designing long term solutions to the daily problems young Africans face as largely undermined. In this philosophical potential lies a better route towards non-violent social change of young Africans.

**The Problem**

Identity formation is a critical viewpoint for human development. Who is a youth? What does it mean to be a youth? What is the essence of youthfulness? What does it mean to be a young person in Africa today? 'Youth' is traditionally defined by development agencies such as the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) as the age set between 15 and 34 years. The Kenyan constitution defines youths as all individuals who are between the ages of 18 - 35 years. According to Obonyo:

> Divergent views on the contrary point that youth does not have to be a single location or finite biological age. Youth is not just a biological stage - a period between childhood and adulthood- it has a socially significant meaning as a moment of transition and change. Youth is a period as well as a state of mind associated with imagination, change, freedom and posterity. This foremost quality of youth manifests itself in the form of freshness, vigor and creativity. Most importantly, youth is about vision for a better tomorrow that is associated with imagination, change, freedom and posterity.[9]

Obonyo further cautions that when youth is viewed as a mere biological state, young people will be ignored at present, and Kenya's development goal that requires active participation of citizens will not be realized. The youth are foot soldiers of conflict especially when they feel marginalized.

Youth therefore is a period in one's life that actualizes imagination and marks a yearning for fundamentals, a desire that strives for an ideal life into the future. This period of youthfulness can be emphasized from a philosophical perspective as the period in which curiosity, inquisitiveness and nostalgia for knowing, identifying with and loving the real is actualized. Grasping for epistemological maturity and moral self-assertiveness in being identifies with not only the good, but mostly the best – most beautiful, most handsome, most complete or wholesome and true. Youthfulness is thus a constant search towards authenticity, a better grasp of oneself and existence.

[8] Obonyo, Raphael, 2015.
[9] Ibid., 6.

In traditional African society, youth is defined as the age of passage from childhood to adulthood. It is the age that marks transition from one state to another therefore influencing change in psycho social behaviors. This passage from childhood to adulthood are usually marked by major rites. As noted by Professor Manu Ampim, 'these rites are critical to individual and community development, and it should not be taken for granted that people automatically grow and develop into responsible, community-oriented adults'. It was the role of society to ensure that youths were guided into contributing meaningfully to society. This was done through initiation. Initiation marked the beginning of a new life, a transformation into the next mature phase – adulthood:

> Adulthood rites in particular were usually done at the onset puberty age (around 12-13 years of age in many cultures) and they were to ensure the shaping of productive, community-oriented responsible adults. The process was systematic. Initiates were taken out of the community far away from daily life concerns to be taught ways of adulthoods, including rules, taboos of the society, moral instruction and social responsibility and to clarify ones mission or calling in life. This helped solve conflicts and contradictions and give individual the societal support to discover and fulfill their life mission and unique contribution.[10]

It is worth noting that traditional African society recognized these potential of the youth to play a critical role in the future development of their communities. Even though the youth were initiated into adulthood, their role in society was subordinate. This concept continues in many contemporary rural settings and influences the roles, expectations, problems and potential of youths in Africa. Young people, though a demographic majority, are marginalized in terms of the modern as well as traditional governance systems. This is further complicated by globalization. Youth formation and identity is no longer a concern for modern society as it was in traditional African society. They have been left alone to redefine themselves.

The concept of identity formation, though not widely documented in the social sciences, is widely explored by Cote and Levine in *Identity formation and Youth Development: A Simplified Approach* which discusses identity formation in relation to youth development. It analyses the problems and prospects faced by contemporary young people in forming identities placed in the context of societies that themselves are in transition, further complicating identity formation and the interrelated processes of self-development and moral-ethical reasoning.[11]

Development agencies and governments do have good intentions to empower the youth given the realization of the consequences of marginalization. However, these efforts are far from achieving the intended results when young people are not engaged in designing programs meant to empower them. Marc Somers in his book *The Outcast Majority* explicitly points out the problems with these interventions as noted by Susan. He explains that:

> First and foremost that it is not the numbers that are a threat but the alienation of the youth by governments and development agencies. Most youths in post war sub-Saharan Africa see themselves as members of an outcast minority, rather than belonging to a majority. They see themselves as outsiders, working in a sea of exclusion structured into cultural and education systems. They are likely not to finish secondary schools nor be accepted. The effects of war distance them form their

[10] Manu Ampim, The Five Major African Initiation Rites, in Africana Studies, September 2003, published in this link.

[11] Cote, James and Levine, Charles. *Identity Formation, Youth and Development: A Simplified Approach*. London: Taylor and Francis group, 2016.

> cultural values. However, this has not prevented the youth in trying to experience themselves as valuable. In their own exclusion, they experience inclusion through their remarkable talents, resist engagement in violence. The world of war is terrible and transformative, inviting realizations and providing opportunities to rework what it means to be young in Africa today – how you become an adult and relate to the opposite sex, who you listen to, how you deal with your past, what you do, where you hope to go.[12]

Somer argues that lack of direct contact between policy makers and the youth continue to structurally alienate the youth. He reasons that development agencies have tremendous pressure to demonstrate statistical success at the expense of the qualitative individual gains. Several donors and implementing agencies agree that development work has become very quantitative. 'Popular macroeconomic remedies run counter to youth ambitions. Domestic politics and other influences, moreover, frequently lead powerful donor agencies in faraway headquarters offices to develop priorities that are not the priorities of youth majorities. Often funds and activities are funneled determine in advance what will be done. People making policies that will affect youth may have little or no direct interaction with them. And once initiatives get to the field, a pronounced orientation toward results usually ensues. Countable indicators, outputs, and outcomes determine, to a large degree, what constitutes success. The insular process may make it difficult to figure out whether or not the initiatives left a positive, negative, or negligible impact on the people known as beneficiaries (News Security Beat, 2016).[13]

He recommends 'reforms for development practice to consider how they can demonstrate inclusion that is reasonable in an environment of exclusion. The starting point is to do mainly qualitative research to find out about the context of the target group, and generate from that research which policies or practices should be addressed then advocate for reform (Boston University, 2016)'.[14] This process would still be an exercise in futility if the youth are not engaged in critical, qualitative research.

In essence, Marc Somers' argument points out that development efforts do not suffice in so long as the youth are absent in the process. The youth are not engaged because their potential is only limited to skilled labor. Yet, their mental abilities, desire for freshness, vision and value are neglected. Youth is a state of being in an existential reality whereby the process of becoming, humanization and consciousness is realized. It is a call towards authenticity. This call unfortunately does not relate with the society today. Today's society considers youth mainly in perceptive realms of pragmatism and consumerism. Here in lies the problem. It is this valueless identity that the youth today are resisting.

The youth are therefore resisting these identities that they cannot be associated with any meaningful development. They are faced with moral and personal responsibilities in their relations with government institutions, family, friends, work conditions, education and are therefore struggling to find a place in the society as fully functional and contributing members. Heidegger in his book *Being and Time* highlights this challenge. He emphasizes that:

> The embeddedness of our existence in a cultural context explains our inveterate tendency toward inauthenticity. As we become initiated into the practices of our community, we are inclined to drift along with the crowd, enacting stereotyped roles

[12] Seligson, Susan. *Challenging Assumptions about Africa's Exploding Youth Population*, 2016, available inthrough this link.
[13] *Ibid*.
[14] Ibid.

> and thereby losing our ability to seize on and define our own lives. To be authentic is to clear sightedly face up to one's responsibility for what one's life is adding up to as a whole. Authenticity therefore involves seizing on the possibilities circulating in our shared 'heritage' in order to realize a communal 'destiny'.[15]

The imagination, freedom and freshness that comes with being a youth is in itself a potency to philosophize. Somer reinstates that the youth resist labels such as unwanted groups, marginalized, vulnerable through remote indicators, projects and outcomes identified by distant donors. This in essence is not the type of empowerment that the youth are yearning for. Youthfulness is a desire for the truth, authenticity, the good, the beautiful, the whole and one. It is this orientation that requires appreciation and actualization.

**The Potential**

Cote and Levine[16] argue that it is possible for youths to adapt to current societal problems in a thoughtful manner. His Simplified theory of identity formation holds that while the youth strive to form their own identity in the realization of today's cultural dilemmas, they none the less strive for ideals. They have capacity to self-direct their behaviors in face of obstacles such as lack of opportunity or discrimination. They have capacity to think ahead, experiment, explore and commit to future identities in family, work places and in their relationships with individuals and institutions. His theory extrapolates that despite the challenges of contemporary society, the youth are able to actively and willingly commit to exploring identities that make them better fit to explore ones role in his/her society.

It is at this juncture that the philosophical potency is found in the youth. As they strive to find out who they really are, asking themselves 'Who am I, really and truly?' They seek an ideal image of themselves and the society in which they live in. To discover and appropriate the human identity has been a goal of a philosophical quest in western history since the early beginnings among Greek philosophers.'[17] We look at youth as a state of mind that yearns for insight into one's being. This yearning is not only empirical. It is intellectual and rational. This yearning therefore leads to a rational conception of being as the objective of pure desire to know in so far as this desire expresses itself in questions for understanding and reflection. It extends the empirical challenges of peer pressure, alcoholism, sex, *et cetera* that is often associated with youthfulness.

This search for a critical interpretation and evaluation of the social identity of youth drives them to an ideological potential. It is a thirst for self-knowledge and as such the initiation into a philosophical potential generated by age. The search for this knowledge can be heavily borrowed from Lonergan's epistemology. Bernard Lonergan is a 20th Century Canadian philosopher and theologian. His work *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* is heavily influenced by Aristotelian and Aquinas thought. Now, in Lonergan's way of thinking the first step in becoming philosophical is self-knowledge. Note that this sort of knowledge is epistemological, and to identify the three levels of consciousness is the first step in that process. Lonergan argues that epistemology is a threefold process comprising of experience (level of presentations), understanding (level of intelligence) and judgment (level of reflection). Knowing is therefore a tripartite function of the three such that judgment would be meaningless without a question.[18]

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[15] Cited in Audi, Robert. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 372.
[16] Cote, James and Levine, Charles, 2016.
[17] Flangan, Joseph. *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997, 7.
[18] Lonergan, Bernard. *Insight: A study of Human Understanding*. New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1958.

He invites the subject to be in touch with him/herself so as to learn how to philosophize out of their own concrete experiences.[19] By relating to concrete experiences one can gain insight into who he/she really is and affirm with certainty his/her experience as a knowing subject. This type of invitation is necessary in guiding the youth to philosophize based on their own concrete experiences, challenges, hopes and aspirations to inform well thought solutions to their current problems. The epitome of judgment is the ability to deliberate and evaluate ones moral choices. However, our assumptions concerning reality and objectivity depend on how we address the process of knowing.

Philosophy is a way of life. It commits us to an existential question that deals with the total reality of our own self-identity as known and as lived and is still unknown and unlived. The question is whether our present identity is in tune with our own potentially unlimited capacities. Our present cultural identity as knowers, choosers, depends on the historical situation in which we were born and the linguistic community in which and through which our experiences have been and are being lived and mediated.[20]

For Lonergan, knowing is characterized by insight. Insight is a personal act of understanding which is a response to appropriate questioning and is dependent on suitable images and sensations. Insight depends on questioning, imagining and sensing in order to evoke understanding. Questioning is the key activity that directs and sustains the whole process, generating tensions that will find their release in that sudden illumination called insight or understanding. This insight ought to be articulated and clarified through the process of judgment. For understanding to be complete, judgment has to occur. Judgment cannot take place unless questioning proceeds. Judgment is the process of affirming or denying the validity of the insight. Lonergan's characterization of knowledge as Insight thus is an affirmation that understanding is at the heart of the process. I believe that this position is attractive to youth.

Insight into daily life experiences remains at the realm of common sense. It is descriptive. It is not interested in understanding and judging these things in their general and special relations to one another. Common sense is specialized and limited. It is practical and oriented to particular and concrete tasks for purposes of developing more intelligent and successful ways of living but not how to choose the best possible way of living. It is not interested in knowledge for its own sake.

Socrates for instance was impressed by the knowledge of various craftsmen such as navigators, cobblers, carpenters, and other followers of trade. Each group knew how to perform specific tasks, but did not know in the way Socrates wanted to know. Each craftsmanship requires a specific knowledge and skills in order to achieve a specific goal. It requires time and effort and gradually the novice becomes a specialized knower. Common sense then involves the development of skills to perform specific tasks within a social community. It is concerned with solving concrete and particular problems.[21] It is at this level that most youth development programs are engaged.

Majority interventions are stuck at this level of knowledge and hardly go beyond knowledge for the sake of its moral value and application. Sustainable empowerment should be premised on the pure, detached and disinterested desire in knowing. This sort of knowledge is epistemological, and to identify the three levels of consciousness (experience, understanding and judgement) is the first step in that process. 'Insight is related to ethics to the extent that a

[19] Flanagan, 1997,11.
[20] Ibid., 13.
[21] Ibid., 72.

person's insight into, or understanding of, a particular situation can lead to the person wondering about or and discovering what one can and should do about the situation. When solving practical problems, knowing what to do depends on correctly understanding the situation and correctly identifying the problems'.[22]

Lonergan further distinguishes the different levels of common sense how they manifest in the human race. Symbolic patterns of knowing are operative in our own biographies since childhood. The opposite of insight is flight from insight. Flight from insight manifests itself in different forms of bias such as psychiatric, moral, cultural or philosophic in different contexts. Individual and group biases are forms of flight from insight associated with ego insights and communal insights that are often deceptive. The individual bias imagines others to be inferior or unworthy of his or her concerns. Group bias is a deception that develops between different socioeconomic groups within the same community claiming dominance and inflicting injustices upon other groups in the community. This type of biases can be related to terrorism and recruitment of vulnerable youth into militia groups and criminality through indoctrination into violent extremism. This is the general nature of suppression of questioning and the failure of insights to occur thus discouraging knowledge.[23] General bias on the other hand is a tension between interested desire to know and disinterested desire to know. It is manifested as a competition between theoretical knowers (egg-head intellectualist) and practical knowers (hard-boiled pragmatist).[24]

> While there is tension and opposition between the two concrete conscious poles of interested practical knowing and disinterested and theoretical knowing, there can be harmonious complementarity. While common sense deals adequately with problems of practical living, it must cooperate with knowers whose insights and ideas have their source not in short term objectives and practices but in long term concerns and consequences. Often, long term interpretations and evaluations seem like mere idealism and folly because general bias effectively establishes attitudes and opinions that make these interpretations seem like wishful thinking. A plausible adaptation would facilitate uncompromised long-term objectives. The disinterested knowing would facilitate an open-ended inquiry and critical reflection and hence providing norms for judging situations.[25]

This disinterested desire to know would empower youths to critically enquire and advance their empowerment as agents of nonviolent social change through a critical inquiry into their self-driven understanding of themselves. Awareness sessions targeting youth should therefore be based on the intrinsic potential of youth in critical inquiry. Sustainable empowerment ought to promote for the youth the "turn to the subject," that is, the mental or spiritual turn to oneself as knower and decision-maker

This complementarity can address long term decline of societies as seen in the gradual decline of the value of our youthful generation. Empowerment will suffice if the potential of the youth to philosophize is tapped instead of the dismissal of the discovery process. An opportunity for them to articulate their disinterested desire to know would create opportunities for them to adequately address problems inherited from past generations through allowing questions, insights and ideas that recognize and remove inherited biases and

[22] Anderson, Bruce. *Discovery in Legal Decision Making*. The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996, 94.
[23] Ibid., 95.
[24] Flanagan, 1997, 86.
[25] Ibid., 87.

disoriented cultural assumptions such as negative ethnicity, corruption, oppression and inequality. Violence would therefore not be a reasonable option to address conflicts.

**The Promise**

When youths are provided with opportunities to philosophize, they are able to articulate their intelligence towards development by translating this intelligence to the development relevant in the African society. This would provide long term solutions to the existing challenges. The worst form of poverty is lack of education or mental capacity to think, reflect and question reality. Neglecting to expose the youth to philosophical thinking is a major tragedy for the African continent. The "potential to philosophize" as a way of describing the desire to know what I'm doing when I am knowing. It's there in all of us (in the youth, therefore) without one's being able necessarily to name it.

Education is a tool for development. The actualization of this potency to think rationally and critically about reality and the solutions is in itself a promise for a better African continent. In as much as youth lack experience in the empirical realm due to their limited number of years, this does not curtail their ability to think logically and extrapolate solutions to current problems. The youth have potential to validating proposed solutions, acting on the solutions, evaluating and redesigning these solutions. They are full of ideas. It is these ideas that shape their identities, self-conception and how they view themselves and their world. This type of knowledge for the sake of moral application and value guarantees long-term interventions in addressing challenges of corruption, tribalism and poverty especially in Kenya.

The progress towards more highly intelligent polices and courses of action lies in critical youth engagement in both theoretical and practical empowerment programs. Appealing to their desire to know and understand themselves as thinkers and doers is a fundamental pillar for the success of the African continent. In this desire to curve their identity, lies a moral epistemology of the youth as experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and acting. The old may argue that they lack experience since they are still young. However, "we need to recall that the questioning of experience transforms that experience into a known unknown. Experience as questioned reveals experience as the limit of our present knowing, but at the same time, questioned experience becomes an opportunity since we can transform this known-unknown into a known through understanding and judging that experience".[26] Potency of experience means a limit from one perspective and an opportunity from another. "Potency is a directed tension since it leads the knower towards the form of understanding, which is a potency for the higher act of judging because form or understanding does not become fully actualized until it is judged correctly or truly affirmed.[27] Thus the potential of the youth to philosophize provides an opportunity to go beyond their limited experience in the empirical realm to the absolute being.

The opportunity to actualize this potency to accumulate insights lies with institutions of higher learning and education, government and ecclesiastical institutions that claim to be empowering the youth. These institutions also have a duty to further extend knowing to a higher level which is choosing. Deciding subsumes, transform and transcends experience, understanding and judgment. This is because it entails judgment of value, the true worth or intrinsic worth of reality. It appreciates that the knower not only appreciates her social order but also esteems herself as a valuable human being. The ontological value of a single knower and chooser ought to be preferred above and beyond cultural values. Judgments of value are

[26] Ibid., 158,159
[27] Ibid., 159.

deliberated, evaluated and conditions set for commitment through making decisions. This creates a spontaneous desire to maintain consistency between knowing and doing.

You feel you ought to respond to the course of action you have understood, judged, and evaluated and that transcends your present way of living. Institutions have the capacity to influence this response by facilitating this desire into reality to maintain consistency between knowing and doing. We are born not as actual knowers and choosers but as potential knowers and choosers who need to develop biologically, physically, intellectually and emotionally before we can decide for ourselves. We are not considered reasonable until we are about seven years old. We are not considered responsible choosers until we have reached a certain stage of maturity.[28]

Unless institutions facilitate the questioning of today's realities, the African society is in danger of rapid decline. Socrates was condemned to death for corrupting the minds of the youth. While death was an extreme punishment to Socrates, his death symbolizes the erosion of universal ethical values as witnessed in contemporary Africa. It is the suicide of our philosophical foundations, values and principles that govern our communities. Hence, it is the responsibility of institutions to facilitate the youth in questioning the 'gods' of corruption, poverty, and war experienced in the African continent by tapping into the curiosity of the youth:. As recognized by Melichin in his book *Transforming Conflict through Insight*;

> Insight requires genuine curiosity and genuine questioning. It requires that we admit that we do not know the answers and sometimes this can require considerable discipline and humility and trust. Our culture has made ignorance a shameful thing and this is a terrible tragedy. The road to insight can only begin with the willing acceptance of not knowing. The principle engine of learning is the curiosity that draws us forward in questioning towards insight. Without the calm acceptance of the state prior to knowing, this curiosity has difficulty taking hold.[29]

Institutions should therefore pay attention to youthful curiosity. 'Curiosity and questioning play a significant role in resolving conflicts. Both are open ended and focused. Conflicts present challenges for our personal relationships, our justice institutions and our involvement in democracy. Citizens play a significant role in solving these conflicts'.[30] When the youth's potential are fully harnessed, they can play a fundamental role in resolving conflicts. It is thus the role of institutions to respond critically to this curiosity that comes with youthfulness. The response should not be narrowed down to employability but rather to empowering the youth to live better lives. Appreciating the curiosity of the youth is harnessing their potential for constructive engagement.

'Philosophical empowerment gives young people a chance to question values that society takes for granted. Philosophy revives the ancient Greek aphorism "know thyself" – even and especially in a modern culture that perpetually ignores this most personal of mandates'.[31] Youth empowerment interventions have to attach greater importance to thinking in hard and sustained ways about values that have little to do with wealth and reputation and bare utility. In this way, interventions addressing oppression and inequalities among the youth will be successful. Young people will be able to participate in investigating, questioning, researching

[28] Ibid., 202.
[29] Melchin, Kenneth and Picard, Cheryl. *Transforming Conflict through Insight*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
[30] Ibid., 130.
[31] Blackburn, Simon: "Can philosophy Survive in an Academy Driven by Employability?" in *Times Higher Education Ranking: World University Rankings*, (2015, December 10) Available in this link

current problems and coming up with clearly thought out solutions to problems such as war, poverty, corruption, terrorism and tribalism. It is promising to engage the youth in philosophizing, seeking intelligence and ethical principles in validating solutions and acting on them.

## Conclusion

The energy, creativity, commitment to idealism, risk-taking and insatiable quest for knowledge and identity with "the being with all the attributes" is a philosophical genre, potency and reality combined. Youth empowerment must be guided, driven and founded upon the realization that being youth is being a philosopher. Development agencies can make a step ahead in youth empowerment by tapping into the imagination, curiosity and orientation towards ideal societies. While their livelihoods are important to consider, fundamental questions regarding the life they ought to live are equally important.

Organizations such as Seeds of Peace Africa (SOPA) International tap into the inquisitive potential of the youth through value-based sport using the epistemological framework of experience, understanding and judging. This approach is based on structured sports and play activities. In the activities, participants brainstorm on topics such as peace, play the game, reflect on the experience of the game, connect their past experiences with similar situations experienced in the game and then apply the lessons learnt in similar situations in the future. This actualizes their inherent potential to become agents of peace based on Mahatma Gandhi's and Fr. Arnold Grol's Undugu Society of Kenya approach of non-violence. Africa's greatest asset today ought not to become its enemy by engaging the youth in critical investigation about issues that affect them.

Youth can be a positive force for development when provided with opportunities for self-discovery and knowledge that they need to thrive. Philosophical guidance influences positive youth development in intellectual and moral fields. Without ethical empowerment, we have no long-term plans to social challenges today on war, violence, tribalism, disease and corruption. Africa today is in need of philosophers more than ever before to help it think through its challenges and provide critical open-ended answers that propel its development agenda. If the youth are a country's greatest asset, then there is need for philosophical formation of this key population.

'We are selves that develop in response to situations, outside influences but also from within. The development from within is the fundamental problem; becoming aware, explicitly conscious, of what intelligence, judgment is and seeing the philosophical implications of intelligence and judgment'.[32] Development begins from a conviction that what is being projected is GOOD. Does this not happen at the judgment level of conciseness intentionality? Any youth empowerment process or program comes from, calls for and ends in sound philosophical foundations. These programs should therefore focus on opportunities for youth to continually examine themselves as the ultimate goal in life apart from wealth and status.

Youth are part and parcel of the society. A community without the youth heads to extinction. The youth are the answer to the societies quest for being because they guarantee continuity. Inspirational figures such as Pope Francis, Nelson Mandela and Michelle Obama acknowledge that any society educating the young, tapping into their energy and creativity has a solid social capital necessary for holistic development. Postponing their contribution would have dire consequences. Families, the existing higher learning institutions, ecclesiastical institutions, civil organizations and governments in Africa must enhance and

[32] Morelli, Elizabeth and Morelli, Mark. *Understanding and Being: An Introduction and Companion to Insight*. United Kingdom: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987. 119-120.

harmonize the philosophical genre in the youth by maximizing their inclination towards ideal societies. Development of youth cannot occur without the invitation to recognize, grasp and appreciate the gift of human intelligence

To be youth is to be a philosopher and to be a philosopher is to be youth. It is a yearning to grasp the truth. This search is not restricted. It begins in childhood and continues. Identity crisis is not a reserve of youth experience. It occurs at all ages. St Augustine says this ends only when our souls rest in God. In any case this identity crisis is what drives philosophical thinking because identity crisis is an experience. This search for being should be an answer to the search of identity. One cannot be settled until he/she find his/herself. Institutions for empowerment ought to be an answer to this search for identity. This paper raises questions for further investigation into what type of interventions would tap into youth inquisitiveness.

# Plea Bargaining, Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Redefinition of Justice: A Philosophical Appraisal of the Nigerian Experience

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**Abstract**
Access to justice is arguably the most fundamental measure of the socio-contractual existence of the modern state. A state that *appropriately* punishes offenders attracts the *endorsement consent* of its citizens because it is perceived as reasonably just; but where this is lacking, there exists a moral vacuum – a vacuity between what victims of crime expect as punishment and actual sentences. Today, the lure of Cost-benefit analysis and plea bargaining in criminal justice has successfully pit cost against justice. Plea bargaining in Nigeria exploits the frothiness of the criminal laws and shifts focus from justice to 'cost' and 'loss' concerns. These approaches threaten our intuitively normative idea about justice and this is especially profound for a moral theorist concerned with retributivism. The paper analyses the application of plea bargaining in Nigeria and finds that it eviscerates every philosophical idea of punishment, despite the recent attempt to address its pitfalls. It holds that retributivism is the theory of punishment that adequately solves or bridges the moral vacuity that arises between the punishment victims of crime expect and actual sentences, especially where plea bargaining is used. Thus, the paper addresses the following questions: what are the requirements of justice? On what grounds can the application of plea bargaining be just or bring about justice? In answering these questions, I develop a retributive framework of punishment that dissolves the challenge of proportionality between crime and punishment as well as addresses the problem of *too* lenient and disparate punishment characteristic of the application of plea bargaining in Nigeria's criminal justice system.
**Keywords:** Plea Bargaining, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Corruption, Justice, Retributivism.

## Introduction

What is Justice? For the purpose of this paper, I shall construe justice in line with the Latin *Suumcuiquetribuere*(to allocate to each his own) or to give to each *his due*, contra Plato who argued against justice as one's due or paying back one's debt in his *The Republic* (5ff). Justice as *one's due* involves the equitable allotments of rewards and punishments in a manner that guarantees individuals in the society get what they truly deserve and in right proportions. This notion of justice is in sync with those of Aquinas, Kant and Spinoza. For Aquinas, justice is the "perpetual and constant will of giving everyone his due", while Kant conceives it as "to give every person his due" while living honourably and injuring no one. Spinoza on his part says "justice is the habitual rendering of everyman his lawful due, while injustice is depriving a man (whether in terms of benefit or punishment), under the pretence of legality, of what the law rightly interpreted would allow him".[1] Thus, there is justice where a victim of a financial crime has got back what was stolen from him/her, where an offender gets the punishment he/she deserves in the right proportion or, on a general note, where one gets what is his/her rightful due both in terms of reward or punishment.

[1] Obioha, P. The Nature of Justice." *Journal of Social Science*, 29(2), 2011, 186.

Nigeria is a country where criminal cases, especially high-profile cases of corruption (hereafter HPCC) involving elite members of the society, are not properly punished. One of the major reasons Nigerians voted in President Muhammadu Buhari was his campaign promise to fight corruption, which most Nigerians agree is a perennial problem of the Nigerian state; one that robs the country of vital developmental capital. This problem ranges from the non-arrest and prosecution of corrupt public officials to abysmally lenient punishment of convicted corrupt officials through the instrumentality of plea bargaining (hereafter PB). As practiced, PB in Nigeria exploits the weaknesses of the penal laws and shifts attention from justice to 'cost' and 'loss' concerns in a manner that negates our intuitively normative idea about justice. A state that *appropriately* punishes offenders attracts what Jean Hampton calls an *endorsement consent*[2] from its citizens because it is perceived as reasonably just; but where this is lacking, there exists a moral vacuity between what victims of crime expect as punishment and actual sentences. PB as currently used in the administration of criminal justice leaves such vacuum and engenders the assumption among the populace that one can profit from corrupt crimes: steal so much then plea bargain for a lighter sentence. The problem with PB in Nigeria is not merely lenient punishment, a major issue of concern is the widespread disparities in the punishment of convicted corrupt officials. The practice has gained traction in Nigeria following the recommendation of the **Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (hereafter PACAC) to adopt it** in prosecuting corruption in Nigeria. This means the judicial tool is here to stay. Its application in the past has resulted in everything but justice. What then are the requirements of justice? What conditions must be met for PB to bring about justice?

Many philosophers agree that the best approach to punishment is retributivism because it justifies punishment on the basis that it is inflicted only on someone that has committed a crime and that such punishment is proportionate to or, according to Feinberg, 'fit' the crime only in the unproblematic sense that the more serious crimes receive stronger disapproval than the less serious ones, the seriousness of the crime being determined by the amount of harm it generally causes and the degree to which people are disposed to commit it.[3] This agreement notwithstanding, retributivism has the inherent challenge of determining *proportionate* punishment. How is proportionality to be determined?

In what follows in this paper, I shall argue that retributivism is the theory of punishment that adequately solves or bridges the moral vacuity that arises between the punishment victims of crime expect and actual sentences. In doing this, I shall develop a retributive framework of punishment that dissolves the challenge of proportionality. This framework also helps to address the problem of lenient punishment and disparities of punishment characteristic of PB in Nigeria's criminal justice system. The paper is laid out in three parts aside the introduction and conclusion. In the first part, I examine how the interplay and influences of PB and cost benefit analysis pit cost against justice and redefine what is just by shifting focus from the magnitude of offence (which should determine the amount of punishment an offender gets) to the cost of punishment (which holds that punishment may be minimized due to the cost of punishment, particularly incarceration). The second part analyses the grounds upon which punishment can be justified and holds that retributivism offers such grounds even though there is the problem of determining what punishment is proportionate to the seriousness of particular crimes. In the third part, I propose a retributive framework of punishment that not

[2] Jean Hampton,. Political Philosophy Colorado: Westview press, 1997, 96. With this form of consent, a citizen expresses her approval for the state and its activities, her loyalty to it, her identification with it as well as her trust in it.

[3] Joel Feinberg,. "The Expressive Function of Punishment." *The Monist*: *Philosophy of Law* 49(3), 1965, 423.

only address the challenge of proportionality, but also resolves the injustice inherent in PB as practiced in Nigeria's criminal justice system.

**Plea Bargaining, Cost Benefit Analysis and the Redefinition of Justice**

With particular reference to how cases of corruption have been disposed of in Nigeria, this section seeks to answer the following questions – is justice a utopian ideal? Is it something ostensibly unachievable? The impact of brazen corruption on the socio-economic performances of African states, particularly Nigeria, is well documented. According to Adjibolosoo, "African countries are unable to achieve real progress because there are too many incidents of embezzlement, bribery and corruption".[4] This translates into a deficit in development capital as a result of illegal capital flight from the continent. Mistry puts the amount of capital held abroad by corrupt African elites at over $500 billion[5], while Ribadu opined that Nigerian officials have misappropriated over $440 billion between 1960 and 1999; an amount he describes as six times the Marshal Plan to rebuild Europe after the World War II.[6] Karl Maier reiterated this position in his argument that "Nigeria's leaders, like the colonialists before them, have sucked out billions of dollars and stashed them in Western banks".[7] The socio-economic implications of this has been highlighted by Gyimah-Brempong who finds that 'a unit increase in corruption reduces the growth rates of GDP and per capita income by between 0.75 and 0.9 percentage points and between 0.39 and 0.41 percentage points per year respectively'.[8]

In his *The Trouble with Nigeria",* published over 3 decades ago, Chinua Achebe notes corruption as one of the major problems of Nigeria, arguing that the Nigerian system incentivises corruption as easy and profitable, and that Nigerians will only "cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and unattractive." One of the avenues through which corruption is made attractively profitable in Nigeria is *PB* and the arguments offered in its defence hinge on the cost of justice.

PB is a legal practice whereby an accused pleads guilty in return for reduced charges or a lighter sentence.[9] It is a practice of reciprocal compromises on the parts of both the accused and prosecutor who both concede certain incentives or 'shift grounds' for a mutually agreeable and beneficial outcome. For the prosecutor, this benefit is in the avoidance of a full trial which can be expensive and time consuming, while for the accused the benefit is to be found in reduced sentence than would have been otherwise required by full trial. Consequently, adherents like Howe have argued that the practice is essentially beneficial in that it saves costs and time while maximizing punishment:

> Bargaining maximizes deserved punishment at a reasonable cost by allowing prosecutors and judges to pursue many discounted sentences with the same resources that they would otherwise use to pursue a single sentence after trial… We prefer to trade some punishment to avoid the high costs associated with a bargainless system….[10]

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[4] Adjibolosoo, S. Economic Underdevelopment in Africa: The Validity of the Corruption Argument. *Review of Human Factor Studies.* 11(1), 2005, 91.

[5] Mistry, S. P. "Reasons for sub-Saharan Africa's Development Deficit that the Commission for Africa did not Consider." *African Affairs,* 104 (417), 2005, 666.

[6] Ribadu, Nuhu. "Capital Loss and Corruption: The Example of Nigeria (Testimony Before the House Financial Services Committee)." In: J. OLAKANMI & Co., 7 Anti-Corruption Laws. 4th ed., Abuja: LawLords Publications, 2012, 157.

[7] Karl Maier,. *This House has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000, xxii.

[8] Ibid., 184

[9] Gorr, M. "The Morality of Plea Bargaining." *Social theory and practice*, 26(1), 2000, 129.

[10] Howe, S. The Value of Plea Bargaining. *Oklahoma Law Review.* 58, 2005, 635-6.

With these seeming benefits, Nigeria, like most other countries (but unlike them in practice), has not only espoused PB, it has gone on to resolve all HPCC through it and handed those involved sentences that eviscerate our intuitive ideas about justice.[11] The problem of PB in the administration of criminal justice in Nigeria can be generally grouped into two:

1. Lack of legal or constitutional foundation
2. Too lenient and incongruent punishment

While 1 has been adequately addressed in recent time, the same cannot be said of 2. Before now a major critique against PB in Nigeria has been that it lacks statutory provisions detailing extant principles and sentencing guidelines to check the practices of prosecutors, in this case, the EFCC. However, these concerns have now been laid to rest with the passage of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (hereafter ACJA), on 15th May, 2015 and the publication of the "Plea Bargain Manual" (hereafter PBM) by the PACAC in February 2016. Section 270 of the ACJA 2015 holds that:

> (1) Notwithstanding anything in this Act or in any other law, the Prosecutor may:
>
> (a) Receive and consider a plea bargain from a defendant charged with an offence either directly from that defendant or on his behalf; or
>
> (b) Offer a plea bargain to a defendant charged with an offence.

The guidelines and conditions set out in the PBM appear very brilliant, particularly its insistence that PB must always be in the interest of justice, victims of crime and the general public. However, there seem to be an inherent, logical inconsistency between conditions that must be met for PB to be in the interest of justice and the public (which the PBM is about) and the PBM's conclusion, which suggests PB can hardly be in the public interest. According to this conclusion, PB cannot be in the public interest if one or more of the following 'aggravating factors' is present:

a. Abuse of power
b. Abuse of position of trust
c. Deliberate targeting victims
d. Profit or illegal benefit from the offence
e. Planning of an offence – organised or conspiracy
f. Defendant was the instigator or a ring leader
g. Multiple and/or vulnerable victims
h. Previous convictions
i. Attempts to conceal or disguise the stolen fund
j. Amount stolen not recovered
k. High impact of the offence on victims and communities[12]

[11]Tafa Balogun, a former Inspector General of Police, only got a six month sentence for an eight count charge of money laundering to the tune of N16 billion in 2005, while Lucky Igbinedion, a former governor of Edo state, bagged a six month imprisonment with an option of N3.5 fine (which he paid and walked away free) for defrauding his state of over N2.9 billion. Bode George's was a 30 month jail term for a 47 count charge of contract splitting and inflation to the tune of N85 billion, while Cecilia Ibru got a six month jail term for a 25 count charge of bank and securities fraud of several billions. John Yusuf got 2 years jail term with an option of N750, 000 fine (which he activated) for a 2 count charge of converting public fund amounting to N27.2 billion (see K. Adekunle. "Plea Bargaining and the Nigerian Penal System…" and S. Dada "How They Looted Nigeria Dry…")

[12] Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC *a*). "Plea Bargain Manual". February, 2016, 21.

Clearly, HPCC, to which PB has been mainly applied, have always involved almost (if not) all of these factors. Of particular concern is factor *j*. Since PB is a practice of concessions open to the doctrine of proportionality – a utilitarian practice permitting some form of evil for a greater good – *j* cannot be addressed within the current framework of PB in Nigeria.

Another beautiful set of principles aimed at addressing 2 above is the "Federal Sentencing Guidelines for High Profile Corruption and Other Related Economic Offences" (FSGHPCOREO, hereafter). Section 6(1) of this law provides that "a sentence must be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence", which is determinable by the nature of the crime, harm occasioned, degree of culpability of the offender and the quantum of punishment contained in the legislation for the offence. Such sentence must contain at least one or more of the following: prevent future crime(s) by the offender; restrain the offender by incarceration; rehabilitate the offender; retribution; restitution as well as educate the public on the reprobation placed on unlawful conducts [section 4(2)]. Undoubtedly, these guidelines obviously recognize the need for retributive punishment in regard to HPCC.

A society that wishes to prevent future crimes and educate her public on the wrongness of illegal actions must adopt a deterrence or retributive theory of punishment respectively. None of the HPCC in the past reflect these theories (or principles in sections 6 and 4 above) in the minutest sense and, to a greater extent, none in the future would; these new pieces of legislation and guidelines notwithstanding. The reason for this is that some of the legislations[13] prescribing sentences for HPCC are weak, others are obsolete both in terms of maximum sentences and fines. A case in point is that of John Yusuf, convicted for misappropriating over N27.2 billion. The maximum sentence in section 309 of the Penal Code with which he was charged is two years imprisonment with the option of fine or both. John gladly paid the paltry fine of N750, 000 right in court and walked away free to the chagrin of the general public. As long as there are traces of these weaknesses and loopholes in the law, deterrence or retribution can never be achieved as they would be found and used by amoral prosecutors and judges. This problem was not lost on the drafters of the FSGHPCOREO in their submission that:

> Although imprisonment is a serious punitive measure for any crime, criminological studies have shown that the most effective punishment for any economic crime including corruption that involves direct or indirect financial gain to the offender or any other person, is punishment that strikes at the motivation for the offence which is financial gain. Further, imprisonment comes with serious costs and even though it may be widely regarded as the penalty that sends a sufficiently strong enough deterrent signal to the society about a crime, the fine is no less effective when it is rigorously applied. Against this backdrop, it is important to ensure that the laws creating the relevant offences adequately provide for financial penalties that are commensurate to the level of offences. Unfortunately, this is not the case presently. The amounts imposed by legislation as fines for offences, the scheme of monetary jurisdiction for the lower courts makes it difficult for the courts to adequately sentence using the fine and the

[13] The Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Act; Criminal Code; Penal Code; Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment, ETC.) Act; Public Procurement Act; Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act; AdvancedFee Fraud & Other Related Offences Act; Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) & Financial Malpractices in Bank Act; Code of Conduct Bureau & Tribunal Act; Recovery of Public Property (Special Provisions) Act; and the Miscellaneous Offences Act (See Part C of the FSGHPCOREO).

> inadequate provisions relating to other ancillary financial measures limit the prospect for effectively using these measures.[14]

The solution suggested by the drafters, if well implemented, will go a long way in giving credence to outcomes of HPCC. Fines are to be determined with reference to the baseline of harm and the degree of culpability. Where there is high culpability, fine should be set at 300% of the amount (ranging between 250% - 400%); medium culpability attracts 200% of the amount (range 150% to 300%); while lesser culpability attracts 100% of the amount (range 70% to 150%).[15] Laudable as this matrix for fine may seem, it only applies where the offender is a corporate entity. What happens where the offender is an individual? Step two of the *Eight-step Matrix of the Sentencing Process* (in the FSGHPCOREO), which seems to answer this question appears somewhat obscure and arbitrary. Since there are only three categories of harm (serious, significant and lesser) and culpability (high, medium and lesser), the matrix for maximum terms of punishment should not exceed three so it matches off categories of harm and degree of culpability. Given that the sentences contained in step two aligns more with the retributive theory of punishment, the question remains: how are these sentences (or proportionality between crime and punishment) arrived at? Above all, the idea of fine punishment should not be restricted to corporate offenders, but extended to individual offenders. And where a convict can afford the monetary value of his/her incarceration, the law should allow such convicts to do so in order to avoid the cost of imprisonment. While no statutory provision, particularly the FSGHPCOREO, show how this is possible, the retributive framework developed in this paper addresses this challenge.

Aside PB, criminal justice is also under profound influence from an economic perspective now being read into the cost of justice. This perspective is the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) which, among other things, examines the value for money of criminal sentences. It analyses the cost involved in investigation, prosecution, the trial courts, and, most importantly, punishment, especially incarceration. An example of this application is the 2010 Missouri Sentencing Commission's recommendation, which required the 'pre-sentencing reports' prepared for judges to include the costs of all possible sentences and the price tag on each sentence.[16] The idea is to encourage judges' selection of cheaper forms of punishment in lieu of incarceration. To this end, cost, and not the seriousness of crime or the degree of harm caused, now determines the appropriateness of punishment. A situation where cost is pitted against justice in determining appropriateness of punishment is very worrisome and can find no justification in philosophy. It redefines justice in a manner that vitiates a true understanding of what justice really entails.

The defence given by adherents of PB in Nigeria clearly mirrors this pitting of cost against justice. For instance, Femi Babafemi, an EFCC Spokesperson, held that:

> …Plea bargaining saves a lot of cost as most of Nigerian criminal Acts don't stipulate capital punishment for their offenders…for instance, [the Money Laundary Act] provides for a fine of not more than N250, 000 and two to three years jail term for anybody convicted of violating the law… if an individual is convicted of embezzling N10 billion, he is allowed to pay N250, 000 and serve a jail term of not more than three years. That is after a long trial where the government may have spent N10 million to get justice… [Therefore], we

[14] Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC *b*). "Plea Bargain Manual". February, 2016, 73.
[15] Ibid., 74.
[16] Flanders, Chad (a). "Cost as a Sentencing Factor: Missouri's Experiment." *Missouri Law Review*. 77(2), 2012, 392.

> sometimes agree to plea bargaining which is a global and universal approach to getting justice. *So in order for Nigerian government and the Nigerian people not to lose out completely, we allow these people to forfeit a substantial part of the loot* (emphasis mine).[17]

That PB saves a lot of cost does not mean every sentence deriving from it translates into justice. Also, a forfeiture of a substantial amount of the loot incentivizes corruption and ratifies Achebe's argument that corruption thrives because the system makes it easy and profitable. As currently being practised, PB gives the impression that one can actually benefit from corrupt crime by pleading guilty (to save cost and time) and forfeiting a part of the loot in exchange for lenient punishment. This route to justice raises serious concerns for moral and legal philosophers, particularly those interested in retributivism. In the next section, I shall examine the retributive grounds upon which punishment is justified and the conditions that must be met before we can say justice has been served.

**Punishment, Retribution and Trust**

The interests of philosophers in crime punishment are twofold: the grounds on which punishment is and can be justified, and the amount of punishment necessary for particular crimes. These interests are what Hart describes as the 'general justifying aims' of punishment and 'issues of distribution' in his "Prolegomenon to the Principles of Punishment." The former deals with the essence or general justification of the entire institution of legal punishment, while the latter focuses on the allotment of punishment to individual offenders in the sense of *who* gets punished and to what extent.[18] Philosophical analysis of the justification of punishment has resulted in a "classic debate" between utilitarian and retributive theories of punishment. Utilitarian accounts of punishment are consequentialist or "forward-looking" in that punishment is justified insofar as it reduces or controls future crimes. An example is the deterrence theory of punishment.[19] Retributivism, of which there are varieties, departs from consequentialism in being wholly focused on crimes already committed rather than on any future crime. In other words, it is characterized as "backward-looking" and, on this basis, a *past offence* constitutes a necessary and sufficient condition for a just punishment. In what follows, I shall focus on the retributive account of punishment.

The word retribution derives from the Latin words *re* and *tribuo* meaning 'to' 'pay back' respectively. Hence, retribution carries with it the idea of 'paying back' or 'repaying' what one owes. In this case, it involves paying for one's offence or debt to society. As a justificatory theory of punishment, retribution has an intuitive appeal even though it is fraught with inherent challenges, chief of which is how to adequately determine proportionate punishment for particular crimes. Retributivism has two central claims:

> (1) Punishment is justified only when it applies to an already committed crime;
>
> (2) Such punishment must be *proportionate* to the crime with the more serious crimes receiving more severe punishment than less serious crimes.

[17] Adeleke, G. (2012). "Prosecuting corruption and the application of plea bargaining in Nigeria: A critique." *International Journal of Advanced Legal Studies and Governance*, 3(1), 61-61.

[18] Hart, H. L. A. "The Presidential Address: Prolegomenon to the Principles of Punishment." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series*. 60, 1959-1960, 8.

[19] The deterrence theory of punishment comprises individual (or special) and general deterrence. While the former deters someone, who has offended in the past via harsher, incremental punishment, the latter deters potential or future offenders from committing crime through the fear of severe punishment.

A combination of these is what Scheid describes as the retributive principle: "all and only those who commit legal offences may justly receive punishments so long as the punishments are in proportion to the seriousness of the respective crimes".[20] Philosophers like Morris, Davis, Nozick, Hampton and Dimock have analysed (1) above within a functionalist explication of restoring an equilibrium between benefits and burdens, the conditions of basic trust in the society or of falsifying a claim of superior self-worth by criminals.

These philosophers believe that, in committing a crime, wrongdoers derive an *unfair advantage* (UA) over their victims or other law-abiding citizens in the society.[21] This advantage is both material and immaterial, mental or psychic. For Davis, the advantage is the "illicit pleasure" derived from crime or "the liberty to do what others cannot", while for Hampton, it is the assertion of a superior self-worth over victims of crime. The point here is that the law equalises all in the society by demanding obedience to certain rules and proscriptions. Such proscriptions (say against murder) is a burden to be carried by all and the benefit (of not being killed) enjoyed by all. Now when criminals flout such law, they fail to bear the burden of the law like other citizens, but enjoy the benefit of being safe from the crime. This way, the wrongdoer gains an *unfair advantage* (UA) over law-abiding citizens. As Davis put it, "the obedience of others makes his (the criminal's) disobedience a taking of unfair advantage".[22] It is this advantage that punishment looks to offset or take back. To remove such advantage, in the retributive sense, Davis argues that punishment ought to match off the value of the *UA* gained. Nozick held a similar position in his argument that the punishment (deserved) is to affect the wrongdoer but not simply as he finds himself after the wrongful act; his ill-gotten gains (including psychic ones) are removed or counterbalanced before the infliction of the deserved penalty.[23]

For Nozick, punishment is not merely in the saddle of counterbalancing or removing the illicit gains of criminals, it also reconnects them to the "correct values" of society from which they were disconnected as a result of their crimes. And, according to him, "it is not that this connection is a desired further effect of punishment: the act of retributive punishment itself effects this connection".[24] Hampton on her part thinks of the *UA* as entirely psychic; an assertion of moral superiority by criminals over the victims of their crimes. The purpose of punishment, therefore, is to negate or falsify the evidence of superiority implicit in the criminal's act.[25] Punishment, in this way, subdues the criminal and shows that he is not superior to his victim in any way.

Suzan Dimock's retributive account of the justification of punishment is more in tune with the thrust of this paper. Consequently, I shall dwell on her theory a bit more. Dimock believes that the purpose of law is to secure the conditions of basic trust in a community in such a manner that violators of the law are effectively punished. Any legal system interested in this goal, argues Dimock, "must adopt a retributivist approach to punishment".[26] Dimock distinguished between punishable and non-punishable trust violations. She contends that it is misleading to base punishment on the actual harm produced by an offence because some

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[20] Don Scheid, E. "Kant's Retributivism." *Ethics*. 93(2), 1983, 263.

[21] See Herbert Morris "Persons and Punishment", *The Monist* 52, 1968; Michael Davis "How to Make Punishment Fit the Crime", *Ethics* 93, 1983; Jean Hampton "An Expressive Theory of Retribution", *Retribution and its Critics*, Wesley Cragg (Ed.), 1992; Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, 1981.

[22] Michael Davis, "How to Make the Punishment fit the Crime." *Nomos*, (*Criminal Justice*). 27, 1985, 138.

[23] Nozick, Robert. 1981. *Philosophical Explanations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, 363-4.

[24] *Ibid*., 374.

[25] Jean Hampton, "The Retributive Idea." In: Murphy J.G., Hampton, J. (eds), *The Retributive Idea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 129.

[26] Suzan Dimock. "Retributivism and Trust". *Law and Philosophy.* 16, 1997, 37

criminal attempts (say attempted murder, foiled terrorist attacks and armed robbery, etc.), which are subject to punishment, produce no material harm, while some other acts like accidents or mistakes, produce considerable harm yet they are not, properly, punishable. On this count, therefore, what acts should be punished? For Dimock, only acts that violates *objective* grounds of trust in the society. In other words, only:

> Those acts which, if performed by any sizeable minority or with any frequency, would undermine basic trust between members of a community: trust in each other, in the first instance, and trust in the legal system itself as an institution designed to maintain trust secondarily.[27]

Trust, whether of individuals or institutions (say elected government officials or the judiciary), has some basic characteristics. Trusting others or institutions means that we willingly or tacitly entrust or place certain interests or goods into the hands of the trusted or within particular institutions. In doing this, we become vulnerable as we risk being disappointed by the trustee who may dash our expectation and or fail to completely care for our interests.[28] Political corruption is a crime performed with frequency by a sizable number of members of the society, particularly people occupying public offices of trust. On Dimock's account, such crimes breach basic trust amongst members of the society, and the failure of the legal institution to punish or properly punish these crimes in relation to their severity also leads to a breach of trust between members of society and legal institutions. For instance, in the police pension fraud highlighted in the previous section, John Yusuf, like many other corrupt public officials, breached the conditions of basic trust at the interpersonal level both to the primary and secondary victims of the crime. Also, by handing him a sentence of just two years jail term or the option of N750, 000, a judgement considered disproportionately inadequate (in relation to the severity of the crime) by most members of the society following protests across Nigeria after the judgement, the conditions of basic trust between citizens and the legal institution was equally breached.

These functionalist explications are given in defence of (1) above as a peculiar feature of retributivism, whence it derives its characterisation as "backward-looking". But does this feature really stand retributivism apart from other theories of punishment like deterrence? I do not think there is anything intuitively appealing about (1) as a special feature of retributivism because it is also found in other theories like restoration and deterrence. The contention here is that the "backward-looking", "forward-looking" dichotomy is misleading as all theories of punishment contain both dichotomies, even though in varying degrees. A deterrence, utilitarian theory is "forward-looking" because of some perceived consequence of crime control or reduction. But we cannot say that the criminal being punished is being punished not because she has committed a crime (backward-looking), but simply because of the interest to deter future perpetrators of similar crime in the future. No punishment is given or can be justified unless someone has committed a crime. This is true of all theories of punishment; the difference or distinguishing feature is found in the amount of punishment meted out. While the deterrence theory holds that such punishment is justified even if it is more than what is deserved (just so that the expression and communication of reprobation can be louder), retributivism insists punishment must only be proportionate to the crime, not more, not less. In-here lies the moral appeal of retributivism, but the problem remains how to determine proportionality amidst different categories of crimes. This challenge shall be considered in the next section.

**Making Punishment Fit Corrupt Crimes**

[27] *Ibid*., 44.
[28] *Ibid*., 46.

I strongly agree with Dimock's argument that any legal system considered reasonably just in maintaining the conditions of basic trust must adopt the retributivist approach to punishment. However, I disagree with her account of retributive punishment for certain reasons. The functionalist arguments for the justification of punishment that we considered in the previous section pertains to the first part of the retributive principle in the Hartian sense of 'general justifying aims'. The second part, Hart's issues of distribution or allotment of punishment, remains the greatest challenge of retributivism – that punishment or the taking away of criminals' *UA* must be proportional to the severity of crime. The question is how do we determine or measure punishment in a manner that correctly fits the degree of crime. For instance, what degree of punishment is proportionate to crimes such as rape, corruption or embezzlement of public funds?

According to Dimock, punishment ought to be proportioned to the need of restoring the conditions of trust; and this can be achieved by other means of punishment other than incarceration. On her account, crimes such as corporate embezzlement (in which the corporation is able to maintain all commitments to its customers, stakeholders and all possible victims of the financial loss), tax evasion or failure to purchase various business licenses do not require incarcerative punishment because nobody is physically harmed or maimed. Therefore, crimes without physical harm do not require incarceration. What kind of punishment is then necessary for the reestablishment of objective trust? According to her, such offenders may be banned for a period of time (including for life) from holding institutional positions of financial trust, or from operating a business or prevented from receiving any future tax returns. Equally, they may be required to pay fines and/or perform community services.[29]

The first concern to this approach to punishment would be the question – will incarceration become necessary were the corporation unable to meet her obligation? Apart from the fact this approach comes across as intuitively too lenient, it does not help us resolve the problem of proportionality. What amount of community service proportionately fits a case of embezzlement such as John Yusuf's N27.2 billion?

I believe that retributivism is our best bet to a fairly justified system of punishment given its insistence on proportionate punishment. In what follows, I shall offer a retributivist account of punishment that attempts to resolve the problem of proportionality inherent in the second principle of retributivism. Many philosophers hold that punishment is justified because it 'takes away' the *UA* gained when crimes are committed. By so doing, punishment is equated with the taking away of this advantage. The taking away of *UA*does not, as I see it, constitute punishment. For instance, an individual A collects a loan facility of N1 million from his friend B with no intention to pay back. By this act, A gains an *UA*over B. Now if A was arraigned before a court of law and was made to pay this loan facility, would this amount to punishment? Certainly not. It is merely a case of A paying back what he owes.

This point is also clearer in a case where A accidentally shatters B's window. Where A is required to pay for this damage, and he does, this too will not amount to punishment, and in such cases, punishment is not even required because if all that was destroyed was a window, a replacement of such window counterbalances the wrong in a manner not to be considered as punishment. However, there are circumstances under which a mere counterbalancing of the wrong will not be enough. Assume the shattering of the window was not accidental but intentional. And before it was shattered, A made a statement like: 'I will destroy this window of yours and nothing will happen (similar to how law-enforcement agents in Nigeria boast of shooting or beating up the innocent, sometimes defenceless citizens, "and nothing will

[29] *Ibid.*, 55-56.

happen").' Here, the offender is asserting a superior self-worth in the Hamptonian sense and punishment would require the nullification of such false notion of superiority. In doing this, only making A to replace the window has not undone such superiority claim. It is only when A is made to replace the window and then punished or made to pay a fine for breaking the law in the first place that the process of punishment is complete.

The contention here is that it is misleading to see the 'taking away' of *UA*as punishment. If a public official embezzles N10 million and, upon conviction, was made to pay back this amount, he cannot be said to have been punished; punishment only comes if, having paid this amount, other loses (say imprisonment, community service or a fine) are imposed upon him. To this end, it is proper to see the 'taking away of *UA'* as a mere 'righting of wrong' in the Hegelian sense[30] or of counterbalancing of a wrong in the Nozickian sense. Hence, I agree with Nozick's assertion that the punishment a criminal deserves is such that not only takes away the criminal's *UA* but one which puts her in a baseline lower than the offender would have been prior to committing the crime:

> Thus, the punishment deserved, r x H (where r represents the degree of responsibility, while H represents the magnitude of harm) is imposed relative to a baseline that marks the situation the wrongdoer would have been in had he not committed the wrong. [In order to prevent victims of crime from being worse off after a crime, wrongdoers are to compensate their victims, which] may itself lower the wrongdoer from his baseline situation by some amount *c*. [Therefore], the punishment still to be inflicted will be equal in magnitude to (r x H) – *c*; thereby the process of extracting compensation followed by punishment leaves the wrongdoer r x H below his baseline situation.[31]

Nozick's point here, like I have argued above, is that counterbalancing a wrongdoing or taking away an *UA* is not enough, a penalty for breaking the law is required. Imagine a case of a hoodlum struggling to snatch a bag from a lady on the street. While they struggled, a police patrol team turned the street's corner and witnessed the robber successfully snatched the bag. If this patrol team chase after and catches the criminal, the recovered bag would be returned to the lady without much question. However, the robber cannot be released simply because what he stole has been recovered, he would have to answer to the law that prohibits robbery. The recovered bag is not, itself, punishment and does not negate the need for punishment. So, what is required under this idea of retributivism is a removing of the UA + penalty. How, then, is proportionality to be determined?

As noted in the previous section, Michael Davis, a thoroughgoing retributivist, is one of many legal philosophers who believe that punishment entails the taking away of *UA*. As he put it, "the unfair advantage is the 'illicit pleasure' in every crime, whether jaywalking or murder, prostitution or stealing. What the criminal deserves (for this act) is a punishment proportioned to that advantage (and to that advantage alone)".[32] And to show how to determine or measure proportionality in relation to particular crime, Davis proposes seven steps:

1. Prepare a list of penalties consisting of those evils (a) which no rational person would risk except for some substantial benefit and (b) which may

[30] See Cottingham, John. "Varieties of Retribution." *The Philosophical Quarterly*. 29(116), 1950. (Jul., 1979), 244.
[31] Nozick, 364.
[32] Michael Davis, , 138.

be inflicted through the procedures of the criminal law. [These penalties include death, loss of liberty (imprisonment, supervision), pain (by flogging or hard labour), loss of property (fine, forfeiture), and mutilation (by branding or amputation)].

2. Strike from the list all inhumane penalties. [E.g. flogging and mutilation].
3. Type the remaining penalties, rank them within each type, and then combine rankings into a scale.
4. List all crimes.
5. Type the crimes, rank them within each type, and then combine rankings into a scale.
6. Connect the greatest penalty with the greatest crime, the least penalty with the least crime, and the rest accordingly.
7. Thereafter: type and grade new penalties as in step 2 and new crimes as in step 4, and then proceed as above.[33]

Despite the seeming persuasiveness of Davis' theory, I do not think that it correctly resolves the problem of proportionality in punishment. This is because his solution, if anything, only helps to scale or group crimes and punishment in terms of their severity, it does not tell us how proportionality is determined in the case of individual crime vis-à-vis individual punishment. For instance, he distinguished between grand and petty theft, simple and aggravated theft.[34] If we say the maximum punishment for grand theft is 5 years imprisonment, while the maximum for petty theft is 2 years imprisonment, the question still remains – how is this arrived at? In what follows, I shall offer an account of retributivism that, I believe, helps to resolve this impasse.

As we earlier noted in this work, retribution or justice, contra Plato's opposition in *The Republic*, involves paying back what you owe – a debt, which also involves crime. Most philosophers agree that in committing a crime, the criminal derives an *UA* over the victim of crime and the debt which is owed to such a victim, which ought to be paid back, is this *UA*. Let us call the process of paying back, that I am suggesting helps us to resolve the proportionality problem, "pay as you earn" (PAYE). The PAYE works by classifying citizens of a society into different socio-economic status. Since most (if not all) people involved in cases of political corruption (including corporate embezzlement or misappropriation) belong to this or that socio-economic group and are in employment or active service, it becomes easy to allot punishment in a manner that resolves the issue of proportionality. The first thing to do is to determine the value of the crime, say, for instance, 10 million. The second thing is to determine the socio-economic status of the criminal – what is the current or last (if out of employment) value of the criminal's annual basic salary?[35]

The *net* annual basic salary (ABS), without commissions and allowances, gives us a rough idea of the socio-economic status of a particular individual and what a one month or one year imprisonment would mean to the criminal in terms of loss. Thus, if such a person were to serve a one-year jail term, the term will equal the *ABS* of the criminal. Recall that we held that a retributively proportionate punishment is UA + Penalty. Let us assume that penalty

[33] *Ibid*. 131.
[34] Ibid., 135
[35] We are using the basic salary because this is what is taxed in the society. This is important because if a criminal were to be imprisoned for one month, we have a fair idea of what the criminal loses in a month and, if the imprisonment is for a year, a fair idea of what he or she loses in a year.

equals 50% of *UA*.[36] To this end, a formula for punishment (in jail term) can be given as follows – Punishment deserved (PD) equals Unfair Advantage (UA) plus Penalty (P) divided by annual basic salary (ABS). This gives us:

$$\mathbf{PD = \frac{UA + P}{ABS}}$$

Therefore, if someone with an *ABS* of 1,000,000 is convicted of embezzling 10, 000, 000, his/her deserved punishment (in jail term) shall be:

$$\mathbf{\frac{10{,}000{,}000 + 5{,}000{,}000}{1{,}000{,}000} = 15 \text{ (years imprisonment)}}$$

Where someone has plea bargained, his or her deserved punishment should be set at half the penalty with the *UA* being non-negotiable and constant. That is, where someone with an *ABS* of 1,000,000 is convicted via plea-bargaining of embezzling 10,000,000 of which he returns 5,000,000, his or her PD (in jail term) shall be:

$$\mathbf{\frac{5{,}000{,}000 + 2{,}500{,}000}{1{,}000{,}000} = 7.5 \text{ (years imprisonment)}}$$

Where the criminal can afford to pay the monetary value of the jail term (15m or 7.5m as above), he or she may do this and avoid going to jail. How can we, on this account, measure proportionate punishment in cases involving the unemployed? Say, for instance, an unemployed individual has been convicted of stealing 10,000,000. What would be a proportionate punishment in this case? Note that each individual has a basic social status in society in terms of education – no education at all, Ordinary Level holder, Advanced Level holder (e.g Nigeria Certificate in Education – NCE, National Diploma – ND), Higher National Diploma (HND) holder, degree holder (1st degree, Masters, PhD), etc.Now, the offence would have occurred in a given state or location. What to do is to determine the entry level *ABS* for each of these levels of education and see which applies to the criminal. The offence is then worked out using the formula to determine what punishment is proportionate to the crime. What if the 10,000,000 was stolen by a group of three individuals? In this case, the *UA* (10,000,000) would be divided by three (so that the *UA* payed back is not greater than what was stolen), while the penalty (50% of the crime or *UA*) remains constant. Thus the formula for a group of three theft becomes:

$$\mathbf{PD = \frac{UA/3 + P}{ABS}}$$

In his interpretation of Kant's retributivism, Pincoffs held that in committing a crime, an offender wills the corresponding maxim; and to punish a criminal is simply to treat him in accordance to the same maxim or rule that is implied by his crime. "So the criminal wills his own punishment in the sense that he wills the maxim according to which the punishment is applied". In other words, says Pincoffs, "what we do to him [punishment] he willed, in willing to adopt his maxim as universalizable".[37] The *PAYE* approach to punishment perfectly fits into this idea of how an offender draws punishment upon himself as, through it, there is no arbitrary impositions. The punishment he gets derives from his will to undertake the crime and the proportion of the punishment derives from his socio-economic status.

[36] This may vary according to society – it could be 20%, 30% or as PACAC suggests, 100%, 200% or 300% (for lesser, medium and high culpability respectively)of UA as society deems fit. But setting it at half the value of UA is rationally persuasive.

[37] Don Scheid, E. 277.

Critics may adjudge this framework as too harsh and wonder what the loyalty of the criminal would be towards his/her nation having fully paid for their crimes without any concessions. If judicial systems were to factor in patriotism into punishment, a great deal of crimes would go unpunished or under-punished. Such system risks being an accomplice in under-punishing crimes or what Kant describes as 'bloodguilt' in his famous example of a disbanding Island:

> Even if a civil society were to dissolve itself by common agreement of all its members (for example, if the people inhabiting an island decide to separate and disperse themselves around the world), the last murderer remaining in prison must first be executed, so that everyone will duly receive what his actions are worth and so that the bloodguilt thereof will not be fixed on the people because they failed to insist on carrying out the punishment; for if they fail to do so, they may be regarded as accomplices in this public violation of legal justice.[38]

Notwithstanding Kant's thoroughgoing retributivism as contained in this passage, a state that is so worried about the patriotic status of criminals, post-punishment, may choose to tender justice with mercy and tinker with the penalty aspect within the framework. While the *UA* in the formula is non-negotiable (because if someone P steals an X amount of money from an individual, an employer or nation S, justice would require that S gets back this X amount of money with or without compensation), the P (penalty) can be reduced to the barest minimum to account for mercy. Therefore, whereas 50% of *UA* was adopted in the formula above, a judicial system concerned with mercy may reduce her penalty for crime to 30%, 10%, 5% or even 1% of *UA*. The central thrust is that the criminal's *UA* is counterbalanced amidst the imposition of a penalty for breaking the law. Nothing less would fulfil the requirements of justice.

## Conclusion

Corruption is a very serious crime that requires no form of incentivization. We have shown in the paper that in committing a crime, an offender benefits an *unfair advantage* over the victim of her crime. It has also been argued that the taking away of this advantage is not, intrinsically, punishment. Any system of justice whose account of punishment does not adequately *takes away* a criminal's *UA* in addition to the imposition of a penalty or a fine redefines justice and, to that extent, it is unjust.

[38] *Ibid.*, 277.

# Terrorism, Anti terror war and Minority Rights: The Case of the Boni of Coastal Kenya

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## Abstract

The shift in sovereignty accompanying globalization has meant that non-state actors are more involved than ever in issues relating to human rights abuses. This development poses challenges to international human rights and global justice, because for the most part that human rights law has been designed to restrain abuses by powerful states and state agents. While globalization has enhanced the ability of civil society to function across borders and promote human rights, other actors have gained the power to violate human rights in unforeseen ways. This paper looks at the frameworks for globalization and its effects on human rights, and then asks to what extent globalization is good for human rights, and to what extent human rights facilitate globalization. We use the Boni people of coastal Kenya to argue that although several legal responses to globalization as they relate to the promotion and protection of human rights are in place, they do not insulate against human rights violations. I conclude that responses to globalization should significantly change our understanding of the parameters within which the state can protect persons from human rights violations instigated by both state and non-state actors.

**KEY WORDS: Terrorism, globalization, liberalization, international activities, human rights, indigenous peoples, minority groups, state actors, non-state actors**

## Introduction

International human rights aim primarily to protect individuals and groups from abusive action by states and non-state agents.[1] Recent developments throughout the world, including the phenomenon of failed states (such as Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo), economic deregulation, privatization, and trade liberalization across borders have led to the emergence of powerful non-state actors who have resources sometimes greater than those of many states. Two opposing views of globalization and its relationship to human rights have emerged:

1. That, human rights and globalization are mutually reinforcing and positive in improving human well-being, and
2. That, globalization poses new threats not adequately governed by existing international human rights regulations.

[1] Robertson, A.H., 1972. *Human Rights in the World*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 15-20.

There is a silent understanding that globalization should support and respect the protection of international human rights within the respective areas and regions within which these global institutions operate. They should endeavour to influence and make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses. The understanding here is that global institutions should integrate universally recognized human rights practices operations as well as engage in transparent dialogues about the contribution by specialized agencies to the promotion and protection of human rights. The globalization of human rights and of economic integration offers mutually beneficial synergies; on the one hand protection and enjoyment of human rights depend on economic resources, opening markets, reducing discrimination and enabling a welfare-increasing division of labour. On the other hand, economic, legal and political integration work towards protecting personal autonomy, legal and social security, peaceful change, individual savings, investments, production and mutually beneficial transactions across frontiers.

At another level, globalization poses new threats to international social order. The obvious one is the dismantling of soft socialism through the drastic limitation or cuts in the welfare system that has cushioned the vulnerable in society for centuries. Critics aver that globalization does not negate the needs of developing countries. According to Zedillo[2], globalization only serves the interests of countries in the developed world such as United States, Europe, Australia and Canada among others. Developing countries are normally left out of major decisions on globalization even in cases where they are directly involved. According to IMF[3], globalization serves to amplify the level of inequality between nations. It is not lost on us that developed countries influence the world economy through economic and social policies that are exported to developing countries. Multi-national Corporations have not made the situation any better in developing countries. According to Robert and Lajtha[4], multinational companies take advantage of the cheap labour that can be obtained from developing countries' citizens. These companies normally provide poor working conditions and do little to upgrade the knowledge of their workers. Consequently, the workers are not in a position to improve their social welfare. Other notable hazards arising from globalization include; rise in inequality; threat to the level of professional skill and expertise for developing countries as a result of free movement of expert and professional labour; increased dependence on developed countries by developing countries as a result of ability of developed countries to produce cheaper products by use of advanced technology, capital and economies of scale (Robert and Lajtha,[5] which undermines the market and present an unfair competition to companies producing similar goods in developing countries thus putting them out of business.

Technically the relationship between globalization and human rights can be analyzed from the perspective of globalization and the effects of liberalization on state institution.[6] Significantly, I wish to examine first whether laws that govern international institutions and activities sufficiently support human rights concerns, and secondly, the extent to which human rights take into account globalization and international activities. In respect to both

[2] Zedillo, E. (2007). Surviving the Doha Round. Impacts and Implications of Global Trade Reform on Poverty. Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 11

[3] International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2000. 'Globalization: Threat or Opportunity?' Link

[4] Robert, B., & Lajtha, C. 2002. 'A New Approach to Crisis Management.' Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, Vol. 10, No. 4, 186.

[5] Ibid., 183.

[6] McCorquodale R.& Richard Fairbrother, 1999. 'Globalization and Human Rights-Questions for Reflection and Discussion.' In *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 21, No. 3, 735-766.

inquiries, the fundamental question is whether a human rights system premised on state responsibility to respect and ensure human rights can be effective in a globalizing world from the perspective of indigenous and minority groups. Finally, I wish to interrogate the capacity or the role of state actors in the protection of indigenous and minority groups given the fluidity of terror gangs' ability to strike at both state infrastructure and civilian community.
My discussion will focus on the relationship between globalization and human rights, assuming that the international society has embraced human rights as a fundamental goal, and globalization as a generally positive phenomenon.[7] I then will examine several existing approaches for the promotion and protection of human rights in the era of globalization. Among these are those that:

1. emphasize *state responsibility* for the actions of non-state actors;
2. impose *international legal obligations* directly on non-state actors, to institutions, groups, and individuals; and,
3. involve *non-state actors directly* in the activities of international organizations to violate or promote human rights.

I conclude by arguing that responses to globalization are significantly changing the international human rights order, and the institutions responsible for protecting persons from violations of human rights committed by both state and non-state actors. Where these changes impact negatively on human rights, rules of globalization should be revised. Specifically, there is need to strengthen national security agencies to respond to human rights based approaches since this is the weak link in the enforcement of human rights in line with democratic governance. These include the various policing formations namely; Anti Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), Border Patrol Unit (BPU), General Service Unit (GSU), Administration Police (AP), National Police Service. Being state security agencies, these at times prioritize state security at the expense of individual human rights. To be sure that such strengthening does not lead to further human rights violations; the international community should make concerted multilateral efforts to enhance its ability to respond to human rights violations through diplomacy, sanctions and in extreme cases United Nations mandated military interventions. In the case of Boni people, non-state actors should generate credible evidence that captures human rights violations that contradict claims by the state based on security grounds of fighting Al Shabaab terror group. This makes international community active participants in promotion of human rights rather than leaving each state to decide who and how human rights are enjoyed.

**The Meanings of Globalization**

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among groups of people, companies, and governments of different nations. The driving factors include the desire to meet human needs, international trade and investment which are all aided by information technology.[8] As much as this process of globalization impacts the environment, culture, political systems, and the process of human development, it significantly affects human rights and the general well being of all around the world. Of course, in very general terms, globalization is not an entirely new phenomenon in the world. For centuries people and later corporations have been trading and engaging in different forms of human interaction across greater distances,

[7] Levitt, Theodore, 1999. 'The Globalization of Markets.' In Aliber Roberts & Reid W Chick eds. Readings in International Business: A Decision Approach, 3rd ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 249-250.
[8] Roland Robertson, 1992. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage Publications, 102.

investing in countries other than their own, transferred skills and technology, produced goods and services that were then exported to distant destinations.

**The Role of Technology in Globalization**

Technology is an important driver of globalization. Advances in information technology, in particular, have dramatically transformed socio-economic life, especially the access and use of mobile technology. This technology has opened up options available to the common man, previously only available to the few well to do.[9] The common man and woman in remote villages in rural areas can now communicate, access information and banking facilities allowing efficient money transfer. Technology has allowed access to credit facilities and markets which have provided a forum for social and economic actors, namely consumers, investors, and businesses. The actors now have new and ready instruments for identifying and pursuing economic opportunities, including faster and more informed analyses of economic trends around the world, easy transfers of assets, and collaboration with far-flung partners.

It has been observed before that globalization has both its upsides and downsides. By its nature globalization draws the world together in a mutually interdependent manner. It enhances trade and breaks political and cultural barriers. Looking at the benefits of and advances achieved through globalization, one would simply assert that attempts to ignore or stop it are an act in futility.[10] There is this general observation that despite the benefits associated with globalization, there are downsides of the same which often make globalization undesirable. Policies and institutions that reduce the probability of these downsides should be pursued in order to make globalization beneficial to a greater majority in the world[11], in particular the developing countries, the poor, minority and vulnerable.

Suffice to say that it is also not just a threat to developing when compared to developed nations, but the adverse effects of globalization can be felt within nationalities especially on the poor, weak, and minority marginalized. It is notable however that globalization is advancing at a fast rate and attempts to stop it would only result in remote consequences. What is interesting in the new look globalization is the increased cross-border trade, investment, and migration to a level not witnessed before.[12] Seemingly the current wave of globalization has been supported by policies that have opened up local and international economies. Our concern here is how this affects the livelihoods, networks, moralities, social organization, and environment both social and natural of the indigenous minority communities. This controversial nature of globalization is telling especially when we look at the Boni people. One argument is that globalization allows the poor to raise their standards of living which is good both at global and international level. At the global level, benefits accrue to individuals while at the international level, the poorer countries use the links enhanced by globalization as an opportunity to increase productivity, create wealth and raise the overall income levels as a way of addressing their development needs. Critics of globalization however hold that an unfettered international free market has benefited multinational corporations in the North at the expense of the locals in the South.[13] This means that

[9] Derek Hrynyshyn , 2002. 'Technology and Globalization Studies.' In *Journal of Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review*, Vol. 67, No. 1, (Spring), 83.
[10] Chan, Steve & James R Scarritt, 2002. *Coping with Globalization: Cross-National Patterns in Domestic Governance and Policy Performance*. London & New York: Frank Cass Publishers, 51.
[11] Bagwati, J. (2004). *In Defense of Globalization*. Oxford University Press, New York, 32.
[12] Aman Alfred C. Jr. 1994. 'Migration and Globalization.' In *Journal of Global Legal Studies* Vol. 1, No. 4, 1.
[13] See Prasad E. et al 2005. 'Effects of Financial Globalization on Developing Countries: Some Empirical Evidence.' In Tseng W., Cowen D. (eds) *India's and China's Recent Experience with Reform and Growth. Procyclicality of Financial Systems in Asia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 209.

globalization in fact increases the overall income gaps between the rich and the poor. This mirrors the differences in income gaps between the rich and the poor in developing countries.

Like much of human rights discourse, minority rights including cultural rights, religious rights, minority rights, indigenous rights, women's rights, disability rights and children's rights have been framed and discussed in the context of the nation state because this has been the best way to do so.[14] It is not that the state grants rights to individuals but because the state is the primary duty bearer, and therefore fair and equal treatment of different minorities and the implementation of their rights should be the primary task of sovereign states. Although international treaties continue to set common standards for the protection of minorities in the global context, these treaties do not have the force of law and hence are not legally binding since these are signed between states.

**Introducing Costal Kenya**

The coastal region of Kenya has a historical significance partly through her links with the Middle East by which Islam, the dominant religion in the region penetrated East Africa[15], and by being the gateway through which the Western world, and by extension civilization,[16] penetrated East Africa, and Kenya in particular. Coastal Kenya is home to diverse culture and with an inviting climate makes the region a tourist hub of East Africa and Kenya specifically.[17] As a consequence, conflict in this region portrays complexity in its causes, players and manifestation. Historical injustices, religion and the clamor for land rights stand out as the major causes of conflict in this region.[18] In particular, religious related conflict has metamorphosed and taken on modern dimensions where technology is used in explaining conflict phenomenon with a significant association of Islam to radicalization. This has led to terrorism, insurgency and related activism. The local population has time and again claimed discrimination from successive independent governments. Claims of marginalization of the Coastal region and her peoples stand out as a significant issue requiring attention from the central government as it remains a ticking time bomb. This applies to the religious profiling where every Muslim is perceived to be terrorist and thus sympathetic to Al Shabaab, the terrorist group based in Somalia.[19] Being Muslim invites questions on one's nationality status, and criminal status. Being Muslims, many coastal residents are treated differently and in suspicion. Majority of the Boni people are Muslims whose social life is secretive and have integrated very little of modern globalized values in their lifestyle. In fact, it is the negative effect of globalization that seems to be interfering with their lifestyle.

**Terrorism and Indigenous rights**

[14] Bas de Gaay Fortman, 2011. 'Minority Rights: A Major Misconception?' In *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 265-303; Thornberry Patrick, 1989. 'Self-Determination, Minorities, Human Rights: A Review of International Instruments.' In *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 867-889.
[15] Mwaruvie John, 2011. 'The Ten Miles Coastal strip: An Examination of the Intricate Nature of Land Question at Kenyan Coast. In *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 1, No. 20.
[16] See Horton, Mark. 1984. 'The Early Settlements of the Northern Swahili Coast.' Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, Cambridge; Horton, Mark. 1987. Early Muslim trading settlements on the East African coast: New evidence from Shanga. In *Antiquaries Journal*, 67: 290-322
[17] Reginald Coupland, 1965. East Africa and Its Invaders from the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Lawrence Hollingsworth,W. 1951. A Short History of East Coast of Africa. London: Macmillan.
[18] IPSOS, 2013. 'Kenya Coast Survey Development, Marginalization, Security and Participation.' Nairobi: IPSOS, 3
[19] Tom Wolf, 2000. 'Contemporary Politics', in Hoorweg, J., Foeken, D., and Obudho, R. A., eds., *Kenya Coast Handbook*. Munster/New Brunswick, Lit Verlag/Transafrica Publishers, 139-140.

The meaning of the term terrorism is controversial. One's terrorist is another person's liberator! For the purpose of this paper, terrorism will mean the politically motivated violence directed at individuals without any good reason to achieve some goal. The UN General Assembly Resolution 49/60 (adopted on December 9, 1994), titled "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism," contains a provision describing terrorism as 'criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them'.[20] It is argued that while some groups and individuals practice terrorism, terrorism for the sake of terror is not their end goal whether this goal is objectively good which in any case is a different matter. What is important for a terrorist is to use it as a tool to achieve a greater purpose. Al Shabaab is one such group that uses violence to advance its ideology, presumably religious. Religiously oriented and millenarian groups typically attempt to inflict as many casualties as possible. Because of the apocalyptic frame of reference they use destructive utopian ideologies to drive their message to the government and public. The more lives lost and the more casualties for them the better. Losses among their co-religionists are of little importance, because such casualties will reap the benefits of the afterlife.[21]

Since Terrorism is a global phenomenon, coming at the convergence of globalization and human rights, one cannot deny the fact that it has struck at the heart of humanity.[22] Terrorists do not discriminate on whom to attack, when and where. Even the civilized north has had its share of terror attacks in spite of their well-equipped security agencies with admirable intelligence systems. Terrorism does not know tribe or religion in its outcome. However, there is a tendency to associate Islam with terrorism because in every terrorist attack, witnesses normally tend to identify the attackers with Islamic features and the investigators look for Islamic trails for leads to culprits.

In Kenya, terrorism has changed people's way of life and has become the focus of security agencies for some time now. All security organization revolves around countering and stopping terrorist activities. Significantly, religious radicalization has increasingly been tied to terrorist activities in Kenya though the coastal region has been most affected. Affected areas along the coast include Lamu, Mombasa, Tana River, Kwale and Kilifi. This means that terrorism has modified the application of globalization in this coastal region, in the process bringing new challenges to the treatment of minority rights especially in terms of religion and culture minorities. Al Shabaab, a non-state actor has redefined people's lives - how people relate to others, to security agents and neighbors which is a completely new phenomenon.

Terrorist activities are complex, worrying and unpredictable. It is the evolution towards and threat of hitting at soft targets that is worrying more. That the Boni are in the crossfire is not in doubt. Coastal Kenya's proximity to Somalia and the thick hide out in Boni forest make the Al Shabaab terrorists operate freely and with confidence, and this is not common or found elsewhere in the country or other parts of the world. Besides the comfort in the forest for ease of operation by terrorists, other factors include; counterterrorism efforts, technology and media coverage, publicity and visibility. Counter terrorism activities target Muslim population which is dominant in the coastal counties and this makes recruitment easy because of the feeling of being targeted. The easier route training of these recruits is the forest.

[20] UN, 1994. 49/60 **'**Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism.' *General Assembly Resolution.*

[21] Israel Silberman *et al*, 2005. 'Religion and World Change: Violence and Terrorism versus Peace.' In *Journal of Social Issues*, Volume 61, Issue 4 December 2005, 761–784.

[22] Jacqueline Ann Carberry, 1999. 'Terrorism: A Global Phenomenon Mandating a Unified International Response.' In *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring), 685-719.

Technology makes the terrorist monitor movement of security agents making it difficult to arrest terrorists who escaped police dragnets at will. Finally, the media in publishing information on attacks give terrorist publicity which is makes Al Shabaab feel they are fulfilling their goal. It is difficult to discuss the link between terrorism and globalization without looking at reasons that drive the former (link). There are many reasons but basically terrorists attack for various reasons. Among these are to:

1. produce widespread fear
2. obtain worldwide, national, or local recognition for their cause by attracting the attention of the media
3. harass, weaken, or embarrass government security forces so that the government overreacts and appears repressive
4. steal or extort money and equipment, especially weapons and ammunition vital to the operation of their group. This, it has achieved by targeting Police stations.
5. destroy facilities or disrupt lines of communication in order to create doubt that the government can provide for and protect its citizens
6. discourage foreign investments, tourism, or assistance programs that can affect the region's economy
7. influence government decisions, legislation, or other critical decisions
8. free prisoners
9. satisfy vengeance especially when one of their own has been arrested
10. turn the tide in a guerrilla war by forcing government security forces to concentrate their efforts in the region. This has allowed Al Shabaab to establish itself within Boni forest among the local population. This is where the Boni rights have been violated both by the terror group and the government.

**The Boni Forest**

Boni forest is an indigenous open canopy coastal mosaic forest which straddles the three Counties of Tana River, Lamu and Garissa in coastal Kenya, stretching all the way to the Eastern part of Lamu District and the Western section of *Badaade* district in Somalia (Link). The little known Boni forest coastal Kenya has an exceptional abundance of biodiversity consisting of a most varied ecosystem that provides refuge for rare and endangered animals and plants. Among these are Hippopotamus, Aardwolf, buffalo, Bush pig, Bush buck, Caracal, Cheetah, Generuk, Grant's gazelle, Honey badger, Black-backed jackal, Kirk's dik dik, Leopard, Lesser kudu, Lion, Oribi, Porcupine, Red duiker, Spotted hyena, squirrels, Topi, Vervet monkeys, Yellow baboon, elephants, Warthog, Waterbuck, Wild dog and zebra among others.[23] This notwithstanding, the area has a problem with security, poor infrastructure and it is largely remote which have contributed to the forest receiving very little attention.

Vital ecosystems in the area are not properly conserved and managed. Instead they are seriously degraded at a high economical and ecological cost. Due to increased human population and settlement, there are conflicts arising from human/wildlife contact, agricultural activities and forest destruction. In the newly settled areas, parcels of land are cleared causing localized fuel wood shortages as well as soil exposure and erosion. Export of timber from indigenous tree species for the construction and furniture industries continues to

[23] Githiru, M. et al., 2007. 'Density, Distribution and Habitat use by Large Mammals in Boni National Reserve and the Neighboring Northern Buffer Zone, NE Kenya.' Nairobi: National Museums of Kenya; Antipa, R. S. *et al,* 2007(a). 'Assessment of the Potential of Eco/Cultural Tourism as Viable Enterprises in Southern Garissa, Ijara and Lamu Districts: A Community Conservation and Enterprise Support Initiative.' Nairobi: National Environmental Management Authority of Kenya (NEMA)

exert pressure on the forest resource. There exists a special tree in the Boni forest that is the primary raw material for the woodcarving industry which is a vital element of the coastal tourism sector. Another threat to this forest is bush fires started by honey gatherers and livestock owners for pest control and pasture improvement. Bush fires rampant during the dry season often spread across large areas indiscriminately burning forest biodiversity, thereby affecting the regeneration of some vegetation species. This often leads to degradation of the habitat and expansion of grassland at the expense of the woody plants. Other threats include influx of cattle in the forest, deforestation and degradation of forest, human wildlife conflict, lack of a management plan and lack of legal protection (Link).

**Boni: An Endangered People**

Living in and adjacent to the Boni forest is the Boni community. These are a remnant hunter-gatherer group that inhabit parts of the Kenyan coast. In the last 30 years, the Aweer, a section of the Boni people who inhabit Boni forest in Lamu have faced very difficult times. In 1967, their homeland became a battle field in the war between Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya today, they are a vulnerable group, struggling to survive, in search of a new identity. Once hunter-gatherers, the Boni now depend more on subsistence cultivation, livestock and harvesting wild plants and honey. Agriculture is however a new way of life to the community that has been cut off from their traditional source of livelihood. Since both their traditional and new livelihood options are natural resource based, it is important that some human rights interventions be made that lead to sustainably manage the livelihoods of this community.

The Boni numbering about 7500 (2009 Census) people are a Cushitic ethnic community found in Kenya. Unlike other Cushitic groups who are pastoralists, their life revolves around hunter-gathering hence these know no settled life.[24] They hunt in the wild, seek wild fruits and collect honey, all within their habitat, the forest. The Boni and their lifestyle do not value education and hence are not quite integrated in the modern life of urbanism and its attendance dynamics. This has meant that they live in abject poverty unable to enjoy rights like other Kenya citizens and actually seem unaware that these rights exist. Their primary language is Aweer while many if not majority practice Islam. The Boni are divided into ethnic sub-groups comprising Watta Balo, Aweer, Dajhalo, Juano and Sanye who inhabit Lamu, and the Watta Gedde and Walungulo who inhabit Kilifi, Kwale, and Taita Taveta. In addition there are the Watta Borana who inhabit Eastern and North Eastern Kenya, and the Watta Omara and Watta Manyore who inhabit Tana River County. Their contact with globalization was when they harvested honey and medicinal herbs to sell by the road side. Today, they have been encouraged to adopt farming as their main livelihood. However, they also continue to engage in many of their traditional hunter-gatherer practices, utilizing the nearby forests for the collection of wild honey, plants for traditional medicine and building materials, and bush meat to supplement their diets. With laws banning the hunting of all wildlife in Kenya, the Boni traditional way of life is in danger.

**The History**

The Shifta war (bandit war) fought in northern Kenya, the then Northern Frontier District.[25] This war was based on a secessionist ideology in which the Kenyan Somali people of the NFD united behind a group called the Northern Province Progressive People's Party (NPPPP). The ragtag militia eventually grew into a full revolution, aimed at uniting and joining the greater Somalia Nation with its headquarters in Mogadishu. The Somali people

[24] Samwel Andanje, et al. 2010. 'Sengi (Elephant-Shrew) Observations from Northern Coastal Kenya.' In Journal of East African Natural History Vol. 99, No.1, 1–8.

[25] Mũturi wa Njeri, 2015, Kenya That was Never Kenyan: The Shifta War & The North Eastern Kenya,, here is the link for the article.

claimed that they had been marginalized by the colonial government, especially after World War II and their continued stay in Kenya would worsen their case hence the need for secession. The NPPPP's military wing was known as the Northern Frontier District Liberation Army (NFDLA).[26] Until 1965, their armory mostly featured old European arms such as rifles and grenade launchers. With Somalia's support, the strategy changed to employing mine warfare. The shift allowed the NFDLA to extend beyond Wajir, Mandera and Garissa into Lamu. The Boni forest in Lamu provided a perfect cover for the bandits as no armored personnel carrier (APC) could use the swampy terrain. This was when the Boni people got entangled in a war they knew nothing about and which marked the beginning of their problems. Their social and economic life was affected as they were accused of harboring, collaborating and assisting with the Shifta fighters. Subsequently they were evacuated from the forest and placed in fenced militarized camps (Ibid).[27] The NPPPP received military and financial assistance from the Somali government, who were in turn trained and funded by the Soviet Union (Ibid). Winning the war thus became paramount for Kenya as a capitalist state and a friend of Western powers. Eventaully the war ended officially through a treaty signed between Kenya and Somalia in Arusha in 1967.

**The Collapse of Somalia**

In 1991, the Somali government effectively collapsed, leaving social units with the mandate of finding ways to govern themselves.[28] A system of Islamic Courts Union (ICU) filled the judicial gap and grew to other roles such as policing, healthcare and education. In the first decade, most of them worked alone with no system of collaboration. This changed in 1999 when they decided to form an armed militia that immediately started fighting for control of Mogadishu. The ICU was funded by the Eritrean government and Ethiopian insurgency groups, making it an enemy of Ethiopia. In the next half a decade, the ICU grew in power and control, especially in areas around Mogadishu. Its military wing decimated warlords who had previously controlled the country. It was a time of peace and prosperity in Somalia, but this was short-lived. The Mogadishu airport and the seaport were reopened and the economy began to recover. But having a Sharia-based largely informal government in Eastern Africa made Kenya and Ethiopia uncomfortable.

At the end of 2006, Ethiopia-funded transitional government forces began attacking the ICU. By the end of 2007, the ICU was no more. It's military wing, Al Shabaab, (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin) survived the death of the ICU.[29] It instead, moved in fast to fill the gap transforming itself into a formidable group in Somalia controlling a significant part of inhabited Somalia, and seeking to transform itself into a national power. Uganda intervened, as did Kenya, uprooting Shabaab from all its lifelines. The group fled to the background and became an insurgency. It would export terror once Kenya and Uganda established themselves as invading armies in Somalia. This is how Boni forest was caught in the middle of two, Kenya's security agents, and Al Shabaab fighters.

**Kenya's Attempt to tame Al Shabaab**

In an attempt to shield her borders from attacks, Kenya turned a former Al Shaabab leader, Ras Kamboni warlord Sheikh Ahmed Madobe into an ally. The aim was to form an autonomous Jubaland on the Somalia side of the border to act as a buffer between Somalia and Kenya so that Al Shabaab are contained in Somalia and that the closest they could attack Kenya, was through Jubaland, which was to be secured by Sheikh Ahmed Madobe. In return,

[26] *Ibid*.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Reuter, 2007, Chronology of Somalia's collapse, conflict.
[29] Mũturi wa Njeri.

a small force of Somalis would be trained by Kenyan forces to help the transitional government bolster its position. Kenya went ahead to recruit and train 4, 000 Kenyans of Somali origin originally sent to Jubaland before being transferred to Somalia. Amid this, there was heavy clan infighting and these fighters disappeared with their weapons and training.[30]

Many of them ended up as Jeysh Ayman fighters formed by the Al Shabaab elite group to engage Kenyan security forces within the country after Kenya deployed its soldiers inside Somalia. Jaysh Ayman, Saleh Nahbahn and Abu Zubeyr brigades were three Al Shabaab elite groups formed to carry out attacks against KDF and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). But Jaysh Ayman militants largely comprised of Kenyans and other foreign jihadists and were deployed to Boni Forest to target military and Kenyan police on the Hindi–Kiunga road, a key operation route for Kenya military operations inside Somalia. They make daring raids on Kenyan security forces and run back to Somalia through the porous border during dry seasons.[31] These are said to be in the Boni forest hideout, the home of the Boni people. It is claimed that the groups are mainly made up of Kenyans from the coastal counties of Mombasa, Lamu, Kilifi and Kwale who joined Al Shabaab and were deployed to wage war on their own motherland, as most of them knew the targeted region well. The group is said to have set up training bases between Boni, Gorji and and Belasange on the border with Somalia.[32] The thick expansive forest in Lamu, previously frequented by researchers and conservationists for research purposes due to its rich ecosystem, is now a no-go zone. Local community members who used to depend on it for their livelihood are also bearing the brunt since Al-Shabaab militants made the forest their home. The government enhanced security operations in the forest and its environs to flush out the terrorists. In the recent past, the region has remained volatile, with frequent attacks reported. Within the forest, the terrorists hunt for food, and use water from several rivers as they engage soldiers and police in guerrilla warfare, killing and injuring them through ambushes, land mines and home-made bombs along key routes. The Boni forest, because it extends right on the Somali border, is a notorious sanctuary for the extremists, who use it as a launching pad for incursions into Lamu and neighboring counties such as Garissa and Tana River. Boni forest is today surrounded by three KDF camps; between Milimani and Basuba, on a border strip separating Kiunga and Ijara; and a major military camp in Bargoni.

**A Forgotten People have no rights?**

Often described as the ‘forgotten people’ of Kenya the Boni, historically semi-nomadic forest dwellers, whose livelihood has depended on the wood, meat, honey, herbal medicines and fertile soil of the forest for hundreds of years, today are a marginalized community and the destruction of large portions of their forest home has left the community struggling to come to terms with a new identity; trying to forge new livelihoods in a very different world. Populations of the Boni community have dwindled, and many are faced with extreme poverty and no access to medical care or education. This community is unaware that they have rights that should be enjoyed under the constitution. Migration being one of the features of globalization has not affected the Boni. They are closely networked and attached to their culture and habitat.

Traditionally, minority rights have been framed and discussed in the context of nation states. The fair and equal treatment of different minorities and the implementation of minority rights has been viewed primarily as the task of the sovereign states. Although there are international

[30] *Ibid*.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*

treaties, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[33] that aim to set common standards for the protection of minorities in the global context, these treaties are not legally binding, being signed by states, who are seen to bear the primary responsibility for implementing cultural justice within their territory. Many other minority issues, including the treatment of religious and ethnic minorities, immigrants, women; although addressed, at least in principle, by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[34], have largely been left to the discretion of the nation states, many vulnerable minorities are still being treated as second class citizens by their governments. The Boni are one example.

Globalization has brought new challenges to the treatment of minority rights. Capitalism is about profit. The Boni are conservative in their lifestyle allowing very little to be known about their lifestyle in the harsh and marshy environment they live in.[35] The outside world however gets into the forest for wood harvesting, grazing, and farming but significantly because of the heavy and impenetrable nature of the forest and swampy terrain, bandits find it a comfortable hide out where access for security agents is difficult. This is how Al Shabaab terror group finds it comfort to use the forest as a launching pad for attacks in coastal Kenya. Thus, the Boni community is violated both by the state and non-state actors.

Whereas it is clear that nation states still have a strong role to play in implementing the principles of justice including cultural justice within their territory, it is equally clear that this role needs to be reconfigured and reformulated in order to fit the changing circumstances and challenges of the globalized world.[36] The agents of the global politics today are not only nation states, but a variety of other actors inter and transnational institutions, multinational corporations, non-governmental agencies all operate, and exercise power, in the global arena. As there is no global state with powerful institutions, the variety of actors navigates within a variety of institutional frameworks including international, transnational, federal, national and local. The rules of the global game, although partially regulated, are also constantly negotiated, with the rich, powerful states and multinational corporations often setting the terms of the game at the expense of the weak, poor and vulnerable.

From the perspective of the status and protection of minorities, including cultural and religious minorities, the multi-layered and multifaceted world of today creates various theoretical as well as practical challenges. Who are the minorities of the global world, and how do they differ from our traditional understandings of minorities in the national contexts? What claims do minorities have on a global scale, and who are to be the primary agents of justice responsible for the protection and implementation of minority rights? Whose ideals are to prevail when the local or national practices collide with the commonly agreed rules, such as the universal human rights standards? Who is to guard those most vulnerable minorities within minorities in a world where self-interest and disparities of power dictate many of the interactions both globally and locally? Overall, Boni forest is a critical biodiversity area. The Boni community lives a life that hangs on a cliff and concerted effort involving the human rights defenders, government and the international community is required to mitigate the threats to the forest and its inhabitants. Importantly, traditional and modern livelihood options for the community need to be sustainably managed in order to maintain the integrity of the resource.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

[33] UN, 2007. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
[34] UN, 1948. Universal Declaration of Human Rights
[35] Michael E. Goodhart, 2003. Origins and Universality in the Human Rights Debates: Cultural Essentialism and the Challenge of Globalization. In *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4, (November): 935-964.
[36] Shaw, M. N. 2008. *International Law,* 6th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The Boni community being a minority group is threatened with extinction. The government has a duty to attend to them. Where it is very clear that the government in protecting its sovereignty and the rights of the people, it is at the same time violating the rights of a minority, then appeal to international human rights law becomes necessary. It is the duty of the state to protect all her citizens. This duty is not overridden by the right to security. It is the duty of the government to find civil ways of protecting the rights of all the citizens while guaranteeing security to all. Clearly it is not possible to have the government engage in human rights violations by ignoring its citizens on account of their being minority and different. It is the government's duty to take deliberate steps and open up the Boni forest, educate the people on the benefits of enjoying their human rights by getting mainstreamed in the wider Kenyan state Education being a basic and mandatory requirement for all children. By failing to afford these children educational opportunities, are we not killing the future of these minority groups. This needs to be addressed. Equally, to redress the many violations, the government should consider the following:

a) resettling these communities permanently on cultivable land in irrigable areas where they can farm peacefully and equip them with relevant skills in farm management in order to empower them economically to afford a stable and predictable life,
b) engaging the National Youth Service in constructing Community Health Centers and public schools.
c) engaging the NYS and military to open up the areas by constructing roads and bridges to open the areas for commercial activities,
d) identifying and sponsoring selected students to secondary schools, polytechnics, university and other tertiary institutions in the spirit of affirmative action,
e) providing employment at least to those who have basic education for economic empowerment, engaging the Provide youth development funds and skills to manage projects and
f) providing development loans for women and the youth for economic empowerment.

# THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN ADDRESSING GENDER GAP

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## Introduction

This article concerns itself with the gender gap which it regards as unfortunate. The gap can be demonstrated by distinguishing between sex and gender. Sex is natural and for a purpose. "Male and female he created them"[1] (Gen: 1:27) but gender is by nurture. That is, while sex is essential (natural or ordained) gender is by accident or man-made. The undesirable ensuing gap pertains to gender than sex. While sex is always necessary and acceptable, gender is sometimes unnecessary and unacceptable, because while gender roles may be acceptable, gender discrimination is not. The knowledge gap that arises may be identifiable in many people taking gender for granted and behaving accordingly including discrimination as if it were a natural phenomenon. Gender is sheer bias and as such needs to be addressed. This is the gist of this article. One of the surest ways of addressing the abhorred gap is through philosophy.

Philosophy accepts and rejects things, not on bias but rational grounds. Human beings whether male or female are characterized by rationality. What distinguishes a being from other beings is his/her rationality.[2] It is this rationality that distinguishes humans from brutes. There is no male and female rationality. There is human rationality. Through philosophy one can understand the rationale behind male and female which make the family the foundation of society. Without male and female there is no family. Without family there is no society. Without society there is no humanity.

The unfortunate gender gap leads to the next concern of this article, namely the exclusion of female from participation in activities such as philosophy. In this regard, Elizabeth Anderson presents the puzzle: "why is gender bias greater in philosophy than in other fields?"[3] While by nature no one can exclude male or female from philosophy, by nurture academic philosophy or the philosophy acquired through school education has been reduced to a male preserve. Thus according to Anderson, "the proportion of women across academic standing revealed that the proportion of females reliably decreases as one moves through each level in the academy, from introductory courses through the faculty population."[4] This work, therefore, is an attempt to correct this anomaly.

Philosophy is a human tool for analyzing and resolving problems. One of such problems is the gender gap that has become a real issue that hinders progress in all ways. And this disturbs. The question we need to answer is; what is it in philosophy that has revealed a broad trend toward improvement in women's representation and standing in academia? This article, therefore, argues for not only rationality in approaching the gender gap but also and mainly empowering the unfairly excluded females to participate in this debate rationally. The goal is to open academic doors wide to female gender.

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[1] The African Bible, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa 2012), p. 26.
[2] Joseph Kahiga Kiruki, *Women's Liberation: A Paradigm Shift for Development* (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications-CUEA Press, 2010), p. 32.
[3] https://www.partiallyexaminedlife.com/2012/08/06/philosophy-and-the-gender-gap/
[4] *Ibid.,*

## The irony of gender gap in Philosophy

While philosophy is blind to human differences, the same differences are ironically applied to philosophy. Thus, the gender gap in philosophy focuses on the absence of women in opportunities related to academic philosophy. This begins with the exclusion of the female from academic studies. Without such an opportunity females cannot participate in subsequent activities such as teaching. Thus, the gender representation in philosophy compared to other studies is wanting. It is empirically true that women philosophers in Africa are getting fewer and fewer. The drop in proportion of the males and females in philosophy is seen during enrolment and registration for major and minor courses. This is an area of concern. Yet women are potentially philosophers like men if and only if females are led to this actuality with interest and empowerment.

This exclusion has led feminist philosophers to challenge the traditional belief that there are no women philosophers and that if there are any, they are unimportant. This belief is exemplified by the long subjugation of women and their lack of educational opportunities in many parts of the world. It is observed that "respectable" women, wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of classical Greece, were not allowed to participate in the educational, cultural, or political life of their communities."[5] It is said "from the cradle to the grave they were kept in oriental seclusion, enjoying virtually no rights or protection under the law save as the property of man."[6] Even though Plato describes or seeks equality in both men and women as having equal status and equal educational opportunities, women during his time had to dress as men in order to attend lecturers.

It is revealed that "Axiothea of Philesia student of Plato was reputedly forced to dress as a man in order to attend his lectures."[7] It is also confirmed that "there were no peripatetic women philosophers, no female followers of Aristotle, albeit a great metaphysician and logician denigrated woman the most."[8] According to him a female by nature was inferior to a male. Female nature was allegedly rationally defective and undeveloped. Aristotle's view on women influenced Western thinkers who quoted him as an authority until the end of the middle ages. This influence has been an important topic in women's history. Aristotle saw women as subject to men, but higher than slaves. In chapter twelve of his politics he writes "the slave is wholly lacking the deliberative element; the female has it but it lacks authority; the child has it but it is not complete" (1260aII).

## Evidence of bias and wrong views of women

The above mentioned views on women are wrong and biased because women are not entirely absent from the history of philosophy. Despite the male biases towards females, the participation and influence of female gender in philosophical field from time immemorial to contemporary society has contributed to the international arena of philosophy with new insights and new approaches. This contribution has been recognized by thinkers who support women in the field of philosophy. The goal of this support is the advancement of women and minorities in philosophy via professional development. People in support of women in philosophy is a critical

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[5]Ethel M. Kersey, Calvin O. Schrag, consulting editor, *Women Philosophers, A Bio-Critical Source Book*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 3.
[6]*Ibid.*, 3.
[7]*Ibid.*, 49.
[8]*Ibid.*, 4.

space reserved for women to develop their philosophical potential outside the standard of academic environment. It is distinct and clear that patriarchy has been taken as absolute as if it is Kant's *thing in itself* [9] Kahiga asserts that "this is a fallacy that needs to be challenged and set right so as to liberate women from the yoke of physiological and psychological slavery"[10]

> Though it might sometimes seem like only men ever had anything to say about philosophy (the world has a history of patriarchy to blame for that), a few brave, brilliant, inspiring women have made sure some sort of balance was maintained. From Ancient Greece to post-war America (and passing through Nazi Germany).[11]

In ancient period of philosophy, one of the female philosophers by name Diotima of Mantinea, whose words and ideas were preserved in *Plato's Symposium* which expresses the nature of love, believed that people express love through reproduction and this can be both literally and metaphorically. Implying that we can have children and show ideas that are immortal respectively. Another notable female philosopher was called Hypatia of Alexandria who was a great mathematician and astronomer born circa 4$^{th}$ Century AD (probably between 350-370 AD) in Egypt. It is asserted that her father Theon of Alexandria, a noted mathematician had great influence on her towards the classical field of study. Hypatia is said to have studied in Athens in her younger days. She even became head of the Neoplatonist school (espousing rationalist thinking) at Alexandria in around 400 AD.

> Was not Hypatia the greatest philosopher of Alexandria, and a true martyr to the old values of learning? She was torn to pieces by a mob of incensed Christians not because she was a woman, but because her learning was so profound, her skills at dialectic so extensive that she reduced all who queried her to embarrassed silence. They could not argue with her so they murdered her.[12]

Hypatia is said to have contributed a lot in ancient mathematics which was primarily divided into four branches: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music and that Hypatia excelled in the first three. It is asserted that she even invented astrolabe, a device used in studying astronomy.[13] She also wrote and edited a few mathematical texts that survive till the present day. Her contribution to the field of philosophy is very imperative in the sense that she fluently delivered discourses on the works of Plato, Aristotle and other renowned philosophers. She is best remembered by one of her famous quotes "Reserve your right to think, for even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all"[14]

The medieval period of philosophy is characterized by Heloise d'Argenteuil (1090-1164); it is asserted that she even became a nun. On intellectual matters she is believed to have been a radical feminist philosopher who totally rejected traditional feminity, if she lived today her assertions would make her stand to greater heights. She also contributed to the ethical thoughts of Peter Abelard who in the Chambers of Biographical Dictionary describes him as "the keenest thinker and boldest theologian of the 12$^{th}$ Century"[15]

Edith Stein, (1891-1942) a modern renowned German Jewish female philosopher and a convert to Catholicism who later became a discalced Carmelite, also known as St. Benedicta Teresa of

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[9] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1991), p. 3
[10] Kahiga, p. 16.
[11] https://theculturetrip.com/europe/italy/articles/10-female-philosophers-who-will-change-your-life/
[12] https://www.realmofhistory.com/2016/04/14/hypatia-last-great-philosopher-alexandria/
[13] *Ibid.*,
[14] *Ibid.*,
[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Abelard

the Cross, OCD. Benedicta is famously known for her work *On the Problem of Empathy*, her work is classified in the phenomenological movement. It is observed that her contribution to the phenomenological tradition is under appreciated and is derailed by both sexism and anti-Semitism. The university position at Gottingen basically said that she would be qualified if university positions were to be for women-hence she did not even get a job.[16]

Simon de Beauvoir (1908-1986) who most philosophers agree that her contribution to philosophy is her revolutionary *magnum opus*, *The Second Sex* published in two volumes in 1949, it was so controversial that the Vatican put it on the index of prohibited books. The book explicitly lays out the theory of feminist existentialism. Her argument was that a person is not born a woman but simply becomes one by being compared to men. She believed that men crafted women into "the other" as a way of putting themselves higher in a created hierarchy; according to her women should not have to act in ways that the society expects. She argues that women have been held back throughout history by the perception that they are "deviation" from the male norm. Beauvoir referred to the work of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas who defined women in terms of a negation of what the male affirms. It was Aristotle who said "The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities…while St. Thomas called woman an "imperfect man" and "incidental".[17] This is an assumption that Beauvoir absolutely asserts that the idea that woman has been held in relationship of long-standing oppression to man through her relegation on being man's "Other" must be discarded if and only if feminism is to succeed. (Other female philosophers of this time and just to mention a few are: Elizabeth Anscombe (*1919-2001*), Ayn Rand (*1905-1982*) and Dame Mary Warnock (*1924-* ).

Philosophy has been practiced by both men and women. So, the involvement of female gender in the field of philosophy has been deteriorating from time to time due to oblivion and negative attitudes towards the female gender by their male counterparts. In this regard then, it is time that we process and challenge our own thinking, sense of weakness and inability to forge ahead.

**Womwn Liberation**

It is a fact that there can be no liberation if there has been no enslavement of any type and kind and recognition of the existence of such enslavement is the first step towards liberation.[18] A paradigm shift is necessary so that phenomenal culture is not taken as absolute *thing in itself*[19] but rather as opinion among many other opinions.[20] The riven of gender in participating in philosophical matters especially by women (not only in Africa, but also in many parts of the world) is because of the above history and enslaving culture that has been dominant from time immemorial, hence, discouraging and barring the feminine gender in the involvement of philosophical issues in the African development process. In order to involve and empower women in the field of Philosophy in Africa and on matters related to development, and to liberate

[16] As one example of this tendency, J.N. Mohanty's (2008, 2011) otherwise masterful intellectual biographies of Husserl do not list her in the indexes, and she is almost completely unmentioned in the main texts, despite the importance she played in Husserl's intellectual life during the mid-to-late 1910s. (By comparison, Ludwig Landgrebe is listed in the index of Mohanty's 2011 book.) Her work on the *Problem of Empathy* is not even mentioned in the sections of the book that address the philosophical views about empathy considered by Husserl after she had successfully defended her thesis.

[17] Peggy R. Sanday and Ruth Gallagher Goodenough eds, *Beyond the Second Sex: New Directions in the Anthropology of Gender*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, ), p. 3.

[18] Kahiga, p. 24.

[19] Kant, p. 217.

[20] Kahiga, p. 24.

them from being categorized as oblivion philosophers, hence freeing them from the slavery of the so called irrationality, myths, obsolete habits and attitudes, women in Africa need 'process' and empowerment. Indeed a call to paradigm shift for development!

In view of the above, there is a need for philosophies about process in the human mind and attitude! Process philosophy is not a new terminology *per se*. The term process can be traced back to the classic philosophy, whereby the term was used to mean change. Aristotle used the term to develop hylemorphism, implying that change is a process involving matter and form. According to him, form is individuated through matter. Change, therefore, is a concept that explains matter, accident, substance etc. According to Aristotle, discussing change in the concept of time requires space. Change involves motion. Change is motion and motion requires space. It is also understood that change helps us explain causality and causes only become intelligible within the concept of change.

Before Aristotle, Heraclitus, had discussed the problem of change. His main idea was that "all things are in flux" and he expressed this concept of constant change by saying that "you cannot step twice in the same river."[21] He asserted that everything is in constant motion, implying that change takes place but we have no capacity to feel or see it. Therefore, being has to be in constant change.[22] So, change is real. Even though Heraclitus has been taken for granted or termed primitive, his contribution to metaphysics and other fields is relevant. It is this relevance of change that needs to be applied to human attitudes. The long overdue wrong attitude to women needs immediate and urgent change. Any dogmatic attitude be discarded.

**Challenges Facing Women Liberation**

The truth is that we live in a world which is organized around the idea that women and men have different bodies, different capabilities and different deeds and desires based on rules about masculinity and femininity and is determined only by history not biology.[23] Therefore, it is a call to transcend these simplistic debates about whether gender is more conditioned by nature or by culture and move on to a philosophical approach. Taking in consideration that in gender nature and nurture are two distinct concepts; the former is all that male and female brings with himself or herself into the world, while the latter is every influence from without that affects male or female person after birth.[24] Nurture promotes human growth and development.[25]

The popular conception of masculinity and femininity has affected both women's and men's self-conception and behaviour toward members of each sex. Examination has shown too how gender affects people's lives from childhood onward, focusing on how women and men relate to each other. Gender concern has been a long standing nature-culture debate, from the psychology of gender it is fixed as a result of inherent, evolved sex differences. Yet others view gender as a wholly arbitrary cultural construction.[26]

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[21] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre, A History of Philosophy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company,1966), p. 13.
[22] William S. Sahakian, *History of Philosophy: From the Earliest times to the Present*, (Harper and Row Publishers)
[23] Mary Holmes, *What is Gender? Sociological Approaches*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2007), p. 1.
[24] Richard A. Lippa, *Gender, Nature and Nurture*, (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. 2002), p. xv.
[25] Kahiga, p. 61.
[26] Laurie A. Rudman and Peter Glick, *The Social Psychology of Gender: How Power and Intimacy Shape Gender Relations*, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2008), pp. 3-4.

Beliefs are indispensable to us and play essential roles on our daily lives. It is asserted that some beliefs we acquire through personal experience, some are adopted during our studies and reflection, while some we appropriate uncritically from others who hold them dearly. During the acquisition of such beliefs we realize that some are well founded while others are not, yet all these act as guide to our behaviour and even to great degree, our reasoning as well.[27]

The belief that there exists male rationality which is deemed superior to female rationality has existed from time immemorial, as had been explained before;

> The association between "male" and "rationality" and "female" and "non-rationality" have of course been a very long history. The idea that the rational is somehow specially associated with masculinity goes back to the Greek founding fathers of rationality as we know it…[28]

It is observed that Aristotle thought that a woman was "as it were an impotent male" and that it was through a certain incapacity that the female is female. Aristotle asserts this intrinsic female incapacity was a lack in the "principle of the soul" hence he associates it with an incapacity in respect to rationality. His claim here is that, it is not that women do not have rationality; they have it in an inferior way and this is what distinguishes them from animals. Yet women are not equal to men, they are somehow lesser men, lesser in respect of the all-important thing: rationality.[29]

In regard to the above issues, the misunderstanding of what gender is and whether there is male and female rationality distinctively have remained great challenges to the human person, especially to women who have become victims of circumstances. Grace Bibb, Ellen Mitchell and the Concord School of Philosophy, in their work entitled "*Women and the Concord School*" states that:

> As the idealist movement grew and gained momentum in the later years, women began to gain access to higher education, but not at the elite institutions. Graduate degrees, teaching fellowships and funding for study abroad at the nation's best schools were commonly reserved for men. Therefore, no matter how well a woman mastered philosophic arguments and discourses, she did not have the academic pedigree necessary to become a professional philosopher. Instead, she was routinely closed out of academic philosophical circles as the discipline became professional…[30]

Anna Brackett in her work asserts that "as previously noted, women were not formally considered as members of St. Louis Philosophical Society, even though many attended meetings regularly, and women's presence at society meeting was not always recorded with accuracy"[31] There have been plausible reason for the exclusion of women from the field of philosophy saying that women focus their work solely on education, arguing that education and social sciences have become disciplines distinct from philosophy in the 1800s. Nevertheless, women idealist and their ideas were set aside by students of philosophy.[32]

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[27] Raymond S. Nickerson, *Aspects of Rationality: Reflection on What It Means to Be Rational and Whether We Are,* (New York: Psychology Press, 2008), Chapter 4.
[28] Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall, *eds, Women, Knowledge and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 150.
[29] *Ibid.,*
[30] Dorothy G. Rogers, *America's First Women Philosophers: Transplanting Hegel, 1860-1925,* (New York: Antony Rowe Ltd. Chipperhan, Witt's, 2005), p. 97.
[31] *Ibid.,* 80.
[32] *Ibid.,* 1.

Throughout human history, women have always been excluded from "academic knowledge". Philosophy today and especially in Africa is one of the most gender discriminative academic field in the humanities. The fact is that philosophy has long been male dominated, since in most cultures there has been no progressive or mobility for women to be educated. In case there was, women have been re-directed to other fields than philosophy. It is also observed that a woman's thoughts are often regarded unfairly.[33] The question that is disturbing and needs an urgent response is; "is it true that women direct their energies in nurturing children while men who are detached from the process of giving birth, direct their excess energy towards philosophical contemplation or creating artwork?[34]

The supposed disconnect between women and philosophy is wanting especially in Africa. One wonders why there are fewer women than men in the field of philosophy while women are considered to have an extra nurturing urge in them. Thus women have a lot of energy which ought to be harnessed for integral development and renaissance instead of wasting it on maintaining oppressive patriarchal structures.[35] Martha Nussbaum in quoting Epicurus asserts that;

> Empty is that philosopher's argument by which no human suffering is therapeutically treated. For just as there is no use in a medical art that does not cast out the sickness of the bodies, so too there is no use in philosophy, unless it casts out the suffering of the soul.[36]

Therefore, according to Nussbaum then, the image of philosophy as helping us sort things out and live our lives might entice women to become closer to half of all philosophers instead of a third.[37] Therefore, women need to move towards a praxis! Kahiga therefore retorts;

> But who will speak for women and who will listen and act on their behalf? The voice of a woman in society needs to be heard and her anguish, heeded. Women need to form a forum that will have their voices heard. They must not always speak in the silence of suffering but also in the loud cry of pain inflicted upon them of patriarchy. The first step towards the elimination of gender discrimination will be achieved through concerted efforts and action of groups of women themselves.[38]

Women in order to be agents of positive transformation in the world, every woman should be critical of her condition, lest she participates in her own subjugation by cooperation.[39]

## Operational Liberating Efforts

These are strategies that can help restore identity of the female gender, embrace the human rationality and wholly participate in philosophic issues. It is asserted that the powers of nurturing and mentoring are vital in a woman's life and are critically assessed in view of our dynamic society.[40] Kahiga further asserts that nurturing promotes human growth and development.[41]

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[33] https://www.quora.com/Why-are-there-fewer-women-philosophers-and-poets-compared-to-men
[34] *Ibid.,*
[35] Kahiga, p. 15.
[36] Martha C. Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 13.
[37] *The Philosopher Magazine Blog*, July 18th 2008, Jean Kazez
[38] Kahiga, p. 62.
[39] *Ibid.*, 63.
[40] *Ibid.*, 57.
[41] *Ibid.*, 61.

It is time now that women re-write and actualize a history for women by women, through engaging in progressive education and philosophies that will bring about mental liberation. Women need to take bold self-driven gradual destruction of structures that support or perpetuate enslavement and this can be achieved through education - a tool of enlightenment.[42] Therefore, there is urgency of revolutionary womanhood as a basis to liberation thus facilitate in bringing out a sense of what is "authentic" for women. There is a great need to strategize ideological poles that shall refute the prevailing tendencies within the field of philosophy and gender discrimination on the same. A renewal of authentic relationship of woman to woman and re-defining ourselves as feminist philosophers is very imperative in this era.

The use of liberative tools with emphasis on personal mental liberation and growth for both male and female gender. Hence a call to process and challenge as women our own thinking, our own sense of weakness and our own inability to forge ahead. It is a moment that women need totally to discard any utopian position that does not embrace women liberation in this field. It's time for women to advocate success for women by women through objective reasoning and open dialogue. Above all, women need to be assertive of their educational rights, equality and dignity and never ever tolerate being in perpetual slavery under male chauvinism.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to empower and bring meaning to the female philosopher and key factors that constitute her freedom, action, self-determination, transcendence and values in setting a better vision of what the person is. The female person may or should never be evaluated as though she was merely an animal, a sociological stick figure, a consumer in the artificial world of economic forces, a piece of raw material upon which government agencies, global organizations, civilizations or technology can manipulate in the manner of laboratory technicians.

It is observed that for many years people have reduced and grounded the concept of human dignity, surprisingly in the Christian tradition too. This is a major paradigm shift which is quite significant to the appreciation of the dignity of the female philosopher. The article argues that the oblivion of female philosophers is not by default but by design. The obscurity of female philosophers is because of male chauvinism.

[42] *Ibid.,* 24.

# Part III
# Philosophy and Development in Africa

# THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHY IN MANAGEMENT OF ORGANISATION: A REFLECTION ON THE ROLE OF HUMAN CAPITAL TOWARDS DEVELOPING AFRICA

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## Abstract

Technological revolution and changes in world economy has fundamentally altered the way we live, work and related to one another. Humanity is now at the Forth Industrial Revolution (4IR) which in its scale, scope, and complexity has come with transformation unlike anything humankind has experienced before. However, the fundamental question here is what is the contribution of philosophy in our world work today? Or what is the role of philosophy in our business, government or in developing world today? In a world where people are more likely to trust scientist, journalists, lawyers, politicians as opposed to the philosophers. The current around development in Africa and the world at large calls for a philosophical reflection on where the world is going as shaped by its productive people, the human capital and the place of philosophy in the continuum of the science of management as such needs to be a case of point to reflect upon. This paper at a high level has alluded to developments in the world around organisations management that takes into consideration the role of human resource management. It qualifies the belief that human capital is the most important asset in any organisation that transforms the tangible assets that any organisation can be measured upon. It identifies human capital as at the centre of business and development. In its quest, it connects fundamental philosophical principles that underlines development Africa and any part other world. It further champions the fact that philosophical thinking is very important in shaping the any development agenda. It also demonstrates the extent to which major branches of philosophy can be linked to management science and most specifically philosophy of human resource management. Through its discussion, it concludes that, to achieve overall Agenda 2063 for Africa, there is a need to rally the call for an integrated philosophical thinking to shape Africa's development agenda for the full realization of Africa's aspiration. That the attainment of Africa's vision can only be achieved through a cohesive philosophical orientation by its people who largely constitute the human capital that development is dependent upon. Finally, it recommends a reflection on the application of various branches of philosophy to argument key philosophical consideration in our world of work today. It further recommends that the human resource function should consider attracting human capital trained in philosophy to be part of their teams and alternately train their existing management on aspects of philosophy as part of leadership enhancement in such areas like critical thinking, ethics, epistemology and metaphysics.

Keywords: Place of Philosophy, Human Capital Management, Africa Development

## Introduction and Background

The world today stand at the brink of a technological revolution that has fundamentally altered the way we live, work, and relate to one another while philosophy has been with us from ages

beginning with the time of Socrates. The fundamental question being asked is: how is philosophy applied in our world of work today? Or what is the role of philosophy in our business world today? Humanity is now at the fourth industrial revolution which in its scale, scope, and complexity has come with transformation unlike anything humankind has experienced before. While the philosophy of science acknowledges the scientific and technological development, science enjoys unparalleled prestige in society compared with other disciplines, and everyone is likely to agree about the need to fund and understand modern science while many may deride modern art, literature or philosophical inquiry. Furthermore, according to Ladyman[43], most people are likely to trust the word of a scientist much more than they do that of, journalist, lawyer or politician (although that may not be saying much about reality of "being") and neither do they engage with philosophy in a strict sense. Everyone is left wondering and does not yet know just how it (the world) will unfold in the next phase. It is the case, philosophy begins with wonder, hence the philosophical reflection on world's realities around business and development needs to be stimulated a fresh. Hence, a rigorous philosophical inquiry to explain world realities is required. However, humanity has to respond in an integrated and comprehensive manner, involving all stakeholders of the global polity, from the public and private sectors to academia and civil society and non-governmental organisations. In this event Philosophical thinking is imperative and can no longer be a subject of debate only meant for technical intellectual philosophers. Hence a reflection on the role of philosophy is key.

According to the World Economic Forum[44], the Fourth Industrial Revolution has major impact on people changing not only what we do but also who we are. Affecting our identity and all the issues associated with it to include; our sense of privacy, our notions of ownership, our consumption patterns, and the time we devote to work and leisure. It also affects how we develop our careers, cultivate our skills, meet people, and nurture relationships. As such therefore, there is a need to reflect on philosophical perspective around how the world is evolving with human resource at the centre and how this evolution is shaping our day to day realities as we think about developing Africa.

As organisations seek to link people, strategy and performance, it's imperative to reflect on such fundamental assertions made by Mclean[45], two decades ago that in most industries, it's now possible to buy on the international marketplace, technology, machinery and equipment that are comparable to those in place by the leading global firms or organisations. Whereas today, access to technology, machinery or equipment are not the differentiating factors, the ability to use it effectively requires a rational being. It is the case now that a company that loses all its equipment, machinery or technology, but kept the skills or know-how of its people could be back in business relatively quickly than the one that lost its workforce, while keeping its current technology, machinery or equipment. Contrary to this assertion is that organisations are still struggling to translate such basic concepts into work reality. This situation then calls for an enquiry on the ontological aspect of being. Where in this case the human person at the centre of work provisionally characterizing the object which befits the theme of philosophical discourse. This then alludes to why the philosophical inquiry can no longer be separated from seeking

[43] Ladyman, J (2002). Understanding Philosophy of Science. New York: Routledge.
[44] World Economic Forum (2016).*The Fourth Industrial Revolution*: *what it means, how to respond*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
[45] Mclean, R (1995). *Performance measure in the New Economy*. Ontario: The Primer's Council of Ontario.

solution to real world's problems and being integrated into other disciplines to provide a sense of direction and insights.

Consequently, ontology whose task are to explain Being itself and to make the Being of entities stand out in full relief are of necessity as exemplified in the works of Martin Heidegger on Being and Time.[46] Alternatively, the same can be linked to the logic of scientific discovery of Karl Popper on the naturalistic approach to the theory of method where he demystified the position of positivists against the position of logical scientific discovery. This provided a typical analogy to explain the alienation of philosophy in the realm of organisation management and the role of human resource. The same position seem to be taken up by science of management as that of the positivist disliking the idea that there should be meaningful problems outside the field of 'positive' empirical science problems to be dealt with by a genuine philosophical theory. Again, where the positivist disliked the idea that there should be a genuine theory of knowledge, an epistemology or a methodology and wished to see in the alleged philosophical problems mere 'pseudo-problems' or 'puzzles'.[47] Similar to the wish of positivist it is apparent that management of organisation implement lots of theories and models as applied and test in some parts of the world only to be duplicated or replicated as universal approach to solving management problems in Africa. These include business fads like; management by objective, total quality management, lean management, business re-engineering, among others, as now being replicated to promote development. The evidences around this are unmistakable. It is imperative to recognise the difference between the physical and intellectual capital that reveal the unique advantage as drawn from the human capital who are at the centre of organisation development. The philosophical enquiry on the concept of human capital and the abilities that people bring on board and hinges on the increasing central role of intangible assets and intellectual capital in today's economy can no longer be under estimated.

The person has been identified as most critical asset (Human Capital) by the science of management. However, the nature of human person as identified by Thomas Aquinas and followed the ideas of those philosophers before him like Boethius assigned the name person to individual beings with rational nature. According to Agaus[48], citing Summa Contra Gentiles indicated that "So a special name is given among all other substances to individual beings having a rational nature, and this name is 'person' where 'rational nature' is added to mean the singular being among rational substances". The African people are not short of this definition and are managing enterprise as well as governing themselves in various organisations be it public or private. Given the dynamism and changes that have been brought about by the industrial revolution and the concept of modern economy, it is therefore imperative that a reflection on the role of human capital at workplace in Africa be given a second consideration. It is so important to examine the principle of "whatness" of man or his essence as a worker being guided by the principles of human resource management. In this sense, a consideration on metaphysics is critical. It is through metaphysics that we gain a better insight about the essence and reality of the human person. In this perspective resides the value they create through their work.

**Human capital at the centre of business and development**

[46] Macquarrie, J and Robinson, E (1962). *On Being and Time by Martin Heidegger*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers

[47] Popper, K (1992). *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London and New York: Routledge Classics.

[48] Agaus, J. J. S (2009).*The Notions of the Human Person and Human Dignity in Aquinas and Wojtyla.* Kritike Volume 3 No.1. pp 40-60

According to Wojtyla[49], a person is an objective entity, which as a definite subject has the closest contacts with the whole (external) world and is most intimately involved with it, precisely because of the inwardness of interior life. Central to business and development is the dominant presence of the human person. In business terms now referred to as the human capital. As such therefore, organisations are starting to realise the value of human resource function in the organisation and this elicits sharply contradicting views within organisations. Today's competitive global markets is characterised with the "war of talent" that is now becoming critical to almost every organisation. Every business is seeking key talents that can shape and drive the business agenda in a volatile, uncertain complex and ambiguous world. This is evident in a recent study done by (Mettl, 2017) that pointed to the fact that business goals change on a regular basis, and many organizations require to reinvent themselves just as regularly. To measure up to the changing dynamics in the world of work, organizations need teams with top talent to solve the world's most challenging problems. It's likely that the required deep skills do not exist within the organizations, or if it so exists somewhere else or some other organisation would be of interest to acquire it. But what kind of skills? The skills in question are those skill that can promote critical thinking, innovation and cognisant of ethical consideration that form the driving values of the individuals.

Against this background is global competition, economic troughs, changing customer demands, political turmoil, and supplier upheavals that have replaced stability with a state of permanent volatility which is now a common phenomenon in Africa. In such a situation, to survive and thrive, organisations are in a race to become more agile. Be it Government or private sector organisation. The concept of agility can only be considered from minds that are philosophically tuned to wonder about nature and to seek the wisdom around the current world's realities. A study has been done by Deloitte on the global trends of human capital 2017 where over 10,400 business and HR leaders across 140 countries participated. This study revealed in its findings some basic fundamental facts that included principal characteristic of the new era, which is not merely change, but change at an accelerating rate, which creates new rules for business and for HR. To this end this most recent survey further pointed out that; organizations face a radically shifting context for the workforce, the workplace, and the world of work. These shifts have changed the rules for nearly every organizational people practice, from learning to management to the definition of work itself[50].

**Fundamental philosophical principles and African perspective**

The application of fundamental philosophical principles has become paramount and can no longer be under estimated or left for the professional philosophers. The debate on the role of philosophy and more profoundly in our context in Africa has been a subject in many fronts and decades now. Taking for instance, the debate on Africa renaissance as a concept that African people and nations shall overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, and economic renewal. This philosophical discourse started some 70 years ago with Cheikh Anta Diop in a series of essays collected in his book "Towards the African Renaissance: Essays in Culture and Development, 1946-1960". However, Okumu[51] turned the

[49] Wojtyla, K (1993). *Love and Responsibility*, Trans. by H.T. Willets. San Francisco:Ignatius Press
[50] Deloitte (2017). *Global Human Capital Trends 2017: Rewriting the Rules of HR*. Chicago: Deloitte University Press.
[51] Okumu, W. A. J (2002). *The African Renaissance: History, Significance and Strategy.* Trenton NJ: Africa World Press Inc.

discourse to specifically point to the role of human resource in the purview of African renaissance that the most important and primary role of the African Renaissance now and in the coming years is to gather a critical mass of first-class African scientists to undertake meaningful problem-solving, research and development applied to industrial production that will lead to really important results of economic dimensions. This point of view is in tandem with human resource management philosophy.

Human Resource Management Philosophy, as mentioned by Legge[52], held that 'human resources are valuable and a source of competitive advantage'. This then lead to the development of the principle terms making reference to human resource as not just mere personnel's but human capital. To further justify the philosophical thinking to translate the discourse, the management gurus, Armstrong and Baron[53] stated that: 'People and their collective skills, abilities and experience, coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interests of the employing organization, are now recognized as making a significant contribution to organizational success and as constituting a significant source of competitive advantage.' The discourse on the subject of Africa renaissance has found its culmination in African Union strategy road map for vision 2063 where the African leaders have committed to build the Africa we want.[54] All to promote business and development in Africa.

Based on the above aspiration, the discourse that philosophy has an important role in shaping the development for the realisation of the ambitious vision for Africa through providing enlargement and providing reflection on the issues at hand can no longer be under estimated. The philosophical question at this junction is; how can philosophy aid this African vision to promote business and development within each and every institution? In general, technical philosophy contributes by demonstrating that the current trend of business and development in Africa are founded on questionable premises. And once this realization is promoted, establishing alternative realities to inform the development agenda might be possible. A critical thinking as an aspect of philosophy, in the end, can open Africa to new possibilities, while revealing that African people have the burden of making their future. Persons are thus capable of reinventing social existence through their imagination and creativity. This brings us back to the fundamental philosophy of human resource management that people are the most important asset of any organisation.

**Focus on business values and development: Why Philosophical thinking is so important**

The concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) is largely based on a management philosophy. It is concerned with the total interests of the organization. The interests of the members of the organization are recognized but subordinated to those of the enterprise. Hence the importance attached to strategic integration and strong cultures, which flow from top management's vision and leadership, and which require people who will be committed to the strategy, who will be adaptable to change. The changes in question are changes brought about by the industrial evolutions of the fourth generation. According to Guest[55] HRM is important in any organisation. Departing from the fact that business and development landscape is changing, it is

[52] Karen Legge, (1995). Human Resource Management Rhetorics and Realities, Macmillan International Higher Education.
[53] Michael Armstrong, and Angele, Baron (2002) Strategic HRM: the key to improved business performance Developing practice. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. London.
[54] Africa Union Commission (2015). *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.* Addis Abba: Africa Union Press.
[55] Guest, D E (1991). Personnel management: the end of orthodoxy, *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 29 (2), pp 149–76.

imperative that every organisation considers bringing talents who can apply philosophical principles. This leads to the question on why philosophy is so important to management and especially human resource manager charged with the responsibility of acquiring talents and maintaining them as productive assets in the organisation.

Armstrong[56], in developing the concept of strategic human resource management argued that the philosophy of HRM as indeed aspirational. The aspect of aspiration brings us to the second reason as to why philosophy applied in management is an important characteristic of individual organisations. Self-interest embedded in critical thinking can help solve issues of social context and ethics within business practices. This leads to the application of two major branches of philosophy: logic and ethics. This leads to Amstrong's[57] contention that the incessant reference to the rhetoric/reality gap by academics suggests that there is a deeply held and cynical belief amongst them that managements never mean what they say or, if they do mean it, don't do anything about it. In this instance the third reason why philosophy is so important is that management itself is modelling a new philosophy of life. Not just profits are made in the world of business but with globalisation and technological changes, continents are actually beginning to overlap and geologically alter each other through talent mobility and global business expansion to new regions.

Human resource management as an open system is subject to philosophical justification. This can be related to the systems school of thought that is now finding much attention because it has brought about important insight into how organizations function. Miller and Rice[58] stated that organizations should be treated as open systems that are continually dependent upon and influenced by their environments. In the present world the basic characteristic of the enterprise as an open system is that it transforms inputs into outputs within its environment. This can no longer be under estimated as every decision made has got tricking effects. However, those decisions are made by people who need to think them through. Which brings us to the moral perspective of decisions. But thinking the decisions through, implies a philosophical aspect of ethics as a branch of philosophy. Wright and Snell[59] developed a similar concept of human resource management as an open system dependent on the environment for inputs, which are transformed during throughput to produce outputs that are exchanged in the environment. These outputs can be termed as the product of development. In this understanding, skills and abilities are treated as inputs from the environment; employee behaviours are treated as throughput; and employee satisfaction and performance are treated as outputs. In this perspective therefore, every organisation's distinctive capabilities or core competences describe what the organization is specially or uniquely capable of doing. This can only be achieved by the human capital employed. Key capabilities can exist in such areas as technology, innovation, and marketing, delivering quality, and making good use of human and financial resources. It can be argued that the most distinctive capability of all is that represented by the knowledge, skills, expertise and commitment of the employees of the organization. This belief provides the basis for the

[56] Michael Armstrong, (2006). Strategic Human Resource Management: A Guide to Action. GBR: Kogan Page 3rd Ed. Philadelphia.
[57] Michael Armstrong, (2011). A Hand Book of Human Resource Management: Kogan Page, 11rd Ed. Philadelphia.
[58] Miller, E and Rice, A (1967). *Systems of Organization*. London: Tavistock.
[59] Wright, P M and Snell, S A (1998). Towards a unifying framework for exploring fit and flexibility in strategic human resource management, *Academy of Management Review*, 23 (4), pp 756–72.

philosophy of strategic human resource management. As such therefore, Barney[60] proposed basic criteria for deciding whether a resource can be regarded as a distinctive capability or competency that included: value creation for the customer, rarity compared to the competition, non-imitability and non-substitutability.

Taking into consideration the required capabilities, little attention is paid to philosophy or sufficient attention to as linked to business management and development in Africa. Nevertheless, management and especially human resource management should not use this as an excuse to ignore Philosophy. The argument here is that philosophy is so important to business management and development. There is a window of opportunity to learn philosophy as most business approving considerable amount of money in their learning, training and development budgets or to that matter attract professional philosopher to be part of their teams. This leads to the question of learning organisation as defined within the purview of human resource development. Garvin defines a learning organization as one that is 'skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights'.[61]

The distinctive capabilities are intended to provide solutions, add value and solve world's most important problems. If so then systematic problem solving becomes key, which rests heavily on the philosophy and methods of the quality movement. Its underlying ideas include relying on scientific method, rather than guesswork, for diagnosing problems what Deming calls the 'plan–do–check–act'[62] cycle and others refer to as 'hypothesis-generating, hypothesis-testing' techniques. Secondly, if it is the fact that the dynamic business environment is ever changing, organisations are then exposed to continuous experimentation. Experimentation within the business cycles then becomes an activity involving systematic search for and testing of new knowledge for continuous improvement programmes. Learning from past experience becomes an important supplement in the whole business process as learning organizations review their successes and failures, assess them systematically and record the lessons learnt in a way that employees find open and accessible. While organisation learns, learning form others also becomes key and is sometimes the most powerful source of insights coming from looking outside one's immediate environment to gain a new perspective. Senge[63], a change management guru considered the above mentioned in the perspective of collective problem-solving within an organization through organisation learning. As such to inculcate the needed learning. Where a learning organization strategy can be based on the belief that learning is a continuous process rather than a set of discrete training activities

**Application of Aspects of philosophy in Human Resource Management**

According to Armstrong people resourcing is concerned with ensuring that the organization acquires and retains the people it needs and employs them productively.[64] It is closely associated with performance management and employee development policy and practice. It is also about

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[60] Barney, J (1991). Types of competition and the theory of strategy: towards an integrative approach, *Academy of Management Review*, 11 (4), pp 791–800

[61] David A. Garvin, "Building a Learning Organization", in *Harvard Business Review*, July 1993, available at this link

[62] Deming, W E (1986). *Out of the Crisis*, MIT Centre for Advanced Engineering Study; MA: Cambridge.

[63] Senge, P (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*, Random Century, New York.

[64] Armstrong, 2011.

those aspects of employment practice that are concerned with welcoming people to the organization and, if there is no alternative, releasing them. The emergence of post-modern science, and economic revolutions require not just the contribution of proposed new theories, but also the contribution of people who could describe, advocate and propagate the new ways of thinking. In modern parlance of scientific and economic revolution informed by philosophical thinking for development needed. The question at this juncture is, how can philosophy aid improvement of management or organisation and more specifically human resource management? Application of major branches of philosophy can be deduced in this sense to include; logic that is the study of sound reasoning, epistemology that is the study of knowledge, metaphysics that is the study of reality, and ethics that is the study of morality. In this sense application of philosophy does not compromise, misdirect, or dilute action, but supplies the conceptual context necessary for action to be effective. The point, accordingly, is to begin applying the principles of philosophizing in management in a critical and revolutionary manner in order to address issues affecting organisation to ultimately enhance organisation management for sustainable development.

Critical thinking is part of logic as mentioned in the previous section, key in managing any organisation. Consequently, understanding the meaning of this is critical for management to make decision. In this event Gamut[65] pointed out, that the meanings of certain kinds of expressions play an essential part in determining the validity of schemata in which they appear. The extent that logic is concerned with the validity of argument schemata, it is also concerned with the meanings of expressions. As such therefore critical thinking becomes key and organisations today require people who can think critically to provide solution to the complex problems in the business environment and societies. As we understand therefore and of importance to Human Resource function, that critical thinking skills are highly related to logic and philosophical domain as illustrated in the paragraph above, which is the study of proper reasoning. This shouldn't be surprising to management who are not philosophers in a strict sense because the main idea of critical thinking is to reason well. The critical thinking classes taught by philosophers teach students about logic in addition to providing practice problems that can improve their critical thinking skills. The question then is, are our schools and colleges teaching critical thinking across all disciplines? The current situation is that most of the African schools and colleges are not teaching critical thinking or aspects of introduction to philosophy across all the disciplines and various specialisation.

Moral philosophy is the study of moral judgments or the value that is placed on decisions about what is right or wrong, good or bad or just and unjust. Business ethics is therefore the application of moral philosophy into the practical questions it poses in the business world. With people at the centre of every organisation, the notions of right and wrong are endemic in one way or another. From a Human resource perspective, the business owners can use these to define the organizational culture of their company by focusing on making employees aware of their moral obligation in their business dealings with outsiders and those within. In short, Human Resource Management should take cognisance of moral philosophy that can be used to create a culture of honesty and ethical business practice by creating a code of ethics that the company uses to shape its workers and leaders. As organisations attract talents and conduct business with their people, the question of ethics remains key. Even granting that business ethics is important, many seem to

[65] Gamut, L. T. F (1991). Logic, Language, and Meaning: Introduction to Logic. Chicago, Chicago University Press.

believe that there is no point in studying the subject. From a Human Resource management perspective Farnham[66], explained that professional ethics are the moral principles and values governing professional behaviour.

The ethical principles of the HR profession imply that HR specialists need to take account of the dignity and rights of employees when taking employment decisions. Based on this foregoing assertions, ethics not only should be studied alongside management, but the two fields are closely related. Business management is all about making the right decisions. Ethics is all about making the right decisions. In summary, Armstrong contends that the ethical frameworks for judging HR practices are basic rights, organizational justice, respecting individuals, and community of purpose. These include; HR issues such as flexibility, work intensification, use of some sophisticated HR techniques such as performance related pay and socialization programmes, and activities promoting closer managerial monitoring of employee performance. As such therefore, management operates in the specialized context of the organisation, while ethics operates in the general context of the world. Hence, it is imperative to consider the philosophical orientation.[67]

Whereas Ladyman[68] in his general statement on understanding philosophy of science pointed out that scientific knowledge derives its justification being based on generalization from experience. Where observations made in a variety of circumstances are to be recorded impartially and then induction is used to arrive at a general law and thus has been applied in modern management science. To transform Africa's development organizations, there must be the fountain of knowledge that justifies what is agreed upon and done. This can be clarified by such epistemology that is a branch of philosophy that inquiries into knowledge and justification. The central questions of epistemology for management of organization that can only be formulated in the purview of philosophical orientation could include: what is knowledge as opposed to mere belief? Can we be sure that we have any knowledge? What things do we in fact know? Much investment in Africa is on innovation and sustainable development with an emphasis on human resource deployed in this area. It is also remarkable that majority of organizations are now hosting innovation centers. It is noted by Machamer[69] Governments, corporations, and private foundations spend billions to support scientific research and innovations. Yet, despite science's multiaspected ubiquity, there remain inadequately answered questions about what science of management is, how to characterize the nature of its practitioners' activities, and what is the significance of the whole enterprise is considered in any way. This being the core business of human resource management.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The African Agenda for vision 2063 rededicate the African people to the enduring Pan African vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena." Rallying the call for an integrated philosophical thinking to shape the African Development to fully realize its aspiration cannot be achieved without a cohesive philosophical orientation by its people who are the very human capital that the development is dependent upon. The starting point for HRM is to define

[66] Farnham, D (2008). *Examiner's Report* (May), London: CIPD.
[67] Armstrong, 2011
[68] Ladyman, J, 2002
[69] Machamer, P. (1998). Philosophy of science: An Overview for Educators. *Journal of Science & Education*, 7, 1-11.

philosophical orientation which helps in defining visionary long-term concepts of organization mission, policies and long-term goals. Key decision maker's philosophies is imperative. This philosophical thinking of the Human Capital revolves around management's beliefs and assumption about people: their nature, needs, values, and their approach to work.

This paper therefore appreciates and recommend the application of basic fundamental principles around importance of philosophy. To begin with, it highly recommends urgent attention to logic and ethics. Where logic will help improve critical thinking skills and ethics on the reflection on a good way to inform general behaviors and conduct. The other aspects of epistemology and metaphysics would be implied.

The role of the philosophers in this space is to engage those in the management field in a constructive conversation about the importance of philosophy. This can be through justification of the fact that philosophy helps us to be reasonable, define the moral conduct, broadens our knowledge, leads to great achievements, to be more creative to achieve our goals and finally make the world a better place to live in beyond contemplation of being.

To the human resource functions of organizations, it is imperative that the organizations start to attract talents that have philosophical orientation. To enhance it further, through the core function of human resource that is training, learning and development, other than developing general leadership and soft skill of their people, it may be important to start training on areas of philosophy as part of skills enhancement.

To the institutions of higher learning in Africa, this study in its conclusion recommends that introduction to philosophy should be taught and encouraged across various disciplines. This in turn will enhance growth and development of practical African philosophy as applied in day to day living.

# THE RELEVANCE OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION TO INTEGRAL DEVELOMENT IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA.

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## ABSTRACT

*Any type of desirable development hinges upon the kind of education an individual receives. However, the education given emphasis in Africa is one that is akin to schooling, examination oriented, individualistic and mean in vision. The consequence is that individual transformation and change that contemporary society yearns for is hampered since much preference is placed on cognitive development at the expense of the whole person together with his/her relationship to the community and nature as a whole. The African philosopher Kwasi Wiredu once asked, what shall it benefit a man to gain the whole world and loose his/her own soul? The implication here is that any society that educates in disregard of the core of the human being undermines an important basis for development. Since much of the education in contemporary Africa is dominated by 'educating to gain the whole world' as its basis, this author argues that there is need for a philosophy of education that is all-inclusive in nature to enable citizens to live together harmoniously in the dynamic global community. Thus, this paper borrows a leaf from traditional African philosophy of education which is, holistic, lifelong, pragmatic, and anchored on moral values and competence, to argue that in order to enhance the fullness of life experiences of every member of society, an appropriate framework should govern instruction and educational practice in contemporary society. Only then can we attain integral and sustainable development in society.*

***Key words:*** *integral development, sustainable development, African philosophy of education, holistic education, soul.*

## Introduction

This paper demonstrates that in any society, the framework that informs an education system determines the product. Integral development is possible only when individual persons are enabled, through education, to know and realize themselves as beings among other beings. I argue that this end was possible at some point in Africa but was later lost when colonizers conquered Africa and replaced or modified her culture. In spite of the present education scenario that is largely characterized by rote learning, individualism and competition, we can salvage our situation by recalling our indigenous philosophy of education which is more holistic and life-long. The following steps will enable me to support the above position.

First, an attempt will be made to trace the source of the problem and elaborate the meaning of integral development. Second, I will highlight the key features of Africa's traditional philosophy of education in comparison to the western type. Thirdly, I will demonstrate the necessity for a harmonized and holistic way of educating for Africa's development.

## Source of the Problem

It was going well in Africa until the colonialist arrived and committed to ripping off Africa's identity in exchange for their own supposed superior values. The greatest of the consequences of the European conquest of Africa, I think, is the loss of Africa's culture and identity. This is because when a people's mind is colonized and their culture depicted as inferior then their self-image, confidence and achievement is, to a larger extent, also eroded. This is evidenced in the very definition of colonialism which Kwame Nkrumah describes as "a practice of invading and inhabiting a geographical location outside the borders of one's

own nation in the name of empire building… with the primary objective of promoting her own economic advantage."[1]

After independence, most African countries embraced an education that had been borrowed from the colonizers, and whose main aim entailed enhancing socio-economic and political development. Implicit in this move was the commitment of most African governments to ensure that the education system and development agenda "approximated the institutional forms and underlying values of western industrialized nations"[2] at the expense of African indigenous values.The contemporary African education and development ideologies are therefore largely borrowed from the Western European culture which led to the introduction of formal education, with its emphasis on literary and purely academic work.[3] African parents readily accepted this new education and they began to send their children to the schools fashioned after the European curriculum to learn, gradually setting aside the kind of education-the holistic and lifelong type, which they themselves had received. Consequently, integral development in Africa has not been fully realized.

**Indigenous African philosophy of Education**

The term "indigenous" is used here to refer to Africa in the pre-colonial period while philosophy is regarded as a framework or guiding principle(s). Fafunwa identified the following key goals of African indigenous education:

1. To develop the child's latent physical skills.
2. To develop character.
3. To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority.
4. To develop intellectual skills.
5. To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labor.
6. To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs.
7. To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.[4]

The key framework of African education is generally enshrined in its humanistic, holistic, ethical and life-long world views. Education was all-round in order to enable individuals perform various tasks and most importantly to focus and live together peacefully in the community.

The humanistic component is best exemplified in the *Ubuntu* philosophy which has the human being and human welfare at the heart of every human action. The African children and youth were nurtured and enabled to realize the necessity of the "other" and to respect and promote human life and flourishing at all times. This is reinforced by J.S. Mbiti's observation that whatever happened to the individual did so to the whole group, and whatever happened to the whole group did so to the individual. The individual can therefore only say that "I am

[1]1. Nkrumah, K. *Towards Colonial Freedom: Africa In the Struggle Against World Imperialism* (London: Panaf, 1973), p.2.
[2] Sifuna, D. "Educational Developments after Independenec," in SIfuna et. al, Ed. Themes in the Study of the Foundations of Education ( Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, 2006), p.103.
[3] *Ibid*
[4] Fafunwa A. B.History of Education in Nigeria (London: Allen and Unwin,1974), p.20.

because we are; and since we are, I am."[5] This made the African education to be geared towards attitudes and acts that build human relationships and community.

The holistic feature of African education is embedded in the all-round learning processes that the young people were subjected to. This was meant to enable them perform both specific and related tasks that called for their attention. Among the Acholi of Uganda, for instance, a boy who was taught to construct a house was also expected to learn related lessons such as the geography of the site of building in terms of the source of water, geology and location of neighboring villages. Additionally, he was also expected to possess knowledge of the right types of trees and grass for construction of walls and for thatching.[6] This also applied to other specialties such as hunting, fishing, ruling, and general care-giving. The goal of education was to enable any individual to embark on any task and occupation (when need arose) without difficulty in order to ensure societal progress.

The ethical feature of African education runs through its philosophical underpinnings and seems to be at its heart because every element of education and general human responsibility was undertaken within a defined moral system at its front. However, we can still isolate ethics as a stand-alone component of the indigenous education. Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* presents us with a rich African education whose main purpose was to develop the moral competence of individual members of society. Beside the direct teaching and learning of values such as generosity and honesty, African education presented the need for peace and harmony that brings fulfilment in the individual and the society-which was made up of the living and the departed members. This education also posed the need for a conscious personal attitude that enhanced a consistent commitment to cultivating and maintaining such harmony. Additionally, respect for other people was a very crucial ethical demand in the indigenous context because the human being had a divine component acquired through naming. This is all people (known and strangers) were treated with dignity.

The life-long component of the indigenous African philosophy of education was evidenced in the insistence on values, and not just knowledge and skills. The values were meant for posterity in order to enhance the fullness of life experience for all whether in the physical or spiritual world.

Although his book is biased toward instances from the Gikuyu cultural practices, Jomo Kenyatta describes what most of the communities in pre-colonial Africa practiced as far as educating children and the young people are concerned. He brings out the life-long process when describing the educational system of the Gikuyu people of Kenya as follows:

> It will be found that education begins at the time of birth and ends with death. The child has to pass various stages of age-groupings with a system of education defined for every status in life. They aim at instilling into the children what the Gikuyu call '*otaari wa mocie'* or '*kerera kia mocie*,'namely, educating the children in the family and clan tradition. Apart from the system of schools which has been introduced by the Europeans, there is no special school building in the Gikuyu sense of the word: the homestead is the school ... This is one of the methods by which the history of the people is passed from generation to generation.[7]

From the foregoing, African indigenous education was generally based on a philosophy that emphasized character formation, learning by doing, respect for humanity, lifelong education,

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[5] Mbiti, J. S. *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1969), p. 262.
[6] (Ocitti, 1971)
[7] Kenyatta, Jomo, *Facing Mount Kenya* (London, Mercury Books, 1961), pp. 99-100.

learning to live and living to learn.[8] Community members were trained in values and skills which made them become productive and useful to themselves and to the society. I observe that its mode of transmission, that is, modeling, direct instruction, stories, riddles and proverbs also reveal that there was a general understanding of the need for variations and alteration of teaching methods to suit the learners/communities' needs.

**The Concept of Integral Development**

The concept of Integral development is very much rooted in the Catholic Social Thought tradition.

In the 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI introduced the concept of integral development. According to him, "Development cannot be limited to mere economic growth. In order to be authentic, it must be complete: integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man."[9] The concept has since been used to refer to a kind of societal positive progress that is human oriented and measured not only on the basis of material flourishing of society but also on the basis of whether individuals in society attain their full potential in an atmosphere of peace, social justice and human dignity. Its three fundamental elements are highlighted in most Catholic Relief Service publications[10] as follows:

1. Holistic: the implication here is that Integral Human Development should be concerned with the whole of the person in all dimensions. It should promote the economic, social, political, cultural, ecological and spiritual well-being of every individual and be mindful of the integrity of creation.
2. Solidarity: Integral Human Development enhances and promotes the rights and responsibilities of each person and of the entire human relationships.
3. Justice and Peace: Integral Human Development creates in society an environment of that which is just and peaceful in respect to the worth and dignity of every individual.

Pope Francis has recently acknowledged and asserted the need for Mother Earth to be considered a crucial part of any development agenda. Thus, his latest encyclical on care for our common home, *Laudato Si'*, complements his predecessors' position by using the phrase 'Sustainable Integral Development', to implore upon us the need for care for the planet alongside care for human beings in their economic, social and spiritual contexts. He further condemns any economic system that destroys the planet in disregard for future generations.[11] This, I think, is because there is a strong ethical interrelationship between human beings and the universe to the extent that a reliable future of former depends on the later and vice versa.

Some African authors and philosophers have also demonstrated an understanding of development that is in agreement with the preceding position. For example, Abedayo Adedeji considers development, in general, as a process through which man's overall being is enhanced and that development for society means development of the collective personality of the society.[12] This view is important because the human being is the central actor in development and should also be its end. We can therefore not talk of development that disregards the human component. Toyo agrees with the preceding position on development

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[8] Oduaran, A. *Learning to Live, and Living to Learn, Inaugural Lecture Series* (Gaborone, Faculty of Education, 2002).

[9] Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1967), #14.

[10] Burpee, G. et. *al ,Integral Human Development (IHD): The Concept and the Framework*, (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2008), p. 2.

[11] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), #13.

[12] Abedayo Adedesi, *Towards a Dynamic African Economy: Selected Speeches and Lectures 1975- 1986*, Compiled and arranged by Jeggan C. Ssenghor (London:Francass, 1989), pp. 97

by emphasizing its social dimension. He asserts that generally, by "development", people tend to mean "economic development" but social development embraces economic, cultural and ideological aspects. Social development is not so much a change of things as it is a change of people. Social development primarily changes relations among people and their abilities.[13] It is in agreement with the above position that Odera Oruka asserted that "development means that people must be happier, more dignified, friendlier with each other and more at peace."[14] Development must thus have humanistic underpinnings. This translates into humanistic approach to development whose main aim is to promote human dignity and welfare.

I agree with the foregoing that authentic development should consider the worth and dignity of the human person and the common good should be its ultimate measure and end. In this regard, integral development is not limited to economic growth but should be holistic, that is, exhaust all spheres of life – the economic, political, cultural, personal, spiritual, and natural resources. This agrees with the aim of education in indigenous African setting as presented earlier.

**Towards Integral Development in Contemporary Africa**

In order to achieve the kind of humanistic and holistic development that was presented earlier in this paper, there is need for an education that is humanistic, comprehensive and all-inclusive unlike the type that has taken root in most learning institutions in contemporary Africa which is more individualistic (it is the education of the individual for the individual) and anti-nature (disregard for the environment) in most dimensions. For example, an educated man in contemporary society is one who has been through the schooling system. By this conception, people are considered educated if they have spent some years in school, in the process of which they have gained certificates, diplomas or degrees. Thus, education is seen purely in terms of acquiring knowledge for the sole purpose of passing examinations and getting employment. To be educated is to acquire some sort of package which has a label attached to it, and which indicates its value-determined mainly in economic terms. This conception of education and its practice is problematic because it divorces people from their humanity and from natural world in preference for white-collar professions, and to live in isolation in towns. This agrees with Sifuna's assertion that the "western education inherited at independence, does not deal with the realities of children's time and environment-the realities of life. Traditional education, on the other hand, reminds us of the importance of realism in education. It was deeply rooted in the environment, bringing children into contact with the world of nature and people."[15]

I borrow the description of an educated person that is given by J. A. Akinpelu to argue that the philosophy of education in indigenous Africa is more suitable for integral development in contemporary Africa:

> …there is no system of education separate and distinct from the system of socialization and of loving in the indigenous African society. Education being life-long and embracing the whole way of living, to talk of the educated man is to talk of the ideal man in the culture. Thus, the educated man can be described as one who

[13] 9. Toyo, E. "Ideology and African Development: A clarification of Issues" in *Ideology and African Development*., Peter I. Ozo- Eson and Ukoha Ukiwo, eds. (Abuja; African center for Democratic Govenance, 2001) pp.24-25.

[14] H. Odera Oruka, "Philosophy and Other Disciplines" ,*Thought and Practice* (Vol 1, no 1 1974) pp.34

[15] Sifuna, D. "Traditional Systems of Education in Africa: African Indigenous Education and Islamic Education," in SIfuna *et. al*, Ed. *Themes in the Study of the Foundations of Education* ( Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, 2006), p. 65.

> combines expertise in some economic skill with soundness of character and wisdom in judgment. He is one who is equipped to handle successfully the problems of living in his immediate and extended family; who is well-versed in the folk-lore's and genealogies of his ancestors; who has some skill to handle some minor health problems and where to obtain advice and help in major ones; who stands well with the ancestral spirits of his family and knows how to observe their worship; who has ability to discharge his social and political duties' who is wise and shrewd in judgment; who expresses himself not in too many words but rather in proverbs and analogies leaving his hearers to unravel his thoughts; who is self-controlled under provocation, dignified in sorrow and restrained in success; and finally and most importantly, who is of excellent character.[16]

The pre-colonial African concept of education and learning presented by Akinpelu is similar to John Miller's theory of holistic education which encompasses balance, inclusion, and connection between our mind, body, emotions, spirit and the universe.[17] I submit that the indigenous basis of education enabled people to become fully human and ultimately realize personhood, which is evidenced in how they conducted themselves, related to other beings and things in the universe. In the context of this paper, such individuals are more likely to initiate lasting change and development in contemporary society.

The way forward is to reconsider the completely foreign basis of Africa's education system. I agree with Danil Sifuna's observation that at the moment indigenous and western forms of education should not get into conflict. Instead, they should complement each other in certain aspects. For example learning should be organized in a practical way that, "the knowledge and skills gained in school should be applied to the improvement of living conditions in the community."[18] He adds that the solution to the current African problem is not to replace one form of education with another but to integrate the strong features of each in order to generate a harmonized new that is useful to the development of individuals and society. He further asserts that "formal education has an important role to play in African societies, but for it to meet the cultural, social, moral, intellectual, political and economic needs, it ought to be indigenized."[19] By indigenization, I presume he means, a reconsideration of the framework that shaped the African Indigenous education, thus, its philosophy. I therefore submit that integral development can be attained through a reform of certain fundamental issues regarding the status of education today. The solution lies in revisiting the fundamental basis and aim of education that were advanced in pre-colonial Africa to be the core of our system of education while the strong features in western education to be critically adopted as complimentary. This means the redirection of educational focus to the human being as he/she related to others and to the universe as a whole.

**Conclusion**

Given that the core and success of integral development is measured by the proximity of human attitudes and actions to human nature's well-being, reconnecting our education with the indigenous philosophy of education discussed above is one sure way of ensuring that what Pope Francis referred to as 'sustainable integral development' is attained in contemporary Africa. If this be achieved, then there is a high likelihood for posterity in the African sense.

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[16] Akinpelu, A. J. *An Introduction to the Philsophy of Education* (London, Macmillan Publishers, 1981), pp.178-179.

[17] Miller, J. *The Holistic Curriculum* (Toronto: Oise press, 2001), P.

[18] Sifuna, D. *op. cit,* p. 65

[19] *Ibid*

# KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

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**Abstract**
The paper interrogates the postcolonial production of knowledge in Africa. It examines the essence, conditions and problematic of knowledge production in contemporary Africa. It reasserts the indispensability of knowledge to not only human survival but also the determination of the quality of human life. Hence knowledge is necessary for social development of a people.
But utilization of knowledge to that end requires that people own, manage and control knowledge production. However, the colonial experience in Africa makes knowledge production in Africa problematic since it not only disrupted indigenous knowledge systems and their production process; but also undermined and peripherilized them. This was deemed necessary for effective colonization. The peripherilization has indeed undermined genuine independence and social development of postcolonial Africa.
The kind of knowledge process currently needed in Africa should integrate indigenous and modern knowledge produced in research institutions. This process would involve documentation and validation of indigenous knowledge for their veracity and efficacy. This kind of process would result into a tradition of continuous knowledge production and hence, hopefully, sustainable social development.
The paper concludes that the successful production of knowledge in Africa requires, at least, that Africans fight off servitude mentality and patronization by foreign powers; establish an elaborate network and coordination of knowledge production and exchanges within Africa as well as a practice, especially in political leadership, transformative and progressive governance.

**Keywords**: Knowledge production, indigenous knowledge, exogenous knowledge, social development.

## Essence of Knowledge Production

Knowledge is necessary for human survival. Therefore, the successful continued survival and improvement of quality of human life inevitably require knowledge at every time in human life and society.[1]

In order for the knowledge produced to ensure both the survival and quality of people, it has to be appropriate to the needs and aspirations of people. Therefore, knowledge production has to address itself to what kind of knowledge is being produced, how it is produced and managed.[2] The production of knowledge is critical in postcolonial Africa partly because, Africa needs at present more than at any time in her history, knowledge and technology that can make her free and self-reliant, and hence put her firmly on the path of sound social development and independence. Due to the legacy of colonization, much of the knowledge

[1] Wiredu, Kwasi."Our Problem of Knowledge: Brief Reflections on Knowledge and Development in Africa". In *African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry*, ed. Ivan Karp and D. A. Masolo. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, 181. See also Outlaw, Lucius T. Jr. "Afrocentricity": Critical Considerations'. In *A Companion to African-American Philosophy*, ed. Tommy L. Lott and John P. Pittman. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005, *Blackwell Reference Online*, 155.
[2] Outlaw, Jr 2005, 156

and technology that Africa urgently needs at present is not only being produced and exists outside Africa but is also controlled from outside.[3]

Knowledge production is a continuous process that involves the use of the existing knowledge to create new knowledge.[4] The old knowledge has to continuously be interrogated and analyzed for appropriateness. This means that some parts or aspects of the old knowledge may be abandoned, modified or refined to bring it to currency so that it responds efficiently and effectively to the needs and demands of time. In this aspect, Masolo agrees with Hountondji that local or indigenous knowledge should be the foundation of social development and as a result there should be capacity to harness and manage specific forms of indigenous knowledge for the exploitation of local resources in order to bring about improvements on the conditions and quality of human life in a community.[5]

In knowledge production, efforts should be made to ensure that relevant knowledge is generated in all fields of inquiry which cover virtually all aspects of human life. Of course, this demands that society should have a wide and rich range of experts in various fields. This includes what Oruka refers to as *empirical* and *cultural-spiritual order themes*.[6] These areas would cover domains that deal with practical needs of society as well as with values.

Validation and certification of knowledge for truthfulness and appropriateness is an integral part of knowledge production. Society and experts in various fields must have criteria for validating knowledge produced if that knowledge is to be viable and useful for everybody in society — both the producers and consumers. Though different fields or disciplines have their respective criteria for validating knowledge produced, in general, the very process of knowledge validation which includes experiments, tests and analyses often require a well coordinated effort of the society.[7]

Every knowledge production takes place in a certain specific cultural background. This fact is important because it outlines the social conditions of knowledge production hence spells out the objectives and tasks of the knowledge produced. This necessarily connects knowledge production to its cultural and historical background. In such a situation, as Hountondji explains, people come to own the process of knowledge production, knowledge management and knowledge control.[8] All knowledge, whether informally or formally produced, therefore is "local" since every knowledge production is endogenous to the area from which it is produced. Even the structured disciplinary knowledge produced by experts within universities, laboratories, research centers and research organizations are to some extent local knowledge.[9] At the initial stage knowledge production takes place from a specific cultural background local to it. Later on such knowledge may get appropriated by some areas

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[3] Hountondji, Paulin J. "Scientific Dependence in Africa", *Research in African Literature*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Autumn, 1990), 6.

[4] Tress, Barbel, Gunter Tress and Gary Fry. "Defining concepts and the process of knowledge production in integrative research", 70. (Available on this Link)

[5] Masolo, D. A. *Self and Community in a Changing World*. Bloomington; Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2010, 27.

[6] Oruka, H. Odera. *Practical Philosophy: In Search of an Ethical Minimum*. Nairobi, Kampala: East African Educational Publishers, 1997, 271-274.

[7] Outlaw, Jr 2005, 156; and also Hountondji, Paulin J. "Knowledge as Development Issue". In *A Companion to African Philosophy*, ed. Kwasi Wiredu. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004, 534-5.

[8] Hountondji, Paulin J. "Producing Knowledge in Africa Today the Second Bashorun M. K. O. Abiola Distinguished Lecture", *African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Dec., 1995), 5. See also, Hountondji, Paulin J. "Knowledge of Africa, Knowledge by Africans: Two Perspectives on African Studies", *RCCS Annual Review*, 1, September, 2009, 8-9.

[9] Aronsson, Inga-Lill. "On Knowledge Production and Local Participation", (2008), available on this link, 2-3.

different from the area of its production. Masolo makes apt observations and illustration of this point.[10]

Specific culture of knowledge production gives the people of the culture the ownership and control of knowledge. Such knowledge is more responsive to the local needs, problems and challenges. People easily connect with such knowledge and find it easy to apply in their attempts to solve problems. Not only do people own and control such knowledge, but it gives them a sense of self-reliance and autonomy.[11]

Emphasizing the specific historical and cultural background of knowledge is not to subscribe to or argue for relativism in knowledge production.[12] It is only to point out the inevitable contextual basis of knowledge production. It also serves as a point of caution against the tendency to unjustifiably categorize some knowledge as local or indigenous while some other as global with sole intention of marginalizing the so-called local knowledge. The disparaging of African indigenous knowledge systems especially in the Western anthropological and sociological studies is well documented.[13] Knowledge, whether endogenous or exogenous, has to be subjected to the test for truthfulness and validity. Therefore, any knowledge that passes the test has to be systematic, transparent, reproducible, impartial and therefore, universal.[14]

**Colonization and Knowledge Production**

The history of knowledge production in Africa is problematized by the fact of her colonization. It can be argued, and probably rightly so, that prior to its colonization, Africa had had encounters with forces from outside which indeed had undermined status of its indigenous knowledge as well as its very process of knowledge production. These encounters, which Taiwo calls "various alien historical movements", included Islam, Christianity and slavery.[15] But colonization was perhaps more violent in terms of instituting a denigrating ideological campaign directed at the very base of indigenous knowledge in Africa. Colonization physically destroyed or severely altered institutions of knowledge production in Africa.

Colonization was informed by a contrived racialist discourse which had a long history in Western intellectual tradition. This racist discourse can be traced as far back from Plato, through Aristotle, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, F.W.G. Hegel, Arthur de Gobineau, Levy-Bruhl, Diedrich Westermann,[16] just to mention a few; up to the present. This discourse denied Africans inherent capacity to reason like any other human beings especially the white. Africans were portrayed as people who are by nature either incapable of engaging in a rational activity or are capable only of an inferior mode of rational activity hence denied Africans a critical requirement for the production of knowledge. As a result, this view impinged on both African indigenous knowledge and the very process of knowledge production. The corpus of African indigenous knowledge was therefore branded as either no

[10] Masolo 2010, 22-24.
[11] Hountondji 2009, 8
[12] Masolo 2010, 24
[13] Ibid., 17-18.
[14] Outlaw, Jr 2005, 156; Aronsson 2008, 3.
[15] Taiwo, Olufemi. "Colonialism and Its Aftermath: The Crisis of Knowledge Production", *Callallo*, Vol. 16, No. 4, On "Post-Colonial Discourse": A Special Issue (Autumn, 1993), pp. 891.
[16] Ochieng'-Odhiambo, F. Trends and Issues in African Philosophy. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010, 7-10; Masolo, D. A. African Philosophy in Search of Identity. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994, 1-10; Thairu, Kihumbu. The African Civilization. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1975, 147; Ramose, Mogobe B. African Philosophy Through Ubuntu. Avondale (Harare): Mond Books, 1999, 1-40; Mudimbe, V. Y. The Invention of Africa. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, 1-97.

knowledge at all or an inferior form of knowledge. It was thus despised and suppressed or simply marginalized.[17] The very process of knowledge production was also frustrated and discouraged by the colonizing forces. Fortunately, colonization was not able to completely destroy the indigenous knowledge or the very process of its production. Some knowledge and process of knowledge production survived colonization.[18]

The denigration of African knowledge systems had no justifiable basis at all given that Africa had produced knowledge systems prior to her colonization, some of which were not only great and formed the bases of her past civilizations, but also influenced some other civilizations beyond her borders.[19] The denigration of African knowledge system in particular and African person in general was merely a malicious racist ideology that was intended to justify the oppression, domination and finally the exploitation of Africans.[20] The denigration created in some Africans the inferiority complex which in turn made them psychologically vulnerable for domination and exploitation by the Western colonizing powers. Of course the Western denigrative discourse created the myth of inherently superior and inferior races. Africans were then placed in the later. One of the implications of this discourse of domination is that the knowledge systems from colonizing countries always assumed superiority over the indigenous ones.[21] As a consequent, discourses on the values of African indigenous knowledge become part of the politics of domination and emancipation.[22]

Colonization then institutionalized in Africa a policy, practice and attitude by which knowledge produced in Africa was treated as inferior to that created in the Western world or by the white. This has had at least two adverse implications on knowledge production in Africa. Most of the best centers and technologies for processing knowledge were established outside Africa — best research centers, laboratories and publishing houses. Consequently, as Hountondji aptly explains, the most important aspect of knowledge production which is the processing of research raw materials or data was done outside African. Researches were conducted in Africa but the data were processed outside Africa. Knowledge was then transferred back to Africa just for consumption by Africans.[23] This kind of colonial arrangement for knowledge production reduced the role of Africa to mere provision of raw materials or data and consumption of knowledge. But they were dispossessed of the ownership of knowledge. Africans, since her colonization, lost much of the power over the production, management and control of knowledge meant for its survival. Africa then has been unable to be in control of its progress and destiny. Moreover, Masolo points out that the practice of harvesting indigenous knowledge as raw material to be processed outside Africa leads to loss of their original meaning and manipulation of the psychology of indigenous

[17] Taiwo 1993, 898.
[18] Hountondji 1995, 7; 1990, 7; Taiwo 1993, 894.
[19] James, George G. M. *Stolen Legacy*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1954; Diop, Cheikh Anta. *The Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. New York: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1974; Sertima, Ivan Van, ed. *Great African Thinkers*. Vol. 1: *Cheikh Anta Diop*. New Brunswick (USA) and Oxford (UK): Transaction Books, 1986; Sertima, Ivan Van, ed. *Egypt Revisited*. New Brunswick (USA), London (UK): Transaction Publishers, 1989; Olela, Henry. *From Ancient Africa to Ancient Greece*. Atlanta (Georgia): The Black Heritage Corporation, 1981; Obenga, Theophile. *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period 2780-330 BC*. Trans. Ayi Kwei Armah. Popenguine (Senegal): PER ANKH, 2004.
[20]Taiwo, Olufemi. "Africa and her Challenge to Modernity", *Caribbean Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2009), 6; Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi, ed. *Race and Enlightenment: A Reader*. Cambridge (USA); Oxford (UK): Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 34-37; p'Bitek, Okot. *African Religions in Western Scholarship*. Nairobi, Kampala, Dar es Salaam: East African Literature Bureau, 1971, 12-17; Thairu 1975, 1-15.
[21] Masolo 2010, 24.
[22] *Ibid*., 22.
[23] *Ibid.*, 25.

consumers to believe that whatever is processed in the Western metropolitan centers are superior.[24] The later point is indeed a process of brainwashing and mental colonization.

The inferiority complex inflicted on Africans through the denigrative and humiliating colonial policies and practices means that most Africans lost self-confidence and belief in their power to produce knowledge necessary for the survival of their societies. The impact of this attitude continued into postcolonial Africa. Even in the so-called independent African countries, attempts at the knowledge production, continued to be "extroverted", to borrow an expression from Hountondji. This, as Masolo clearly explains, means that the value or significance of indigenous knowledge lies in its outside, more specifically to its Western consumer.[25] Postcolonial Africa therefore, up to present, has been faced with the problem of effectively generating knowledge which can inform and direct her progress, genuine independence and autonomy.[26] Most Africans who engage in knowledge production activities, especially in the formal institutions of research are still, to a great extent, trapped in the extroverted knowledge production towards the West, predominated by meeting the demands of the West. The knowledge produced in Africa is, in the main, to be assessed, verified, and certified for veracity and usefulness by the West through the many centers of knowledge production and propagation. We cannot rule out the possible loss of some of African ingenious inventions and creations in the process of trying to get them patented in the West. Many African scholars in our institutions charged with knowledge production such as research centers and universities still have the obsession of getting their researches published by Western publishing houses or in Western journals.[27] Many universities in Africa would wish to have the researches of their staff be published in the West. There is often and almost tired and boring talk these days in many African universities of the need for their academic staff to publish in the so-called "international" journals, whatever they may mean by the term "international journals". The adjective "international" in this case can only be understood to mean that the journal admits articles for publication by writers from different nations as well as its readership is not restricted to a particular nation. In that sense most journals, if not all, are international journals. If understood in that way then there is nothing wrong if one publishes in such journals. But when most people who run our universities in Africa talk of an international journal, that is not the meaning they have in mind. They tend to impute to the term "international" the sense that the journal is managed and published from a foreign country, but more so in a Western country; and that alone is assumed to guarantee high quality and intellectual credibility of the articles.

The extroverted knowledge production in Africa has the unfortunate implication that such knowledge is not primarily intended for consumption in Africa. When research products or knowledge from Africa are directed towards the West and not to Africa herself, then such knowledge is not directed at consumption by Africa hence the knowledge produced does not very much assist in the development and improvement of the quality of life within Africa.[28] But worse still, such extroversion implies that the research topics of most researches in Africa are already oriented to meet first and foremost the needs and interest of the non-African readership towards which such researches are directed. This is a kind of extroversion Hountondji calls "socio-theoretical extroversion" which, in his view, is a worse form of extroversion.[29] However, the reverse should be the case. This has made Masolo to decry

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Hountondji 2009, 1; Taiwo 1993, 898
[27] Hountondji 1995, 4
[28] Hountondji, 2006; 1990, 11.
[29] Hountondji 1995, 4,

African researchers' dependency on funding from the Western organizations for conferences to discuss even the very meaning and development of their indigenous knowledge which in a sense undermines African capacity to define their own needs and hence improve their conditions of living.[30] Knowledge production in Africa should be directed first and foremost towards realizing her needs and solving her problems in order to effect her progress. However, if such knowledge proves relevant to some needs and problems outside Africa then there is nothing wrong if it is utilized there as well. There is nothing wrong or inappropriate in applying such knowledge to address issues outside Africa. This does not mean that knowledge production in Africa should not be directed to issues and problems of global concern and interest.[31] Such issues are necessarily of concern to Africans too. Africa is not an island. It is part of the world and many happenings in other parts of the world impact on African positively or negatively. However, the most important point is that knowledge production in Africa should be owned, controlled and managed by Africans and only then can Africans be in control of their societies, progress and destiny.

As we have already mentioned, knowledge is indispensable for human survival, but it is also indispensable for social development. Social development is necessarily holistic and therefore should incorporate scientific, technological, economic, political, cultural, religious and moral development. Social development must ultimately be judged in terms of the extent to which such development secure and promote general human well-being. In order for this to be achieved there is need for scientific, technological, technical and economic development to be accompanied by the development and nurturing of humane values. Only to the extent that there is condition in which human interest, dignity and well-being are recognized, respected and secured can a society be said to be reasonably developed. In such a society, most human needs are actually enjoyed by most members.[32] Africa, like any community, therefore needs, to use Wiredu's words, both technical knowledge generated through "technical rationality" (from science and technology) and humane knowledge (values) generated through "humane rationality" (from humanities and social sciences) for it to be on the sound path towards ensuring greater degree of human flourishing.[33] Human flourishing partly requires humane qualities such as sympathy, love and altruism. Humane rationality leads us to the kind of knowledge that would enable us to determine how best to use scientific and technological knowledge to bring about society that is more humane.

**Necessity of Indigenous Knowledge in Knowledge Production Process**

Knowledge production in contemporary Africa should be an integrated process which brings on board all people and institutions engaged in its various forms. This process should incorporate indigenous knowledge and formal disciplinary knowledge generated in the research institutions. This should involve the retrieval, documentation, study, analysis and validation of indigenous knowledge to establish their veracity, efficacy and appropriateness. There are already some commendable efforts towards this direction going on in Africa. Attempts have been made at documenting selected forms of indigenous knowledge in West Africa[34] and across Africa.[35] In Kenya, John Kokwaro has also done some commendable work

[30] Masolo 2010, 34.
[31] Taiwo 1993, 903.
[32] Wiredu 2000, 183; Oruka1997, 108-114.
[33] Wiredu 2000, 184-186.
[34] Hountondji, Paulin, J. ed. *Endogenous Knowledge: Research Trails*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997; Hountondji 2004, 534.
[35] The World Bank, African Region, *Indigenous Knowledge: Local Pathways to Global Development*, 2004.

in this respect.[36] But these kinds of projects should be intensified and made more comprehensive covering all aspects of knowledge. It is fortunate that Africa did not completely lose traces of her indigenous knowledge.[37] Concerted effort should be expended on recovering any form of indigenous knowledge that can be recovered. This kind of knowledge would then be analyzed, validated and then integrated into the contemporary knowledge systems.

Modern formal institutions concerned with knowledge production in Africa such as universities and other research institutions should focus on generating knowledge in all disciplines. This should include appropriating any ingenious knowledge that may have been produced from outside Africa.[38] When indigenous knowledge systems and modern disciplinary knowledge systems are integrated, then a tradition of an ongoing mainstream knowledge production would have been established in Africa. In this way indigenous knowledge would no longer be peripheralized, but the whole comprehensive process of knowledge production[39] including the scientific and technological knowledge would become, as Hountondji puts it, one continuous uninterrupted process owned, mastered and capitalized by African people which they can use for their own development and improvement of the quality of their life.[40]

In contemporary African philosophy this has been achieved to some extent by the development and incorporation of philosophic sagacity which emphasizes, among other objectives, the appropriation of indigenous philosophic knowledge, into contemporary African philosophy.[41] When the sage philosophy project was first initiated by H. Odera Oruka at the University of Nairobi in 1974[42], one of its main objectives was to look for indigenous philosophy whose existence would debunk the then racialist and bias claim that there never existed a possibility of philosophy in the strict sense of the term in Africa. The data collected and analyzed from the interviews of sages has become an invaluable resource in contemporary African philosophy.[43] Today, a course in contemporary African philosophy is incomplete without the inclusion of philosophic sagacity as one of its trends.

## Conclusion

In order for Africans to engage in genuine knowledge production which is not marginalized in relation to global knowledge systems, and which they own, control, manage and can use to address and manage development in Africa, first, Africans need to liberate themselves, at least those who are still mentally enslaved, from the subservient position to which they are entrapped by the foreign patronizing power systems. In doing that Africans would develop self-confidence and would then engage in knowledge production which is not extroverted. Such knowledge would be more congenial to African own conditions and problems.

Second, African governments, corporate organizations and other organizations concerned with knowledge consumptions should put more focus and direct more funds towards knowledge production in Africa. In that way the people who are involved in knowledge production in Africa would be more accountable and responsible to the people of Africa. That

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[36] John O. Kokwaro, *Luo-English Botanical Dictionary of Plant Names and Their Uses* (1972); John O. Kokwaro, *Medicinal Plants of East Africa* (1976/1993); John O. Kokwaro and Timothy Johns, *Luo Biological Dictionary* (1998).
[37] Hountondji 1995, 6-7
[38] Hountondji 2004, 535; Wiredu 2000, 181-182.
[39] Hountondji 2004, 534-535
[40] Ibid.
[41] Oruka 1997, 182.
[42] Oruka 1991, 17.
[43] Oruka 1990, 113.

would mean that Africa would depend less or not at all on knowledge transfer from foreign countries which, as things stand now, own and control much of the knowledge that Africa critically needs for her development. At the moment Africa cannot effectively exploit her natural resources for her development partly because she lacks requisite knowledge especially scientific and technological knowledge for such a task. The inevitable consequence of that is the unfortunate situation where even after fighting so hard to liberate herself from colonialism, she is still trapped in a neocolonial structure where much of her resources are still controlled and exploited by foreign powers. At present there is an ongoing scramble for resources in Africa by foreign powers, especially America, Europe and Asia.[44] And so long as African economic resources are controlled by foreign powers she will not be independent in the most serious and genuine sense.

Third, Africa has to evolve a network of knowledge production and exchange among her knowledge producers. Through such network, Africa would produce knowledge primarily for her use. Those involved in knowledge production would be able to discuss and exchange their findings. That way, there would be coordination of knowledge production and development in Africa.

Fourth, Africa needs to develop awareness of the necessity of visionary and responsible leadership especially political leadership and systems of realizing such leadership. Sound development requires sound leadership. Leadership is indispensable for articulating social ideals and how such ideals can be realized. Such leadership would steer Africa towards developing strategies of how to generate and utilize her knowledge for her own development. African leadership needs to strive to understand that knowledge is essential for social development and that the primary role of leaders is to help create environment and conditions that engender the general improvement of the quality of human life in Africa, and not to seek and occupy positions of leadership merely for personal aggrandizement. Leadership entails social responsibility for the general wellbeing of the lead.

[44] Taiwo 2009, 10.

# Part IV
# Africa and the Philosophy of Education

# PRAGMATIC EPISTEMOLOGY FOR SCIENCE PEDAGOGY IN KENYA'S VISION 2030

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**Abstract**

Science as content of school curriculum continues to gain importance globally in view of its social, technological and economic value for human development and well-being. In Kenya's Vision 2030 the government is required to devote more resources in scientific research and in improving quality in teaching science, mathematics and technology in schools, polytechnics and universities. The aim is to intensify application of science, technology and innovation to raise productivity and quality of life. Vision 2030 calls for improvement in quality of teaching science for development of society and for inspiring life-long interest in application of scientific knowledge. Analysis of cognitive dimension of education in Kenya by Njoroge and Bennaars fails to avail an epistemological theory appropriate for anchorage of pedagogy of science education in Kenya. However, Dewey's theory of pragmatic epistemology is analyzed in terms of its appropriateness for science pedagogy in Kenya's Vision 2030. Dewey argued for pedagogy of science that is learner-centered based on heuristic or practical problem solving as learning activities. Dewey's pragmatic pedagogy of science education is found to provide suitable grounding of science pedagogy. The paper argues for adoption of Dewey's pragmatic epistemology as appropriate for heuristic pedagogy of science education in Kenya's Vision 2030.

**KEY WORDS:** Science, Pragmatic epistemology, Vision 2030, heuristics, pedagogy
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## Introduction

Science as content of school curriculum continues to gain importance globally in view of its social, technological and economic value for human development and well-being. Since early 20th century science, mathematics and technological knowledge in industrialized countries gained prominence in curriculum.[1] The aim was 'to provide a human infrastructure with the ability to ensure the path towards progress'.[2] Similarly Kenya's Vision 2030 'intends to create a competitive and adaptive human resource base to meet the requirements of a rapidly industrializing economy' through life-long training and education.[3] The strategy is to raise quality in teaching science, mathematics and technology in schools, polytechnics and universities.[4] The expected outcome is intensified application of science, technology and innovation to raise productivity and efficiency of workforce.[5] Teaching of science is therefore imperative for development of society and for inspiring life-long interest in application of scientific knowledge in solving development problems in the country. The argument in this

[1] Radford, L (2015) *Epistemology as research Category in Mathematics Teaching and Learning.* N.Y.: Springer, 1.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] GoK (2007) *Kenya Vision 2030: A Globally Competitive and Prosperous Kenya*,11.
[4] Ibid., ix.
[5] Ibid.

paper is that pragmatic epistemology is an appropriate anchorage for pedagogy of science instrumental in knowledge-economy.

Kenya's Vision 2030 fits within the narrative of knowledge-based economy since *inter alia* it is expected that 'implementing Vision 2030 will require more knowledge-based skills' of the labor force[6], and education is charged with responsibility of 'creating a knowledge-based society'.[7] 'Knowledge-based economy' or society is a current term in economic discourse which links science, technology and education to development.[8] This term gained ascendancy in economic discourse with new theory of development where knowledge is a factor of production. Traditional factors of production are land, labor, capital, but also materials, energy and entrepreneurship. Inclusion of knowledge amongst factors of production is predicated on the premise that 'economy is more strongly … rooted in the production, distribution and use of knowledge'.[9] Knowledge-based economy is a function of 'the production, distribution and use of knowledge'.[10] Godin opines that we live in a time of information explosion, information deluge, or information chaos. Information is not knowledge. Godin relies on Machlup's 1962 work[11] to distinguish knowledge from information, 'to inform is an activity by which knowledge is conveyed; to know may be the result of having been informed'.[12] Information is a process, an activity but knowledge is a state, a result. However, 'information as that which is being communicated becomes identical with knowledge in the sense of that which is known'.[13] Semetsky asserts that 'pragmatic inquiry is concerned with organizing information into knowledge.'[14] The concept of knowledge as employed in relation to economy denotes dispositional rather than propositional knowledge. Dispositional knowledge is about how to do something in terms of practical know-how of using knowledge to specific task. Unlike propositional knowledge which denotes knowing-that in terms of contemplative intellective and speculative theoretical understanding. Dispositional knowledge is that which makes practical difference in its use. Theory of knowledge espoused under knowledge-based society is practical; it transcends traditional epistemological speculations of nature of knowledge germane to debate between rationalism and empiricism.

'What knowledge is of most worth? This question remains classical since it was first asked by Herbert Spencer in 1859. He 'concluded that from all points of view scientific knowledge is most valuable'.[15] Scientific work is 'creation of new knowledge, new applications of knowledge to useful purposes, or furtherance of the creation of new knowledge or new applications'.[16] This is pragmatic view of scientific work for its

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[6] Ibid., 100.
[7] Ibid., 93.
[8] Godin, B (2009) *The Making of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy: Conceptual Frameworks as Narratives, 1945-2005.* Quebec: Centre Urbanisation Culture Institute National de la Recherche Scientifique, 100
[9] Ibid., 280.
[10] Ibid., 279.
[11] Fritz Machlup, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*, Princeton, New Jersey Princeton University Press,1962.
[12] Godin, 2009, 313
[13] Ibid., 314
[14] Semetsky, I (2009) *Re-readding Dewey through the Lens of Complexity Science, or: On the Creative Logic of Education. Complexity Theory and the Philosophy of Education.* Edited by Mark Mason, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 88.
[15] Dewey, J (2014) *Democracy and Education: An introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916). Delhi: Aakar Books Classics, 239.
[16] Godin 2009, 317.

instrumental use in society. Scientific knowledge is of most value in Kenya's Vision 2030 for its application in development to improve quality of life for all Kenyans.

**Problem Statement**

Kenya's Vision 2030 is a blue-print for improving quality of life of all Kenyans by the year 2030. Education requires reforming in order to play its role effectively in Vision 2030. Key aspect of educational reform is improvement of quality in teaching science in schools, polytechnics and universities.[17] Discourse on nature of teaching is called pedagogy. Thus Vision 2030 is calling for pedagogical reform in science education. Pedagogy "comprises teachers' ideas, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and understanding about the curriculum, the teaching and learning process and their students, and which impact on their 'teaching practices', that is, what teachers actually think, do and say in the classroom".[18] Pedagogy is the theory that informs teaching practices of teachers. Recent curriculum reforms have moved away from 'teacher-centered pedagogic approaches to more student-centered learning approaches. Pedagogical approaches are also informed by theories of learning, which in turn presuppose educational philosophies.[19] This paper argues that educational reforms in Kenya relating to pedagogy have to embrace student-centered pedagogical approaches. Thus Vision 2030 requires an appropriate educational philosophy to guide in student-centered pedagogy. One aspect of educational philosophy is epistemology, it analyses relationship between education and knowledge in teaching and learning activity.[20] Classroom pedagogy is an enactment of epistemic beliefs of a teacher. Thus, pedagogical practice presupposes an epistemic perspective.

Vision 2030 has taken an epistemological stance in prioritizing teaching of science. However, what epistemological theory is appropriate to inform student-centered pedagogy for teaching science intended for application in national development? Dewey asserts that 'philosophic problems arise because of wide-spread and widely felt difficulties in social practice.'[21] Vision 2030 presents widespread philosophic problem in education when it calls for pedagogical reform in national educational practice. This paper assesses epistemological theory of Njoroge and Bennaars educational philosophers in Kenya and in light of shortcomings there-from pragmatic epistemology of Dewey is analyzed for its appropriateness in improving quality of pedagogical practices in science education in Kenyan schools, polytechnics and universities.[22]

**Objective of the study**

The objective of this study is to analyze appropriateness of pragmatic epistemology of Dewey for improvement of quality of pedagogy of science education in Kenyan schools, polytechnics and universities.

**Research question**

The research question in this study is stated as follows:

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[17] GoK 2007, ix.

[18] Westbrook, J et als (2013) *Pedagogy, Curriculum, Teaching Practices and Teacher Education in Developing Countries. Final Report. Education Rigorous Literature Review. Department for International Development.* UKAID, University of Sussex, 7.

[19] McNergney, R and Herbert, J (1998) *Foundations of Education: The Challenge of Professional Practice.* 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon,138.

[20] Njoroge, R and Bennaars, G (1986) *Philosophy and education in Africa: an introductory Text for Students of Education.* Nairobi: Transafrica, 145.

[21] Dewey, 2014, 353.

[22] GoK 2007, ix.

Is pragmatic epistemology of Dewey relevant to improve quality of pedagogy of science education in Kenyan schools, polytechnics and universities?

## Research Design and methodology

This study is philosophical in nature and therefore focuses on conceptual clarity and argumentation. It aims to elucidate on epistemological base of pedagogy in science education. The study employs method of conceptual analysis in relating epistemology and pedagogy to science education. The study considers whether pragmatic epistemology can provide theoretical grounding of pedagogy of science education in Kenya under Vision 2030.

## Epistemological Analysis of Education in Kenya

Epistemology is theory of knowledge.[23] It is used in education firstly to reflect on how objects of knowledge feature in school practice. Secondly, it analyses formation of knowledge in education.[24] Objects of knowledge feature in school curriculum based on needs assessment of the society but learners form or acquire knowledge under pedagogical practices of teachers. Here epistemology is approached from the perspective of cognitive dimension of education. Njoroge and Bennaars are pioneer philosophers of education in Kenya. Their textbook of 1986 remains a canonical pedagogical resource in philosophy of education in Kenya. Concept of education is analysed under four dimensions: cognitive, normative, dialogical and creative.[25] The focus here is on cognitive dimension of education which is epistemological. Have Njoroge and Bennaars (1986) analysed an epistemological theory that they believe is appropriate for student-centred pedagogy in Kenya? Based on their analysis is there pedagogical practice in Kenya that can raise quality of teaching mathematics, science and technology in schools, polytechnics and universities for Vision 2030? Njoroge and Bennaars[26] observe that students 'in matters of knowledge' 'display a strong belief in the word of the teacher' and 'in recommended textbooks' this results in students acquiring '*authoritative knowledge'*. Further, 'students seem to accept the word of the teacher and the textbook without much questioning.' This dogmatic and naïve epistemic belief is 'encouraged…by authoritarian teachers'.[27] Authoritarian pedagogy was also observed by Balazsi and Balogh[28] in their comparison of classroom pedagogy between Kenya and Sweden. From their findings 'Kenyan education is characterized by only one right way of thinking, moralistic lessons in schools, punishment for errors, discipline and duty, and obeying rules. There are roles and rules for all and authorities have a large control'[29]. It is believed that where pedagogy is authoritarian learning process becomes conditioning, indoctrination or brainwashing in addition to mechanical exercise in mental skills like drilling.[30] The analogy used to describe such education is 'banking education' where teachers deposit knowledge in the *tabula rasa* heads of the students. The imagery here is to evoke idea of depositing money in bank account which one withdraws on demand. Similarly, in authoritarian pedagogical practices students are viewed 'as depositories, as receptacles or empty vessels, which are to be filled with knowledge; students are expected to keep and guard this knowledge till it is demanded back

[23] Rescher, N (2003) *Epistemology: An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge.* N.Y.: State University of New York, xiii.
[24] Radford 2015, 3.
[25] Njoroge, R and Bennaars, G 1986, 135.
[26] Ibid., 162.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Balazsi, G and Balogh, E (2007) *Obey God and Your Teacher: Teaching and Learning Methods Engaged in Three Kenyan Schools.* Thesis. Varjo Universitet, Sweden.
[29] Ibid., 39.
[30] Njoroge, R and Bennaars, G 1986, 162.

at the time of examination'.[31] Thus, 'students tend to be passive and docile in matters of knowledge', consequently knowledge is like an object. This means that students 'acquire ideas or notions without understanding them fully. Learning experience 'hardly changes them'.[32]

The only concern of students is to 'learn for purposes of the examination'. Nyerere described it as 'a big mistake' that 'after getting the certificate and using it to obtain employment' some people 'never use the knowledge of reading and writing.'[33] It is as if their purpose of going to school was to get certificate and use it to get employment then hang it up for all to see. This is what is referred to as 'diploma disease' it equivocates schooling with education.[34] It appears that predominant pedagogy in Kenya is anchored on behaviorism, a theory of learning which 'supports teacher-controlled approaches where the teacher is the sole authority figure…. Assessment is often exam-oriented.' Behavioral pedagogical approaches are evident in teaching/learning practices like 'lecturing, demonstration, rote learning, memorization, choral repetition, direct/explicit instruction'.[35] Njoroge and Bennaars analyzed empiricism which is the epistemic theoretical base of behavioral psychology however they failed to link the two and they did not draw pedagogical implications from empirical epistemology. The problem of authoritarian, banking education and its attendant evils persists in science education in Kenya. Njoroge and Bennaars are vague on their proposal of African traditional view where 'knowledge as well as truth have a social dimension.'[36] This social dimension is supposed to mitigate Western atomistic learning a point already lamented in the first post-independence commission of education report namely *Kenya Education Commission Report* (GoK, 1964). This report observed that 'in our schools, we find the idea of competition pressed to an astonishing degree'.[37] Njoroge and Bennaars argue that although individual process of knowing is a personal experience the knowledge acquired is 'not merely for one's own sake, but also for a social purpose' however they have not sufficiently elaborated on this point.[38] They fail to identify an epistemological theory to inform pedagogy that can correct the problem of authoritarian and banking education. Thus, teaching of mathematics, science and technology will face similar problem as observed, thereby education failing to realize its role in Kenya's Vision 2030.

**Dewey Pragmatic Epistemology**

Pragmatism is the theory of knowledge advanced by Dewey; it is 'continuity of knowing with an activity'.[39] Scheffler explained the beginning of pragmatism as anti-Cartesian.[40] Pragmatic epistemology 'developed a functional view of thought, relating cognition to the purposive life of the organism, responding to problems set by its environment'.[41] The rejection of Cartesian dualism is vehement in Dewey who points at 'the evil results which have flowed from this dualism of mind and body'.[42] This evil of Cartesian dualism affects education when learning

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Nyerere, J.K. (1979) *The Tanzanian Experience: Education for Liberation and Development.*Edited by Hinzen and Hundsdorfer. Ibadan: Evans Brothers, 46.
[34] Njoroge, R and Bennaars, G 1986, 151.
[35] Westbrook et als 2013, 9.
[36] Njoroge, R and Bennaars, G 1986, 158, 163.
[37] GoK (1964) *Kenya Education Commission Report.Part I,* 23.
[38] Njoroge, R and Bennaars, G 1986, 163.
[39] Dewey, 2014,369.
[40] Scheffler, I (2009) *Worlds of Truth: A Philosophy of Knowledge*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
[41] Ibid., 100.
[42] Dewey, 2014, 153.

is reduced to merely cognitive affair divorced from experience of bodily activity. He explains:

> In schools, those under instruction are too customarily looked upon as acquiring knowledge by direct energy of intellect. The very word pupil has almost come to mean one who is engaged not in having fruitful experiences but in absorbing knowledge directly. Something which is called mind or consciousness is severed from the physical organs of activity. The former is then thought to be purely intellectual and cognitive; the latter to be an irrelevant and intruding physical factor. The intimate union of activity and undergoing its consequences which lead to recognition of meaning is broken; instead we have two fragments: mere bodily action on one side, and meaning directly grasped by 'spiritual' activity on the other.[43]

Dewey encapsulates epistemological base of theoretical and academic learning which lacks practical relevance to life experience. Seckinger calls it 'didactic aspect of cognitive-intellectual aspect of teaching and learning' which is 'the stock in trade of most formal schooling' where teachers 'transmit theoretical knowledge' and learning becomes 'memorization of given truth for its own sake, divorced from its original contexts of argument'.[44] In 'surrendering Cartesian individualism, pragmatists offer in its place a social conception of science as the effort, not of single inquirers, but of an open-ended community of investigators to learn from experience in a systematic way'.[45] This idea can be useful in offsetting the academic competition which has led to exam malpractices in Kenya. Learners must be taught to view learning experience as cooperative endeavor. Dewey[46] developed 'a new philosophy of experience and knowledge' where experience is not what we have accumulated from the past by chance or custom but rather 'it is a deliberate control of what is done with reference to making what happens to us and what we do to things as fertile as possible of suggestions (meanings) and a means for trying out the validity of the suggestions.' The trying out is experimentation which is guided by an aim and conducted methodically to become enlightening and instructive in managing subsequent experiences. In this pragmatic theory of experience and knowledge the traditional separation of doing and knowing is dismantled. That is theory and practice constitute two sides of the same coin. This experimental method of Dewey hopes to undo 'authoritative methods of forming beliefs which have governed the schools of the past'.[47]

Appropriate pedagogy is one that makes students inquirers not disciples. Such a pedagogy is to be predicated on pragmatic epistemology which relies on experimental method as a scientific resource of creating or constructing knowledge.[48] Dewey's technical definition of education suggests its pedagogy, he states education is 'that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience'.[49] Intelligence is the capacity to perceive connections and continuities in experience. This translates to capacity to control what happens in latter experiences. Thus 'educative experience' increases capacity of learners to reconstruct knowledge for subsequent use. Genuine knowledge in education is prospective; it is resource by which problematic situation present opportunity for testing its practicability. Schools must cease to be places where learners cram ideas from teachers and standard textbooks as an end-in-itself. Rather school must use pedagogy that makes learners inquirers who text ideas,

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[43] Ibid., 152.
[44] Donald S. Seckinger, (1982) "Three dimensions of Education" in McGill *journal of education* vol. xvii No. 1, 24.
[45] Scheffler 2009, 100.
[46] Dewey, 2014, 294.
[47] Ibid., 364.
[48] Ibid., 363.
[49] Ibid., 86.

theory, principles for their practical utility in solving problems. Dewey cautions that scientific knowledge is not to be communicated in a ready-made structure. Science textbooks are indispensable part of science education however their presentation of science does not constitute scientific method. Textbook presentation of science tends to communicate science in statements removed from fruitful contact with everyday experiences. Such knowledge though 'stated in technically correct scientific form … remains a body of inert information'.[50] If this pedagogical approach dominates teaching of science the student 'learns symbols without key to their meaning. He acquires a technical body of information without ability to trace its connections to his environment'.[51] Dewey counsels that introducing science in 'perfected form is a stumbling block' to the non-expert because 'scientific form is an ideal to be achieved, not a starting point from which to set out'.[52]

Dewey warns against pedagogical assumption that presenting science in 'its perfected form provides a royal road to learning'.[53] It is as if the non-expert is expected to start from where the expert left off. This is evident in textbooks where students are led to study science with topics organized from perspective of the expert scientist. Scientific technical concepts and laws are introduced and defined from the outset without indication of their derivation. The student 'simply acquires a peculiar vocabulary'[54] in form of scientific statements which 'use signs and symbols' in a cognitive system which does not designate 'things directly in their practical use in experience'.[55] Symbols for scientific inquiry like atoms, molecules, chemical formulae among others are abstractions meaningless to students without scientific expertise. Their meaning like all tools is in their use; they can only be learnt by 'pointing to their work when they are employed as part of the technique of knowledge'.[56] Dewey explains that 'knowing' the definitions, rules, formulae, etc., is like knowing the names of parts of a machine without knowing what they do. It is like memorizing names of roads in a city without acquaintance of where they lead. In other words learners acquire the ideas or terms used in science but cannot relate them in daily life experiences. But Dewey has more serious point to make in distinguishing scientific knowledge as instrumental, a resource of solving problems. If a student has no concept of a scientific formula beyond nominal cramming how can he get to use it as instrument in solving problems not only in science but in ordinary social experience? Dewey proposes pedagogy of problem-solving approach alternatively called heuristics.

**Heuristic Pedagogy**

Heuristics refers to 'the cognitive-problem-solving mode of teaching-learning' experience.[57] Heuristics lays emphasis on knowledge that is actionable. That is knowledge which can be used to bring change in the world. Seckinger associates heuristics with Dewey and progressive philosophies of education. He claims that heuristics 'employs what Dewey called the method of science. Heuristics is focused on further inquiry, testing, experimenting with knowledge. It holds knowledge as tentative and contingent. It safeguards against stagnation which didactic pedagogy is prone to engender. Heuristics progressively uses methods of inquiry which may yield undisclosed knowledge. Heuristics is 'a method of solving problems by finding practical ways of dealing with them, it is learning from past experience' (Oxford

[50] Ibid., 239.
[51] Ibid., 238.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 240.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Seckinger 1982, 24

dictionary). Heuristic pedagogy encourages learners to discover things by themselves under guidance of teachers. However, Cronin cautions that an educational system 'cannot afford the time to allow students to discover everything for themselves.'[58] Nonetheless he suggests that 'an educational system which allowed more time for personal research and discovery would motivate and encourage students' to form disposition of working through problems with confidence and self-reliance. Under pressure of time at school, pressure to complete syllabus and anxiety of exams, teachers don't have luxury of heuristics. The easy option out is traditional didactic teaching where the 'accumulated discoveries of generations of scholars are put together systematically and the student has to understand, remember, digest it all in one semester and repeat it in the exam'[59]. It seems for heuristic pedagogy to work the curriculum must not be crowded, school teaching timetable must allocate more time for teaching and learning activities, and teachers must have heuristic competence as part of repertoire of pedagogical content knowledge. Heuristic works where student and teacher are both actuated by desire to know or co-joint knowledge creation. There is deep love of learning, an inquiring mind, a thirst for knowledge. These conditions sustain perseverance and intellectual grit in thoughtful experimentation with alternative solutions to problems. But when the students lack personal interest in the subject, lacks sufficient motivation to learn, heuristic fails. Cronin asserts that 'knowing begins in inquiry'[60] or as Dewey declared the 'initial stage of…thinking is *experience.'*[61] Intelligence reflects on the experience in search of understanding the problem. Many thought activities and experiments are involved. Sketches are drawn, analogies are explored, relevant past experiences are summoned in memory, suggestions are tested out.

All these activities are united by desire of finding a solution. Thinking and learning become purposive, urgent and determined in problem solving. Thinking in attempt to solve problem where no ready-made formula is available is reflection. It is prospective thinking. It is 'to think things through, to understand correctly, to find correct solution to the problems'.[62] Such reflection involves searching for connections, relations and possibilities. Heuristic thinking is akin to conversation with others; such kind of conversation involves thought activities like 'considering, rejecting, arguing, referring to examples, invoking images, working things out'.[63] It is thinking that is 'connected with increase of efficiency in action'.[64] At the end we arrive at a solution or we remain frustrated without solution but not giving up. Heuristic thinking starts with puzzlement, a challenge to intelligence. We attempt to define the problem presented by the puzzle. Then we begin to think how to solve it. When learners become adept at disposition of problem solving they become productive resourceful human beings in society. Nyerere calls it 'education of creators, not for creatures.'[65] Heuristic pedagogy could raise quality of teaching mathematics, science and technology for Vision 2030. It will 'teach us to improve our lives. We need to learn how to produce more in our farms and in our factories and offices'.[66]

## Conclusion

[58] Cronin, B (2005) *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitional Theory and Epistemology.* Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy, 66.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Dewey, 2014, 166.
[62] Cronin 2005, 59.
[63] Ibid., 60.
[64] Dewey, 2014, 165.
[65] Nyerere, 1979, 44.
[66] Ibid., 33.

Vision 2030 in Kenya under social pillar tasks education with making Kenya a knowledge-based society. This requires education to improve quality of pedagogy of science to enhance productive and competitive workforce. Due to its heuristic method pragmatic epistemology is found to be appropriate for improving pedagogy of science education in Kenyan schools, polytechnics and universities. Pragmatic epistemology and its heuristic pedagogy is relevant in forming dispositions of problem solving necessary for knowledge-based economy for Kenya's Vision 2030.

## Recommendations

1. Reforms in education for Vision 2030 in Kenya should allocate more time in teaching timetable for learners to practice skills in problem solving
2. Teachers, tutors and lecturers undertake workshops on heuristic pedagogy
3. Policy makers in education be made aware of how epistemology relates to pedagogy
4. Teachers need to identify, examine, assess and evaluate their epistemic beliefs in terms of how they inform their pedagogical behaviour

# INTEGRATING PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper will discuss the relation between philosophy and education in Kenya. It will consist in an evaluation of the status of the discipline of philosophy in Kenya's education system and urge for a broad-based inclusion of philosophy in the on-going education reform discourse in the country. Specifically, it will argue for the inclusion of technophilosophy which emphasizes the instrumental function of philosophy. This is in recognition of the fact that education is partly a psychotechnology with accompanying philosophical assumptions. The paper will propose three philosophical areas which are appropriate for an elaboration of an educational technophilosophy namely; scientific ethics, virtue epistemology and general methodology (or prescriptive epistemology). These three are suggested because first, they are the desiderata of all academic disciplines, secondly, they are transferable to all spheres of life and lastly, they are relatively amenable to tests and measurements whose outcomes can form the basis of an argument to policy-makers thereby making a case for inclusion of philosophy in the broader educational curriculum in Kenya.*

## Introduction

I adopt Kwasi Wiredu's "strategic particularism", in doing African philosophy, which allows that we may seek to generalize from a particular case.[1] Kenya is our particular case and it is currently at the point of reviewing its education curriculum. This is another attempt in a long chain of such attempts in the past and hopefully, it will not be the last one as we continually strive towards a better educational policy and curriculum. The first education commission to attempt a review was set up soon after independence. It was the Ominde commission in 1964, under the stewardship of Simeon Ominde, aimed at revamping the colonial education curriculum which was designed to prepare Africans principally for clerical and administrative tasks; next followed the Gachathi taskforce in 1976; the famous Mackay commission of 1981 which adopted the 8-4-4 system of education; the Koech commission of 1988-89[2]; and currently the National Conference on Curriculum Reforms 2017 has proposed to do away with the 8-4-4 system and replace it with 2-6-3-3-3 system. In all the previous attempts at curriculum review the concern has always been equity, access, quality, and relevance. While these remain the concern for the current proposal, it does shift the focus from examinations to competences, talents and technical skills.

Competence-based learning aims at developing specific intellectual capacities, habits, and dispositions. It is contrasted to information-based learning, which is becoming redundant in the information age in which information is readily available at the touch of a button. It is here argued that competence-based learning is best achieved through the acquisition of a

[1] Kwasi Wiredu, "On Decolonizing African Religions" in Coetzee, P. H. and Roux A. P. J. (eds.), *Philosophy from Africa*, Oxford/Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 2002, p 20

[2] Pius M. Wanyama and John K. Chang'ach, "Education Reforms in Kenya for Innovation" in International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol. 3 No. 9, May 2013, p 126 p 123 - 145

philosophical mindset. Yet this educational function of philosophy is not readily apparent to everyone. It is in this context that the paper is motivated.

One of the most difficult questions to any teacher is, when at the end of it all, the students ask what they can do with whatever you have taught in the course. The teacher of philosophy is no exception to this question, and particularly at a time when philosophy's relevance in today's world is hotly debated. Philosophy's overriding concern with highly abstract questions, its insistence on rigorous applications of logic in its explanations, its questioning of common assumptions, its pursuit of logical as well as moral implications of science and technology all serve to earn it a bad name and a general characterization as a discipline of hair-splitting and sterile argumentation.

Bertrand Russell addressed this question of the value of philosophy. He pointed out the intrinsic value of philosophy which lies in the fact that it gives unity and system to the body of the sciences and also that the profundity of its questions which remain insoluble to the current human intellect contribute to the development of free-thinking. Thus he recommends that

> "philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions…but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good"[3]

Certainly, Russell was driven to this position by the basic conviction that "the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body". However, in order to advance the cause of philosophy in the contemporary world, the appeal to the intrinsic value of philosophy alone, just as of any science, will not be convincing due to the prevalent pragmatic mindset which emphasizes the instrumental or extrinsic value of learning. The worth of any discipline nowadays tends to be judged by how it contributes to solving practical problems. So, in the same essay Russell recognizes this when he points out that

> "Physical science, through the medium of inventions, is useful to innumerable people who are wholly ignorant of it; thus the study of physical science is to be recommended, not only, or primarily, because of the effect on the student, but rather because of the effect on mankind in general. Thus utility does not belong to philosophy. If the study of philosophy has any value at all for others than students of philosophy, it must be only indirectly through its effect upon the lives of those who study it. It is in these effects, therefore, if anywhere, that the value of philosophy must be primarily sought." [4]

It is the proposal for the search for the extrinsic value of philosophy which motivates this paper. It proposes that inclusion of philosophy in the general education curriculum will enable it to induce its effects on the learners thereby making them better learners and practitioners in whatever field they may be in. I have isolated three basic areas of focus namely; virtue epistemology, scientific ethics, and prescriptive epistemology. I refer to such an approach, which emphasizes the instrumentality of philosophy, as technophilosophy in order to distinguish it from theoretical philosophy which emphasizes pursuit of knowledge for its own sake together with its accompanying intrinsic values. This distinction does not

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[3] Bertrand Russell quoted in John Chafee, *The Philosopher's Way*, Boston: Pearson, 2016, pp 34 - 35

[4] Bertrand Russell, *Op. Cit.* 34

imply a preferential judgment; it only urges us to tap into the rich heritage of theoretical philosophy and apply it to educational practice thereby enhancing the argument for the inclusion of philosophy in the broader education curriculum.

**Virtue Epistemology**

Kenya has proposed to revise its education system from 8-4-4 to 2-6-3-3-3 system which means the learners will spend two years in pre-primary, six in primary, three in junior high school and three in senior high, then finally, three in tertiary institutions.[5] The philosophical interest in the proposed system lies less in the distribution of the years spent in school but rather on the proposed shift of focus which hints to a push from examinations-oriented 8-4-4 to one that emphasizes epistemological virtues. The proposed system is anchored on several pillars among which are communication and collaboration, self-efficacy, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, and learning how to learn. A part from the humanities, social sciences and STEM (science, technology, education and mathematics) the learners will also be taught global citizenship, health and life skills. I submit that the insights gleaned from virtue epistemology which encourages the cultivation of such values in the learners would be instrumental in helping realize the aspirations of the new curriculum.

Virtue epistemology was a re-orientation in epistemology as an attempt to reconcile the foundationalists and the reliabilists whose controversies pose irresolvable difficulties to epistemologists. Ernest Sosa (1991: 284), one of its chief proponents, holds that a justified belief should be held as so due to its origin in stable intellectual dispositions. Such a disposition is an intellectual or epistemic virtue which he describes as a subject's competence to distinguish between truth and falsehood in a field, F of propositions under circumstances, C. [6]

Another proponent of virtue epistemology, Linda Zagzebski, in her turn, defines an intellectual virtue as a "deep and enduring acquired excellence of the human person that includes both a motivational component and a component of a reliable success in bringing about the end of the motivational component"[7]. She cites the following as instances of intellectual virtues; open-mindedness, intellectual autonomy, perseverance and attentiveness.

Others in the virtue epistemology school have added some more, such as, insight, understanding, inquisitiveness, intellectual humility, skepticism, intellectual criticism, diligence, resourcefulness, ingenuity, thoughtfulness, care for knowledge, intellectual honesty, independence of judgment, intellectual courage, love of intellectual freedom, sense of justice, egalitarianism (autonomy), rationality, full disclosure, creativity, thought, debate, initiative, leadership, and ironically, rebellion[8].

Richard Paul, in the context of critical thinking, identifies the following intellectual traits[9]:

1. Intellectual integrity: applying the same standards to yourself as to others
2. Intellectual honesty: the concern and commitment for truth, rationality, objectivity and testability as well as contempt for falsehood

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[5] The Daily Nation, Wednesday, 15th February,2017, pp 19-22 and The Standard, Tuesday, 31st January 2017, 1 & 8

[6] Ernest Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 284

[7] Linda Zagzebski, "Précis of Virtues of the Mind" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 60*: 172

[8] Jason Baehr, J. (ed.), *Intellectual Virtues and Education*, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2016

[9] Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *The Miniature guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools*, 4th Edition, The Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2007, www.criticalthinking.org, 16-17

3. Intellectual perseverance: Tenacity of purpose and patience in search for truth
4. Confidence in reason: Respect for evidence and reason as ways of discovering truth.
5. Intellectual autonomy: cherishing independence of thought and judgment. This involves the habit of searching for evidence or proof without appealing to ultimate authority
6. Intellectual freedom: The freedom to investigate, criticize, and take sides, as well as the respect of individual rights and civil liberties that protect and promote freedom of research
7. Intellectual fairness: ability to reckon with other people's rights, feelings and opinions, as well as ability to empathize and switch to alternative and opposite points of view
8. Intellectual Courage: the disposition to tackle hard and even embarrassing problems, defend the truth, criticize error, and expose hoaxes irrespective of their source
9. Intellectual humility: recognition of one's limitations and ignorance, always giving credit where it is due

These virtues suggest that the core of science resides in intellectual honesty embodied in a willingness to have our certainties about the world constrained by good evidence and good argument. We should be honest and not shelter ideas from criticism. Without these virtues scientific research would degenerate into charlatanism.

But the sheer number of these virtues gives rise to some skepticism about their feasibility in education. This is compounded by the complex accounts of the identified virtues which have problematic implications of practical, pedagogical, and philosophical nature. This calls for further research and work aimed at specifying the distinctive characteristics and structures of each virtue as well as showing how they relate to one another.

For example, Battaly Heather distinguishes two categories of intellectual virtues; those that have got to do with truth and those that do with truth-motivations. The former she calls reliabilist virtues since they have to do with skills which reliably produce truth such as logical skills. The latter she calls responsibilist virtues because the individual learner is partly responsible for their acquisition. They have got to do with the motivations driving the pursuit of truth. For example, there are motivations which pursue truth as a means such as good grades and jobs and motivations that seek truth as an end in itself for example open-mindedness, intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy and intellectual courage.

While it is possible to cultivate the two kinds of intellectual virtues independently of each other, she recommends the simultaneous cultivation of both because they mutually reinforce one another. This is due to the fact that that

> "students who are learning to care more, and care appropriately, about truth are more likely to recognize the value of logical skills (as a means to truth) and to take their courses in logic seriously. They are also more likely to develop dispositions to use these skills when they should, and to apply these skills outside of the classroom. In contrast, students who care more about getting good grades than they do about getting truth are less likely to use their logical skills outside of class, and less likely to continue to use them after the semester ends."[10]

Responsibilist virtues are acquired dispositions of appropriate intellectual action, motivation, emotion and perception. Instances of intellectual actions are defending one's beliefs, conceding one's ignorance, formulating hypotheses, searching for evidence, considering

[10] Battaly Heather, "Responsibilist Virtues in Reliabilist Classrooms" in Baehr, J. (ed.), *Intellectual Virtues and Education*, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2016, 166

alternatives, etc. She proposes a strategy for developing responsibilist virtues among learners modeled on Aristotle's moral virtue namely; instruction, exemplars and practice.

While such distinctions among the intellectual virtues may be important I would also propose that research be further pursued which not only aim at classifying the virtues but also towards establishing relations and orderings among them. Such relations and orderings would be a logical framework for sequential development of the intellectual virtues. An example of virtue ordering by the relation of precedence is the following: i) intellectual honesty or cult of truth requires ii) an independence of judgment, that is, relying on evidence and reason instead of authority predicated on iii) intellectual courage, disposition to tackle hard problems, and criticize error dependent on iv) love of intellectual freedom to investigate, criticize, and take sides thereby reinforcing v) intellectual fairness, that is, disposition to reckon with other people's ideas and feelings. Such an order can form the basis of a curriculum from the basic level of education rising upwards in an increasing order corresponding to the precedence order of the virtues. Thus, the pedagogical order would start from four backwards to one and ending in five.

**Scientific Ethics**

The second component of educational technophilosophy that I propose is the promotion of scientific ethics. This is highly contentious to philosophers who are conscious that with the emergence of logical positivism, a wedge was driven between science and ethics. Ethics was henceforth regarded as based on intuition and emotions and not on rationality as had been maintained by traditional philosophers. Traditional philosophers proposed naturalistic ethical theories which hold that moral statements are factual in nature or are deducible solely from factual premises. But the logical positivists such as Moore, Ayer, Stevenson, and Hare held that ethical statements lack a truth-value hence not amenable to logical analysis. So, they rejected naturalistic ethics. For them, moral expressions such as 'good', 'ought' and 'right' do not refer to moral properties instantiated in the world, but are instead evaluative terms used to perform a distinctive function in language namely, commendatory speech act. Such a subjectivist and noncognitivist conception of ethics implied that it is irrelevant to science which emphasizes objectivity, truth and rationality.

Another usual argument for the thesis that ethics and science are separate is that science does not make value judgments but limits itself to accounting for facts. This means that science is constrained to saying what is and not what ought to be. This is known to philosophers as the fact-value gap. There is a grain of truth in this claim since it is the case that the content of logic, mathematics and the natural sciences are axiologically and ethically neutral. But the same does not hold for human and social sciences which must be interested in values. The latter must therefore be interested in values and valuation as a kind of human behaviour.

But even in the case of logico-mathematical and natural sciences, we have to point out that science is not exhausted by its content. The scientific process too is important in equal measure as its content. Yet, the scientific process itself is subject to valuation and norms. So, even if the content of scientific description, explanation, prediction and theorizing is axiologically and ethically neutral, we must recognize that the process of such scientific operations is committed axiologically and ethically.

This relation between science and ethics suggests that the fact-value gap can be bridged and exactly this is what technophilosophy is predicated on when we realize that 'action', which is its primitive concept, is simply an effort by an agent to use specific means to force the realization of a desired goal. This induces a clear and simple unification of what is and what ought to be.

Lastly, the more subtle cause of worry for the science-ethics relation lies in the fact that scientific research is usually dependent on funding from business, industry and government whose agents, due to self-interests and greed, normally cast aside ethical principles. This raises the suspicion that scientific research and findings are bound to serve the unethical interests of those who fund it. This is a legitimate concern for the postmodernist thinkers and the social constructivist theorists. It is more so likely in the social sciences such as economics and political science where ideology easily fuses with science. But this fear can be allayed when once again scientific research can demonstrate the philosophical contention by business ethicists that ethics, integrity, and reputation are valuable resources in these sectors thereby allaying the fears of their actors that ethics is in conflict with their interests.[11]

However, despite the above arguments for the separation of science from ethics and with the dust settling after the euphoria of logical positivism, philosophers recognize once again that ethics is intricately tied to science in the following ways, i) scientific research itself has its own ethos such as; thou shall not cook up data, thou shall share information, thou shall not steal ideas, thou shall tell the truth, etc; ii) the applications of science through technology have moral consequences that must be taken seriously into account; iii) the human and social sciences research carry a constant moral component because they study systems involving human beings; iv) ethics is amenable to scientific study, hence, it can be turned into a science in its own right.

The four components constitute scientific ethics but the paper focuses on the fourth aspect of science-ethics coupling which is founded on the assumption that ethics is cognitivist and can therefore be rendered scientific. The prospect of developing a scientific ethics is feasible through the confluence of three sources; descriptive ethics (or psychosocial ethics), the ethics of science, and analytic ethics. These would help build ethics as a science of good conduct which incorporates the scientific method and the scientific knowledge of individual and social behaviour. It would also include an inquiry into the neurological, demographic, and the social structures that support morality.

The proposal for scientific ethics is consonant with a long-standing philosophical tradition of ethical cognitivism which stretches back to Aristotle and holds that "the good and right are essentially bound up with human well-being and human flourishing, and virtuous actions are those that promote our well-being. Since there are ascertainable facts concerning human well-being and what promotes it, some facts do have moral consequences".[12] Hence, cognitivism (or objectivism or moral realism) investigates the issue of rationality in action i.e. they look for moral reasons for acting or refraining from acting in certain ways in certain circumstances; while the noncognitivists express skepticism at the idea that reason and facts, in themselves, can motivate action.

Analytical ethics confirms that ethical propositions are devoid of truth-value and it is precisely for this reason that ethics was thought irrelevant to logic and science. The explicit form of a moral sentence contains the moral predicates such as 'good', 'desirable', 'ought', etc. They also do come in various forms, for example, we can encounter moral propositions couched in imperatives or prohibitions such as 'love your neighbour' or 'do not kill'. But other times we can have them in the form of conditionals such as in taboo formulations, for instance, 'if you do x, y will befall you', from which we can derive two pragmatic rules:

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[11] Jackson, T. K., *Building Reputational Capital*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2004. He argues for the comparative advantage that a business has in upholding not only legal requirements but also a moral reputation. His argument can be generalized and carried over to government and industry.

[12] Barry Dainton and Howard Robinson, (eds.), *The Bloomsbury Companion to Analytic Philosophy*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, p 101

i) to avoid y, refrain from x
ii) to suffer y, do x.

This situation reveals that at the logical level moral discourse lacks truth-value and can be expressed in diverse modes. However, what gives unity to the diversity of expressions of moral discourse, whether expressed imperatively, exhortatively or conditionally is that they are all pragmatic. Pragmatic propositions are the ones that violate the law of uniform substitution unless we specify the contexts and users of the propositions. The pragmatic characterization of moral propositions implies that moral predicates do not represent intrinsic properties of objects or individuals but instead they are relational. They are polyadic predicates of at least rank three. It is therefore, possible to set them up as functions from the Cartesian product of individuals, objects and circumstances to propositions carrying the predicate of interest.

In this pragmatic formulation of moral sentences lies the root of the possibility of turning ethics into a science. As Mario Bunge[13] has correctly observed that it allows for the possibility of transforming ethical sentences into declarative sentences without loss of meaning or practical effect. For example, "x is good" is equivalent to x is valuable to y in respect z in the circumstance c; or x is desired by y in circumstance z. Such a proposition is precise and testable whereupon they are assigned a truth-value on the basis of empirical evidence. We can make all this possible by making our ethical theory to be value-based. This implies that we make the complex dispositional 'valuable' as our basic concept, from which other moral terms such as "good", "better than", "desirable", etc, can be defined.

**Prescriptive Epistemology**

Finally, we come to the last component of our technophilosophy which is prescriptive epistemology. Prescriptive epistemology is not a unique approach to epistemology but rather a whole family of philosophical branches which include methodology, critical thinking and philosophy of science. It was initiated by Descartes who first brought philosophy into sharp focus on the question of method. He did this by first suspending the quest to understand external reality and shift his attention towards the thinking process itself. He understood that thinking and reasoning are means to acquire truth and knowledge. Hence, if the thinking process is flawed then it is likely that our conclusions too would be flawed. He distinguished between independent constructive thinking and passive absorption of information from authorities. In the discourse on method he points out that

> "we shall not , e.g. turn out to be mathematicians though we know by heart all the proofs others have elaborated, unless we have an intellectual talent that fits us to resolve difficulties of any kind. Neither, though we may have mastered all the arguments of Plato and Aristotle…if yet we have not the capacity for passing judgment on these matters, shall we become philosophers; we shall have acquired the knowledge not of science, but of history."[14]

Interest in method or cognitional process is important because independence of thought alone is not sufficient. Autonomous thinking should be guided by a rigorous method, if we are to avoid useless idiosyncrasies. Genuine knowledge, which is the end product of cognition, is not only acquired, but must continually be updated, deepened and expanded and all these processes must be methodical.

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[13] Mario Bunge, "Ethics as a Science" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1962, pp 139-152

[14] Rene Descartes quoted in John Chafee, *The Philosopher's Way*, Boston: Pearson, 2016, p 102

The alternative to methodical inquiry would be merely blind curiosity proceeding by trial and error which has little chance of success in the search for truth and knowledge of complex matters and systems. The right path requires clear thinking, rigorous analysis, coherent argument, keen observation and experimentation. Specific cognitive and empirical operations are necessary in order to realize the above desiderata. These are operations such as problem-statement, hypothesis formulation, predictions, testing and evaluation. The intriguing challenge is that none of these operations is rule-guided so they cannot be mechanized. They require imagination and creativity.

However, logical analysis of each reveals a formal structure which might form the basis of teaching their heuristics. Methodology, critical thinking, and a large part of philosophy of science are devoted to the analysis of such cognitional and empirical operations. This includes also the study of both deductive and non-deductive reasoning processes.

A viable system of education should make inquiry sustainable and this can only be achieved through the cultivation of curiosity. It is the driving force of intellectual exploration. But as exploration proceeds curiosity may be satisfied thereby reducing the epistemic drive. If this happens then knowledge is no different from other behaviour patterns in which the satisfaction of a drive tends to reduce it. A good system of learning should make knowledge acquisition exceptional to this pattern. Acquisition of knowledge should increase the drive by generating more problems, seeking to perfect solutions, and proposing and testing alternative solutions to the problems. In other words, inquiry should be self-sustaining. One way of achieving this sustainability is to educate the learners to actively generate questions, propose hypotheses, test and evaluate the predictions of their hypotheses. Being creative processes, they would induce the interest in learners.

However, we must confront the major contemporary obstacle to inquiry and implementation of the principles of prescriptive epistemology. It is the cult of computers. We need to emphasize that computers are an aid to problem-solving and not to problem-finding. The latter which is the fountain of inquiry is a typically human ability. Fact-finding reduces the epistemic drive once the corresponding problem is solved. Actually, it ceases the moment either the fact has been established or when it is shown to be insoluble with the means available.

Inquiry and research consist instead in posing new problems and trying to solve them. Computers cannot replace well-educated and curious brains. Mario Bunge has pointed out certain factors that render computers inherently incapable of original research: a computer program can only tackle well-posed problems with the help of some algorithm or instruction. It is therefore helpless in the face of an ill-posed problem, or of a well-posed problem for which no algorithm is known (or for which it is known that no algorithm is possible).[15]

The cult of computers makes learners equate knowledge with information, and research with information retrieval, processing, or its diffusion. This is compounded when computers are applied in fact-finding learning approaches instead of research-based learning. The ironical consequence of information-based learning is that today's learners and professionals suffer from an excess of information rather than from its scarcity. In order to remedy this information overload, we must promote the teaching of critical thinking which allows the learner to set up information filters that would allow him/her to ignore most information in order to facilitate learning and avoid confusion. Moreover, we need insightfulness and creativity in order to innovatively apply the information that is available.

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[15] Mario Bunge, *Philosophy in Crisis: The Need for Reconstruction*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001, p 19

Another reason for emphasizing prescriptive epistemology is the realization that the bulk of problems which are productive are the inverse (or indirect) problems. They are the most demanding, challenging, and productive. They stand in contrast to direct problems. Direct problems call for forward or progressive reasoning for example in figuring out the solution to an equation whose formula is known. But an inverse problem consists in a backward reasoning process, for example figuring out the general formula to solving a class of equations the solution to one of which is known. As such a result of a direct problem constitutes a discovery while that of an inverse problem constitutes an invention.

Another hallmark of inverse problems is that if they are soluble at all, they have multiple solutions. This is an insight we glean from the philosophy of science known to philosophers as the problem of induction. It consists in the jump from data to hypotheses that explain the data. The central problem which has frustrated philosophers' attempt to formulate logic of induction is that a data set does not uniquely determine a hypothesis, instead an infinite number of hypotheses can be proposed as explanatory of the data.[16]

In this regard of methodology, philosophy should also address some of its inherent weaknesses such as innumeracy which compromises its interaction with other disciplines. This will also help bridge the quantity-quality gap that is implied in philosophical research. There is also the problem of lack of a criterion to adjudicate and choose between competing philosophical theses.

**Conclusion**

With the foregoing remarks it is my submission that philosophy ought to be an integral part of an education system. This is so much the case in an information age where fact-finding and information-based education is rendered redundant due to access and excess of information. The shift in the education practice should be geared to, particularly, the one that emphasizes competences such as thinking skills, autonomy, problem-solving, etc. However, the policy makers who can implement the incorporation of philosophy into the curriculum must hear it from the philosophers themselves and see what role philosophy can play in this new paradigm of education.

Yet the challenge is that policy makers, when scientific, rely on evidence which best comes from numbers. It is therefore a task that should be undertaken urgently by students and researchers of philosophy to propose ways of quantifying the impact of teaching philosophy in regards to thinking skills. This might of necessity involve also interdisciplinary ventures with experts in psychometric tests, measurements and evaluations, pedagogy, and curriculum developers. Another recommendation is to have students join the professional courses after basic degree courses instead of going to those courses immediately from high school. This would allow them time not only to digest the massive information they require in preparation for their careers but also acquire the methodological skills employed in research and which are universally applicable in all walks of life.

[16] Mario Bunge, *Chasing Reality: Strife over Realism*, Toronto-Buffalo-London: University of Toronto Press, 2006, p 146

# THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY FOR INTELLECTUAL FORMATION IN AFRICA

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**Abstract**

This paper seeks to answer the question "what is the value and importance of studying philosophy in the contemporary world, especially in Africa?" Historically, philosophy as 'the mother of all disciplines', seems to have so delegated its roles to her offspring so as to appear to have no subject matter, nor a peculiar role of its own to play in the contemporary world, except, perhaps, to serve only as an evaluative study in the sense of 'philosophy of…' other disciplines such as science, law, politics, theology and religion. In some institutions of higher learning, departments of philosophy hardly exist while in others they have been merged with other departments in order, so it seems, to make philosophy *appear* relevant and, in ordinary parlance, '*marketable*.' Whereas departments can be merged for administrative purposes disciplines cannot because they are unique in terms of their methods and subject-matter. The importance of philosophy as the discipline which prides itself etymologically as 'the love of wisdom' cannot be gainsaid. This paper attempts to show that philosophy, *along with other disciplines*, plays an invaluable intellectual role not only in Africa today, but also in the contemporary world as a whole, just has it has done since time immemorial.

**Key words**: Value of philosophy; intellectual formation

## Introduction: The Value of Philosophy (Bertrand Russell)

One of the most common questions that students ask is this: 'What is the value of philosophy?' To answer this question, let us consider the views of one Twentieth-century British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, who devoted the last chapter of his book, *The Problems of Philosophy* to the discussion of the value of philosophy and the reason that it should be studied. He thinks that many people are influenced by science and "practical affairs," to think that philosophy is nothing more than "innocent but useless trifling, hair-splitting distinctions, and controversies on matters concerning which knowledge is impossible".[1] This is, in his view, a misleading, wrong and negative view about the value of philosophy. This view trivializes the important intellectual role of philosophy especially in shaping the mental outlook of those who study it. It emanates from a misconception of the goals of life as well as the aims of philosophy. Unlike the physical sciences, the importance of philosophy does not lie in any universal benefits to mankind. "If the study of philosophy has any value at all for others than students of philosophy, it must be only indirectly, through its effects upon the lives of those who study it. It is in these effects, therefore, if anywhere,

[1] Russell, B. (1989) *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford: OUP, 89.

that the value of philosophy must be primarily sought".[2] In order to depict the value of philosophy accurately, Russell says that we must avoid the pitfalls of the prejudices of the so-called 'practical man' "who recognizes only material needs, who realizes that men must have food for the body, but is oblivious of the necessity of providing food for the mind".[3] The value of philosophy lies in its provision of food for thought. The mind needs to be nourished as much as does the body. "If all men were well off, if poverty and disease had been reduced to their lowest possible point, there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society; and even in the existing world the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body. It is exclusively among the goods of the mind that the value of philosophy is to be found; and only those who are not indifferent to these goods can be persuaded that the study of philosophy is not a waste of time".[4] Philosophy is one of the many goods of the mind. Its value lies in the provision of intellectual nourishment for those who care and dare to philosophize.

The main aim of philosophy like that of other disciplines is knowledge, especially a comprehensive and systematic knowledge, "the kind which results from a critical examination of the grounds of our convictions, prejudices, and beliefs"[5] However, philosophy has not succeeded like the physical sciences in the achievement of certain solutions to its perennial problems.

> It is true that this is partly accounted for by the fact that, as soon as definite knowledge concerning any subject becomes possible, this subject ceases to be called philosophy, and becomes a separate science. The whole study of the heavens, which now belongs to astronomy, was once included in philosophy; Newton's great work was called 'the mathematical principles of natural philosophy'. Similarly, the study of the human mind, which was a part of philosophy, has now been separated from philosophy and has become the science of psychology. Thus, to a great extent, the uncertainty of philosophy is more apparent than real: those questions which are already capable of definite answers are placed in the sciences, while those only to which, at present, no definite answer can be given, remain to form the residue which is called philosophy.[6]

It is for this reason that philosophy is said to be the 'mother of all disciplines.' This expression should not be taken to mean that the other disciplines are therefore inferior or junior to philosophy as offspring are, in a sense, to their parents. Indeed, philosophy should take pride in the success of offshoot disciplines, which should, in turn, be proud of their present achievements as well as their origins in philosophy, their parentage as good parents are proud of their children, and likewise, good offspring are proud of their parents. For example, as Russell suggests above, scientists like Isaac Newton were referred to, during their life-time, as philosophers of nature. Thus, philosophy is important historically as the intellectual root of the development of other disciplines.

However, the human mind cannot answer some ultimate questions like those concerning religion with certainty given that its capacity is limited, unless it evolves to a higher level of intellectual capability. Philosophers still ask and try to, answer in different ways such questions as: "has the universe any unity of plan or purpose, or is it a fortuitous concourse of atoms? Is consciousness a permanent part of the universe, giving hope of indefinite growth in wisdom, or is it a transitory accident on a small planet on which life must ultimately become

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[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 89-90.
[5] Ibid., 90.
[6] Ibid.

impossible? Are good and evil of importance to the universe or only to man?"[7] But even if the answers to these questions are found or not, and their truth cannot be known philosophy will still remain relevant and its role valuable. For "it is part of the business of philosophy to continue the consideration of such questions, to make us aware of their importance, to examine all the approaches to them, and to keep alive that speculative interest in the universe which is apt to be killed by confining ourselves to definitely ascertainable knowledge".[8] Though Philosophical knowledge may be uncertain, philosophers have a perennial quest for wisdom and knowledge. According to Russell, "We cannot, therefore, include as part of the value of philosophy any definite set of answers to such questions. Hence, once more, the value of philosophy must not depend upon any supposed body of definitely ascertainable knowledge to be acquired by those who study it".[9] Not all types of knowledge are demonstrable; and 'ascertainable knowledge' is not the only type of knowledge worth thinking and talking about. There are different types of knowledge besides scientific knowledge. Nonscientific knowledge is also a type of knowledge, for instance, knowledge of God through revelation and faith. Philosophical knowledge is another type of knowledge as the following quote show:

> The value of philosophy is, in fact, to be sought largely in its very uncertainty. The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason. To such a man the world tends to become definite, finite, obvious; common objects rouse no questions, and unfamiliar possibilities are contemptuously rejected. As soon as we begin to philosophize, on the contrary, we find, …, that even the most everyday things lead to problems to which only very incomplete answers can be given. Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom. Thus, while diminishing our feeling of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be; it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never travelled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect.[10]

Here, Russell sounds Aristotelian when he refers to the chief function of man as consisting in contemplation. "Apart from its utility in showing unsuspected possibilities, philosophy has a value -- perhaps its chief value -- through the greatness of the objects which it contemplates, and the freedom from narrow and personal aims resulting from this contemplation"[11] Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* categorizes the highest good as contemplation and the good life as the contemplative life. This is the philosophic life of *theoria* or theoretical wisdom.[12]

Russell concludes his discussion of the value of philosophy thus: "Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation;

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 90-91.
[9] Ibid., 91
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Aristotle. (1985) *Nicomachean Ethics*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 284.

but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good".[13] Russell could be right. But the religious person can disagree with him as an atheist who thought that the universe is the greatest reality thereby leaving God out of the picture. If philosophy is truly, as it has been defined etymologically 'the love of wisdom' and if, as scripture asserts, 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' then the philosopher ought to fear the lord. However, there are different kinds of people who are widely regarded as philosophers, ranging from theists to atheists.

**Epicurus on the importance of philosophy**

In order to underscore the importance of philosophy, Epicurus, for his part, gave the following noteworthy advice: "Let no one delay to study philosophy while he is young, and when he is old let him not become weary of the study; for no man can ever find the time unsuitable or too late to study the health of his soul. And he who asserts either that it is not yet time to philosophize, or that the hour is passed, is like a man who should say that the time is not yet come to be happy, or that it is too late."[14]

It will be remembered that Epicurus, unlike Aristippus, the cofounder of hedonism, stressed the pleasures of the mind over and above the pleasures of the moment and those of the body. In the quoted passage, Epicurus underscores the importance of studying philosophy, which is equated with the study of the soul! This is the point where philosophy and theology seem to meet. Not surprisingly, philosophy was notably regarded as the handmaiden of theology in the medieval times. Since then the two disciplines tend to be partners especially in Catholic institutions, particularly seminaries where theological studies are preceded by years of studying philosophy for both moral and intellectual formation. In this case, philosophy prepares scholars intellectually for the science of God, that is, theology. Hence the priest who has spent many years studying both philosophy and theology before ordination is, as expected, an educated individual. Reconcilable as the two disciplines may be some students, however, opt to pursue either theology or philosophy exclusively, depending, of course, on the dictates of their vocation or career goals. Those who choose to pursue philosophy alone must take care of themselves while those who choose theology and are finally ordained priests seem more blessed in the sense that they will be taken care of *ceteris paribus* by the Church. So one of the institutions that recognizes the importance of studying philosophy for intellectual and moral formation is, for example, the Catholic Church. Lay people as well as the clergy have both studied philosophy and quite a good number of them have ended up as very successful priests, intellectuals, and leaders in their own right.

**The Importance of Philosophy for Intellectual Formation**

According to G. J. Wanjohi, there are at least two things that philosophy has done to Africa: "1. Preservation and development of traditional African values; and 2. Participation in contemporary development of Africa".[15] He also acknowledges that the missionaries played an important role in African intellectual formation:

> the missionaries set up schools, health centres, agricultural enterprises, …they created seminaries for training young African *males* [my emphasis.] to become priests. This was particularly the case with the Catholic missionaries. In these institutions philosophy was a prerequisite subject as a basis for studying theology. It turned out that after studying theology and being ordained priests, some of these people went on

[13] Russell, B., 1989, 93-94.
[14] Introduction to Ethical Studies, available in the link.
[15] Wanjohi, G.J. (2017) *Philosophy and Liberation of Africa*, Nairobi: Nyaturima Publications, 128.

> to do higher studies in philosophy, even up to the doctoral level. In the immediate past it is these types of people who have been teaching philosophy in seminaries as well as in public universities. As a result of the pioneering work of these missionaries, we find that today philosophy lecturers in African universities are not all associated with missionaries or with any religious denomination. But what is interesting is that many of the well-known names in African philosophy today are a product of the missionary effort to bring education and evangelization to Africa.[16]

It is instructive that African philosophy, for example, while it was still in its infancy, was founded by theologians: that is, Fr. Placid Tempels, Alexis Kagame and John Mbiti, before becoming the comparatively young academic discipline that it is today. These were the pioneers of African philosophy. According to Masolo, "the honor of having brought the first piece of literature concerning "Bantu (or African) philosophy" into academic philosophical discussion is attributed to Father Placid Frans Tempels".[17] Moreover, St. Augustine too was among the first well-known African Christian philosophers of the pre-colonial Africa, North of the Sahara. As theologians St. Augustine, Origen and Tertullian pioneered the advent of ethno-philosophy which paved the way for the other schools of thinking in African philosophy, namely, Nationalist-Ideological, hermeneutic, linguistic-artistic, professional and sagacious schools of thought in African philosophy. Thus, the value of philosophy and its importance for intellectual formation or development can be found in the study of African philosophy. Many eminent and successful African personalities may belong to any of these schools of thought, with the exception of a few of them. As Martin F. Asiegbu avers, the history of African philosophy plays an important role by attempting to solve societal problems: "Just as the elaboration of political theories with grounded philosophical depth is indispensable to the solution of Africa's socio-political problems, so also does the chronicling of the thoughts, figures, influences, texts, environments of African philosophy as a text of a history of this philosophy remain one of the greatest challenges to all African philosophers".[18]

**Dwindling number of Philosophy Students**

In some public and private universities where philosophical studies are not tied to the pursuit of theological studies and priesthood, students are often asking questions concerning the prospects of studying philosophy. They seem not to be interested in, nor are they satisfied by, the answer that they will become accomplished scholars and professional philosophers, as Odera–Oruka called this category. As Ejikemeuwa Ndubisi correctly observes,

> On several occasions, young students of philosophy and other non-students of philosophy have posed some questions to me: What is the value of philosophy? What role does philosophy play in our contemporary world? Why must I study philosophy? What do I stand to gain by studying philosophy? Can philosophy actually put food on my table? The questions are too numerous to mention. Therefore, the thesis of this paper is simple: Philosophy has a significant role to play in human society.[19]

Some students are interested in the materialistic rewards of studying philosophy. They are not only interested in knowing what they can do with philosophy, but also what material benefits they will reap after studying philosophy. The apathetic and lethargic study of philosophy

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[16] Ibid., 127

[17] Masolo, D. A. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994, 46.

[18] Assiegbu, M. F., (2016) "Contemporary African Philosophy: Emergent Issues and Challenges" in *Ogirisi: a new journal of African studies – African Journals Online*, vol. 12, 20.

[19] Ndubisi, J. O. E., (2015) "The Role of Philosophy in Contemporary Society: The Nigerian Experience", in *Humanity & Social Sciences. Journal.*, 10 (1), 40-46.

explains the low levels of registration of students, especially female students, in departments of philosophy in both public and private universities, an eventuality that has necessitated the merger of philosophy departments with other disciplines so as to enroll a teachable number of students. As G. J. Wanjohi rightfully observes, "it is regrettable that, since 2005, public universities in Kenya have gone a step backward and amalgameted philosophy with religious studies. This is a serious retrogressive step which disadvantages both disciplines. In contrast to the Catholic missionaries who introduced philosophy to Africa, this move cannot be described as other than myopic".[20] The number of philosophy students in some universities has dwindled over the years as the number of graduates in other disciplines increases because of the perceived lack of prospects in studying philosophy. Furthermore, there seems to be a crisis in African philosophy according to Asiegbu in the sense that in the past

> African universities emphasized, principally, the study of Western philosophy,
>
> introducing courses in African philosophy much later, perhaps, as an afterthought. Some African Universities, moreover, attach no importance to African philosophy. The adverse impact, which such reprehensible attitudes bear on the formation of African students, stand out in the students' inability to contribute meaningfully to their societies.[21]

According to Asiegbu, a lot of time was spent on the debate about the meaning of African philosophy, the debate on "what is African Philosophy?" rather than on documenting the history of African philosophy. Asiegbu declares that "just as the elaboration of political theories with grounded philosophical depth is indispensable to the solution of Africa's socio-political problems, so also does the chronicling of the thoughts, figures, influences, texts, environments of African philosophy as a text of a history of this philosophy remain one of the greatest challenges to all African philosophers".[22]

Perhaps the way in which philosophy retains its value, role as well as relevance in academia involves its being offered, in one way or another, as a common course to all undergraduates irrespective of their career-choices. Further, for philosophy to maintain its academic significance and relevance philosophers should collaborate with experts in other disciplines such as law (through philosophy of law or jurisprudence), medicine (for instance, in bioethics and biomedical ethics), and even science and technology (in the philosophy of science and philosophy of technology) with a view to studying the philosophy, findings, presumptions and implications of other disciplines. This is a herculean task, challenge that very few contemporary philosophers are prepared to take since it requires and presupposes knowledge of the other disciplines. Again G. J. Wanjohi reiterates the importance of philosophy for intellectual formation in Africa thus: "Given the power of philosophy in broadening and sharpening the mind, a recommendation is here made that philosophy be taught to all first year university students in African universities. This practice is in vogue in many European and American universities".[23]

**A multidisciplinary approach to philosophy**

Such an undertaking may provide the answer to a good number of students who are concerned about the so-called *marketability* of the courses they study, their market value in terms of the kind of jobs and by extension, profitability in terms of money that they entail over and above their inherent academic value. In pragmatic terms, the students are worried

[20] Wanjohi, G.J. (2017), 132.
[21] Assiegbu, M. F., (2016), 17.
[22] Ibid., 20.
[23] Wanjohi, G.J. (2017), 132.

about the practical, beneficial consequences or results of studying philosophy, its 'cash-value.' They are more concerned about the extrinsic or instrumental value of philosophy rather than its intrinsic value. It is as if philosophy is not an end in itself but, rather a means to the end of, for example, securing a job, a well-paying job at that. But there are no jobs that are reserved for students of philosophy the way students of accountancy and economics, for example, may have their professional careers. Seemingly, contemporary students are no longer interested in such ideas as knowledge for its own sake. Hence, none should overlook the economic importance of the so-called market-driven courses such as the social sciences, business-oriented courses, and the hard sciences. A number of young and upcoming philosophy students have voiced their concerns for professional practices and careers. This concern is reminiscent of that of the Logical positivists who sought to introduce the methods of science and mathematics into philosophy. They failed because a big chunk of the subject matter of philosophy consists by nature, in abstract thinking. We find ourselves in some sort of dilemma: whereas the needs, desires and wants of clients and consumers have changed, the nature and goals of philosophy have not changed simultaneously.

**Consumerism in Africa**

This materialistic manner of thinking is germane to consumerism in Africa. The contemporary consumer capitalistic society is characterized by a stiff competition for limited resources, a society in which hard work is duly rewarded and laziness condemned, a society in which, by and large, wealth is adored and glorified while poverty is condemned. For this reason, many students and would-be students of philosophy seek to know what it is that they will 'do with philosophy' after graduating. They are no longer content with such ready-made answers like these: 'philosophy trains and broadens one's mind, world-view and point of view; puts things in perspective; makes one careful, avoids dogmatism and poses challenges.' The quest for material goods suggests that present-day students are continuously becoming less idealistic and more materialistic, in their approach to issues to do with knowledge and education. Hence the current rampant crime, among a section of society, of giving students fake grades and buying or forging certificates with impunity as if the end of getting a good well-paying job justifies the means of getting employed through hypocrisy, forgery, pretext and subterfuge. Many people apparently no longer go to school merely to acquire knowledge but in order to be able to earn a living, good living which might be out of reach for those who cannot afford a good education due to poverty. Because of this materialistic lifestyle, some people can be overheard saying that they would prefer a wealthy but an uneducated person to an educated but poor person, even as a leader, and that it does not matter whatever means one uses to become rich! This is a wrong-headed mentality that breeds crime, especially corruption. Further, there are people who educated but jobless and others who, though employed, bought or forged their certificates and used them to find well-paying jobs and business contracts. It is small wonder then when the latter subsequently become rich while the latter languish in poverty as a consequence of joblessness. J S. Mill's dictum: 'better Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied' has apparently been reversed in a section of the contemporary African society to read 'better a pig satisfied than Socrates dissatisfied!' It is as if the Machiavellian principle that 'the end justifies the means' is, in actual fact, true.

Arguably, philosophy does not promise much in terms of material gain. If one is chasing after material wealth, one should be advised to look for it elsewhere since philosophy is its own reward. Its reward consists in thinking, asking relevant questions, and formulating arguments (not in minting money like the sophists who fell into disrepute among other philosophers, especially Socrates, for charging a fee for their teaching). The following passage underscores the intellectual importance of philosophy: "The great virtue of philosophy is that it teaches not what to think, but how to think. It is the study of meaning, of the principles underlying

conduct, thought and knowledge. The skills it hones are the ability to analyze, to question orthodoxies and to express things clearly. However arcane some philosophical texts may be … the ability to formulate questions and follow arguments is the essence of education".[24]

## Conclusion

The commercialization of the education sector in Africa and the mushrooming of colleges and universities in Africa seem to spoil the broth, like the proverbial too many cooks who spoilt the broth. This scenario has aggravated the unemployment situation in many countries in Africa and watered down the quality of tertiary education. Africa ought to develop fewer but better-equipped and well-staffed institutions offering quality education rather than too many sophistic institutions responding to market demands which they cannot satisfy.

However, Philosophy alone cannot claim credit for the intellectual development of Africa as other disciplines are also equally involved in the ongoing intellectual formation in Africa. This is a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort the burden of which philosophy cannot claim to carry alone on her shoulders. For all disciplines are interdependent. Therefore, philosophy, like any other discipline, cannot stand alone and lay claim on the credit of intellectual formation of contemporary African societies collectively, and particular individuals. African intellectual formation does not depend on any single discipline but on all disciplines as knowledge is a worthy interdisciplinary goal.

[24] The London Times, 1998, August 15, on this link.

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