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FILOSOFIA THEORETICA was founded by Jonathan O. Chimakonam in May 2010 and the aim is to make it a world class academic journal with a global brand that would thrive on standard, quality and originality. It is published twice a year with maximum of ten (10) articles including book review on each volume.

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Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions, previously published by Graduate Research Unit (GRU) and Congress on African Philosophy and Religions (CAPAR) and edited originally by Prof. G. O. Ozumba, is now published by the Calabar School of Philosophy (CSP) as its official journal and edited by Dr. Jonathan Okeke Chimakonam. The site is also moving from www.platojournal.com and www.africanphilcongress.com to the university-based site www.csp.unical.edu.ng. The editorial board has also been shuffled to make way for improved service. Every other thing about the journal remains the same. Thanks------Editor

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Editorial

In this Volume 3 number 1, we present yet again, diverse and original topics in different areas of African studies which include prominently issues in African philosophy, culture and religions. As we continue to develop, propagate and promote a new phase of African philosophy, culture, history and religions where creative originality perfectly blends with established traditional and modern resources, the frontiers of our knowledge are extended in many useful ways. In keeping with our vision and reputation as the most original academic journal in African philosophy and studies from the continent of Africa, we present a cache of interesting essays for the researchers, students, teachers and general readers.

Chimakonam seeks to break yet another ice with his novel thought on interrogatory theory. In it he presents institutions as social structures or the building blocks of the society. The precolonial African social structures were replaced with colonial ones that are hardly compatible and have been easily distorted to retard the progress of postcolonial African societies. Interrogatory theory prescribes a three-mode of interrogation geared toward social reconstructions. Any scholar that loves critical theory would find this essay novel and refreshing especially for the African experience.

From Adekunle Ajasin University, Benson Igboin writes about African religioue discourse on names and identity. African names he argues are not philosophical rhetoric, but they are believed to convey deep intrinsic significance for the bearer and the community as a whole. He also argues that African names evaluate nature, essence as well as provide a string of relationship between the living and the dead. His essay argues that though African names function thus much, the various incursions into Africa have continued to vitrify their context, nature and continuum. Through the gristmill of religious interpretive framework, he further argues that if this trend remains unabated, African names as part of African religious cultural value or heritage would in no distant time ebb into oblivion. This essay provides that sort of rock-bottom excavation of African cultural and religious practices. A must read for scholars in African culture and religion.

In his essay on ethnocentric bias in African philosophy, Ezeugwu employs Asouzu's ibuanyidanda ontology to x-ray various manifestations of ethnocentrism in philosophy. He is of the view that it is

not bad for the Africans to defend their philosophy and their origin, as against the claims and positions of the few African thinkers, who do not believe that African philosophy exists, and a great number of the Westerners, who see nothing meaningful in their thoughts and ideas, but in doing so, Ezeugwu observes that the proponents of African philosophy became biased and elevated their philosophy and relegated other philosophies to the background. Thus he extrapolates that the charge of ethnocentrism against those who deny African philosophy can also be extended to those African philosophers who in a bid to affirm African philosophy commit the discipline to strong ethnic reduction. If you enjoy philosophical animadversions, this is perhaps an essay you would find insightful.

Peter Bisong in his essay engages J. O. Chimakonam on his bodily theory of personal identity. Personal identity for him correctly resides in the consciousness and not in the body as Chimakonam theorizes. A splendid intellectual encounter, Bisong took on Chimakonam's essay published in the first volume of this journal pound for pound. Students and scholars of philosophy especially those in philosophy of mind would find this essay entertaining and richly informative.

From the University of Witwatersrand South Africa, Edwin Etieyibo tinkers with the mercurial topic of postmodernism and African philosophy. He articulates the central direction that postmodern thinking or philosophy (or postmodernism or postmodernity) takes. Then he presents a brief sketch of African philosophy, focusing mostly on some aspects of African ethics. From there he gestures towards the view that while postmodern thinking seems to suggest that African philosophy is a legitimate narrative or "language game" it could be argued that given its central ideas and doctrines African philosophy may be open to some of the worries facing modern thinking (or modernism or modernity). This essay is a perfect example of philosophical rigor that throws a new light on the subject of African philosophy. Indeed, philosophers of various persuasions would find it very interesting.

Olúkáyọ̀dé Adéṣuyì writes on the relevance of culture in the formulation of African philosophy. Culture cannot be wished away in articulating any philosophical tradition. He explains that culture is an all encompassing phenomenon and that it serves as a relevant source for the discussion on African philosophy. He uses functionalism and structuralism as theories that could be used to understand African philosophy and culture. This essay challenges those who describe African philosophy as

ethnophilosophy or cultural philosophy by establishing the inevitable role which culture has to play in the formulation of any philosophical tradition. It is an exciting piece.

Fainos Mangena writes from the University of Zimbabwe in Southern Africa. He writes in defense of ethno-philosophy and in response to Kanu's eclecticism published in the Volume 2 Number 1 of this journal. He is of the opinion that as Africans of Black extraction, we were doing a disservice to our very own philosophy which they call Ethno-philosophy. For many years African philosophy has not been taken seriously by both African Philosophers and Western Philosophers alike. For him, African philosophy has been disparaged and downgraded for failing to have, among other things, a coherent system of thought and a method that can be applied across all the cultures of this world. He argues that philosophy needs not to have a method that is applicable across cultures in order to be a philosophy that is worth celebrating. He urges that the current generation of African philosophers should develop a logic on which African philosophy should sit instead of "running away from their burning house only to seek refuge next door." This essay represents a radical and audacious defense of a thought model many wish to flee from. A must read for all the cowards and heroes of African discourse.

Lucky Ogbonnaya in discussing the question of being in African philosophy is of the view that the question of being is not only a problem in Western philosophy but also in African philosophy. He posits that being is that which is and has both abstract and concrete aspect. He arrives at this conclusion by critically analyzing and evaluating the views of some key African philosophers with respect to being. From these, he discovers that the way that these African philosophers have postulated the idea of being is in the same manner like their Western philosophers whom they tried to criticize. He synthesizes a notion of being that leans heavily on Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology which does not bifurcate or polarize being, but harmonizes entities or realities that seem to be contrary or opposing in being. Whoever wants a refreshing introduction to African ontology would find Ogbonnaya's essay an important research resource.

Writing from Ebonyi State University, Uduma Oji addresses the controversial question of the "Africanness" of a philosophy. For him, the African question in African philosophy is enigmatic because of the

intentional attempt to rationalize Africans out of humanity. Eurocentric scholars and missionaries mutilated history and concocted a false image of Africans which they presented as the substantive African identity. Following this, a search for the criterion of African philosophy seems to have been made unavoidable by this turn of events. But this is not without some problems. This is because such a criterion will restrict the scope of African philosophy to a given epoch. In this sense, African philosophy will be concerned with only a part of the African historical experience. Therefore, he argues that given the comprehensive nature of philosophy, we must be inclined to the persuasion that a criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy ought to be derived from the totality of the African experience. This is perhaps one of the most troublesome issues in the formulation of the African philosophical tradition. Uduma handles that with great insight and clarity. Every philosopher whether African or non-African needs to read this essay.

In concluding this issue, Mesembe Edet presents an elegant review of an ice-breaking work by Godfrey Ozumba and Jonathan Chimakonam entitled [Njikoka Amaka: Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism, (A Contribution to African and Intercultural Philosophy). Mesembe highlights the importance of system building if African philosophy is to develop and very cheeringly points to the fact that the authors of the work Godfrey O. Ozumba and Jonathan O. Chimakonam seeks to consolidate the African philosophic conversation in respect of system-building within the context of the philosophy of Integrative Humanism, a trend or tradition which has emerged from the Calabar School of Philosophy (CSP) and has become quite popular and dominant in contemporary African philosophy. He describes the work as the magnum opus of Integrative Humanism, pointing out the philosophical depth and intercultural philosophic value of the work. Whoever wants to read a comprehensive summary of the book has to read this elegant review that says it all.

As a certain African proverb admonishes "do not drink raffia wine because palm wine is on the way", which simply suggests that what lies ahead is greater, we enjoin our dedicated readers who enjoyed the elegance of the previous issues to savor the brilliance of this current issue. It is our aim to continue providing the platform for present generation of Africa's intellectuals to chart a new course for African philosophy, history, culture and religions. We applaud all the scholars who use our journal's platform to lend their voices to the future of Africa. They are the champions of our time and the makers of the new

Africa. Through the creativity in their pens, they seek to inaugurate a better and progressive Africa. *Hakuna Matata!*
Editor -in- Chief

CONTENTS

INTERROGATORY THEORY: PATTERNS OF SOCIAL DECONSTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION AND THE CONVERSATIONAL ORDER IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

Africa is in economic and social terms widely regarded as an underdeveloped continent even though we in interrogatory theory (IT) would prefer the term developing instead. Its societies are characterized by unstable institutions. Societies ride on the wheels of institutions. Institutions are social structures or building blocks of any society. Repressive colonial times replaced traditional institutions with non-compatible ones ignoring any usable part of tradition and admitting without censorship every element in the imposed modernity. My position in this essay is that social structures in postcolonial Africa are ramshackled hence the massive retrogression of the continent's social order. To get Africa on its feet and moving in the right direction requires the reconstruction of the social structures of Africa's modernity and the construction of its futurity. I postulate interrogatory theory (IT) as a conversational algorithm that would provide the theoretic base for the authentic African renaissance. It is constructively questioning rather than being exclusively critical i.e. it questions to reconstruct rather than being merely critical to deconstruct; dialogical rather than merely individualistic; rigorous rather than merely informative; yet radical rather than being conventional.

KEYWORDS: Interrogatory theory, deconstruction, reconstruction, conversationalism, African philosophy

Introduction

Africa is in dire need of a viable social philosophy. As massive institutionalization characterizes modernity to which the colonialists roughly led the Africans into with neither their consent nor adequate preparation; it is imperative that Africa develops strong and viable institutions. In interrogatory theory, we hold that for Africa to develop, strong and viable institutions are preferable to strong individuals which is a rogue legacy of repressive times. Suffice it to say following Ivan Illich (1971) that Africa as a result, has made the most of the confusion between institution and process. In superimposing a squarish peg in a roundish hole, what ought to be a regular social order of modernity has become not only distorted but inexplicably disfigured in the Africa that emerged onto the global matrix from the womb of colonialism. In this essay,

we shall take as examples the institutions of "education", "religion" and "democracy".

To do this, we shall use the tool of Interrogatory Theory which is a dialogical engagement or questioning of the societal structures and cultures using the reflective method of G. O. Ozumba (Integrativity—Njikoka Ontology) that occurs at two levels: one with "tradition" to discover some of its elements that will be usable or valuable for "modernity"; the other with modernity to discover some of its elements that will be usable or valuable for the futurity.

The purpose of Interrogatory Theory is reflective assessment or interrogation of social structures (tradition and modernity) in order to deconstruct, construct/reconstruct or synthesize where necessary in pursuit of the future which contains the ideal. This exercise can also be cross-cultural, intercultural besides intra-cultural. The Calabar School of Philosophy recognizes the fact that Africa is a developing continent that needs serious efforts to facilitate its development in different fronts; as a result, the deconstruction is to identify usable or valuable elements for reconstruction/synthesis not strictly to fault-find as is the case in critical theory of the Frankfurt School developed principally by Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin and Erich Fromm.

Europe of the twentieth century in which these theoreticians thrived was already developed beyond comprehension. Technology and overtly strong institutions riding on the backs of ideologies such as capitalism, socialism and communism, etc., where thought to have encroached on human freedom beyond tolerance. For this, some ideologies like Marxism or even humanism were preferred on the ground that they could recapture human freedom. This is perhaps re-echoed in the famous definition which Horkheimer provided for "Critical Theory". For him, any theory is critical if it aspires "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (HORKHEIMER 1982, 244). These circumstances could be the subliminal technology or the ideologies that manifest themselves in the mode of social institutions. Hence, the focus of critical theory (CT) is, in part, to fault-find or deconstruct institutions and ideologies which have engendered pitch-high development in Europe at the great cost of human freedom. In doing this the critical Theoreticians favour the Marxist ideology as a working tool or method understandably because of its revolutionary and deconstructive temper. Indeed, it can be concluded that critical theory aims at deconstructing domineering social structures so that human freedom would on its own see space to thrive. There is hardly any serious emphasis on reconstruction.

Interrogatory theory on the other hand, has a different framework altogether. It is here developed for a twenty-first century Africa that is still aspiring to shake off the repressive conditions of colonialism and develop like Europe. That quest for unabated human freedom is absolutely not necessary for a

yet to be developed Africa. As a matter of fact, that freedom which critical theory wants to *uncage* in developed Europe is what interrogatory theory wants to cage in undeveloped Africa. It seems to me that there are two important stages in the history of human civilization namely: the pre-development and the post-development stages. The roles which human freedom has to play in these two stages are staggering. In the pre-development stage, if humans are allowed free expression of their freedom, the human society inevitably would at best develop in cyclical form, and at worst in utter retrogression. This is because humans are mercurial to say the least; the human freedom when uncensored would breed disagreement, rancor, conflict, sometimes anarchy, war, pogroms and destructions in the society. No society would ever develop if its inhabitants are free to live the way they please. A developed society is one that has *means* to offer and sustain appreciable quality of life for at least, the greater number. Non can a society acquire these structural paraphernalia without whittling down the freedom of its inhabitants. That is what the laws and constitutions of nations do—to dominate humans and repress their freedoms.

To do this effectively, strong and viable institutions are imperatives for any underdeveloped or developing societies. This is what interrogatory theory advocates—positive repression of treacherous human freedom in Africa. This does not include non-treacherous freedoms like "freedom of inquiry". The repression of treacherous human freedom is positive if it tantamount to building strong institutions. It is negative if it tantamount to building strong individuals. But even a negatively repressed freedom is far better than unrepressed freedom in underdeveloped or developing societies. Many Sub-Saharan African nations in the postcolonial era dangle between negatively repressed and totally unrepressed freedoms. While nations like Uganda, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, etc., at the time of writing this essay experience negatively repressed freedoms others like Somalia, Central African Republic, D. R. Congo to name a few experience unrepressed freedoms. Freedom in a nation might still be negatively repressed even though such a nation has a democracy just as in another, it may be totally unrepressed even though such a state has a government. The indices can be assessed based on the statistics of crime, violence, injustice, conflict, political gangsterism, social instability, economic retrogression, unpredictable regime change and corruption, etc.

The other stage of civilization is the post-development—this is a stage at which a society attains commensurate development in different front. At this point, inhabitants experience so much comfort and luxury—this includes the luxury of time to engage in pastimes. But there is a certain abnormal feature of this stage that always almost promises to upset the apple cart from time to time. This can be called the "gulch factor". It simply entails that no matter how stable a society is, there is always a gap yawning to be filled from time to time. This

factor is often caused by economic, political, sometimes religious and social problems orchestrated mainly by movements in world's population. The situations in USA, Greece, Ukraine, etc., are cases in point. While racism in USA translates to economic, political and social decision making index, economic instability and political maneuvers have taken a huge toll on the Greek and Ukrainian societies of late. It is in times like this that the gulch factor manifests in developed societies. Inhabitants who are used to certain standards daily living suddenly realizes that there is a shake up. Usually, adjustment to the new social reality is hardly an option for people who know that they have been caged for far too long. Now if the same society which has restricted their freedoms can no longer sustain the standard of living it constantly promises in exchange for their freedom then it is right about time that they reclaimed their freedoms. This is the cause of riots, protests, demonstrations in all developed societies in the world today. In all this, neo-revolutions are not out of place. Neo-revolution is a term I would like to use to describe revolutions in developed societies. I call it neo because it is not like revolutions in poor societies that demand for development; rather it makes use of the free expressions of human freedom to demand for social stability. The postdevelopment era therefore is an anxious period of human civilization where neo-revolutions or at least the threat of it would force through serious programmes of social stability. For the great danger which the *uncaging* of human freedom portends, I reckon that the critical theoreticians are attempting to stir the hornet's nest—to cause pandemonium in the world. Had they any idea of the consequences of their advocacy, they would rather device more subtle ways of caging the treacherous human freedom. But it also does appear that in some sort of fatalism, human freedom is bound to leave the cage to which it has been imprisoned in developed societies just one day.

Africa however, is at present not threatened by this "gulch factor" but rather has to worry about what I shall call the "arroyo effect" which is the sort of gap orchestrated in underdeveloped or developing societies by non-correspondence of social policies and action patterns of inhabitants of such societies. This sometimes creates economic, religious, social and political frictions difficult to handle in the society. I shall dwell more on "arroyo effect" in the next section.

The aim of interrogatory theory therefore is to understand and identify the factors which retard Africa's growth and to continuously assemble those that will enhance its progress from stage to stage through the dynamics of deconstruction, construction/reconstruction and synthesis. The deconstructive process in interrogatory theory as stated earlier does not merely aim at identifying or critiquing the faults in a social structure but emphatically, it aims at identifying the gains or the positive points which can be harnessed in the ever rolling chains of reconstruction. This process in turn is expected to terminate

only when the ideals of futurity are met. But every future carries the present in its womb and the present carries yet another future in its womb.

Accordingly, we shall in this essay interrogate the social institutions of education, religion and democracy in the postcolonial Africa's "modernity" to see what we can take and what must be dropped in forging better systems for the "future".

Background to Interrogatory Theory (IT)
Social deconstruction and construction/reconstruction of the interrogatory theory (IT) consist in radical questioning of social structures of tradition or modernity for futurity in Africa. Where tradition represents the precolonial Africa, modernity represents the postcolonial Africa and futurity represents a renaissance period after the progress of modernity became stunted. Interrogatory theory sees any organized human society as resting and running on the wheels of institutions. The native institutions that remarked precolonial Africa were toppled by colonialism and replaced with Western brand institutions most of which have proved quite flabby in modern Africa hence, the call by Interrogationists for future reconstruction of the flaccid social structures. These institutions are regarded by Interrogationists as social structures or the building blocks of the society that characterize its functionality. Here, we want to interrogate those of modernity. To do this effectively, it requires that we put the social candidate in a "rack" and compel it through decisive interrogation to bear witnesses for and against itself. During interrogations, questions are guided to discover not only the positive aspects but the ones that are usable or valuable for possible reconstruction. Also, questions are also asked to uncover the discrete negative aspects which must be overcome in the reconstruction. To the positive aspects, the interrogator harnesses only the ones that prove to be valuable or usable for reconstructive purposes and to the negative aspects, he takes the lesson of the shortcomings which are to be forestalled in the reconstruction.

Interrogatory theory rides on three hypotheses namely; (1) the social behavior hypothesis which states that action patterns of humans ought to determine the type of social structures put in place in the society. (2) The Structural behavior hypothesis which states that the type of social structures in a society ought to determine the action patterns of humans in the society. These two hypotheses are jointly called "nne n' nna" hypotheses to highlight the thetic and antithetic structure of male and female patterns they have.

On the first hypothesis, it can be deduced that when social structures are established uninfluenced by the action patterns of humans in the society that there would be a gap between humans and the society. The same could invariably be deduced from the second hypothesis. This can be called the "arroyo effect". The arroyo effect bespeak of unbridgeable gap that often characterize policies of

social structures in the society and the action pattern of humans in it. This supposes that without some measure of agreeableness between social structures and action pattern of humans in the society, progress or development of specific form would be unlikely.

To overcome the arroyo effect that would naturally arise when either of the two hypotheses is unfulfilled, a third hypothesis known as (3) the structural reconciliatory hypothesis is here put forward. The structural reconciliatory hypothesis states that action patterns of humans should first determine the type of social structures to be set up in the society (as a way of establishing human freedom as the formational foundation of the society) and in turn, the social structures set up should determine the action patterns of humans as governing principles (as way of repressing the treacherous human freedom). For its reconciliatory character, this third hypothesis can be called "nwa" hypothesis to highlight the synthetic property it has. This demonstrates the presence of Godfrey Ozumba's integrative method which sees the nne n' nna hypotheses as "necessary links" (OZUMBA and CHIMAKONAM 2014, 11) in the formation of the "nwa" hypothesis.

The logical process of interrogatory theory is therefore dialectic. This dialectic however, is somewhat different from the Marxist or the Hegelian dialectic because thesis and anti-thesis are not treated as contradictories but sub-contraries. It is for this that Ezumezu three-valued logic rather than the Lukasiewicz' or the Kleene type three-valued logic is the background logic of interrogatory theory. In the section to follow, we shall employ interrogatory theory and its tools to deconstruct and reconstruct some selected social structures.

Patterns of Social Deconstruction and Reconstruction
Here, we shall interrogate three selected social structures in modern Africa namely; education, religion and democracy with the aim of first, deconstructing their modern structures and then reconstructing for futurity.

What does education consist in? What should determine the type of educational structure to be set up in African societies? Do those factors actually determine the structure of education in modern Africa? What are the problems of the type of educational structure in modern Africa? How can we set up a better structure for futurity? Are there usable or valuable elements from the positive aspects of the structural order to be deconstructed? What are the lessons to be gleaned from the negative aspects? To what extent can the usable part of the positive aspects and the lessons from the negative aspects be appropriated for future reconstruction? These are the questions we can use to deconstruct the social structure of education in modern Africa. "Education" has had its meaning broken and is confused in the modern Africa with schooling. The young who represent the future of the continent are put through the system of school and

curriculum which lay emphasis on certification rather than learning. Proficiency in colonial language is in the same system confused with expression of new thought where craftiness is effectively taken for creativity and the static individualistic ontology replaces morality. Character formation which has been overshadowed in the school curriculum due to the overemphasis on certification, now favours a tilt toward Nietzschean Ubermensch and individuals are supposed to attain this on their own and at their wills. The postcolonial Africa therefore becomes a "modern jungle" where beasts clad in modern attire re-enact on daily basis the Hobbesian state of nature—this calls for the positive repression of human freedom.

The succession of bad leadership since colonialism ended, the thriving corruption in all sectors, intentional enactment of bad policies and poor implementation of good ones, etc., are all evidences of systems of education that have consistently failed to educate postcolonial Africans. Education not only liberates one from the strangle hold of another man's will by stuffing up his head with some details, it opens his eyes to the knowledge of good and bad; it gives him the ability to see the future; it endows him with the capacity to discern the future consequences of actions or inactions taken today; it provides him with good understanding of the world; and above all, education rescues a man from his ego which is the greatest enemy of the uneducated and the miseducated. In confusing schooling with education, the systems in postcolonial Africa do not offer these to the young, hence the broken social order.

Education is a tool for civilization and civilization is supposed to wean man off his beastly nature encoded in his ego. Massive modern institutionalization brought into Africa by colonialism effectively eroded cultural institutions which served as guides for the education of the young. Yet, in their places there are no commensurate replacements in the new order. This has in the last fifty years led to the constant production of generations of guinea pigs taking turns to run systems and determine Africa's future, each with their trademark over-bloated egos. The job of the human ego is to consistently ring the bell of self-interest which effectively blinds one to the true nature of things. Civilization is supposed to encapsulate a process that relieves humans of the burden of the ego. This, the so-called civilization has not been able to do for the postcolonial Africa because "education" has been bastardized.

Education as I have stated, is in the postcolonial Africa confused with schooling hence certification takes the place of learning and fluency in colonial language replaces expression of new thought. Craftiness replaces creativity; distortion and copycatism take the places of originality and innovation. In this way, the postcolonial African waters down the essence of education by breaking its traditional meaning. The consequence is that a society that does not educate its young in this institutionalized world is abusing them and they will in turn take

revenge on that society in the future.   How may we then deconstruct and reconstruct this distorted idea of education?

A society where the majority lives their live under assumptions does not have a proper system of education. Proper education entails the transmission of reasoned knowledge to citizens and the demolition of basic pillars of societal assumptions. Assumptions are simply too dangerous to constitute a people's mode of living in this modern world. Hence, an education system that directly or indirectly transmits or tolerates assumptions as tenets of living rather than knowledge is not good enough for Africa. In such a system, massive authority is placed on hearsay and bandwagon to the detriment of informed individual convictions. Because of undue emphasis on certification, people are less interested in proper learning that results from critical engagements with teachers, colleagues and books. For this, rumors and gossips gradually become regular and acceptable sources of information among postcolonial Africans. How often does one see such group exchanges in the bars, market places, squares, roadside canteens, churches and even in schools, where ill-informed individuals misinform others who simply listen and believe rather than question? This misinformed people in turn carry the news to other places where again people are all too happy to hear than to question its authenticity. Because of strings of curricula that emphasize certification rather than learning, African people develop phobia if not sheer indolence for reading since there are shorter cuts to passing exams which is the ultimate requirement for certification. In the end, those coming out of school are too lazy and uninspired to read even the newspapers. Generally, monies spent on buying books are considered waste in the sub-Saharan Africa. More than ninety-five percent of University graduates in sub-Saharan Africa never read a single book again in their lives. This might not be scientifically generated statistics but it is not too far from the truth from daily observations. The result is that in the sub-Saharan postcolonial Africa, there is what I call "foolish majority" which constitutes an overwhelming percentage of the total population. This is the reason why an ideology like democracy which rides very strongly on the idea of "majority principle" has failed in Africa. How can a foolish majority produce proper democracy? Proper democracy is most times called "liberal democracy" to emphasize the individual posturing at free expression of his informed convictions. With foolish majority there is no such thing as informed convictions, there is rather a dangerously misinformed orientation riding on the wheels of deep-seated band-wagonism. Hence, transplanted to African soil, liberal democracy germinates as non-liberal and as a result, non-democratic to say the least.

In the spirit of interrogatory theory, as we deconstruct to reconstruct we have to identify what has been called the "valuable past" (JAHN 1961, 16) or "usable past" (JEWSIEWICKI 1989, 1–76) or elements of the given order for

prospective reconstruction. In the postcolonial education systems in Africa and Nigeria in particular, we have seen many a good policy whose implementations failed due to inherent structural weaknesses. We must discard the faulty structures and take along some of the good policies like the nomad education, bia-lingual education, liberal education, creative education, etc. The point on emphasis here is that some education policies may be good but fail due to the poverty of internal structure chiefly that of implementation, curriculum, output evaluation/confirmation and curriculum delivery techniques. It is these faulty internal structures that must be discarded and reformed in a new reconstruction of education systems in postcolonial Africa. As viable policies and ideas of education are taken along from Africa's modernity, some of the identified faulty elements would be discarded.

To this end, we should have a system of education that (1) develops a curriculum that encourages creativity, originality, innovation and aspiration to learn rather than simply to pass among students. (2) A system that encourages and inspires students to discover, invent and get well-informed as output evaluation/confirmation of learning method rather than a system that places undue emphasis on certification. (3) A system that emphasizes liberality, freedom of enquiry/expression and critical engagements between teacher and student and between student and books rather than a banking method of teacher delivery technique. (4) And above all, a system in which implementation of education policies is on time and not compromised, including regular curriculum assessment and reviews.

Also, religion (Christianity and Islam) another institutional import of colonial or foreign powers is in the postcolonial Africa confused with morality. Membership of any is erroneously taken to canonize one into a moral paragon. Whatever he does in the name of the governing deity is not only moral but the very wish of the deity. There are two painful consequences that result from the transplanting of these foreign religions to Africa: (1) the cultural embers of morality were easily over-run as the attendant reinterpretation of concepts such as "baptism" and "born-againism" provided the leeway for immorality to thrive under the cover of belongingness or membership. The unbelievers condemned for eternal punishment in both Islam and Christianity are no longer those found wanting in character but have shrewdly become those who are yet to belong. For this, most postcolonial African societies are mired in deep moral decay in the midst of overwhelming theism—an immoral society can hardly make progress. (2) Again, for the misinterpretation of the actual role of religion in the society, most postcolonial Africans through the passage of time have unwittingly surrendered their ingenuity to the gods. The scientific concept of "chance" is now confused with miracle. Working hard gradually became unfashionable as praying hard receives televised promotions backed up by fictitious testimonies. In the

face of this senseless yet, stupefying revolution, ex-criminals and celebrated failures reinvent themselves in the mold of prayer warriors, prophets, miracle-workers and seers to cash in on people's ignorance and misery. The outcome is that postcolonial Africa stopped working, stopped thinking and wastes fine human industry, generation after generation, attempting to pray the continent out of poverty and the general decadence orchestrated by entrenched moral decay. So we see that religion is further confused with enterprise just as praying hard has come to replace working hard. How did this distortion of religion occur and how can it be remedied?

Some have argued that the trouble with the postcolonial African societies is squarely leadership. Others think it is corruption. I clearly do not agree with either. Yes, these are some of the unnerving challenges Africa face in today's world but the ultimate trouble with the postcolonial Africa is "religion". The colonial religions are the root of all the evil that plague Africa. In the postcolonial Africa religion has effectively come to become the opium of the people (MARX 1844/1976). Sociologically, as August Comte categorized; it has relegated Africa further down in the rung of social progress and civilization. It is only a badly informed people that after reading about the miracles in the scriptures would be inspired to sit and pray rather than stand and work. Would the racist Europe have offered Africa religion if it were convinced that it guarantees morality? Would it have offered Africa religion if it were certain it holds the key to heaven? The same racist Europe that does not even in this modern time, want to share this wicked earth with black Africans, if it were truly convinced that religion issues entry visas to glorious heaven, would it truly have given it to Africans? Would a black African be elected Pope? No, instead the European in Diaspora, somewhere from Argentina would be elected. So, even the masters of the religions (Europeans) do not practice what they preach—is that not strong enough to tell Africans that the whole thing is fake? Over fifty years after colonialism ended and neo-colonialism began, the European exploiter has not had the milk of human kindness to share some of his little technologies (technology transfer) with the exploited Africa, could he really have given Africa religion if it were of any discernible value? Indeed, in no place of the world and in no portion of human history has religion been fully utilized as instrument of repression than in the Sub-Saharan Africa. A religious person is a mere pun in the hands of the master of the religion. This was ruthlessly done by the colonizer in keeping with Karl Marx's declaration that: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creatures, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of the spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people" (MARX 1884/1976). Thus the religion that the European brought to Africa is nothing but a cleverly contrived hoax—a big scam.

This is a point education intersperses with religion. Like I argued above, the education system in the postcolonial Africa has failed to inform and educate. It has failed above all else to free Africans from the strangle-hold of the colonizer's will and ruse. Education and religion were used by the colonizer as instruments of domination and control rather than as instruments of liberation and development. While education was effectively used to under-inform and misinform, religion was used to sedate and indoctrinate, perfectly as opium not only to steer Africans away from reality but to embed discord among Africans. When a people cannot agree, they cannot move forward.

The point on emphasis here is that Africa took what I call "religious plunge" following the massive indoctrination of the colonizer's missionary arm. The stunning effect of this ungodly religious brainwash meted out on Africans is unmistakeably obvious in this postcolonial times. J. G. Donders reports that Africa fell for the trickery of colonizer's religions partly because of their addiction for the commune which the foreign religions offered in interestingly new way (1985, 32). In his [The Invention of Africa] V. Y. Mudimbe (1988, 52-58) recounts the statistics of some researches conducted ten years earlier which show the massive growth of Christianity in Africa. Some of the research including that of World bank (1984), Barrett (1970) and Meester de Ravenstein (1980) suggest that Africa would be home to the world's largest Christian population by the year 2000. The question is; if religious indoctrination is essential for survival in a tough and unfair world as they made the African to believe, why does Christianity keep shrinking in the West and expanding in Africa as Mudimbe statistically shows? (1988, 54-55). Why do the missionaries leave their continent where there are many atheists to come to Africa to evangelize? Is it sensible to suggest that they want more Africans to go to heaven than Europeans? Ignorant of the motive of the colonizer's missionary, Africa followed their guided indoctrination and took a massive "religious plunge" that today cost Africa a lot in history and a place in world civilization. An average African commits over eighty percent of his daily time attempting to conquer some fantasy place in the great beyond described to him by the European as being most important whereas he has not conquered the world he lives in. There in now religious houses on every street, village, town and city where cottage industries and business outfits should be in the Sub-Saharan Africa most of which summon their members to meet on work days and during working hours. In Nigeria, which perhaps leads the pack in this religious plunge, former factory buildings and warehouses are being converted to religious houses. And so the continent is lost chasing shadows in a world where reality bites deep.

To obtain a radical break from this scenario we need to understand (1) what religion truly is. (2) And its place in this world. To do the reconstruction, we must identify what is valuable or usable from the decadent modernity.

Religion is nothing but one of the ways of life. Religion primarily is supposed to teach adherents upright or moral living with fellow humans and additionally, because most religions believe in some governing deity and its promise of eternal bliss, a consistent practice of its code of upright living with one's neighbors would at death earn one's soul a ticket to paradise. In the postcolonial Africa however, religion is not perceived as a way of life but as a sort of embassy or visa issuing house to paradise whose only requirement for getting a visa is to be within the embassy. The role of teaching upright living for most religions in Africa has long become trivial hence, the confusion of religion with morality or uprightness. The prophet or the preacher is a righteous man and his actions are moral simply because he is a prophet or a preacher. His morality is guaranteed by his position in the religious assembly and not by the quality of his conducts. Similarly, adherents in Christian parlance are "born agains" who are guaranteed heaven not by their conducts but by their membership of a bible-believing Church. The result of this decadent social structure is the disintegration of moral fibre at both the individual and institutional levels in the postcolonial African society.

Following this deconstruction should be a posturing for reconstruction of the social structure of religion. Interrogatory theory requires that we identify valuable or usable elements from this decadent modernity which would be needed for the reconstruction of futurity. Besides the telling deception, misinterpretation, distortions and faulty internal structure of what religion is and its role in the society there are apparently some good elements which could be sifted from that modern conception of religion in postcolonial Africa. Some of these include dogged believe in the system, hard work in the religious house, incessant interrogation of non members, unbridled gratification of prophets and preachers. These are all good attributes of religious practice in Africa's modernity even though they are misguided in the mode of *squarish* peg in a roundish hole. In a future reconstruction, we recommend a turn-around for example: hard work should be proportionate in both the religious structure and the other social structures. This eschews a scenario where many Africans devote all their productive time working in the religious houses. Again, the culture of always seeking to gratify religious leaders with all sorts of charity should be proportionate. The religious man must understand that charity must go round. Most importantly, it must be directed to the less-privileged in the society and not always to the well-of religious leaders in exchange for blessings. Also, members of religious groups in the postcolonial Africa incessantly interrogate non members by questioning their candidature for paradise. This interrogation should in a new structure be directed to religious leaders and members. It is only in so doing that the moral decay which has permeated the religious structure of modern Africa can be exposed and addressed. Finally, the sort of faith members of

religious groups in the postcolonial Africa demonstrate in their religious systems is to say the least awesome even when it is obvious that such systems fail in capturing the correct role and interpretation of religion in the society. In the new structure, this faith would play important role when redirected to uphold only the correct institution of religion in the society. In doing so, this faith would have to rise from the understanding that there is a vital connection between the religious structure and the society. Religion must be seen primarily as a social structure which has roles to play in the stability and growth of the society.

The third social structure we are going to interrogate here is "democracy", a popular political institution transplanted to Africa from the West held promises as the very LCM of good governance and leadership. This again, has become a farce in postcolonial Africa. "The government of the people" easily became confused with "the government of the selected few", so if you could organize a sham of an election and declare results in your favour, the system is democratic and you have the people's mandate. With failure of dictatorships across Africa in three or four decades following independence; taking the likes of Congo's Mobutu Seseseko, Uganda's Idi Amin, Nigeria's Gowon, Muritala Muhammed, Olusegun Obasanjo, Mohammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and of course, Sani Abacha; other dictators and would be dictators reinvented themselves in the mold of democrats by sprinkling in fake elections. Yet, have we not seen many of them in the last three decades or more still dictating and hand over mantles to their sons in their dying beds like Congo's Cabila, Uganda's Museveni, Burkina Faso's Blaise Compoure, Cameroon's Paul Biya. These are some of Africa's dictators putting on the toga of democracy. Is the problem then, with democracy or with the postcolonial African distortion of the social structure of democracy?

One can argue for the later but if the social structure of democracy was watertight as assumed perhaps there would not be room for its convenient distortion as we observe in postcolonial Africa. So there is probably more to the assumption of distortion. Democracy itself must have internal structural lapses that only became apparent as it was transplanted to the African soil. It was Aristotle who in the Ancient Greece intuited that democracy must be a form of mob system of government (COPLESTON 1962, 96) and Plato capped it up by describing it as the worst form of all lawful governments and the best form of all lawless ones (COPLESTON 1962, 260). These learned opinions point to the observed structural lapses of the system which was to tower above every other in modern civilization until recently. The transplantation of this system from the West to Africa and Asia which signals perhaps, a ricochet off one compatible thought system to a non compatible one must be responsible for this. It has been argued that the thought systems of the races of the world vary considerably (HEBGA 1958, 222-23; CHIMAKONAM 2012, 13-18; HUNNINGS 1975, 4;

OMOREGBE 1985, 6) and this has implications on the compatibility of alien social structures.

To start with, the idea of democratic institution is not alien to African native thought system (OLADIPO 2000, web page 1; WIREDU 1996, 182-90) what is different is that in native African societies, "consensus principle" rather than the Western "majoritarian principle" undergirded the system (BUSIA 1967, 28; NWALA 1985, 168). With the consensus principle it is difficult if not out-rightly impossible for the "government of the people" to be confused with "government of the select few". The torpedo of the social structure by disgruntled opposition is also absent because everyone is in the boat. Nwala, therefore, likens this to the unanimity principle in Igbo-African version of traditional democracy. In his words "*Unanimity* and all the rigorous processes and compromises (igba izu—period of consultation) that lead to it are all efforts made to contain the wishes of the majority as well as those of the minority. In short, they are designed to arrive at what may be abstractly called 'the general will of the people of the community' (NWALA 1985, 168)." This same system which Nwala presents is also found in many African societies notably the Kenya people and the Ashanti of Ghana (BUSIA 1967, 18-22).

Corroborating Nwala's position, Kwasi Wiredu bemoans the failure of liberal democracy in Africa and blames it on the incompatibility of the system with the native political order and orientation in Africa. This is because, the multi-party system based on majority rule does not produce a reasonable system of democracy anywhere in the world how much more in African political order characterized by multi-ethnicity. Busia writes that for some people, it was the European Colonial Powers that destroyed African traditional democracy (1967, 17). Little wonder Wiredu recommends that we build an alternative democratic system for Africa resting on the democratic potentials of the traditional African political order; such potentials he says include the consensus principle and all-inclusive decision making processes (WIREDU 1996, 182-90).

Kwame Gyekye also holds that there was a functional democratic order in pre-colonial Africa prior to colonialism whose basic orientations are couched in community spirit and consensus principle. The traditional African system features a democratic order where dependence on dialogue and effective consultation were means of decision-making. According to K. A. Busia, "so strong was the value of solidarity that the chief aim of the counselors was to reach unanimity, and they talked until this was achieved (BUSIA 1967, 28)." A viable democratic alternative for Africa therefore must be constructed on these traditional democratic principles that have worked for Africa for ages. Writing in support Olusegun Oladipo states that:

The goal…is to show that a currently viable adaption and transformation of the African democratic heritage could help to consolidate Africa's multicultural societies. A central task in this process lies in the reconciliation of democracy and justice via the establishment of a consensus-oriented dialogue for decision-making,

> a constitutional legitimation of the rule of ethnic groups, and a decentralisation of political power, so that local and regional autonomy becomes possible (OLADIPO 2000, web page 1).

On the issue of reconciling democracy and justice, it has been mooted that this is one of the stumbling blocks of Western-styled liberal democracy in Africa. As a result of the principle of majority rule, Africa's political class takes undue advantage on others. An alibi that was not present in Africa's traditional political system. Expressing this correctly, Mahmood Mamdani echoes that the Western-styled liberal democracy practiced in Africa today has created a scenario in which "the minority fears democracy; the majority fears justice" (MAHMOOD 1998, 11). This issue, it is safe to say is central to all the crises in Africa's democracies today.

It is therefore easy to observe that (1) the majoritarian principle (2) the idea of the opposition (3) the instrument of election (4) the multiparty system to name a few, in different ways short-change the practice of liberal democracy in postcolonial Africa. In the precolonial native African idea of democracy as Wiredu, Busia and Nwala showed above, there is no room for opposition—every interest is duly accommodated, hence the only unaccommodated interest is the non-interested party. If such non-interested party does not behoove the interest of the commune it is then regarded as an enemy and treated as such. In this light, the idea of opposition brought in by liberal democracy is not received well in postcolonial Africa. He whose interests cannot be accommodated for any reason at all whether he is called opposition is simply an enemy of the commune and should be treated as such. Thus we see liberal democracy in postcolonial Africa that behooves the principle of unanimity rather than that of checks and balance which the opposition brings. We also see the traditional preference for selection dominating the idea of election in postcolonial Africa. The elections which bring people to power have been mutilated to wear the toga of selection instead and the idea of multiparty system has sparked off massive divisions and discriminations along ethnic lines. Parties somehow bear the reflection of communities (in accordance with African communitarian ontology) who must protect its interests absolutely. To cap it all, the majoritarian principle has provided leeway for ruling parties or powerful groups to perpetuate themselves in power through fake elections. All these have a direct connection with Africa's communitarian ontology. One could see that the friction between the entrenched communitarian ontology and the imported Western liberal democratic ideology undergirded by individualistic ontology cannot be resolved without tampering with the structure of liberal democracy itself. This adjustment is not because liberal democracy is faulty in itself but because it is faulty in Africa.

In interrogatory theory we always look out for lessons to take from negative elements and the valuable or usable elements to take from the positive ones that emerge from the interrogation. Here, it must be admitted that there are structural weaknesses in liberal democracy as far as its practice in Africa is concerned. So we should look out

for structural adjustments in our reconstruction of the institution of democracy in Africa. Wiredu's call for a non-party consensual democratic system is based on the motivation for all-inclusive decision making system. Perhaps, we must observe, a one party system might be better since in the absence of the lure of community-life which party system provides, political actors almost involuntarily in keeping with Africa's communitarian system of thought would create communities and which is worse, along ethnic lines. J. G. Donders in writing about the missionary successes in Africa corroborates that Africans are naturally and strongly attracted to communitarian ontology and would only leave one community for another if the new one offers greater promises of congregation (1985, 32). Hence, I reason that a non-party system might have grave consequences on social cohesion. Africa's new democracy should offer a community in the form of one-party system that would strive to overcome exclusions and strengthen inclusions. In this way, the responsibility of checks and balances provided for in the idea of the opposition would be transferred to and captured in what T.U. Nwala calls "the general will" (1985, 168). The line between the majority and the minority would fade away naturally. In the absence of the negative influences of the idea of opposition and majoritarian principle, democratic elections in Africa would become truly democratic, characteristic of the Igbo maxim "nwa mmuo emegbuna nwa mmadu, nwa mmadu emegbuna nwa mmuo" meaning "let the son of the spirit not cheat son of man and let the son of man not cheat son of the spirit" this injunction is given in the understanding that there is continuum of life from physical to spiritual. Figuratively, though we may speak in different tongues, we are one and the same people nonetheless. It is in this way that the idea of unanimity or consensus principle as harped by K. A. Busia, T. U. Nwala, O. Oladipo and K. Wiredu would return to take the place of the notorious "majoritarian principle" in democratic systems in Africa. Such an alternative democratic system may be called "Ohakarasi" or "Ohacracy" meaning "all people (not some or most) have the say". In 1974 in his [Igbo Political Culture] one named E. N. Njaka described the Igbo brand of democracy as Ohacracy (1974, 13). F. U. Okafor in his 1992 [Igbo Philosophy of Law] also fine-tuned the concept as a democratic system (1992, 9) and further stretched it as a jurisprudential concept in the form of "ohacentrism" (1992, 59). However, in his 1997 University of Louvain lecture, the brilliant Pantaleon Iroegbu gave the concept further rigorous conception as an alternative democratic system for Africa (1997, 3-7).

So we see the positive elements of modern democracy such as electioneering, party system, representational system, constitutional order to name a few can be absorbed in our reconstruction of the social structure of democracy to yield an alternative system called ohacracy. In another vein, the negative ones supply invaluable lessons which crystallize to: "non can you fit a square peg into a round hole if you did not first trim it to size".

Inaugurating the Conversational Order in African Philosophy
The New Era or Contemporary Period of African philosophy began in the late 1990's and took shape by the turn of the millennium years. The orientation of this period is conversational philosophy hence, the conversational school becomes the new school of thought to which all who grant the synthesis of "usable" tradition and modernity, rigour, individual creations, futuristic synthesis and critical conversations among practitioners belong. So, conversationalism is what I call the movement that thrives in this era. In the Calabar School of Philosophy two prominent theories have emerged namely, Ibuanyidanda and Njikoka philosophies. By conversational philosophy I mean the rigorous engagement of individual African philosophers in the creation of critical narratives through the fusion of relevant elements of tradition and modernity for the construction of future. There is also critical conversation among practitioners, critical synthesis, theoretic evaluation, re-enforcements and purifications of the thoughts of other African philosophers in ways that upgrade them to metanarrative of African philosophy. These also make such thoughts universalizable although with the primary purpose of solving African problems. In this era, the synthesis of the later period evolves into critical synthesis and the degraded critical analysis returns in full force.

Some of the noisy proponents of conversational African philosophy in this era ironically have emerged in the Western world notably in America.[1] The American philosopher, Jennifer Lisa vest is noted principally for this campaign. Another champion is the brilliant Bruce Janz, ironically, a white American philosopher whose essays re-echo the importance of conversational detour. He too, is an ardent scholar in African philosophy or should I say a dogged African philosopher. These two to name a few, posit that the highest purification of African philosophy is to be realized in conversational philosophizing.

However, it was the Nigerian philosopher Innocent Asouzu who going beyond the earlier botched attempt of Leopold Senghor and transcending the foundations of Pantaleon Iroegbu erected a model of modern African philosophy. The New Era therefore, is the beginning of modern African philosophy[2] and

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[1]. Tsenay Serequeberhan in the Introduction to his edited collection *African Philosophy: The Essential Reading,* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), was therefore wrong in excluding foreigners from the business of constructing African philosophy or to even call them such names as meddlers, xviii.
[2]. The modern African philosophy as extrapolated by Olusegun Oladipo (ed) *The Third Way in African Philosophy*, (Ibadan: Hope, 2002), 11–15; and Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay in African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11–12., were in terms of orientation and not in historical demarcation as we employ it here in

Innocent Asouzu[3] according to the young Nigerian philosopher Ada Agada, arguably could be regarded as the father of modern African philosophy.[4] I do not dispute this and I believe he must have beaten his compatriot, the imaginative Pantaleon Iroegbu to this honor, whose career was cut short by death. The exceptionally brilliant young Nigerian philosopher Ada Agada believes Asouzu also beats the illustrious Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu to this honor simply by the dense constructionist flavor of his works. I do not think this is lacking in Wiredu but I quite agree it is more pronounced in Asouzu. The importance of Wiredu in African philosophy cannot be fully captured in an expression, perhaps the most prolific; one can add that without a Wiredu there may never have been an Asouzu in African philosophy. Yet, there is this touch in Asouzu's works that stands him out. Wiredu may be properly regarded as a forerunner or probably something more glorious, I do not know which. Maybe as John de Baptiste of African philosophy who for decades identified problems and suggested ways of constructing authentic African philosophy. He was preparing the mind of Africa for the arrival of authentic African philosophy. It is in the same light that Ngugi wa Thiong'o spoke of decolonizing the African mind[5] and Amilcar Cabral the Guinean nationalist recommended what he called "return to the source"[6]—a sort of re-africanization of the colonized people of Africa through philosophical re-education. This re-education is necessary for the recovery and re-integration of Africans brainwashed through the colonial

fulfillment of some of the conditions stipulated by Marcien Towa in his "Conditions for the Affirmation of a Modern African Philosophical Thought" Tsanay Serequeberhan (ed) *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 187–200.

[3]. Most of Innocent Asouzu's works were published in Switzerland by publishers who are little known elsewhere and this may have accounted for the slow diffusion of these important parts of modern African philosophical literature in places where they ought to be read and evaluated. Thus it may come as a surprise to those who may never have heard of this philosopher to see him declared father of modern African philosopher as Ada Agada has done elsewhere. From a personal perspective I think there is merit to this declaration.

[4]. See Ada Agada. *Existence and Consolation*: Reinventing Ontology, Gnosis and Values in African Philosophy. 3rd Logic Option Publishing, 2014 [forthcoming]

[5]. See Ngugi wa Thiong'O, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,* (London: J. Curry and Portsmouth, N. H: Heinemann, 1986); *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Toward a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1998.

[6]. See Cabral Amilcar, *Revolution in Guinea: An African People's Struggle* (London: Stage 1, 1969).

education or one should say, mis-education to borrow the favored concept of Ivan Illich in his [Deschooling the Society] (1971) The colonial mis-education which consisted in the transfer of foreign system of thought and the denigration of the indigenous one eventually created out of the so-called Africans what the writer of [Bantu Philosophy] Tempels calls *évoléus* (1958, 13) or the deracinés. These are those Africans who have been torn away from the traditional ways of life and thought of their own ethnic group and have taken over those of the West which they have been made to believe represent civilization.[7]

Iroegbu in his [Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy] inaugurated reconstructive and conversational approach in African philosophy. He engaged previous writers in a critical conversation out of which he produced his own thought, (Uwa ontology) bearing the stain of African tradition and thought system but remarkably different in approach and method from ethnophilosophy.[8] I regard him as the father of conversationalism. Franz Fanon has highlighted the importance of sourcing African philosophical paraphernalia from African indigenous culture. This is corroborated in a way by Lucius Outlaw in his [African Philosophy: Deconstructive and Reconstructive Challenges]. In it, Outlaw advocates the deconstruction of the European-invented Africa to be replaced by a reconstruction to be done by conscientized African free from the grip of colonial mentality (OUTLAW 1996, 11). Whereas the Wiredu's crusade sought to deconstruct the invented Africa, actors in the New Era of African philosophy seek to reconstruct through conversational approach.

Iroegbu like we have stated inaugurated this drive but it was Asouzu who has made the most of it in the very recent. His theory of Ibuanyidanda ontology or complementary reflection maintains that "to be" simply means to be in mutual complementary relationship (ASOUZU 2007, 251–55). Every being therefore, is a variable with capacity to join a mutual interaction. In this capacity every being is seen as a missing link serving a missing link of reality in the network of realities. One immediately suspects the apparent contradiction that might arise from the fusion of two opposed variables when considered logically. But the logic of this theory is not the two-valued classical logic but the three-valued African logic.[9] In this, the two standard values are sub-contraries rather than

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[7]. Tsanay Serequeberhan (ed), *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, has described these people scornfully as Europeanized Africans, 8.

[8]. Recall that this was the direct advocacy of Kwasi Wiredu and others who followed him after. Members of the modernist school of thought like Olusegun Oladipo, *The Third Way in African Philosophy*, 12; Kwame Gyekye, 11; Tsanay Serequeberhan, 19; Odera Oruka, 47–62.

[9]. The variant associated with J. O. Chimakonam called Ezumezu logic. See Chimakonam Jonathan, "Outline of African logic for the Development of

contradictories thereby facilitating effective complementation of variables. The possibility of the two standard values merging to form the third value in the complementary mode is what makes ezumezu logic a powerful tool of thought.

Other emerging theories of conversational and reconstructive African philosophy are those that came after. These include, Njikoka philosophy or integrative humanism credited to Godfrey Ozumba (the chief proponent) and J. O. Chimakonam; consolationism credited to the emerging Nigerian philosopher Ada Agada; Afrizealotism developed by G. Ekwuru are some of the theories that have left their domains and are spreading.

Njikoka philosophy sees the question of being as central in African philosophy. "To be" therefore, is to be in mutual integrative relationship. Njikoka meaning integration maintains that being is being only if it is in a network of other beings. Isolated from this network, there is strictly no being because true beings depend for their existences on the mutuality and on the network to which they inevitably belong. This prompts the Integrativists to regard every being as a necessarily link of reality (CHIMAKONAM 2013, 79). Within the network of reality, every being therefore is necessary. The human being is a necessarily being whose endeavor in the world is to actualize the status as being unto eternity. He is nwa-mgbe-nta in this world but he aims at transforming into nwa-mgbe-ebi-ebi in the continuing next world. The same logic which undergirds Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy is the driving principle of this theory.

Ada Agada's consolationism is an existentialist theory which reflects on African experiences. In a way, it seeks to answer such existential questions already raised in Western philosophy but from African perspectives. The melancholy man is the 21st century human beleaguered by existential problems some of which are beyond him and leave him seeking consolation as the only remaining option. The emotional man whom Senghor erroneously announced as

Thought, Science and Technology in Africa," Paper Presented at the *Sixth Annual International Conference on Research and Innovation for Sustainable Development: Prospects and Challenges in the Third World*, (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Oct. 25–28, 2011); "Building African logic as an Algorithm for Africa's Development" Presented at African Studies Institute Conference, The University of Georgia (*USA* Nov. 8–10, 2012); see also "Ezumezu: A Variant of Three-valued Logic—Insights and Controversies." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (Free State University, Bloemfontein, South Africa Jan. 20–22, 2014).

the Negro was in fact according to Ada Agada, the universal man. The much taunted reason or rationality of the modern man emerged from emotions. Thus, science, art, religion and philosophy find their bearing in the immanent spaces of human joy and sadness. The goal of being in the world is a struggle to avoid sadness and achieve joy. Consolationism therefore, subverts the Western category of being and replaces it with the category of mood. For when man fails to achieve joy and is rather sad, he finds consolation by finding God or anything that serves this purpose.

E. G. Ekwuru is the proponent of Afrizealotism. This is a social theory which seeks to reconstruct the African being or humanism. In the post colonial era, the African emerged distorted not purely African and not purely Western. This is due to the colonial contamination of African system of thought. Afrizealotism therefore, seeks, not to purge the Western influences totally, and certainly not to admit all of African tradition without censorship; but to produce a viable synthesis by sifting modern and relevant variables from the Western system that is sufficient without making the new synthesis Western; and retaining just enough and relevant African traditions that will ensure that the synthesis is African but not archaic. This presupposes a logic that is dynamic and at least three-valued. Like Iroegbu, Asouzu, Ozumba, Chimakonam and Agada, the champions of Afrizealotism are building the new edifice by reconstructing the deconstructed domain of thought in the later period of African philosophy and the central approach is conversation, i.e. engaging other African philosophers in critical and positive discourses to reconstruct the deconstructed edifice of African philosophy. Hence, the New Era of African philosophy is safe from the retrogressive perverse dialogues which characterized the early period (1920-1960) and middle periods.

Also, with the critical deconstruction that occurred in the middle period (1960-1980) of African philosophy and the attendant eclecticism that emerged in the later period (1980-1990); the stage was set for the formidable conversational encounters that marked the arrival of the New Era of African philosophy.

Interrogatory theory therefore aims at taking conversationalism to a purely synthetic level through the three modes of deconstruction, construction/reconstruction and critical synthesis. Africa at this level of discourse is approached as a backward continent with so much confusion within its social structures. I see the primary goal of Philosophy in Africa (whether African or Western philosophy) to be the interrogation of decadent social structures in order to force through an interrogatory program of social reconstruction sifting valuable or usable elements of tradition or modernity in constructing futurity.

Conclusion

In this essay I inaugurate my thought on Interrogatory Theory (IT) which I define as the conversational questioning of social structures in postcolonial Africa for the ultimate and desperate purpose of forcing through a progress and growth-sensitive African society. I reason that the domain of reflective discourse on African social structures has either not been properly charged in the postcolonial era or efforts have for the wrong reasons been derailed. The undeniable result for me is the ever growing retrogression and the widening gap between Africa and the West. Recourse to the tools of interrogatory theory as I articulate them holds a great promise for the authentic African renaissance. The later being the only and inevitable goal a backward people and an underdeveloped continent must pursue. Interrogatory theory provides this exotic wheel of promise that would ride Africa out of squalor.

In this essay, I provided a brief background to interrogatory theory, its focus, promise and mechanisms. I also interrogated three prominent social structures in the mode of education, religion and democracy as a guide to the functionality of this philosophical method of enquiry. I also inaugurated conversationalism not only as a new school of thought or movement in contemporary history of African philosophy but as the next stage of the development of African philosophy. Finally, I showed that the grand aim of interrogatory theory was to take conversational philosophy beyond reconstructive level and properly to critical synthetic level.

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AN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE ON NAMES AND IDENTITY

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Abstract
African names are not philosophical rhetoric, but they are believed to convey deep intrinsic significance for the bearer and the community as a whole. It is argued that African names evaluate nature, essence as well as provide a string of relationship between the living and the dead. This paper argued that though African names function thus much, the various incursions into Africa have continued to vitrify their context, nature and continuum. Through the gristmill of religious interpretive framework, it is argued that if this trend remains unabated, African names as part of African religious cultural value or heritage would in no distant time ebb into oblivion.
KEYWORDS: Names, African, culture, community, colonialism, Christianity

Introduction
Almost everyone who writes on African concept of names generalizes, undermining the increasing heterogeneous and pluralistic nature of African society. Traditional African communities may have shared similar traits; it is also true that there are parallel intricate values. The cultural complexities in Africa are further ossified by the widespread establishment of missionary religions— Christianity and Islam—which have added their own cultural peculiarities to indigenous cultures, particularly names that many Africans have to bear. The influences of colonialism on African cultural values have been well documented (IGBOIN 2011). The adverse effects of these incursions on African culture such as religion, language, values, and African names in this context are very well articulated by Thabo Mbeki, when he challenged African leaders to critically reflect on the legacies of colonialism whose emblems have continued to

> …evoke our distant past, our living present and our future as it unfolds before us…. We have chosen an ancient language of our people. This language is now extinct as no one lives who speaks it as his or her mother-tongue. This emphasises the tragedy of the millions of human beings who, through ages, have perished and even ceased to exist as peoples, because of people's inhumanity to others. (MORAN 2009, 10)

The obvious reality that this work provokes further is that just as many African languages are going extinct, so also are their names and identity. In this paper, we espouse how Christianity and colonialism have vitrified autochthonous African belief and values of names; we also argue for restraint from uncritical adoption of foreign names.

African Concept of Names
Anthony Echekwube (2005, 279) instantiates the import of African names when he avers that names are not just signs but also symbols that evaluate "nature, essence, characteristics, functions, and orientation of an object, person, or place relative to what role it plays in the sight and understandings of the one who gives the name." In other words, names encapsulate the totality of humanity and nature on the one hand, and on other, they depict intimate relationship between the named and the namer. Anthony Ekwunife does not agree less when he argues that for the African, there are pungent philosophical accounts to sustain the position that African names are both intrinsically and extrinsically meaningful. He further distils the point that some of the names which Africans bear need deliberate conscious efforts to decode. Otherwise, for the ordinary person, African names may just be labels, meaningless and dispensable (EGBUNU 2013, 1).

John Mbiti (1969, 119), one of the most influential authorities in naming in Africa, argues that almost all African names are meaningful. The meanings of names are tied largely, in many occasions, to the circumstances of birth of the child; and to a large extent, these names influence the personality and character of the bearer, thus his/her identity. Names, he adds, are constant reminder of the composite conception of the African community because, some names borne, realistically recall the belief in reincarnation. Thus, Mbiti introduces strong metaphysical ontology to African naming code. Hence, "the name is the person, and many names are often descriptive of the individual, particularly names acquired as the person grows." Mbiti (1969, 119) further posits that there are no 'family names' in traditional Africa, except in a few instances. The reason for this is that individuals bear their own names. According to him, "there are no single family names shared by everybody in a given family." Ayandele ((1969, 259) has argued that the Yoruba do not have family names because of the sacred nature of one's father's name such that "no younger members dare mention it even after a father's death." The adoption of surnames in Africa by the will of colonialists is believed to have destroyed the reverence and respect accorded them. In Nigeria, the British introduced it. It was compatible with the British law of property and inheritance just as it suited the individualism introduced by colonialism and foreign religions into African communal setting (1966, 259).

Laurenti Magesa opines that personal identity is a function of complex realities, which in turn defines the person. That is why Africans do not "conceive

of personal identity apart from life in its totality; that is, where they come from, what they do, whom they associate with their relations, their gods, etc" (1997, 82). Even though these define humanity, self understanding is incomplete unless the 'drama of life' takes place within the natural world, in the life of nature and culture. As H. Sindima puts it, "as nature opens itself to people, it presents possibilities for discovering how inseparably bonded people are to each other and to all of creation" (1990, 144-145).   This bond initiates an incarnation or actualization of the named in the reflex of his/her ancestor; this brings to the fore an expected moral quality or values, power or event of the latter. It is in this sense that it can be said that "to confer a name is therefore to confer personality, status, destiny, or express a wish or circumstances in which the bearer of the name was born" (NYAMITI 1988, 42).

　　　Apart from that, names preserve memories of historical events just as they represent current family or personal reality, or replay the circumstances of birth. However, the ethical demand of historical names, especially the negative ones is to help the individual and community to prevent a reoccurrence of the grubby circumstances that had been experienced. The ethical challenge therefore is to place on the family and community template "the responsibility to create a new social, political or economic order in which everyone can enjoy a full life" (MAGESA 1997, 89). For the positive names, the logic is the same because they are clear expressions of desires or moral qualities, and media for "preserving the vital force of the clan" (MAGESA 1997, 89). This is partly why names may not be held in derision because they are intrinsically valuable and tied to the bearers, thereby deserving respect. Maquet submits that:

> An individual is defined by his name; he is his name. This is an inside name which is never lost, and this distinguished from the second name given on the occasion of an increase in strength…. The inside name is the indicator of a person's individuality within his lineage. For no man is isolated: he 'constitutes a link in the chain of vital forces, a living link, both active and passive fastened by the top to the link of his ascending line, and supporting at the bottom the line of his descent.' (1972, 106)

Benezet Bujo (1997: 27) argues from anthropocentric dimension of African names. According to him, the strengthening and growth of life in individual and community is the core responsibility of every member of the African "ethical community" in its composite nature. The African community has a dialectical relationship, each playing its roles in accordance with the rules with the hindsight to generate rather than diminish life. With this co-responsibility of all, names function in cohering the dialectics (1997, 27).

Bujo (1990, 95-102), Kwame Gyekye (1996, 25) and Ferdinand Ezekwonna (2005) among others first and foremost debunk, and rightly so, the position of some of the first generation of African religious studies scholars and thinkers that held the view that African individuality is wholly subsumed under or lost in community. Contrary to that, within the community thesis, the individuals do not lose their identity; rather it is the collective identities of the individuals that generate life for the community identity even though the latter apparently works towards the fulfillment or satisfaction of the former. Ezekwonna illustratively uses the case of the Igbo in Nigeria to drive home the argument when he avers that though every individual belongs to the community, the community emplaces the individuals in such a way that they do not forfeit their essence, talents and skills (2005, 34). Bujo expatiates:

> Usually, it is not the father's name that is just passed on to the child; every child gets his or her own name according to the circumstance of birth. Therefore the name is never without individual meaning, but expressed something of the person's being. It characterizes the personal ontological reality. (1997, 28)

It is also in this sense that the community demands morality from the individual as free moral agents, thus becoming responsible for their actions. The community and the individual, by this relationship, are not opposed to each other in the generation and fulfillment of life. It is within this ambit that both individual and community names reflect the kind of values that identify them in the midst of others.

In the context of the rights of the individual in African tradition, Bujo admits that there are no family names in the Western sense, which are transmitted from father to son. Rather the child bears his/her names, which confers on him/her "a historical being, in its uniqueness" and espouses "the history and prehistory of a family as well as those of the entire lineage…. It contains a whole programme for life, which everybody has to realize individually and not through others" (1997, 147-148). Ezekwonna argues that personal names are a proof of individual identity. Researching among the Igbo, he posits that "a name is the first mark of personal identity in African communities" without which meaning and value are impossible to discern and ascribe (2005, 73). This argument is in tandem with Tempels' study of the Bantu that "the first criterion is the name. The name expressed the individual character of the being. The name is not a simple external courtesy; it is the very reality of the individual." It is the name that maintains individual presence in the community (1959, 73-74). Edwin Smith relates it well when he said that in Africa, "names are not mere labels, but often express qualities for which the owners are conspicuous" (DANQUAH 1968, xi).

In the series of names a person bears, it is believed that the first defines the ontological or intrinsic reality of the bearer. This, more than any other reason, accounts for change of names in Africa. Tempels shares his experience during a baptismal rite to justify this. During the baptism, the parents of the child being baptized were asked the native name of their child, which was Ngoi, to which they responded: "that is he" rather than the Christian name which they merely said was Joseph (1959, 107-108). To compromise the African name seems to mean to lose one's identity or individuality.

But how does a name confer identity and individuality if it reflects the namer's experiences rather than the named? Jacob Ayantayo answers this question partly. Engaging the functional theory of sociological investigation, he argues that "the traditional names are serving some purposes because there is much in a name as far as those who give names are concerned." This ramification is important because the act of name changing has become a global concern. If the namer names the named according to his/her condition, should not the latter have the right to determine his/her identity by changing his/her name in order to fulfill his/her own destiny believed to be attached to the name? On the other hand, when the name works in the positive side, the bearer is not likely to change it. Here lies the dilemma, which Ayantayo tries to survey among the Yoruba. He observes that Yoruba names reveal peculiarity, genealogy and royalty apart from the fact that they are sources of family pride and means of historical preservation of tradition. The abandonment of traditional names is a sign of cultural disintegration, which requires drastic measures for preservation. His worry is not a recent one, but it has become widespread, it is not only in Africa but also in other places, to which we turn (2010, 1-16).

Concept of Names in African Christian Traditions
Many African writers use Christian and Western concept of name interchangeably. In other words, they present Western names as Christian and vice versa. Ezekwonna (2005) and Ayantayo (2010) among others do not distinguish between them. The question is whether there is a difference between them. In the context of our discourse, Christian and Western traditions are different even though the former has been adjudged to have had great influence on the history and culture of the latter. It is in this sense that John Onaiyekan avers that every culture that accepts Christianity must necessarily be converted into it, even the Jewish people and culture, among whom and where Jesus Christ himself came from need be converted to Christianity (2001, 3). Thus, it can be said that Christianity is thoroughly contextualized in the West so much so that its traditions have been greatly influenced by it. Hence, for many Africans, as a consequence of the influences of slave trade, mission and colonialism, Western

names are not distinguished from Christian ones, even though they have radical different motives.

A question is whether the Jewish or Greek names that appear in the Bible are Christian names if the argument of Onaiyekan above holds. We can also ask if those Jewish and Greek names that do not appear in the Bible are not to be considered among Christian names. How therefore do we distinguish between Jewish and Christian names? To the infallibilists, the answer lies in taking the Bible and its contents literally, in such a way that whatever appears therein is what God allows, and must be the standard of theological discourse. For the inculturationists the Bible as a living Word must meet every culture that yearns for it and its demands without compromising its standard. Therefore, names that appear in the Bible and those in other cultures which Christianity has met and that bear the contours of sound biblical theme can be regarded as Christian. In this way, we can differentiate Christian names from Western or African ones.

Efficacy and Change of Names in Africa
The common questions usually asked include, what is in a name, do names influence the bearer's character, and if yes, how? Is it the name that has influence on the bearer or vice versa? These questions are relevant because of the fact that names are believed to be meaningful and powerful. Ayantayo disagrees with the position that names influence the bearer's status in life. According to him, there is no "logical connection between the name a person bears and the fortunes that attend with one's life" (2010, 13-14). This is because, as he puts it, no reasonable parents would give 'evil' names to their children. In spite of that, that a person is named Abiola among the Yoruba, for instance, which means 'born into wealth,' does not follow logically that the child will be wealthy. In fact, there are so many unheard Abiola in Yoruba land. He crystallized this by making reference to late MKO Abiola, one of the wealthiest people in Nigeria and the acclaimed winner of June 12, 1993 Presidential election, who many parents name their children after. The wish of those who name their children after him is that such children would be as wealthy as Abiola was. However, Ayantayo's position raises three points that he has not correlated. One is that parents can name their children in accordance with their present condition, so Abiola in this sense means born into wealth. This does not mean that the parents logically think that the child will be wealthy even though it is their desire. Rather, the birth of the child coincides with a very pleasant moment in the family which bears historical significance. The second is that parents who name their children after a successful person, e.g. Abiola, express their admiration and wish that their child would be as great as the person he/she is named after. Even though it may not be in all cases that the child grows to be like the person he/she is named after, it cannot be ruled out that there are ample exceptions. Third, a person can name his child after a friend as a seal

to their friendship or relationship. So we can tease out those who name their children after Abiola in order to categorize where they belong to in accordance with the three realms above.

Anthony Akinola also anatomizes the name of the Nigerian President, Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan. According to him, the rise of Jonathan from obscurity to prominence in Nigerian politics has nothing to do with his name essentially. To think it does is to sentimentalize democracy rather than put into it some rational pill. That he is named after Nnamdi Azikwe, one of the foremost Nigerian nationalists and the first indigenous Governor-General should not be imputed into the equation. According to him, "it will be dishonest not to acknowledge that the strategic importance of the south-south geopolitical zone as the region that accounts for our nation's wealth has rubbed off in the historic achievement of Goodluck Jonathan" (2011, Web. N. P).   He adds:

> Jonathan's first name may be about luck but it is doubtful if there would have been much support for him to "continue" with the mandate originally given to the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua via the zoning arrangements of his party if he had been a Vice President from elsewhere. (AKINOLA 2011, Web. N. P)

While the above thesis bears some truth that there is no logical correlation between Jonathan's name and his political rise, one wonders how he became a Deputy Governor, who by 'providence', (his boss was impeached), became the Governor. Jonathan was said to have been struggling to retain his position in the gubernatorial primaries in his state when he was appointed as Vice Presidential candidate to Umaru Yar'Adua, to the angst of majority of his party and the country. Jonathan did not struggle to become the President when by 'providence' his boss died and he assumed the position of the President. As Akinola himself realizes, "the tsunami effect of Jonathanism had been unstoppable" even by the North that believes that rotational presidency was destroyed by Jonathan's ambition, and the more astute and deft politicians who consider him to be a political neophyte (2011, Web. N. P).

If Akinola believes that luck or name, as he puts it, "defies rational explanation" (2011, Web. N. P) it means that rationality has its limits in explaining itself and other realities. One can be justified to argue that should Jonathan have come from another zone, the permutations of presidential circumstances that brought him political 'luck' would possibly have worked for his favor, in the order of his name, as it is at present. After all, Leonardo Boff (1979: 57)   observes rightly when he said:

> Reason itself, the very foundation of science, is nonrational. While reasons begin with reason, the latter itself has no reason. There is no rational motive that calls for the existence of reason. Reason itself is gratuitous. It exists as a bare fact, grounding rationality on a base which itself is not rational. The nonrational does exist, therefore, and it is seen as a limit by science itself. (1979, 57)

This position received philosophical corroboration from Louis Pojman and David Stewart who argue that no matter the logicality of rationalism in the explication of realities, rationality, by the very essence of things cannot answer all questions. This is because the rationalist cleverly and rationally selects the method that tends to align with his/her objective while excluding other methods as nonrational, if not irrational (POJMAN 2001, 14). For Stewart , those who pursue rational basis for the justification of all human phenomena must come to terms with the reality that human beings function through "a complex unity of reason, emotion, will, appetites, and feelings" (1992, 6). Jacques Derrida in his "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" reasons more critically about the underlying colonial sting in universal reason discourse. According to him:

> Metaphysics—the white metaphysics which resembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form that he must still wish to call Reason.(MORAN 2009, 19)

Derrida obviously insists that reason is a universal tablet and not domiciled with particular people. Contrary to the claim of the West, their myths are local to them; it is their peculiar mythological way of thought, which ought not to be universalized since every culture has its reason and myths.

It is observed that Africans are increasingly assuming Christian and foreign names. Theophilus Okere observes that missionaries and colonialists regarded every African as fetish, "their languages were hopelessly tone-infested cacophonies, while their names were unpronounceable gibberish for which the names of European canonized saints had to be substantiated" (OLANISEBE 2010, 55).. Ayandele , on the other hand observes that many Africans, even the educated ones like to assume "high-sounding or polysyllabic (foreign or alliterative) names" (1966, 257) possibly as a mark of pride of association with the West.

Reasons for change of name differ from one person to another or even culture and religion. Colonialism has accounted for change of names among various cultures. For instance, even though many Christians claim that there is a

lot of name-changing in the Bible as their reference for their action, it is the case that most of the changes were as a consequence of colonialism. In the Old Testament (OT) only three cases show God's involvement in change of names: Abram, Sarai and Jacob to Abraham, Sarah and Israel respectively. In others, it was an imposition: Joseph was renamed Saphenath-Paneah by Pharaoh (Gen. 41:45) Pharaoh-necoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah King and renamed him Jehoiakim (2Kgs. 23:34). King of Babylon coronated Mattaniah and renamed him Zedekiah (2Kgs. 24:17), the chief eunuch of Babylon also changed the names of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego respectively (Dan. 1:6-7). These examples authentically demonstrate the fact that "to name a person is to assert one's authority over the person named, and thus explains the change of names imposed by a master" (OLANISEBE 2010, 55). It is through this prism of master-slave dialectic that we can understand the rampant change of names that characterized the colonial and postcolonial periods in Africa.

In Africa, slave trade, mission, colonialism and now globalization seriously affected and still affect the concept of name. The assumption of foreign names by Africans was not only to show admiration for them, it was a form of cultural subjugation. Culture is instantiated here as "the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterizes a society or societal groups. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (cited in FALOLA 2010, 13). Since names and naming are part of culture and heritage, Blyden believed that the imposition and acceptance of foreign names by Africans caused "cultural calamity," which affected adversely African spiritual profundity in the struggle for independence. Those educated Africans who realized the spiritual, cultural and theological implications of imposed or acquired foreign names as "a terrible homicide" began the process of change of names (AYANDELE 1966, 253).

The real awakening of cultural nationalism in the twentieth century was first manifested in change of names from foreign to African autochthonous names. Such figures as "David B. Vincent became Mojola Agbebi; the Rev. J. H. Samuel, Secretary of the Lagos Institute founded in 1901, became Adegboyega Edun…. Joseph Pythagoras Haastrup became Ademuyiwa Haastrup, while George William Johnson… became Oshokale Tejumade Johnson" (AYANDELE 1966, 257-258). Ayandele further points out that these important people relinquished their foreign names because they reminded them of their slavery experiences; such names culturally and spiritually separated them from their African people and cosmology, their root; and were meaningless in "a society that attached a great deal of importance to names" (1966, 258). This intellectual and cultural disobedience was carried further at national level in Zaire under

Mobutu Sese Seko. According to Eugene Hillman, the blunt refusal of colonialists and Christianity to recognize African names and their import would also be met with rebuff such as:

> in Zaire, the initiative came from the government of Mobutu Sese Seko when he decided to abandon his "Christian" names, Joseph Désiré, and retrieve from the dustbin of history his original names. At the same time the Belgian Congo became Zaire. Leopoldville was renamed Kinshasa, and Elizabethville became Lubumbashi. (EZEKWONNA 2005, 77)

According to Ezekwonna , it is not enough to castigate those who renounce Christian and foreign names to assume their traditional ones in which they find meaning, identity and purpose of life. It is strongly believed that it is in these traditional (inner) names that they find their personality or individuality within their community; an umbilical cord that ties them to their ontological root and a compass to philosophic spirit inherent in their culture (1966, 258).

As the realization of ontological reality of names dawned on Africans in the Diaspora, there have been several cultural programs for revival of their African root, one of which is assumption of African names, and other rites embarked upon by them include reversion to African burial rites, spirituality, and worship. According to Lupenga Mphande, this decision was made in order to reaffirm their humanity, identity and genealogy thus continuing the "process of redefining themselves and dismantling the paradigm that kept them mentally chained for centuries" (OLANISEBE 2010, 62).

However, in contemporary African Christian experience, it is no longer the foreign missionaries and colonialists that demonize African names, especially the theophoric ones; it is on the contrary the African Christian bodies, particularly their leaders that have continued to de-Africanize us. Although it might be argued that this could have been a carry over from the missionary-colonial treatment and mentality, or even an extension of neo-colonialism, such reasoning would not be enough for continued mental and cultural slavery. The more popular reason adduced for change of name has to do with divine directive, a situation in which a Christian claims to have received revelation to do so. It is observed that Pentecostal churches are more prone to this claim. While we cannot prove or disprove their claim to divine directive, it is however true that most changes of names in the Bible reflect colonial dialectics rather than divine mandate. Even Jabez that most of them frequently refer to did not change his change but rather prayed that God should change his status in the family and community. Today, such names as Jekayinfa, Babatunde, Esubiyi, Ifafoore etc. have been rechristened to Jakayinoluwa, Olutunde, Jesubiyi, Oluforesayemi respectively (AYANTAYO 2010, 9). The change from Babatunde to Olutunde

has serious theological problems, for instance among the Yoruba. Babatunde means 'father has come back again.' This is an expression of the belief in reincarnation. To say Olutunde, if it implies God has returned, means that the lineal concept of history and eschatology of the West and Christianity must be replaced by the African cyclical eschatology. It also means that God is finite, mortal, mutable and susceptible to human caprices. But more critically, Olutunde would mean that God had died and reincarnated. This is an admission of the finitude and mortality of God, which in actual sense is preposterous to Yoruba metaphysics. Again, even if it is granted that it reflects Christian conception of name and the power believed to exist in name, the same conclusion is inevitable, namely that the Christian God is also mortal and finite, and in addition, he has lost touch with his essence and linearity and assumes the African cyclical eschatological reality.

There are other times that the names changed are not contextualized; they are outrightly changed and bearers assume new names. Such common names Christians now bear include: Precious, Simple, Prosper, Gentle, Covenant, Marvelous, Promise, Treasure, Testimony, Diadem, Joy, Glory, Excellent, Favor, Righteous, Praise, Blessing, Mercy, Perfect, Heaven, Gift, Battleaxe, etc. (OLANISEBE 2010, 64; IGBOIN 2004, 22). Battleaxe, for example, is the shortened form of God's battleaxe. A pastor who named his son Battleaxe was compelled to rename him after three years because of the wild and weird behavior of the boy. It was reported that the boy would hit his classmates with his head and when cautioned, he would proceed to hit the wall. As usual, the pastor claimed that he was divinely directed to rechristen the boy (IGBOIN 2004, 22).

These biblical adjectives, verbs and nouns which have turned names of Christians and non-Christians alike reflect the level of theological understanding of the namers. Although they lay claim to divine inspiration, it is hardly demonstrated that these names carry such import and authority. It is apparent that the namers are carving a class for themselves by their 'Christian' names. It has been observed that some of them change their surnames, the names which link them with the other members of their lineage: "changing surnames is an embarrassment to the parents and a form of spiting them and it is against the biblical injunction that made it mandatory to honour their parents for longevity of life" (OLANISEBE 2010, 64).

Names and Identity
We have tried in the preceding paragraphs to argue that names and identity have correlative appeal. Names have much to do with identity-determination as well as identity-crisis. The sense of identity is crucial to individuals even though some have tried to "downplay the critical importance of identity inheritance and

constructions to the well being of the individual human and the group" (BEWAJI 2008, 267). As Amartya Sen puts it:

> A sense of identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence. It is not surprising that the idea of identity receives such widespread admiration, from popular advocacy of loving your neighbour to high theories of social capital and communitarian definition. (BEWAJI 2008, 268)

This widespread or global admiration of identity provokes metaphysical, quasi-metaphysical (cultural), religious, epistemological and axiological consciousness, that people can, and do, defend, kill and be killed for, identity. "And yet identity can also kill—and kill with abandon. A strong and exclusive sense of belonging to one group can in many cases carry with it the perception of distance and divergence from other. Within-group solidarity can help feed between-group discord" (BEWAJI 2008, 273).

Name-identity-crises are becoming prevalent in many African families. This involves a situation whereby a member of a family changes his/her surname, while others retain it. This act has generated identity-crises affecting social solidarity and inter-personal relationship. This, in turn, has negative effects on genealogy, history and events depicted by the changed names (AYANTAYO 2010; OLANISEBE 2010 and IGBOIN 2004). The acquired names change the identity of the person and the ontological dependence and relationship of the group. But should identity be confined to cultural provenance in a global setting? Should names still exercise their authority, if any, within a cultural province in light of global forces that are redefining identities? Are their global provisions that are so universal to safeguard the cultural advantages derived from names, and the identity they confer? Whose culture becomes supervinient in a global society in which the question of cultural relativism or cultural difference is hardly sufficiently resolved? What universal religious paradigms should be adjudged best standard in name and identity in the African-global setting? Is colonialism not implied in globalization of names and identities as had been experienced before?

Conclusion
We are confronted with real critical challenges concerning African names. Thus far, true life situation has shown the difficulty those who hold traditional view of African names would have to face should we argue for a complete return to pre-colonial and pre-missionary Africa. The other side of the dilemma is that should we continue with the rate of abandoning African names for Christian and foreign names we are also faced with the danger of culture decline. The only option that

appears open is how best to "balance between two intellectual traditions that have long been in conflict and mutually exclusive" (MORAN 2009, 7). Thus, while the creative contextuality has its own very tortuous challenges to African culture, it is also a fact that cannot be easily or even realistically stopped because of the pervading endorsement of the foreign religions and cultures. Nevertheless, it is instructive that the enlightened Africans should realize that there is the urgent need for a re-think so that they can begin to halt mental slavery that foreign influences have imposed on them.

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ETHNOCENTRIC BIAS IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY VIS-A-VIS ASOUZU'S IBUANYIDANDA ONTOLOGY

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Abstract
This paper is of the view that it is not bad for the Africans to defend their philosophy and their origin, as against the claims and positions of the few African thinkers, who do not believe that African philosophy exists, and a great number of the Westerners, who see nothing meaningful in their thoughts and ideas, but in doing so, they became biased and elevated their philosophy and relegated other philosophies to the background. This charge of ethnocentrism against those who deny African philosophy can also be extended to those African philosophers who in a bid to affirm African philosophy commit the discipline to strong ethnic reduction. This paper using Innocent Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda ontology, observes that most of the African scholars are too biased and self aggrandized in doing African philosophy, and as such have marred the beauty of African philosophy, just in the name of attaching cultural value to it. Innocent Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda ontology is used in this paper to educate the Africans that in as much as the Westerners cannot do without them, they too cannot do without Westerners. This paper therefore, is an attempt to eradicate ethnocentrism in and beyond Africa in doing philosophy through complementarity and mutual understanding of realities, not in a polarized mindset but in relationship to other realities that exist.
KEYWORDS: Ethnocentrism, Bias, Ibuanyidanda, Ontology, Complementarity, Ethnophilosophy.

Introduction

The focus of African philosophy has recently undergone a paradigm shift, from question bordering on whether African philosophy exists and African origin of philosophy, to desperate attempt to elevate African philosophy from ethnophilosophy to rigorous individual discourse. The reason for this departure is not farfetched; philosophy, according to Alabi Yekini, originated in human history, in questions about the nature of existence, knowledge, values, society and the quest for wisdom (2004, 7). To this end, it is deemed to be a universal exercise whose constructs should also be universalizable. Thus as most of the early narratives in African philosophy were criticized as cultural philosophy, the

contemporary shift to a much more rigorous discourse becomes imperative. Philosophy therefore, as a discipline, is as old as humanity.

Basil Okolo defines African philosophy as the critical thinking on the African and her experience of reality (1987, 34). This could be in various forms, for example: Andrew Uduigwomen maintains that a nationalist ideological philosophy emerged from the attempt by African nationalists or freedom fighters to develop a new, and possibly, unique political theory, based on African traditional socialism and family hood (2009, 4). This is an ideological conception. Pantaleon Iroegbu in a broader sense says that African philosophy is the reflective enquiry into the marvels and problematic that confronts one in Africa world, in view of producing systematic explanation and sustained responses (1994, 45). In line with Iroegbu, Campbell Momoh, describes African philosophy as African doctrines or theories on reality (being) and universe, which is made up of things like God, gods, life after death, spirit, so;ciety, man, ancestors, heaven, hell, belief, conception and practices (2004, 23). Without gainsaying any of the submissions above, I wish to add that African philosophy encompasses the activity or the systematic enquiry into the African experience and interpretation of being or reality. What is left to be said is that the bemoaning of African past and stolen legacies have added little or no value to African philosophy. Hence, the elevation of African philosophy to a critical and individual level of discourse has become imperative for the development of the discipline in our time.

However, efforts have been made by some African philosophers, to show that we have our own philosophy, while others do not see any reason to argue whether African philosophy exists or not. Having observed this, the question is what is responsible for the claim that Africa should have something distinctively African, and the denial of African philosophy? This question brings us to our concern in this paper, which is about ethnocentric bias in doing African philosophy. Innocent Asouzu identifies ethnocentric commitment or bias, which have befallen African philosophy , and beyond as a heavy burden (2007a, 10) that emerges as a result of our instinct of self-preservation, which always deceives us to see reality in a polarized and dichotomized manner, and operate within the ambience of the super maxim the nearer the better and the safer. This paper will look at what constitutes ethnocentric bias and how it crippled the progress of African philosophy.

Aristotle's Ontology and the Rise of Ethnocentric Bias in Africa

Aristotle adopted a polarizing and dichotomizing mindset in pursuing metaphysics. He sees metaphysics as a science that supersedes other sciences, both in eminence and grandeur. For him, therefore, others are ancillary sciences

that contribute little in the society. He captures the relationship between metaphysics and other sciences with the imagery of the relationship between the master worker and the mechanic, the wise and the unwise, the essential and the accidental. He observes that:

> the master workers in each craft are more honourable and know in a truer sense and are wiser than the manual workers, because they know the causes of the things that are done... the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any sense perception whatever, the artist wiser than the men of experience, the master worker than the mechanic and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of wisdom than the productive. (ARISTOTLE Metaphysica Bk A)

It is clear from this passage that Aristotle holds a discriminatory mindset, which makes us to think that the wise are destined to rule the unwise. When this type of polarization and categorization is applied to societal or ethnic relationship, it easily induces the mind to tend towards ethnocentrism. Aristotle's mindset has actually made so many persons to derail from justice. Today, things are not done the way they ought to be done. This is exactly why Asouzu believes and accuses Aristotle of being the major instigator of ethnocentric reduction. Hence, Aristotle introduced a type of mindset that would determine the way most Westerners think and seek to achieve their desires. Following the dictates of Aristotle's approach, the mind would be inclined to create a picture of human interpersonal relationship, where some human beings are perceived as essential and others merely as accidental and inconsequential entities (ASOUZU 2007a, 145).Thus, by instigating a kind of tone concerning the nature of metaphysics in comparison to the rest of the sciences. Aristotle initiates the kind of mindset that has influenced the way science and philosophy is done in the West, and by extension Africa.

Ethnocentric Bias and its Implications
Ethnocentric bias is the tendency of the mind to cling to those nearest to it, and seeks to protect their interest, against what it perceived as the external order. Ethnocentric commitment arises from the mind is tendency to misuse or misinterpret its ethnic consciousness or affiliation.

Ethnic group as defined by the Academic American Encyclopaedia, is "any group of people distinguished by common cultural, and frequently racial characteristics" (1997, 631). The members of these ethnic group are said to have a group identity; thus it is the consciousness of this group identity, and the tendency of bifurcation and polarization "imbibed through education,

socialization and indoctrination, that make us consider ourselves as best, and should have the best of everything, along with those who share certain characteristics with us" (ASOUZU 2007a, 129). According to Godfrey Ozumba and Jonathan Chimakonam, the seed of polarization and fragmentations of human society into antagonistic factions were sown by man himself. This has led to several wars, aliances, migrations, miscegenations and pockets of human societies, each seeking autonomy, identity, national personality, and today we are talking of races, nations, countries, continents unions, federations, republic etc., (2004, 75). The tendency to act from the background of ethnocentric bias or commitment, leads us to cling to those nearest to us, and our mind seeks to protect their interest against what is perceived as the external other. Asouzu writes thus:

> Since we tend to act under this impulse of our primitive instinct of self preservation always and often unintentionally, one can say that in most multicultural and multiethnic contexts, there is often the tendency for the mind to act in an unintended ethnocentric fashion, in view of securing certain interests and privileges it defines as very important for the inner circle. (2007a, 130)

Here, we understand clearly that the instinct of self preservation, which implies, so that I may be alone, is the major causes of ethnocentric commitment, and the core reason we often secure ourselves at the detriment of others. Moreso, Asouzu avers that this tendency to act from ethnic commitment , can be said to be one of the major causes of conflict in our society, and one that influences greatly the way we do philosophy and science (2007a, 130). Ethnocentric bias, is rooted in our instinct of self preservation which serves as a negative facilitator of exclusiveness, and is boosted, according to Asouzu, by the kind of "ontologies" we espouse the ontologies after Aristotle's bifurcating mindset (2007a, 131). These kinds of ontologies that Asouzu is pointing at can be found in all facet of our lives. You can see it in the market, here, the person very close to us is given the best product in the market while those distant to us are been cheated and given fake products. This mentality is equally obtainable in the church, family, school and association. We often regard our thing, and despise their thing, in many occasions, seeing what belongs to us as the best and what does not belong to us as useless and meaningless ignorant of the fact that ours cannot be complete without theirs and vice versa.

     This ethnocentric reduction in thought has done more harm than good in developing ideas, and cross fertilization of thoughts. Hence, what other people are doing, is thought to be nonsense, and has little or no value to contribute to what we are doing ourselves. This will invariably retard the development and progress

of our thoughts, philosophies and ideas in doing African Philosophy in Africa and beyond.

Ethnocentric Bias in African Philosophy
When we talk of ethnocentric bias in African philosophy, the scramble for Africa in late nineteenth century by European explorers and administrators often comes to mind. The visitors on arrival on the shores of Africa took turns to distort the thinking and policy of the black man in his father land. The first thing was to set the different group against themselves in the name of tribal identification (AUDREY 1971, 4-7). Some tribes were considered as superior to another. In Nigeria, reference is made to the three major languages; Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. This was the origin of ethnic prejudices, dichotomization and segregation. This kind of spirit of superiority complex, inculcated into some Africans, by their colonial masters, has come to stand the test of time. It is functional in many societies in Africa.

According to Asouzu, most Western debates within the framework of what is called Western philosophy are usually done in this mindset of utter mutual negation (2007a, 169) after the mindset of Aristotle. African philosophers could also be said to be influenced by the Aristotelian mindset, considering the fact that leadership structure in Africa, both in learning, philosophy and administration is drawn from people who have a disproportionately Western type of education (ASOUZU 2007a, 169). This was made possible through colonial Western education, socialization and indoctrination (ASOUZU 2007a, 177). This colonial super imposition now colours the mind in which Africans approach ontology.

Thus, the impact of Aristotle's ontology on African philosophy could be vivid if one recalls that Europe is a continent of colonizers and religious proselytizers. They transmitted this mindset in some way to the Africans. Having imbibed with this type of bifurcative mindset, Africans now approach reality, through most of their works in literature, politics and history, with the mindset of showing how superior, and excellent Africans and their cultural heritages are. These sentiments are clearly noticeable in works like Consciencism of Nkrumah, Ujamaa socialism of Nyerere, Pan-Africanism of Nkrumah and Dubois, Neo-welfarism of Azikiwe, etcetera. These works are directed against external intervention and exploitation, and thus are ethnocentric in character. However, most works in Africa, operate within the scope of we-and-them spirit, and the nearer the better and the safer, forgetting that anything that exists, serves a missing links of reality. And that anything that has head, has a tail-end. They tend to paint an idyllic picture of an African and contrast this with the Western.

This is the spirit behind the fronting of the concept "communalism'' as uniquely African, as against the individualism, of the West. The impression

here is that 'there is something uniquely African, which sets Africans apart from their detractors and tormentors (ASOUZU 2007a, 178). These detractors and tormentors are meant to be the West who have dumped ideas and products to ruin our lives (ANYAEHIE 2007, 162). Thus, most philosophical debates in Africa are carried out with a highly compromised mindset. This paper in line with Alabi Yekini's position, disagrees with Wamba dia Wamba, who asked if the philosopher or philosophy exists or not (2001, 227). This question does not hold water hence we cannot do without philosophy, the wisdom itself. The paper to an extent equally disagrees with Peter Bodunrin, who argues that the concept of philosophy in terms of the methodology and subject matter of the discipline, should be the same in both the Western and African senses (1984, 56), but argues that there should be a nexus between both the Western and African senses and advices that both should exist to complement each other. As a matter of fact, It only sees a mutual relationship between both thoughts, and that non can do without the other. This submission questions Placid Temples' notion of thought that the Africans cannot know being from its attribute but we the West can and Paulin Hountondji's rejection of ethno- philosophy as a genuine philosophical discipline hence it is more of the west than African (2002, 17). According to him, ethno- philosophy confuses the method of anthropology with those of philosophy, producing a hybrid discipline without a recognisable status in the world of theory. It is quite appalling that most African thinkers often forget that their philosophy is built upon another philosophy. Tell me what a particular writer have said that another writer have not said? Is there anything like that? For me, there is nothing like that. Then it becomes nonsensical, to claim uniqueness the way most African philosophers do. Unless we understand that there is nothing uniquely African and nothing uniquely Western, we can never make any head way, but as soon as that is introduced our consciousness about the issue of superiority stops, mutuality and interpersonal relationship would be established.

Here, Asouzu's notion that everything that exists has a head and a tail-end would be acknowledged and cherished. Asouzu's ibuanyidanda philosophy aims at decolouring this compromised and polarized mindset, with which philosophy is being done in African and beyond.

Ibuanyidanda as a Veritable Tool for solving the Problem of Ethnocentrism in African Philosophy

Asouzu maintains that ethnocentric reduction clouds our minds, and makes certainty in knowledge to elude us. Ibuanyidanda recognizes the fact that all missing links, are windows to reality, and the way we manage them determine the level of truth we arrive at (2007a, 94). It admonishes all stakeholders thus, "never elevate a world immanent missing links to an absolute instance"

(ASOUZU 2007b, 197) rather being is to be captured "in a comprehensive, total and future referential and proleptic manner" (ASOUZU 2004, 316). Ibuanyidanda or complementary reflection is an attempt to redefine, refine, reconstruct, and free our system of thoughts, from all ethnocentric commitment, making the mind of all, to see reality, from the windows of missing links.

An ethnocentric mindset operates under the influence of the super maxim, the nearer the better and the safer. Moreover, for the mind to begin to see being as missing links of reality, it has to go under a process Asouzu calls "existential conversion". This process of existential conversion brings the subject to full awareness of the limited value of this super maxim. When existential conversion has taken place, the mind becomes aware that the super maxim, the nearer the better and the safer, has only a limited range of application' (ASOUZU 2007b, 329). This super maxim, Asuozu stresses, is at the root of most clannish and ethnocentric tendencies in Africa, and indeed, the whole world. Nevertheless, when existential conversion, is in place, the subject begins to discover that the nearer is not always the better and the safest, as the maxim suggests. It is at this moment of discovery that an individual comes to the realization that the joy of being, lies on its limitations. At this level of consciousness, the mind no longer sees reality, as absolute fragments, as it is presently done in Africa, but on a platform of comprehensiveness and universality. Here, the mind sees being not in a limited frame, but with a global or totalizing mindset.

The mind begins to operate in keeping with the dictates of what Asuozu calls "the transcendent categories, grasping being in its fragmentation, unity, totality, universality, comprehensiveness, wholeness and future reference" (2007a, 323). However, for a subject to be able to capture being, in its fragmentation, unity, totality, universality, comprehensiveness, wholeness and future reference, the harmonizing faculty must be in charge. The harmonizing faculty called in Igbo language, Obi/Mmuo eziokwu "is a faculty that harmonizes all forces that tends toward bifurcation and exclusiveness" (ASOUZU 2007a, 316). As a matter of fact, when the harmonizing faculty is in control, the tendency of the mind to be led astray to ethnocentric bias or commitment would not be there, for this faculty harmonizes all differences, leaving no chance for polarization and bifurcation, which lead to ethnocentric bias. Obi/Mmuo eziokwu enables the mind to encounter the opposite other in its otherness, and embrace this otherness, as an extension of ego without discrimination. It is from this mindset that we are capable of seeing the opposite others not as "them" but as "we". It is from seeing the world in this mindset, that ethnocentric bias can be checked and eliminated in African philosophy.

Conclusion

Ibuanyidanda philosophy has as its major task, the liberalization of human reason from all forms of ethnocentric impositions and self aggrandizement. It is a call on African philosophers and all philosophers, to see reality, through the windows of missing links of reality, and never as an absolute mode of existence, for every individual or being, is a missing link that serves other missing links. Viewing reality in this way, eliminate the "we-them" mentality. When this we-them ethnocentric mentality is rejected from all stakeholders, then and only then, could philosophy in general and African philosophy in particular, be operated, devoid of ethnic biases, sentiments and misinterpretations.

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JONATHAN O. CHIMAKONAM'S CONCEPT OF PERSONAL IDENTITY: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

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Abstract

What is it that constitutes personal identity, is a question that has engaged the minds of scholars for eons of years. This question has become more complex in recent times with the emergence of biomedical technologies like allotransplantation, xenotransplantation and other forms of genetic engineering, which have tended to obliterate the uniqueness that hitherto existed in individuals. With organs and tissues being transplanted at will from one human to another, it becomes difficult to define what constitutes personal identity of person A who received an allotransplant from person B. Is he person B or Person A or both? This question would be a hard nut to crack for the adherent to a bodily theory of personal identity like Chimakonam. To assume that personal identity resides in the continuation of the same body will amount to a conclusion that Mrs. B who had a face and breast transplant is not Mrs. B but somebody else. The society Chimakonam holds as a judge of personal identity, would actually see her as not Mrs. A. But is she really not Mrs. A? This work concludes that she is Mrs. A because it is the individual that is the judge of personal identity and not the society. Personal identity resides in the consciousness. This is because it is consciousness that marks human from animals. This is not to say that the body is not a criterion of personal identity, personal identity resides more in consciousness than in the body. The body could only serve as a criterion, where the consciousness is lost, but when consciousness is regained, the body ceases to be the criterion. The body could at best be said to be a temporary criterion of identity, and would give way when consciousness returns.
KEY WORDS: person, personal identity, society, individual, consciousness

Introduction

The problem of personal identity has been a perennial one. It has perplexed the minds of philosophers for eons of years. What makes a person a person? Is it right to attribute the same identity to an object that has undergone radical change? Is Peter at two the same person with Peter at seventy two years? Is somebody who has lost his/her consciousness the same person? Are Siamese twins one or two persons? What constitutes personal identity? At what point does a person stop to exist? These and many more are questions that surround the issue of personal identity. Different theories have been raised in attempt to

answer these questions. These theories are often characterized into those that favour: bodily continuity, mental continuity and continuity of consciousness.

Jonathan Okeke Chimakonam (hereafter referred to simply as Chimakonam) peculiar conception of it actually stirred me into intellectual consciousness. Is it true that my identity ends at death as Chimakonam's theory seems to suggest? For if the physical body is the sole criterion of personal identity, it means that, after losing this body at death I would cease to exist. This is precisely because without identity, I am void.

I am of the view that, the problem of personal identity revolves round the concept of "person". If there is an agreement on what a person is, then the problem of identity would be resolved. Chimakonam seemed to have based his theory on the traditional African conception of a person. In traditional Africa, a person is considered a person if others say so (MENKITI 1984, 172). Thus, if they say you are nothing, then you are nothing, and if they say that you are, then you are. Menkiti presents this view thus: "in communal Africa, it is the community that defines a person as a person, not the static quality of rationality, will and memory" (1984, 172). Olatunji supports this assertion when he avers that, "the state of being of the community determines what the lot of individuals becomes, irrespective of the values cherished by the individual" (2006, 102). In traditional Africa therefore, the community not only defines a person as a person as Menkiti asserts, it also has "the right of appropriation over the rights or obligations of its members … it is the community that mostly determines who should live and who should not have life" (ASOUZU 2007a, 351). Understanding the background of Jonathan Chimakonam's conception of personal identity, would make it vivid why he is insistent that "the identity of a person is not what he thinks (what the person himself thinks), but what others see" (CHIMAKONAM 2011, 200 emphasis mine). This belief informs why he holds so strongly to the bodily theory of identity and defends it with such vigour. I will show in this work that African conception of personhood is not sound and thus is not a good base to erect a theory of personal identity. But before we go into that, we will explicate the meaning of some key terms that would be helpful to our understanding of the problem at stake.

What is Identity

Both Locke and Hume treated the problem of the origin of the idea of identity at length and were in considerable agreement in their analyses. In book 2 of [An Essay Concerning Human Understanding] Locke suggests that the idea of identity originates from human tendency to compare the "very being" of a thing observed to exist at a determined time and place, with the same thing existing at another time and place. He asserts:

> Another occasion the mind often takes of comparing is the very being of things. When considering anything as existing at any determined time and place, we compare it with itself existing at another time, and thereupon form the idea of identity and diversity. (1952, 218)

Identity for Locke therefore, arises from a comparison of a thing with itself through a period of time. In [A Treatise of Human Nature], Hume proposed a similar but more subtle analysis of the origin of the idea of identity. He argued that the perception of a single object gives rise to the idea of unity, and not of identity, whereas the perception of a number of objects conveys the idea of multiplicity. Since they can be "no medium betwixt unity and number", he argues that the idea of identity can arise neither from the perception of a single object nor from a multiplicity of objects seen simultaneously or in a single moment of time. The solution to the dilemma according to Hume is to be found in the notion of time, or duration. The notion of identity he believes arises from a propensity of the mind to attribute invariableness to an object while tracing it, without a break in the span of attention, through a variation in time. He states:

> Though we are led after this manner, by the natural propensity of the imagination, to ascribe a continued existence to those sensible objects or perception, which we find to resemble each other in their interrupted appearance, yet a very little reflection and philosophy is sufficient to make us perceive the fallacy of the opinion (2002, 22)

This act of ascribing identity to our impressions according to Hume is a fictitious one; the mind is "seduced into such an opinion only by means of the resemblance of certain perceptions" (HUME 2002, 22).

Almost all the writers from the period between Descartes and Kant took the term identity to mean that an object is the same with itself (NNORUKA 1995, 112). This formulation was expressed by the logical principle regarded as one of the basic laws of reasoning (X=X). Everything is what it is or that if something is true, it is true. Identity therefore, is the attribute of being a single thing or a single kind. For David Hume, identity statements state that an object existing at one time is the same as itself existing at another time. For instance this chair is the same as the one that was here yesterday. It therefore, means that an idea of identity is "that of an object which persists throughout a length of time without change or interruption" (HUME 2002, 192). There are different kinds of identity: floral, which is identity of plants or the persistence of plants through a period of time without change or interruption. Faunal is identity of animals and fluminal is identity of inanimate things and personal identity which is our main focus in this work is identity of human beings.

Personal Identity

According to Reid, "personal identity is the continued existence of the indivisible thing I call myself" (1969, 40). This definition is shared by many philosophers including Locke and Hume, but their point of diversion is in their opinion of what the nature of the self is. For Locke "the identity of the same man consists; via, in nothing but a participation of the same continued life, by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized body" (1952, 220). David Hume in his Treatise explains that, "the principium individuation or principle of identity consists of nothing but the invariableness and interestedness of any object, through a supposed variation of time" (2002, 22). For Hume therefore, personal identity consists in the invariableness of a self through time. But the nature of this self he says, he knows nothing about, he only stumbles on different perceptions and have not been able to get the impression of this self; "for my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perceptions or another … I never can catch myself at anything without a perceptions" (HUME 2002, 235).

As can be noticed from our discussion so far, all the problems of personal identity can be said to revolve round the notion of "person". If there were to be considerable agreement on the nature of the self, then the problem of identity would not exist. Reid though, conceding that the notion of the self is not clear to him, asserts that he is certain that "the self is something, which thinks and deliberates and resolves, and acts, and suffers" (REID 1959, 41).He goes further:

> I know that I am neither thought nor action nor feeling. I am rather a being that thinks and suffers. My thoughts can change, my feelings can change, their existence is not continuous, and it is rather successive. On the other hand, the self or I to which the thoughts, actions and feelings belong does not change; is permanent and has the same relation to all the succeeding thought, actions and feelings, which I call, mine (1959, 41)

The self for Reid therefore, is the permanent thing that owns all the feelings, actions, thinking et cetera of an individual. It is evident that for Reid, person is separate from the body. The body does not constitute personhood. It is the self or person that owns the body and as such, even if a person is disembodied, he still remains the same person and loses nothing of his personhood, except that he has not a body any longer. Christian Wolf disagreed with Reid, arguing that "we can't be sure, there is such a thing as self, which has a claim to all the thoughts, actions, and feelings, which I call mine" (1968, 924).

Philosophical Explication of the Concept

From Boethius through Locke to the all contemporary times, self-awareness and especially rationality have factored in most philosophical discussion of personhood. According to Kant, "that which is conscious of the numerical identity of itself at different times is insofar a person" (1943, 142).

Leibniz characterized person as that which conserves "the conscious or reflective inward feeling of what it is, thus it is rendered liable to reward and punishment" (1938, 89). His follower Christian Wolf explained the fact that animals are not persons and that human beings are simply persons on the grounds that the latter have as the former do not "a consciousness of having been the same thing previously in this or that state" (1968, 926).

For Descartes, the body is not an essential part of a person, "thus simply by knowing that I exist and seeing at the same time that absolutely nothing else belongs to my nature or essence except, that I am a thinking thing. I can infer correctly that my essence consists solely in the fact, I am a thinking thing (1969, 54). Descartes believes his body is not logically necessary for his existence; it is not an essential part of himself. He can go on thinking, being conscious and thus continues to exist. The fact that he exists means, he is more to himself than his body, and "more" is the essential part of himself. Returning to our problem of identity, if we admit that the body is an accidental part of a person and not an essential part, it therefore means that change or sameness of the body adds or subtracts nothing from personhood. Even total disembodiment will not change the identity of the person.

For Locke, person is "a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection and consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places, which it does by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking, and seems to me essential to it" (2002, 222). "I know", Locke continued "that in the ordinary way of speaking, the same person and the same man stand for one and the same thing" (2002, 222). He however, believes that these two expressions stand for quite distinct ideas, man having to do simply with a certain physical shape. A rational parrot he argued would not be called a man, nor would a non-rational human be called anything but man. The former however, might be a person, while the latter failing in rationality might not be a person at all (2002, 222). It is obvious that for Locke, the concept of a person is not tied to a certain bodily shape. It is the rationality that makes a person, in such a way that a rational parrot could be considered a person and a human being who has failed in rationality (e.g. mad man), can be nothing but a man, and not a person.

It follows from Locke's discourse that, I would logically remain the same person even though I am altogether disembodied. Thomas Reid even regards the idea of a person losing a part of himself as impossible, for persons he contends

are indivisible. One of his arguments is that, if an amputated member of the body were part of a person, "it would be liable for parts of his engagements" (1969, 41). For Reid therefore and Locke as well as Leibniz and Wolf, persons are essentially covert, non-corporeal simple entities. Hume seemingly takes the position of Locke, for in the specific comments that he made about identity of persons, he was clearly working, as was Locke in the restricted framework in which persons means minds. Only thus can we read his statement that people are nothing but a bundle of perceptions.

Person as used by Locke and others, make it difficult to distinguish persons, from concepts like metaphysical selves, transcendental egos, pure acts, spirits, mental substances, souls and other such terms. Because of this, a lot of people tend to see the bodily identity criterion as more plausible.

Aristotle is often given the credit for a comprehensive account of the bodily theory of personal identity because of the elaborate way he treated substances and accidents in his metaphysics. He asserts that "substance is that of which everything else is predicated, while it is itself not predicated of anything else (1941, 785). This means that substance is that by which accidents adhere to. For instance, I may be described as being fair, tall, intelligent, slim et cetera, but all these qualities or properties are owned by something called Peter. This thing called Peter is what Aristotle calls substance.

Aristotle distinguishes between essential properties or accidents —"those which constitute its forms" and the accidental properties—"that which attaches to something and can be truly asserted but neither of necessity nor usually" (1941, 177). Thus, accidental properties are "all that attaches to each thing in virtue of itself but is not in its essence" (1941, 777). For example, it is an essential property of a palm tree that, it has under normal circumstances a certain general shape and appearance, a certain life cycle of producing fruits at a certain period of the year and not at another. But, its exact height, its position, and the distribution of leaves are accidental properties. If the matter of the palm tree is reduced to a heap of firewood, the palm tree ceases to exist because it lacks essential properties.

This account of the identity of a palm tree can also be applied to persons. It follows therefore, from above, that a person ceases to be a person when his essential properties, which may be classified as shape, matter, colour etc., are destroyed. The identity of a person therefore, is maintained by the fact that, while continuing to possess the essential properties, which constitute its form, its matter is the same or obtained by the matter of the former substance by gradual replacement. Thus, if Aristotle's account is applied, it would follow that "for a person to be the same person as the earlier person, say the person I met yesterday, he has to have the same matter (or matter obtained from that earlier person by gradual replacement) organized into the form of a person (NNORUKA

1995, 21). It therefore implies that, for a person to be said to be identical with another, the essential properties of the person, say matter, shape, colour etc., must be the same, though the accidental properties, which may include the height, fatness, skill etc., may change.

Sylvanus Nnoruka agrees with Aristotle, he avers: "for a person to be the same person as the earlier person, say the person I met yesterday, he has to have the same matter (or matter obtained from earlier person by gradual replacement) organized into the form of a person" (1995, 21). This implies that what constitute a person is the essential bodily qualities like matter, shape, colour, etc.

John Perry is also a proponent of the bodily theory of identity. According to him, ascription of identity to an immaterial soul is absurd. He argues; if identity of persons is attributed to an immaterial soul, then we can be sure that the judgment of personal identity we make daily, like when we greet a friend or when we avoid an enemy, are really judgment about such souls. This kind of judgment, he argues further, is baseless, for nobody has a direct observation of souls to decide if the souls of the person we just greeted is the same as the soul of our supposed friend. He added, since the judgments we make daily are not baseless and stupid, then they cannot be about souls but the body. He concludes that the bodily theory of identity is more plausible than the soul theory (1993, 338-342).

Strawson theory is closer to daily usage of the concept than others. For Strawson, persons are distinct from material bodies, but they are not immaterial bodies or incorporeal non-bodies. A "person has states of consciousness as well as physical attributes and is not merely to be identified with one" (1959, 87). Persons are irreducible to parts of themselves and are thus primitive in just the same way in which material bodies are. This means that our ability to identity and re-identify material bodies is insufficient for identification and re-identification of persons. For persons are not just material bodies but consist also of immaterial parts, and these must also be considered when identifying or re-identifying persons.

Michael Polanyi, a scientist was much satisfied with Strawson's concept of person, because of its closeness to the ordinary usage of the term. He went ahead to summarize his theory by saying, "a person is the body, is the appearance, is the self-conscious and rational individual, is the source and object of rights and obligations, is that which takes roles and discharges functions," (1958, 89) and not merely an immaterial substance as postulated by John Locke or a physical body as postulated by Chimakonam.

Chimakonam on the Problem of Personal Identity

In the world, we observe things constantly changing. We see ice melting into water, firewood burning into ashes and children growing into adults. Yet we still believe that these things that have undergone considerable change are still the

same things they were before the change. We still believe that a football team is still the same, even when the team comprises of entirely new players and coach. We would believe that a car is still the same, even if most of its parts have been changed. The question is what gives us the propensity to believe that those beings remain the same after a noticeable change? What gives us the propensity to believe that a baby who becomes a man is still the same person with the baby? For Locke and some others, the man can no longer be the same person with the baby, for he cannot remember what he did when he was a baby. Chimakonam on the other hand believes that the continuity of the physical body is what constitutes personal identity.

Chimakonam gave the argument for his position in a brilliant and captivating style. Though his argument is very appealing, it is still hard to concede that all that constitutes personal identity is the material body as he envisaged (2011:200). I am sure G. O. Ozumba would share my doubt, because he believes that man is a being unto eternity (2010, 24, 44). If the physical body is the seat of personal identity, then personal identity inevitably ends at dead, and thereby man cannot be a being unto eternity. Although it would be fair to indicate that Chimakonam does not out-rightly hold this eternity argument in his paper.

However, Chimakonam imagined himself undergoing a mental surgery that transplanted his mind into the body of Prof. C. S. Momoh. After the surgery Prof. C. S. Momoh's body had the mind of Jonathan, and Jonathan's body had the mind of Prof. Momoh. The consequence of this was that the entity that had the body of Prof. Momoh and the mind of Jonathan, acted and behaved like Jonathan but people addressed him as Prof. Momoh. And the entity that had the body of Jonathan and the mind of Prof. Momoh acted and behave like Prof. Momoh but people see him as Jonathan. The former entity believes himself to be Jonathan but people see him as Prof. Momoh. The latter entity believes himself to be Prof. Momoh whereas people see him as Jonathan. The fundamental question, and which Chimakonam seeks to answer becomes where lies the true identity of these persons? Do the identities of these persons lie in what the individual believes himself to be or in what the observers believe them to be. The entity that has the mind of Prof. Momoh and the body of Jonathan, believes strongly that he is Prof. Momoh, but the society also with the same vigour believes that he is Jonathan and is addressed as such. Chimakonam goes along with the society, arguing that the idea of the society is right. He asserts; "personal identity is to the body, and wherever it is, there lies identity" (2011, 197). For Jonathan therefore, what constitute personal identity is the body and not the mind. Thus, if my mind is separated from my body, my identity goes to wherever my body is taken to, even if this body eventually is given a new mind. Chimakonam believes this to be so because to him, "person is not an internal but an external thing… that I am what I think I am is socially meaningless for one

cannot talk of person without the society. Without the society, there is no person" (2011, 200). Chimakonam is obviously true to his "Africanness" here, for he closely holds to his chest the African conception of personhood. Menkiti expresses African conception of a person in these words; "in communal Africa, it is the community that defines a person as a person, not the static quality of rationality, will and memory" (2011, 172). If a person is defined by the society, then it becomes vivid, why Chimakonam would argue for the body as the sole constituent of personal identity. Only the body is perceptible, and therefore could be the only judging parameter for the society, thus "identity does not involve the internal mind but the external body" (CHIMAKONAM 2011, 200).

Chimakonam's argument is admittedly valid but definitely not sound. Even the society he so ardently defends goes against him by refusing to plant identity on the physical body. The corpse of Mr. Paul can never be referred to as Paul but as the remains or body of Paul. Nobody points to a corpse and says this is Paul. If a corpse is not identified by the society as Mr. Paul, then it implicitly implies that personal identity is not tied to the physical body by the society. If Paul's body is not Paul, then Chimakonam cannot possibly be right in his identification of personal identity with the physical body. To attach personal identity to the physical body would mean that even at death, the corpse would still be Paul. But the African society Chimakonam seemingly defends goes against such attribution. The society sees personal identity as going beyond the material body. There is something else, the society thinks is Paul that is different from the corpse of Paul lying in the mortuary. This belief informs the doctrine of reincarnation. In the doctrine of reincarnation, Paul is said to come back to life in perhaps another body. He does not come back to life with the same body—this one has been lost at death and thus a new body would be needed for the reincarnated Paul. The physical body therefore, when seen as something that could be dropped for another at reincarnation defeats Chimakonam's position. However, how can one explain African reincarnation theory in which sometimes dead people are said to reincarnate with the same body marks they had on their bodies in a previous life? This becomes a puzzle for further research.

Taking the physical body to constitute the identity of a person is the same as saying that animals especially primates are persons, because they have similar bodily physique like humans. If external appearance is the hallmark of identity as Chimakonam seemingly suggests, then what constitutes personhood is the external part of the body. If the external body constitutes personhood, then primates would undeniably qualify as persons. This however, is what humans would not want to admit, pointing to the fact that personhood is not attached to the external body by the common man, implying that personal identity cannot be based on physical appearance. Rationality or consciousness is therefore, the mark of a person and by implication the seat of personal identity. Personal identity is

the identity of persons. Thus, if personal identity is identity of persons, then identity necessarily lies in rationality or consciousness. This has to be so, because what marks a person from animal is rationality or consciousness. I am sure if animals had consciousness, they would be addressed as persons. To attribute identity to the physical body is to confuse a person for a man. The identity of a man is in the physical body, but identity of persons is in the consciousness. It follows therefore, that Chimakonam was actually talking about identity of man and not persons. If the society attributes identity to physical appearance, then they are erroneously attributing identity to a man, and not a person. Personhood is a far deeper concept than mere physical body. What makes a person is what marks animal from humans, and this cannot be bodily appearance but rationality. To construe it as merely physical is to make chimpanzees persons. As we said earlier, the problem of identity revolves round the concept of persons. If there is considerable agreement on what a person constitutes, then the problem of personal identity would not be there. Since there is an implicit agreement that what constitutes a person is the rational consciousness; then consciousness is a constituent of personal identify. Thus, in Chimakonam's thought experiment the entity with Jonathan's mind or consciousness and Prof. Momoh's body is Jonathan and not Prof. Momoh as the people mistakenly think. A little explanation by Jonathan to the people, that he is Jonathan with Prof. Momoh's body will clear the mistake of the people. On hearing this explanation, the people will understand that the entity standing before them is Jonathan who underwent surgery to assume Prof. Momoh's body. This is much the same way as somebody who underwent plastic surgery on his face; he would only need to explain to the people that he is Mr. A with a changed face. This little explanation will be enough to bring the erring society to track. Therefore, Jonathan, mistakenly called Prof. Momoh will regain his personal identity after this simple lecture to the people as regards who he actually is.

Let us do some ratiocination to make this discourse sink in. The entity with Jonathan's mind and Prof. Momoh's body always thinks that he is Jonathan no matter how much the people may try to persuade him to believe that he is Prof. Momoh. No counselor would be able to do this work; he always continues to believe that he is Jonathan because he remembers himself as Jonathan. Even the mirror cannot make him to think otherwise. Seeing the mirror would only solve the puzzle as to why people think he is Prof. Momoh, but it would not change his mind as regards who he is. The effect of the mirror would be to instigate him to attempt to clear the people's ignorance by educating them that he is Jonathan but with a different body. This explanation would take away his mistaken identity attached by the society and replace it with his true identity. What needs to be noted here is that the society could be made to see their mistake and change their minds but the entity can never be made to change his perception

about himself. This shows us where identity lies, it is in the individual and not the society. This is because the society knows of its vulnerability to error and would be quick to adjust to the right. But the individual being so sure of his identity can never be swayed to contrary positions. For instance, nobody can successfully convince me that I am not Peter but Paul. This shows that I can never be wrong about my person but others could be wrong, thus, needing to be corrected. The entity that thinks he is Jonathan, is right in this thinking. Consequently, people that believed that the entity was Prof. Momoh were wrong in their attribution, for Jonathan's consciousness tells him he is Jonathan.

Consequences of Bodily Theory of Identity[Initial Cap]
To hold to the bodily theory of identity could lead to the case I would call "multiple identity". If personal identity is external as Chimakonam wants us to believe, then one individual can carry multiple identities. For instance, a criminal known as Mr. A in society B, because he changed his name to Mrs. B and underwent a surgery that changed his sex to female. He moved to Society C and is known as Mrs. A. the question is, which is his true identity? Is it the one ascribed by society A or that ascribed to him by Society B or both? Whatever the answer may be, it would turn out to be absurd; for if we take the society's A ascription as right, society B would refute that, because they know him as Mrs B and that is the identity attributed to him. If we take the two societies to be right, we will be implying that an individual could have two identities—identity A and identity B which is absurd.

An individual who changed himself to a woman through the aid of recent sex change technologies would possess a mixed identity, if identity is measured through the criterion of the physical body. Which would be his true identity—a woman or a man? There is a current research on the possibility of changing humans to other animals. If a man is changed into a bird, using bodily criterion of identity, would he maintain his identity as a man or assume the identity of a bird? Would Chimakonam ascribe the same identity to Mr. A now turned bird. If he does, then he would be indirectly renouncing his bodily identity position, for the society does not consider a bird as a person. The society cannot ascribe identity of Mr. A to a bird based on the differences of bodies. But if Chimakonam does not ascribe identity of "Mr A" to the bird, where then lies the identity of Mr. A, is it lost with the bird? Does a man turned bird lose his identity as a person? The African society does not think so. In Boki of Cross River state in Nigeria, a man could turn to a lion, crocodile, cat, snake etc., and still retain his identity as a man even in this animal form. As a lion he is Mr. A and as a human he is Mr. A. A story is told of a certain man in Boki whose son told him that he would love to experience what a lion looked like. The father promised to show him a lion. Then in the bush, the father turned to a lion to the utter astonishment of the son. The

son in this case would not assume another identity for the lion but the father's identity. The lion is the father and the father is the lion. Some hunters in Boki have claimed to hear antelopes and other animals speak to them, claiming to be this or that person. By hearing this, the hunter who initially had mistaken animal identity for this animal would correct himself by ascribing personal identity of Mr. A to such an animal. The bodily identity as proposed by Chimakonam cannot account for this ascription and counter-ascription of these identities. Therefore, as we have explained before, personal identity is not something external as held by Chimakonam but something internal. The identity ascribed by the society is not necessarily the right one, rather it is the one ascribed by the individual that is necessarily right. In case of error, the society can always be corrected by the individual as in the case of a father turned lion and that of the experiences of the hunter. The hunters at first mistook the animals for mere animals, but this ascription was immediately changed, when the animals spoke and explained themselves. The same change would necessarily happen if Jonathan explains that he is not Prof. Momoh.

Apart from the problem of multiple identity whereby strict adherence to the bodily identity theory makes one individual to assume different identities, say, man, woman, lion, cat, etc., in one life span. Another consequence of strict adherence to the bodily theory would be a denial of personal identity after death. There is a general belief that after death, the body decays while the person unites with the ancestors, saints or whatever name it is called. There is general agreement as to the continual living of the spirits in the after world. This belief is also shared by Chimakonam, for this is what is portrayed by his statement that "we see man as a being unto eternity" (OZUMBA & CHIMAKONAM 2014, 8). The bodily theory of identity questions this general belief. In fact, it even denies it. To assume that the external body is the criterion of identity means, that the death of this external body is the death of personal identity. And when there is no personal identity, there is no existence. If there is no personal identity after death, then using Chimakonam's own words 'I' is "void". If I is void, then there is no existence after bodily death. Where there is no 'I' there is 'we', and we is nothing. Thus, after death there is nothing. I wonder if Chimakonam envisaged this implication. It is true that his theory did not extend to the world beyond but is limited to the physical world. However, his theory remains open to such implications, since even he himself believes in the world hereafter.

Adherence to a bodily theory of identity could also be shown to go against the common belief of people. It is a common belief that life does not end here on earth. Let us assume that two people knew Mr. A at different times. Mr. A was known to Mr. B as a handsome young man, and in his later life was known by Mr. C as a blind, crippled old man. Mr. B did not know Mr. A at old age when he was crippled and blind, and Mr. C did not know Mr. A in his

youthful handsome age but as a crippled blind man. Since almost all religion believes in the afterlife, the question becomes, in heaven or home of the ancestors, how would Mr. A look like? Would he be in his former handsome self or in the later ugly self. If he appears in his handsome self, then Mr. C who knows him only in his ugly state would not identify him. Also, if he appears in his ugly self, then Mr. B would not be able to place his identity. If the body is the criterion for personal identity, this sort of puzzle would always arise. Mr. B would in heaven search out for a Mr. A with clear sight, strong legs and a certain bodily shape but may not know that the blind lame man by his side is Mr. A in a different body. Thus, two people who know an individual in separate times may not have the same identity of the person in heaven, if the body is the sole criterion of identity.

As said earlier Chimakonam based his concept of personal identity on the conception of personhood by Africans. He did this without minding the flaws in this African conception. The assertion that a person is defined as a person by the society may be appealing but it is not plausible. This is because the society is never unanimous in its characterization of a person. As regards one person, the society may have conflicting views about him. For instance, some describe me as being fair in complexion; some others see me as having a chocolate colour. When I pondered over these conflicting views of people about myself, I wondered what actually I am. I know the larger societal characterization of "me" would be divided along this line. One segment of the society would see me as having a chocolate colour; the other one would see me as fair in complexion. How can the society be the judge of my identity when it lacks agreement on what I am? Some people in Nigeria would see President Jonathan as handsome and a lot of others would see him as ugly. Who is this Goodluck Jonathan from the society's perspective? Can a society be a true judge of personal identity as Chimakonam's claim? To insist on clinging on the African conception, without minding the implication is what Asouzu would call unintended ethnocentric commitment (2007b, 25-192).

Conclusion

Chimakonam asks the adherent of memory theory of personal identity a pertinent question: "if memory is the rock bottom proof of one's identity, how can one retain his identity when this memory is lost?" (2011, 202). But he fails to ask himself the same question; if one loses his body, what happens to his identity? This is actually a case of pointing at a log in another's eyes, when one's own eyes are covered with bigger logs. Asouzu would call this, a case of "phenomenon of concealment" (ASOUZU, 2013, 15-80).

Chimakonam may not be totally wrong in adhering to the bodily theory of identity but he is definitely wrong in upholding to the body as the sole criterion

of personal identity. The physical body is a criterion, the consciousness or the spiritual body is another criterion. The problem of personal identity has persisted over the years because of the penchant towards divisiveness and extremism. What is the rationale behind holding unto the physical body in utter negation of memory or consciousness, and what is the rationale behind holding unto memory and consciousness in utter negation of the physical body. The physical body as well as consciousness add up to constitute a person. Negation of any of them would give us a partial understanding of a person as well as personal identity. However, in all kinds of combination, there is hardly a case where the constituent elements combine in the same degree to form a compound. Consciousness could be said to contribute more to personhood than the body. This is because it is consciousness that is one distinguishing mark between a person and a mere animal. An animal though may have the same physical body like man, but lack of consciousness makes it to fail to qualify as a person. If this consciousness was embedded in animals, they would be persons. To talk of personal identity in terms of bodily identity alone is to equate humans with non human animals. Faunal identity or identity of animals is bodily identity. But man is much more than animals, and this "much" must be captured in a complete definition of him as well as his identity. To define him in terms of the body alone as if he is merely an animal is to make knowledge of him obscure. To define him as such is to "derobe" him of his personhood. This seeming conclusion of the bodily theory as beautifully coded by Chimakonam woke me up from my intellectual slumber. In as much as we agree that animals are not persons, we must also make this distinct element in man to be felt in our definition of personal identity.

Though it would appear at surface that the society attributes personal identity to the physical body alone, but a deeper reflection as we have done already would show that the society in which Chimakonam postulates his theory holds a deeper view. The society holds unto the body as a criterion but holds more dearly to consciousness. This is exactly why the society would be quick to change its opinion on personal identity that was hitherto based on physical appearance, if the entity in question explains to them in clear terms whom he is. We all often mistake somebody's identity based on physical appearance but a little coaching from the person makes us correct our mistake. For instance when we see a twin, we may mistakenly call him Peter based on his bodily appearance, but a protest by the person, that he is not Peter but Paul, would make us quickly change our conception. We would not say to this person, no you are not Paul but Peter. In the thought experiment presented by Chimakonam, the entity that has the mind of Jonathan and the body of Prof. Momoh, would easily change the perception of the society by making key explanations like: "I am Jonathan, my father is Chimakonam, my grandfather was buried in Ntamante a village in Boki, I school in Ekpashi Technical College, I had a surgery that switched my mind

into the body of Prof. Momoh. These explanations that describe events in Jonathan's life would sway even the most unbelieving people to change from seeing the entity as Prof. Momoh but Jonathan in a new body, the society would be willing to change this view because they understand that consciousness is a superior criterion for personal identity than the body. A real life case occurred in Mbarakom, a village in Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State, late last year. A 2 year old child, whose father was from Oban village claimed to be from Mbarakom and asked to be taken to Mbarakom. After persistent disturbance and failed attempts to convince her that she is from Oban, the father decided to hearken to her request and decided to take her to Mbarakom. At Mbarakom the child directed the father on which compound to enter. On entering that compound, the child pointed to a grave and claimed it is her own. She explained to the people in that compound who she is, how she died and why she has come back to life in another body. The description of the events and things in her past life were said to correspond to that of the girl that died and whose grave the girl pointed at as her own. Though she was disbelieved at first because of differences in bodies but the consciousness of the events of her life re-established her identity. Thus, consciousness of the individual is always seen as superior to the body and its demands are always tilted to. Therefore, in a situation where there is a conflict between the individual consciousness and the society's perception of the individual, the individual consciousness shows its superiority by winning over the debate. However, when consciousness is lost like in cases of rationally impaired individuals, the body could be used as a sole criterion of personal identity, but this attribution must be cautious, for the individual may regain consciousness one day and prove beyond all reasonable doubt that he is not the person they thought he was

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POST-MODERN THINKING AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract
I want to do a couple of things in this essay. First, I want to articulate the central direction that postmodern thinking or philosophy (or postmodernism or postmodernity) takes. Second, I want to present a brief sketch of African philosophy, focusing mostly on some aspects of African ethics. Third, I want to gesture towards the view that while postmodern thinking seems to suggest that African philosophy is a legitimate narrative or "language game" it could be argued that given its central ideas and doctrines African philosophy may be open to some of the worries facing modern thinking (or modernism or modernity).
KEYWORDS: Post-modern, modern, modernity, African philosophy

Introduction
I have in the abstract specified the aims of this work which include: First, to articulate the central direction that postmodern thinking or philosophy (or postmodernism or postmodernity) takes. Second, to present a brief sketch of African philosophy, focusing mostly on some aspects of African ethics. Third, to gesture towards the view that while postmodern thinking seems to suggest that African philosophy is a legitimate narrative or "language game" it could be argued that given its central ideas and doctrines African philosophy may be open to some of the worries facing modern thinking (or modernism or modernity). In carrying out these aims, I do not intend or pretend to defend the validity and plausibility of postmodernism. Rather, my motivation is first and foremost to examine some of the directions of postmodern thinking, and second, to make a case that if postmodern thinking is true or if its claims are plausible, then such thinking would, on the one hand, suggest that African philosophy is a competing narrative or language game, and on the other hand, raise certain worries for it — worries that are similar to those raised for modernity.

Postmodern Thinking
There is the view, and quite rightly it seems to me, that postmodernism is at some level indefinable (AYLESWORTH 2013, Web. N.P). That is not to say that what postmodernism *is* or *isn't* is utterly beyond comprehension or our grasp. Postmodern thinking can be described as a philosophical direction or movement that is critical both of the foundational assumptions of Western thinking and its "totalitarian" and universalizing tendency. In particular, it can be seen as largely

a reaction against the philosophical assumptions, values, and intellectual worldview of the modern period of Western (specifically European) history —a period spanning the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries right up to the second half of the twentieth century. Central to postmodern thinking is its emphasis on the importance of power relationships, personalization and discourse in the way truth and worldviews are traded and constructed, and role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power and relationships. The last point is quite fundamental to postmodern thinking and its critique of modernity. For in the perpetuation of particular worldviews through particular ideology, modernity, according to postmodernism, serves to undermine and marginalize other worldviews. That is, the universalizing tendency of modern thinking is totalitarian since it effectively imposes conformity on other perspectives or discourses, thereby oppressing, marginalizing, or silencing them. For postmodernism, the universalizing theories of modernism are not only pernicious and harmful but misleading and false.

To this extent, postmodern thinking can be said to constitute a set of critical and strategic practices which aims to destabilize concepts such as historical progress, presence, the univocity of meaning, epistemic certainty, and identity (generally associated with modernity and particularly with the 18th-century Enlightenment) by employing other concepts like simulacrum, difference, hyperreality repetition, and the trace. If postmodern thinking is critical of certain concepts associated with modernity which were taken for granted during the 18th-century Enlightenment then clearly it is skeptical or nihilistic toward many of the values and assumptions of thinking that derive from modernity. Some of the core views and values that postmodern thinking questions and rejects include (a) that humanity has an essence that distinguishes humans from nonhuman animals; (b) that there is an objective natural reality whose existence and properties are logically independent of human beings—of their minds, societies, social practices, or human investigative techniques; (c) that one form of government or particular way of conduct and acting is better than another; (d) that humans can acquire knowledge about natural reality, which is ultimately justifiable on the basis of evidence, demonstration or principles that are, or can be, recognized directly, intuitively, or with certainty.

Postmodernism's rejection of modern thinking gives us a peek into the shape of some of its positive doctrines. Let me highlight two of such. First, the doctrine that the view of reality that modernity espouses is a kind of naive realism, for such reality that it espouses is simply a conceptual construct, an artefact of scientific practice and language. Second, the doctrine that knowledge and value are relative to discourse and that the established discourses of modernity or the Enlightenment are no more necessary or justified than alternative discourses. Simply put, there is a privileging of knowledge narrative

or metanarrative, or language game over other narratives or language games by modernity. However, these privileged narratives are necessarily valid and justified within different and particular discourses. One implication of the latter doctrine is that if reality, knowledge, and value are constructed by discourses then they necessarily vary with different context of discourses. If they thus so vary, then the discourses and perspectives of modern science, for example, considered separately from the evidential standards internal to it, has no greater claim to knowledge and truth than other alternative discourses and perspectives, including, for example, astrology and witchcraft.

Although it could be said that the idea of postmodernity has been around since the 1940s, as a philosophy it originated primarily in France during the second half of the twentieth century. Some of the most influential early postmodern philosophers are Jean Baudrillard, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. However, it was Lyotard who introduced into the literature the term "postmodernism" in 1979, with the publication of his *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.*

An analysis of postmodern thinking would be incomplete without pointing out several philosophical antecedents that inform its concerns. Postmodernity was greatly influenced by the writings of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche in the ninetieth century and by some twentieth 20th thinkers including Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. It is important to also note that the philosophical modernism at issue in postmodernity or its concern begins with Immanuel Kant's "Copernican revolution," namely, his twin claim that we cannot know things in themselves and that objects of knowledge must conform to our faculties of representation.

Since Lyotard is credited with introducing the term modernism it will be important to examine some of his ideas. I now turn to some of these ideas as espoused primarily in [The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge].

Lyotard is largely concerned with the role of narrative in human culture. Particularly, he is concerned with how such role has changed as we moved away from the condition of modernity into a "postindustrial" or postmodern condition. The motivation of [The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge] and Lyotard's analysis of the postmodern condition is Wittgenstein's model of language games and concepts taken from speech act theory. In employing Wittgenstein's model of language games and concepts Lyotard attempts to account for a transformation of the game rules for science, art, and literature since the end of the nineteenth century. He takes the book both as a kind of experiment in the combination of language games and as an objective "report." Also, for Lyotard, it is an amalgamation of two very different language games; first, that of the philosopher or questioner and, secondly, that of the expert or

knower. Whereas the former knows what he knows and what he doesn't know, the latter knows neither, but rather poses questions (LYOTARD 1984, 7).

Lyotard defines "*postmodern* as incredulity toward meta-narratives" (LYOTARD 1984, xxiv), by which he means skepticism towards some unique and overriding narratives or simply put the idea that knowledge is not essentially narrative (LYOTARD 1984, 26). Here Lyotard makes use of narrative in the context of knowledge to suggest first and foremost that there is a problem with modernity or the perspective of the West with regards to knowledge via the strict linkages of various subjects, which constitutes the cultural perspective of the West. If, for example, "there is a strict interlinkage between the kind of language called science and the kind called ethics and politics" (LYOTARD 1984, 8) and if this interlinkage constitutes the cultural perspective of the West, then so worse for the universalizing tendency of meta-narratives since such interlinkage does not constitute a universal perspective.

The universalization of knowledge or even the idea of epistemic certainty as derived from modernity is clearly at work in the kind of legitimization that modern thinking provides for science and for its own truth-claims. So, on the one hand, science seeks to distinguish itself from narrative knowledge in the form of tribal wisdom communicated through myths and legends, and modern philosophy, on the other, seeks to provide some legitimating narratives for science and (for its own truth-claims) in the form of "the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth," (LYOTARD 1984, xxiii). According to Lyotard, such legitimization, particularly of the truth-claims of modern philosophy is not done on the basis of logical or empirical grounds, but rather on the grounds of accepted stories or some metanarratives about knowledge and the world. But as he is eager to point out, there is a problem with the legitimization—in our postmodern condition, these metanarratives no longer work to legitimize truth-claims. Indeed, he shares the view that part of the collapse of metanarratives in our postmodern condition seems to be brought about by science. For clearly science plays the language game of denotation to the exclusion of all others. By doing this science displaces narrative knowledge, including the metanarratives of philosophy, which partly arises because of the rapid development of technologies and techniques in the latter part of the twentieth century. This development heralded a shifted in the emphasis of knowledge from the ends of human action to its means (LYOTARD 1984, 37). The collapse of modern metanarratives can introduce into the human condition some form of nihilism. But Lyotard doesn't hold this view. Rather he says that people are developing a new "language game"— one that eschews the universalizing tendency of modernity and that does not make claims to epistemic certainty or absolute truth but rather celebrates

a world of ever-changing relationships, first among people, and then between people and the world.

As appealing as postmodernism may be to some I would like to conclude this section by bringing up some important reactions to postmodernism—that of Jürgen Habermas and Noam Chomsky. Habermas happens to be postmodernism's most prominent and comprehensive critic and does seem to take the theory more seriously (than many other critics of postmodernism) given that postmodern thinkers openly respond to him. For Habermas, postmodernism commits a number of errors, not the least by contradicting itself through self-reference and presupposing concepts that it otherwise seeks to undermine, namely, freedom, creativity, and subjectivity. In [*The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity]* he takes on postmodernism at the level of society and "communicative action", that is, postmodernism as it is realized in social practices and institutions rather than in the arena of theories of cognition or formal linguistics as autonomous domains (HABERMAS 1987, 1-22). Unlike Habermas, Chomsky (like many other critics of postmodernism) simply rejects it as mere nonsense. Postmodernism, he argues, is meaningless because it adds nothing to analytical or empirical knowledge and suggests that its theories should be committed to the flames: "Seriously, what are the principles of their theories, on what evidence are they based, what do they explain that wasn't already obvious, etc.? These are fair requests for anyone to make. If they can't be met, then I'd suggest recourse to Hume's advice in similar circumstances: to the flames (1995)". For some similar and related criticisms see Richard Dawkins (1998, 141-143) and Dick Hebdige (2006, ch.40).

African Philosophy

African philosophy is used in different ways by different philosophers. Although African philosophers spend their time doing work in many different areas, such as metaphysics, epistemology, moral philosophy, and political philosophy, a great deal of the literature is taken up with a debate concerning the nature and existence of African philosophy itself. Although the brief history of African philosophy is marked by some progress, which is, as, Okafor notes "punctuated by fluctuations, oscillations, and occasional regressions" (1997, 251) it seems that the meta-philosophical questions (questions about the nature and existence of African philosophy) will continue. Consequently, it will be an understatement to say that the issue of an African philosophy is burdened with many difficulties and that it is enormously difficult to define. These difficulties do not arise only because African philosophy is used in different ways by different philosophers or because a great deal of the literature is spent debating about the meta-philosophical questions in African philosophy (notwithstanding the fact that African philosophers spend their time doing work in many different areas of

African metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political philosophy), but also because at some level the notion of what philosophy is or what the subject means is notoriously difficult to articulate.

Within the context of the issues that arise from the meta-philosophical questions, discussions of the existence of African philosophy seem to primarily focus on the modern period, namely, the twentieth century, according to which its development is relatively recent. Although it could be said that African philosophy in the twentieth century is relatively contemporary and although this is traceable to some seminal texts, it is important to note also that it is equally locatable in the ancient period (or traditional African societies) in virtue of the fact that it draws on cultural forms that stretch back in time and space.

Because a universal definition of African philosophy is not within my reach I will simply follow Bruce Janz (4) and for my purpose take African philosophy to be "palatial", that is, African philosophy as concerned with some phenomenological analysis, where phenomenological analysis refers to the explication of the meaning of an African life-world for Africans. On this view, African philosophy is not simply understood geographical (i.e. African philosophy as circumscribed by borders and territories) or racialized (African philosophy or the doing or doers of African philosophy as circumscribed by race or racial backgrounds). Rather, on the "platial" understanding we will understand African philosophy as referring to the practice of raising, formulating and engaging with "a set of culturally original questions about the full range of philosophical issues" within an African life-world for Africans (JANZ Web, 4).

Since my concern in this chapter is to try to forge some sort of linkage between postmodern thinking and African philosophy within the context of the claims that I made at the outset I think it would be important for me to focus on one area of African philosophy. I have chosen to focus on African ethics or morality, partly because I take it as more accessible than other areas. My aim is to briefly discuss some of the issues around African ethics as a platform for my argument in the next section that if postmodern thinking is right then it would suggest that African philosophy is a competing narrative or language game and that it may be open to some of the worries facing modern thinking.

African Ethics

African ethics is sometimes characterized as a character-based ethics and sometimes in humanistic terms, where the former is about the individual's character or moral development and the latter is about circumscribing ones moral thoughts and actions by the interests, needs, and welfare of members of the community. Both characterizations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. There are descriptive and prescriptive or normative aspects to the character-based notion and the doctrine of humanism, which I will come to in a moment.

Although I will be discussing both I do want to focus mostly on the doctrine of humanism and how it generates a system of obligations rather than one of rights.

Humanistic morality
A humanistic morality is human oriented, that is to say it is an ethic that is oriented towards the interests, needs, wellbeing—or in Aristotelian terms flourishing—of members of the human community. Later (in 2.1.3) I will show that human flourishing is essentially social flourishing or the flourishing of the community *qua* the common good. This thinking is generally captured by some of the ideas that *Ubuntu* (*qua* "humanity", "humanness" or "humaneness") expresses. *Ubuntu* means "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am" (MBITI 1970, 141) and with regards to its humanistic ethical principles of sharing, caring and compassion it is not surprising that it encourages an approach that says: "Your pain is my pain, my wealth is your wealth, and your salvation is my salvation," or, according to the Uhrobo proverb, "A neighbor's situation is our situation, and our situation is a neighbor's situation".

Humanism has both a descriptive and prescriptive aspect. In is descriptive aspect it asserts that human flourishing is the goal of human thought and actions. In its prescriptive aspect it asserts that an action's moral rightness or wrongness is determined by how well it promotes human flourishing. This makes African ethics teleological in the sense that it derives duty or moral obligation from what is good or desirable as an end to be achieved, the end being human flourishing—similar in some ways to Aristotle's idea of eudemonia (living well, or flourishing) as the highest good (§21; 1095a, 15–22). This is in contrast to deontological ethics (divine theory, Kantian ethics) which hold that the standards for the moral rightness of an action, on the one hand, depend on a set of rules or principles, and on the other hand, independent of the end to be achieved.

If a humanistic morality is focus on the individual in the capacity of the individual's relatedness to other individuals or the community, then a humanistic morality is fundamentally a kind of social morality, which stems from the idea of humans as essentially social beings. If we take a humanistic morality as I am describing, then considering the sort of communitarian ethos that are present in many African societies, it seems safe to say that they are implicated in a humanistic morality.

Like Aristotle, the view that a human being is essentially social or by nature a social animal means that humans are born into existing human society. As a member of the human community by nature, the individual stands in a social relationship with others; he or she is related and connected to other persons, and must necessarily have relationships with them and consequently, have some obligations or duties by virtue of such relationships. That is to say, the social relationships of humans prescribe a social ethic which takes into

consideration the interests, needs, wellbeing of humans—this is essentially what it means to say a morality or ethic is humanistic. On this view, a humanistic or social ethic would be different from an individualistic ethic which focuses on the flourishing of the individual *qua* individual.

Character-based ethics
As a character-based ethics African ethics is said to hold the view that the quality of the individual's character is the most fundamental in our moral life. That is, good character is the essence of the African moral system. There is much of this view that is similar to virtue-based ethics or Aristotle's view about character and virtue. Although, of course with Aristotle such character in connection with eudemonia consists in activities where one exercises the rational part of the psyche or soul in accordance with the virtues or excellency of reason (ARISTOTLE 1097b, 22–1098a, 20)

One has a good character when that person exhibits certain character traits like honesty, generosity, benevolence, loyalty—what virtue Ethicists generally call cardinal virtues—where these traits are congenial and conducive to human flourishing and the maintenance of social order. Character refers to habits, which stem from a person's deeds or actions. As with Aristotle, these habits and invariably the character traits are developed from repeated performance of particular actions. That is, in order for one to acquire a virtuous character or for certain morally acceptable actions to become part of one's character or for them to be habitual for an individual that individual must repeatedly perform them. One begins by recognizing those actions that are morally acceptable and then performs them on a regular basis. By performing the actions it leads to acquisition of a newly good habit and repeated performance strengthens the habit and leads to the acquisition of good character or virtue. So in order for one to act in accord with the moral values, principles, and rules of society one must have a good character. To this extent, moral education is very important in African societies. African societies see it as part of their duty to impart moral education to members of societies, making them aware of the moral values, principles, and rules of society, with the hope that members will imbibe them. Thus failure to follow these principles or develop a good charter trait is a moral failing on the part of the individual who must take responsibility, an idea that is well expressed by the Yoruba proverb "Good character is a person's guard" (see GBADEGESIN 1991, 79).

In African ethics moral or good character or acting well is related to the notion of moral personhood insofar as only a moral person or a person that lives in accordance with the moral values, principles, and rules of society can be truly considered a good or virtuous person. This perhaps is what Ifeanyi Menkiti means by the concept of personhood that is circumscribed by the context of an

individual's participations "in communal life through the discharge of the various obligations defined by [his or her station]" (1984, 176). On this thinking, only moral persons are considered proper subject of ethics. This is because living in accordance with the moral values, principles, and rules of society and the development of good character, choosing and acting repeatedly on those actions that are believed to be morally acceptable require conscious decisions and such decisions stem from one that has the desire to maintain social order. Simply stated, virtuously moral actions must be *intentional*, where *intentionality* refers to some conscious choice to participate in communal life through the discharge of the various obligations that define one's station in life. Thus in African ethics careful attempt is made to distinguish between a person from a mere human being.

This view is eerily similar to Kant's view about rational beings being the subject of morality and the distinction he draws between rational beings and human beings. In African ethics, while a person is a human being and a member of the human community, a human being is not necessarily a person. One is a person if one exercises one's moral capacity and makes moral judgments consistent with the moral values, principles, and rules of society, that is one participates in communal life through the discharge of those obligations that delineate one's station. Therefore, an individual that fails to live in accordance with the moral values, principles, and rules of society is strictly speaking not a "person" but only a human being (see GBADAGESIN 1991, 27). Children are thus, on this view of African morality (as in Kant's moral account), considered only as human beings and not as yet (moral) persons insofar as they are yet to exercise the capacity to participate in communal life through the discharge of their obligations.

Human flourishing as communal flourishing
Now I want to show how in African ethics human flourishing can be thought of as essentially social flourishing or the flourishing of the community and how this is tied to the idea of the common good. This idea has been expressed by various commentators who have separately described African morality as teleological, namely, as aiming towards some particular end, the end being the wellbeing of the community or the common good (WILSON 1971, 98; MCVEIGH 1974, 84). This idea is well illustrated in Bantu and Lovedu moralities (See MOLEMA 1920, 116; J. D KRIGE and E. J. KRIGE 1954, 78). In African ethics the end towards which morally good actions aim for is human flourishing, which is communal flourishing. This is because the individual is considered a social being whose existence and flourishing depends on and is determined by the flourishing of the community as a whole. This idea of flourishing and its connection to

interdependence and reciprocal relationship are well expressed by the following African proverbs:

   (1) The wellbeing of man depends on his fellow man (Akan proverb)

   (2) The right arm washes the left arm and the left arm washes the right arm (Akan proverb)

   (3) If you want to go fast go alone. If you want to get there go with others (Niger Delta proverb)

   (4) The iroko tree is strong but it is not complete; man too is not complete (Niger Delta proverb)

The first proverb highlights the limited nature of humans with regards to what they can possibly accomplish individually, the realization of their ends, their wellbeing. It highlights the importance of the kindness, assistance, sympathy, and compassion of others to an individual's goal of flourishing. To possess these traits or virtues would require the appropriate development of an individual's character. The second proverb underlies the importance of reciprocity and social cooperation. It shows that in order for you and I (both the left and right arms) to succeed in our endeavours and ends we must work together. The third proverb emphasizes that being individualistic will not get us very far or to our destination. We might be able to go very fast but we may not get there. In order to achieve our ends whatever these may be we must get others on-board. That is, their involvement is a necessary component of our success and flourishing. The fourth proverb shows that even the iroko tree with all its priceless strength is not complete (or self-sufficient). It is not self-sufficient because it needs a rich soil, constant stream of water, and sunlight to maintain its strength, it luxuriant leaves, and above all to blossom. In fact, this can be said of all or most trees. The point then is that if with all its strength the iroko tree is not self-sufficient how much more humans who are not as strong as the iroko tree.

     I said above that the goal of individual's flourishing is tied to the flourishing of the community. This idea is somewhat similar to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's self-effacing thesis which takes the interests of the individual to be roughly identical to and with the interests of every member of the community or the common good. In Rousseau's [The Social Contract], the individuality of the individual is effaced when she identifies her particular private will with the General Will. Of the transformation and self-effacing nature of the individual's will, Rousseau notes:

> As soon as this multitude is thus united in one body, one cannot injure one of the members without attacking the body, and still less can one injure the body without the members being affected. Thus duty and interest alike obligates the contracting parties to help one another, and the same men

must strive to combine in this two-fold relation all the advantages attendant on it. (Bk 1, ch. 7, § 4)

The point about the General Will for Rousseau is that the basic interests of all members of the community are identical as every member desire what we might call primary communal goods such as peace, justice, security, equality, freedom, and dignity. If we take the primary communal goods to be the common good because every member of the community desires them, then it could be said that the individual good is satisfied just in case the common good is achieved, and the individual good is diminished insofar as the common good is diminished.

This view underlies why brotherhood, namely the association of humans (men and women) with common aims and interests is essential in African worldview. For if the basic human interests are identical, and the satisfaction of an individual's interests follows from the satisfaction of common interests, then humanity is bound together in some common aims, and belongs to a common membership of one universal human family. And with regards to *Ubuntu* Desmond Tutu beautifully expresses this idea severally thus:

> A person with Ubuntu is available and open to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able or good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed. (1988, 2)

> When we want to give high praise to someone we say, "*Yu, u nobuntu*"; "Hey, so-and-so has *ubuntu*." Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours. (1999, 31)

Because every human is a member of the one universal family he or she deserves moral concern notwithstanding his or her contextual backgrounds (racial, sexual, economic or social). When we respect individual members we respect their humanity or the fact that they are part of the one universal family and not simply because they are family members, friends, and close neighbours.

Obligations in African Ethics
Because African ethics is humanistic and emphasizes human welfare it places emphasis on duties rather than rights. A right-oriented ethic places emphasis on the interests and welfare of the individual and subscribes to rights in order to satisfy those interests. Conversely, a duty-oriented ethic emphasizes the interests

and welfare of the community with regards to the individual and subscribes to duties as a way to satisfy them. The individual *qua* human being is in a relational existence with others by virtue of his social nature, that is he or she is implicated in his or her community as a social being. Because of the natural sociality of humans the individual is implicated in some social and moral roles in the form of obligations, commitments to other members of his or her community which the individual must fulfil. Thus it could be said that African ethics takes our primary moral obligation to involve concern for the interests of others. Consequently, it emphasizes and encourages the development of a good character or those character traits that contribute to an individual's acting virtuously (namely, compassion, justice, loyalty, kindness, honesty etc.)—where acting virtuously enables humans to promote the common good. On this view of promoting the common good, right action and conduct are evaluated by how well they promote smooth relationships on the one hand, and uphold social structure and order, on the other. An action or conduct is good to the extent it promotes these ends and bad to the extent it detracts from the ends or runs counter to them.

The point is that particular obligations arise from one's particular station or situation in relation to others. Honesty, respect, justice compassion, reverence as moral values can only be shown to particular persons. We have a moral obligation to be honest and just to other members of the community because it benefits the community which in turn benefits us. We ought to treat our neighbour (others or "strangers") compassionately because he or she is a member of the universal human family. We have a duty to be respectful and show reverence to others. This means that the individual stands simultaneously in several different relationships with different members of the community, for example, as a junior in relations to seniors, parents and elders, as a senior in relation to younger siblings, as a leader or ruler in relation to those being led or the ruled, as a father or mother in relation to son or daughter, wife to husband, elder brother or sister to younger brother or sister, friend to friend, native to non-native. These bonds and relationships impose specific duties on us first and foremost as individuals in these relationships, and then general duties as members of the one universal human family. By discharging our obligations we help maintain social order and the flourishing of the common good and we discharge our obligations by playing our part well in the relationships that we find ourselves in.

African Philosophy in the Lens of Postmodern Thinking

Postmodern thinking as I have articulated claims that value or morality (as are reality, knowledge and truth) are constructed by discourses, that is, they are narratives that are contextual, namely, relative to different discourses. If postmodernism is right, then African philosophy, and in the context of my

discussion African ethics would be one of many narratives. It is not *the* perspective on right conduct and actions; rather it is *a* perspective on morality among other perspectives. Since values are only valid and justified within certain discourses, African morality, as is Western morality, is only valid and justified within its own discourse or internal standards. As a competing narrative or language game the credibility of African ethics is not provided by Western ethics. Simply put, the plausibility of its claims cannot be externally imposed and examined, but rather are imposed and examined internally.

However, although postmodern thinking seems to suggest that African philosophy is a legitimate perspective on reality, knowledge and value or morality given that postmodern thinking eschews any universalizing tendency it may be said that it has a few things to say about the content and claims of African philosophy (or ethics). Specifically, some of the worries that postmodernism will raise for African ethics will be similar to some of those it raises for modern thinking. The idea of moral or good character or acting in African morality as it relates to the notion of moral personhood does suggest that humans are at some level distinctly different from non-humans, in particular non-human animals. In fact, like Kantian ethics, African ethics claim that only a subset of humans are moral persons or capable of moral standing and actions— children are thus excluded from the moral sphere. One can therefore say that African ethics is susceptible to the same sort of worries that postmodernity raises for modern thinking which holds, among other things, that humans have some essence that separates them from nonhuman animals.

Furthermore, African ethics is prescriptive. It is prescriptive in the sense that it prescribes some particular way of conduct or a certain way of *being* or *beingness* or *existing*. Mogobe Ramose claims that in affirming one's humanity with others through the recognition of the humanity of others *Ubuntu* enjoins or commands us to "actually become a human being" (2002, 52). Ramose's claim suggests the deep kind of normativity of African ethics that I am suggesting. One way to interpret the claim that *Ubuntu* enjoins or commands us to become a human being is that it requires that we should exist in certain ways, or that certain ways of *beingness* or existence is better or more appropriate than others. A way of *being human* is better and more appropriate than a way of *being non/un-human*. If this is right, then African ethics has some universalizing tendency. In exhibiting such tendency it is not clear to me if it can be reconciled with the idea of contextualized narratives or worldviews that are situated relative to particular discourses. African philosophy requires that individuals or moral persons ought to or need cultivate good character, to have certain virtues, to be just, honest, compassionate, to care and share and to act within the broader common good of human flourishing. Human flourishing which circumscribes African ethics imposes on individuals particular ways of acting such that there are good or

appropriate ways of acting and bad or inappropriate ways of acting. Appropriate moral actions are those that aid, abet and advance the totality of human flourishing and inappropriate moral actions are those that do the very opposite. If this moral prescriptive perspective cannot be reconciled with the idea of contextualized narratives or discourses, then it seems right to conclude that African philosophy, like modernism is grounded on some universalism that may be both misleading and erroneous.

Conclusion

This essay has examined some directions of postmodern thinking and African philosophy through African ethics, where the former is about the meanings or explanations that people give to events that occur in the physical world, and the lack of objectivity or universalism to those meanings or explanations, and the latter is about the full range of philosophical issues that are implicated in the set of culturally original questions raised within an African context and life-world. I suggested that if postmodern thinking is true then it would suggest that African philosophy is a legitimate narrative or language game that is justified within a specific discourse and that going by some of the important ideas and doctrines of postmodern thinking African philosophy, like modern thinking, is faced with certain worries—worries that are related to its universalising tendency. Insofar as postmodernism is a movement characterized by broad skepticism, relativism or subjectivism, a general suspicion of reason and rationality, and a deep sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power, or simply insofar as postmodernity is a rejection of modern thinking it needs to be taken seriously. Although I have not defended in this paper the plausibility of the claims of postmodernity I do think that its claims are worth engaging with, for it seems misleading to hold as modernity does that reality, knowledge, truth and values are realizable outside particular social practices, institutions and discourses or that theories of cognition or formal linguistics are autonomous and objective domains. Having said that, it is important to point out that since postmodernism claims that it is never possible to evaluate a discourse according to whether it leads to objective Truth, it would have to tell some coherent story of how established discourses of modern thinking have become privileged discourses or the predominant worldview of the modern epoch. Or simply stated, it has to tell us (and convincingly so) why it is the case that perspectives or discourses of modernity were adopted or developed and not some other perspectives or discourses.

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CULTURAL AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract
The paper attempts an analysis of African philosophy from the commencement of its ontological debate and focuses on its relevance in culture. The paper does not contribute to the debate, since the debate is no longer a serious issue among African philosophers and scholars. It, however, states the importance of the debate to the field of African philosophy. It explains culture as an all encompassing phenomenon and that it serves as a relevant source for the discussion on African philosophy. It uses functionalism and structuralism as theories that could be used to understand African philosophy and culture. The theories are to expatiate how the concerned can analyze African philosophy and other relevant things. The paper concludes that given the understanding of these theories African philosophy can be understood in their directions.
KEYWORDS: functionalism, structuralism, culture, ontological debate.

Introduction
The commencement of African philosophy, in the contemporary period, is said to have been responses to the denial of the existence of African philosophy by some anthropologists. This started in the 60s to 90s. But towards the end of 90s to this present decade, scholars are not much preoccupied with the debate, but doing what I can call applied African philosophy. Functionalism is a theory in the philosophy of mind, which tries to explain how the mind is related with the external world and how it functions, while structuralism is a theory in both linguistic and anthropology, but which has crept into philosophy, trying to explain the whole through the parts.

In this paper, attempt shall be made to show the relationship that can co-exist between philosophy and these theories as regards culture, since philosophy is said to be part of culture and philosophers are products of culture.

African Philosophy: From Ontological Debate to Cultural Relevance
There have been arguments and counter arguments on the ontological status of African philosophy. While some believe that it "is still in the making" (WIREDUa 1980, 86), although this position is now obsolete, because of lack of written documents, which is one of the problems seen in African philosophy and

that it is founded on the "written traditions of other lands" (WIREDUa 1980, 7). The traditions are the languages of those that colonized the countries of the scholars, either French or English languages. There are some that claim that the argument should now be a forgone issue, since African philosophy has been addressing issues that are addressed by the philosophy of the West (MAKINDEb 2010, 437). Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the latter's view overrides the former, just because of the date and the time lag, there is still the problem of definition.

Many philosophers are faced with problems in attempts to define philosophy, given the fact that each definition faces a criticism or the other.[10] It is equally said of African philosophy that it does not have any universally[11] acceptable definition (OYESHILE 2008, 57-58). Based on this, attempts have been made to define African philosophy. While doing this, some try to say what African philosophy is not. Kwasi Wiredu, for instance, is of the view that it cannot be "congeries of unargued conception about gods, ghosts and witches" (WIREDUa 1980, 45). While for Peter Bodunrin, it is not "the collective world views of African people, their myths and folklores and folk-wisdom" (BODUNRIN 1984, 1). Instead African philosophy should be seen from another perspective.

However, some scholars have attempted to say what African philosophy is. One of the earliest definitions is John Mbiti's. He defines African philosophy as "the understanding, attitude of mind, logic, perception behind the manner in which African people think, act or speak in different situations of life" (MBITI 1969, 2). Odera Oruka, in his own case, sees African philosophy as "the work dealing with specific African issue, formulated by indigenous African thinkers or by a versed in African cultural life" (ORUKA 1990, 112). C. S. Momoh views it as African doctrines or theories in the universe, the creator, the elements, institutions, beliefs and concept in it (MOMOH 1996, 318).

Looking at these definitions, each has a defect or the other. Some are too inclusive, that is, bringing what is not philosophy into its scope; this is the case with Mbiti's. While for some, too exclusive, trying to deny some that are supposed to be African philosophy not to be. One thing is, nevertheless, noted in the definitions. Each of them is concerned with African culture. That is, one cannot talk of African philosophy without the discussion of African culture. In my view, since philosophy is sometimes seen as the critical examination of life,

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[10] For some definitions of philosophy, see Solomon, R. C. and Higgins, K. M. (eds), *World Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995: xxxi-xli, Staniland, H. S., "What is Philosophy?" in *Second Order* Vol. viii, Nos. 1&2, Jan/July 1979: 8.

[11] The universe referred to here is Africa and, therefore, the people concerned are the African philosophers.

African philosophy should then be seen as the critical examination of life. In this case, life will be all encompassing .

As it is always said that there is always a reason for doing a particular thing at a particular time, the same thing goes for African philosophy. There have been reasons, given by different scholars, which vary from one scholar to the other. For instance, Gbenga Fasiku states that it is the definition given by Mbiti that Africans challenge that led to the debate about the possibility of African philosophy (2008, 102). Olusegun Oladipo sees it from another perspective. In his view, it is as a result of finding ways in which African philosophers can make their works relevant to human interests in their societies (OLADIPOa 2000, 15). From Didier Kaphagawani's point of view, there are two reasons. First, it is an attempt to respond to the anthropologists who are denying Africans of many things, and philosophy inclusive. Second, it is the issue of post colonial identity (KAPHGAWANI 1998, 86-87).

Fasiku's opinion may not be right in the sense that there can always be different definitions for a concept. Since, in philosophy, there is no generally acceptable definition, they (the scholars) could have assumed that, though, Mbiti's definition might not be absolutely right, but there can be alternatives. On the other hand, He (Fasiku) may be raising this on the basis that Mbiti was not trained as a philosopher rather as a theologist, therefore, seeing philosophy from the perspective of theology. Nevertheless, whichever way one may look at it, African philosophy arose, in line with Olusegun Oladipo, to address "the interrelated issues of the nature and direction of African philosophy" (OLADIPOb 2006, 9).

The history of philosophy (Western) is always traced to Thales, thereby making people believe that (Western) philosophy has a date. For African philosophy, there is no actual date to which it can be traced. Instead, there have only been suggestions. Francis Ogunmodede, in trying to trace the probable date that African philosophy started, faults the claim of some scholars, who have given some dates (OGUNMODEDE 2001, 12-13; OLADIPOb 2006, 9; OKOLO 1987, 21).

For Western philosophy, there have been periods, ranging from the pre-Socratic philosophers, Ancient philosophers, medieval, modern (rationalists and empiricists) to the contemporary, so as to aid the date and history of western philosophy. The same attempt has been made by African scholars to periodize African philosophy, though, this may not be unconnected with the fact that they want to trace the date, but it can be said that it will assist in tracing the history (OGUNMODEDE 2001, 16-38).

Some have divided African philosophy, most importantly, to show types, methods or approaches. Odera Oruka who is known to have divided his into trends, to which people have responded, first gave four trends (1981). Kwasi

Wiredu, in his own case, divides it into levels and senses (1980, 37-50). While for Moses Makinde, his own division is into three phases (1988, 33-39).

Looking at Oruka's and Wiredu's divisions, only terminologies differ, their connotations are the same. For Oruka, the trends are ethno philosophy, philosophic sagacity, nationalistic ideological philosophy and professional philosopher. Wiredu divides into levels- traditional and modern and senses- folk-world view, native capacity for critical reflections and modern philosophizing. In Makinde's case, the phases are first phase- unwritten philosophy and unknown philosophers, second phase- re-orientation in philosophy and colonial ethno philosophers and third phase- critical re-orientation in philosophy and contemporary African philosophers.

Since, for Wiredu, the levels are broken down into senses, therefore, to effectively make use of his own division, I think the levels may not be relevant, so as not to create unnecessary tautology. For Oruka and Wiredu, and even Makinde, their first categories as ethno-philosophy, folk-world views and unwritten philosophy and unknown philosophers have almost the same idea. They can be said to be culture philosophy, the communal thought of the people arising from their beliefs, customs and traditions (KAPHAGAWANI 1988, 89). Oruka's philosophic sagacity and Wiredu's second sense-native capacity for critical reflection are similar. In both ways, they recognize individual thinkers, whose reflections are more of "inborn or presumably acquired skill or talent" (KAPHAGAWANI 1988, 89).

Oruka's professional philosophy, Wiredu's modern philosophizing and Makinde's critical re-orientation and contemporary African philosophers are the same. The three try to explain the contemporary African philosophers who are trained with the rigour and concerned with analysis of issues. They are referred to as purists (UDOH 2002, 98). It must be pointed out that for the fact that philosophic sagacity or native capacity for critical thinking and professional philosophy cannot do without "culture" philosophy makes the latter relevant, though, not defect free (OLADIPOa 2000, 57-58; KAPHAGAWANI, 1998, 91-92). "Culture" philosophy serves as the source material upon which sages reflect and modern/contemporary philosophers do their philosophy. These materials are embedded in culture.

Cultural and Social Relevance of African Philosophy
Without denying any fact, philosophy is a cultural phenomenon, because it is grounded in a cultural experience (GYEKYE 1987, x). This view is also shared by Olusegun Oladipo by asserting the fact that philosophy does not exist in vacuum. For him, philosophy is seen as a "social phenomenon which derives its being from the experience generated through the continuous interaction between human beings and their environment and between themselves" (OLADIPOa

2000, 25). This is the same point, as I believe, made by Masolo, that philosophy is done by a rational, reason-driven human being, who, at the same time, belongs to a setting,[12] where there are other beings. These people live together, relate with one another, but through internal reasons govern their affairs (MASOLO 1997, 290). This is also shared by Adeshina Afolayan (2006), but he, in his own case, sees a problem with the relationship between philosophy and culture, which is perceived as a result of the debate of having a standard for philosophical enterprise. This implies that the standard to be followed will be that of the west. This is, for him, the position of the *Universalist* (AFOLAYAN 2006, 21).

In this sense, philosophy will be seen as a field "responding to challenges and problems created by peculiarities and exigencies of the different era" (UDOH 2002, 101). It also serves as the defence of the strong bound between philosophy and culture. Establishing the relationship between philosophy and culture, the materials of culture are objects or materials for philosophic reflections,[13] because the philosopher cannot think, interpret and find meaning in a vacuum (OKOLO 1987, 42). It is with wisdom, intelligence and ability to reason that the philosopher brings what has already been thrown apart by common reason (WIREDUa 1980, 175).

Different conceptions have been given on what culture is about. Moses Makinde gives, at least, three conceptions of culture. But these conceptions are directed towards two theses. First, culture is not static but evolutionary/dynamic. Second, the dynamism in culture is as a result of the people, who reflect on it critically (MAKINDEa 1988, 15). The person that reflects on it critically is the philosopher, because he is first and foremost a person of culture, product of the education and belief of his society (MAKINDEa 1988, 15).

Wiredu, however, sees culture in two senses. He sees it as social forms and customary beliefs and practices of a human group. The other sense is language, upon which the first sense depends (WIREDUb 1998, 36). Language performs some important role in human society. It serves as the fulcrum to human interactive process (BEWAJI 2002, 271; FASIKU 2008, 101). Though human language is important in human society and that without language, there will not be what is called human society, it does, however, not mean that it is language that investigates or captures reality; rather it is the users of language. The users are philosophers, who have been "equipped".

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[12] The setting here is spacio-temporal, which is the background against which the human being grows and is used to.

[13] This is to prove the definition earlier given that philosophy being a critical examination of life.

Plato has explained how the mental aspect of man is developed.[14] What is meant here is that the philosophers are the ones that can do a critical reflection upon the culture. Though the sages, who are reputed for individual critical reflection can do this, but it may not be as critical as those with philosophical training. This is not to relegate the sages out rightly, but we still have some of them that are just moralists. And even those that are not moralists would not have gotten enough philosophical tools, since, according to Kwasi Wiredu, they are not affected by "modern intellectual influences" (WIREDUa 1980, 37). The task of African philosophers, therefore, is to examine the cultural values of Africans critically and bring out the ones that are still good and discard the ones that are not relevant.

No one can deny the fact that Philosophers are products of culture. It will be correct if one says that philosophy cannot be done the same way Descartes has done philosophy. For philosophy without cognizance of one's environment can, at best, be described as pseudo-philosophy. The philosophy of Descartes, his assertion of the *cogito* (the thinking thing) as the only certain thing is heavily criticized because of its neglect on his environment. According to phenomenology, consciousness is always directed towards an object.[15] The implication of this is that consciousness, or simply put, Descartes' thinking thing cannot exist without that which is thought of. Therefore, there cannot be a *cogito* without a corresponding *cogitatum*. Human consciousness does not exist in vacuum. For Brentano, the human consciousness is that characteristic feature of psyche or mental phenomena. Intentionality is a causal connection between the external concrete of things (SEARLE 2004, 159). Therefore, the problem of Descartes consists in the fact that even if the cogito is the most certain thing in the world, nevertheless, the thinking thing ends up denying the existence of the world (KOLAK 2001, 480).

Against this background, it therefore corroborates with the fact that, while a philosopher is doing philosophy, it must be done, not as an arm chair philosophy, like Descartes, without minding the society, but in recognition of the society to which he belongs (MASOLO 1997, 283-299). This can best be explained via functionalism and structuralism

Functionalism is the doctrine that what makes something a thought, desire, pain (or any other type of mental state) depends not on its internal constitution, but solely on its function, or the role it plays, in the cognitive system of which it is a part (LEVIN 2009, Web. N. P). It did not arise in isolation or

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[14] This is detailed in his analogy of the line in book six of his *The Republic.* In this analogy, the mental development is explained and that one can only know and be able to reflect on anything, if the mind has reached a certain level.

[15] This is what is referred to as the intentionality of the consciousness.

come as a theory in the 20th Century; its antecedent is dated back to the ancient[16] and modern philosophy as well as in early theories of computation and artificial intelligence.[17] It is, however, a modern successor of behaviourism (BLACKBURN 2005, 144). For the functionalist, the mind is characterized in terms of function. The function of the mind is examined, but with comparison with computer program. The mind and the brain are equated to be computer program and hardware respectively (SEARLEa 2004, 65).

Three types of functionalism have been influential in Philosophy of Mind. They are functional analysis, computation-representation and metaphysical functionalism (BLOCK 1980). Francis Njoku tries to give a further explanation on each of them. He explains functionalism in the sense of functional analysis to mean research strategy of looking for explanation (NJOKU 2006, 84). This type of functionalism is less relevant in this discussion, and I tend to discard it.

The metaphysical functionalism is a theory of the mind concerned not with how mental states account for behaviour but rather with what they are (NJOKU 2006, 85). On this, mental states are characterized by metaphysical functionalists in terms of their causal roles, particularly in terms of their sensory stimulations, behavioural outputs and other mental states. The third analysis is computation – representation. This applies to a special case of functional analysis or explanation designed to provide a computer program for the mind.

> It decides, deciphers and dissolves the mystery of mental life by function analysis of mental process to the point where they are seen to be composed as computations as mechanical as the primitive operations of a digital computer. (NJOKU 2006, 84)

The computer is programmed such that there are three basic devices; input, processing and output devices. The computer has a function for which it is made. It is in this sense that computation functionalism conceives of human mind:

> as an enormously complex machine, incarnated in the neurological processes of the brain. Like coke machines, human beings take inputs in the form of sensory and perceptual information, and output them in form of behaviours. (MASLIN 2001, 142)

So what make the mental entities are the ideas that are impressed into the mind, perceptions of the world around us (NJOKU 2006, 87). Functionalism has been

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[16] It can be traced back to Aristotle's theory of the soul, where he argues that the human soul is a form of a natural organised human body.

[17] For discussions on Artificial Intelligence See Boden, M. A. (ed), *The Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

attacked by some scholars. One of the criticisms of it is that functionalism is an insufficient theory of the mind (SEARLEb 1980). This argument is known as *Chinese room argument.*

Another serious attack on functionalism is from Block. He poses several problems for functionalism. The first of these is known as the "Chinese nation" (or China brain) thought experiment. The Chinese nation thought experiment involves supposing that the entire nation of China systematically organizes itself to operate just like a brain, with each individual acting as a neuron (forming what has come to be called a "Blockhead"). According to functionalism, so long as the people are performing the proper functional roles, with the proper causal relations between inputs and outputs, the system will be a real mind, with mental states, consciousness, and so on. However, Block argues, this is patently absurd, so there must be something wrong with the thesis of functionalism since it would allow this to be a legitimate description of a mind (BLOCK 1980, 268-305). This and several other criticisms are leveled against functionalism. The criticisms do not make functionalism a bad theory in its entirety. It can still be used, especially by Philosophers, for proper understanding of the relationship between culture, the people and the outside world.

Structuralism has been defined as a theory that considers any text as a structure, which various parts have meaning only when they are considered in relation to each other (HORNBY 2010, 1482). Text in this sense can be replaced with many other things, since it is used to symbolize things with parts. Structuralism is the name that is given to a wide range of discourses that study underlying structures of signification. From the point of view of structuralism, all texts, all meaningful events and all signifying practices can be analyzed for their underlying structures. Such an analysis would reveal the patterns that characterize the system that makes such texts and practices possible. Structuralism, therefore, promises to offer insights into what makes us the way we are.

Structuralism can be traced to Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, who developed a branch of linguistics called "Structural Linguistics". But the term structuralism appeared in the works of Claude Levi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, thereby giving rise to Structuralist Movement. This has further given way to some other theories, for instance, post structuralism. It is, nevertheless, applicable to some other fields. For instance, it has been used in biological sciences to explain the physical composition of organism.

The position of structuralism, among other approaches in anthropology, can be located by means of Aristotelian notion of causality (MARANDA 1990, 291-320). For Aristotle, to know means to be able to map the different causes of phenomenon. Of the four causes of Aristotle, each of them can be explained in terms of structural theory. Each of these is explained against the cause it

corresponds with. They are formal cause (structural theory) and final cause (functional theory), material cause (biological, physical and cultural anthropology and compositions) and efficient cause (evolutionary theory) respectively (MARANDA 1990, 329). If, according to Edmund Leach, that "every real society is a process of time" (LEACH 1954, 5), it, therefore, follows that such a society must be given a system of transformation. The problem inherent in this is that it is not factually possible to understand every part so as to know the whole. Nevertheless, one can argue that better understanding of culture can be achieved if culture is not studied all at a go. It has to be studied systematically, and from its various parts. It is when culture is studied bit by bit that it will be understood properly; otherwise, it may not be understood in its entirety. It is from this realm that we would see the relevance of philosophy. Apart from being a cultural phenomenon, it is also a tool for social inquiry. This makes those within the field of philosophy to be critical about culture. By implication, it assists a cultural person to be critical about his/her practice of a particular culture or the other.

Conclusion

In African philosophy, there are also three *devices,* the input, the output and the processes. For the computer, if it is not well equipped, it is most likely going to malfunction. This can be interpreted in terms of Platonic analogy of the line, that there should be a thorough mental development. Culture, in this sense, will serve as the data that is processed. The senses of the philosopher represent the input devices with which his mind is furnished with ideas and that of the culture. The processing device is the philosopher (his mind) with philosophical tools (just like the computer programs). The end result, which is the output, is the observations that are put into writing for people to see and read.

In a nutshell, before one can understand the whole of a society, one must understand the parts of the society, which will be culture-customs, traditions, belief systems, religion, etc. When cultures have been understood and the minds of the trained scholars are capable of doing philosophy that is assumed to be purely understood. The problem then will be how to structure it. This is where the use of language, as a tool, will come in. How can this be explained in the language the 'native' people will understand? Fasiku, following Hallen, has proposed ordinary language, (FASIKU 2008, 110) which, to me, will be interpreted as the simplest language without the use of (philosophical) concepts, I guess, or with further explication of the concepts. Philosophy will not be a strange area among people who are owners of their philosophy. Can everybody read the ordinary language?

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IN DEFENSE OF ETHNO-PHILOSOPHY: A BRIEF RESPONSE TO KANU'S ECLECTICISM

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Abstract

After reading an Article by Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu entitled: Trends in African Philosophy: A Case for Eclectism (2013, 275-287), I felt that as Africans of Black extraction, we were doing a disservice to our very own philosophy called Ethno-philosophy in ridicle. For many years African philosophy has not been taken seriously by both African Philosophers and Western Philosophers alike. To my knowledge, African philosophy has been disparaged and downgraded for failing to have, among other things, a coherent system of thought and a method that can be applied across all the cultures of this world. In this essay, I argue that philosophy needs not to have a method that is absolutely applicable across all cultures in order to be a philosophy that is worth celebrating. My position is that the current generation of African philosophers must develop a logic on which African philosophy should sit instead of "running away from their burning house only to seek refuge next door."

KEYWORDS: Ethno-philosophy, Universalism, Particularism, Eclecticism, African Logic

Introduction

In this essay, I defend the thesis that ethno-philosophy is the only philosophy that an African of black extraction can be proud of as it is rooted in African traditions and cultures. This is notwithstanding the amount of criticism that it has received over the years from the West and from fellow Africans who subscribe to the Universalist approach to the study of African philosophy. I begin this essay by briefly re-visiting the debate on whether or not African philosophy exists and I outline and critique the arguments by selected Western philosophers against the possibility of the existence of African philosophy. To me, this exercise is very important since all the criticisms that ethno-philosophy has received over the years have been done in the context of this debate. Coming to this debate, I discuss arguments by Hume, Hegel and Bruhl before turning to Universalist and Particularist positions on African philosophy.

Turning to the Western arguments against African philosophy, Hume, for instance argued that the African was incapable of logical thinking and was therefore intellectually unproductive, among other inadequacies. Hegel, on the other hand, divided Africa into three parts; the one that lied south of the Sahara which he called Africa proper; the one that lied to the north of the Sahara desert

which he called European Africa and finally, the one along the river Nile close to Asia. For Hegel, Africa proper was still incapable of being rational since it was still at the childhood stage. Bruhl also completely rejected the rationality of Africans as he claimed "that Africans were largely pre-logical" (OYESHILE 2008, 57). Bruhl described a "pre-logical thought" as one that was unscientific, uncritical and one that contained evident contradictions (2008, 57).

After sampling and discussing these arguments, I discuss the Universalist and Particularist positions on this debate. While Universalists like Kwasi Wiredu, Peter O. Bodunrin, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Paulin Hountondji among others reasoned that philosophy was the same everywhere and so was the method of doing it, Particularists like Placide Tempels, Leopold Sedar Senghor, John S. Mbiti and J. Olubi Sodipo argued that philosophy was culture-bound, that is, it was a function of the traditions and cultures of a given people. I then outline and discuss Kanu's eclecticism project which, to me, is not any different from the Universalist and Eurocentric project which is seeking to disparage and downgrade African philosophy, in general and ethno-philosophy, in particular. Finally, I make a case for ethno-philosophy by arguing that the current generation of African philosophers has a role to play in the project of taking ethno-philosophy beyond the foundational level where it is at the moment. One way to doing this is by establishing the logic and science on which this philosophy will be anchored. To this end, I give credit to Jonathan O. Chimakonam and others who have already set the tone for the development of this logic.

Re-visiting the African Philosophy Debate
The African Philosophy debate is a long standing debate that has spanned many generations. The debate is centered on whether or not there is something called African philosophy with a clearly distinct method and system of thought, the same way as there is British philosophy, American philosophy and Asian philosophy or that Africa has no philosophy that is worth studying study. To this debate, we have had critical voices from both the West and from Africa. From the West it has been argued that Africans are not rational and since philosophy is a rational enterprise, it follows that Africans cannot philosophize.

Since these arguments have been presented for more than three decades now and have found an audience, I will only select and present three of these arguments by Western philosophers namely; David Hume, G. W. F. Hegel and Lucien Levy Bruhl. To begin with, Hume, a Scottish philosopher, held that the African (the black-man) was incapable of logical thinking and was therefore intellectually unproductive, among other inadequacies (MADUKA 2005, 5). Hume also believed very strongly in the idea that Europe was the model of humanity, culture and history (2005, 5).

Much later, this view found support from former Apartheid South African president, Mr. Pieter Whilem Botha who remarked, thus, "intellectually, we are superior to the Blacks; that has been proved beyond any reasonable doubt over the years" (MAILU 2012, Web. N.P). Although Botha himself was not a philosopher, it is easier to discern from his tone that the generality of white people both in South Africa and the West—during his time, and to some extent even now—never accepted and may never accept the notion that Blacks are rational people capable of having a clearly defined philosophy.

Hegel, a German Philosopher, also did not believe that Africans could philosophize and that there was something called African philosophy that was worth celebrating. Thus, in [The Philosophy of History] Hegel divided Africa into three parts:

> One that lies south of the desert of Sahara… Africa proper…the Upland almost entirely unknown to us, with narrow coast-tracks along the sea; the second is that to the north of the desert…European Africa (if we may so call it)…a coastland; the third is the river region of the Nile, the only valley-land of Africa, and which is in connection with Asia. Africa proper, as far back as history goes, has remained –for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world—shut up; it is the gold land compressed within itself—the land of childhood, which is lying beyond the day of self conscious history and is enveloped in the dark mantle of the night… (HEGEL cited in ONYEWUENYI 1994, 94-95)

Bruhl, a French sociologist, also denied Africans the idea of having a philosophy that was worth of study. According to Offia (2009, Web. N.P), Bruhl and other sociologists like Evan Pritchard, Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes felt the inclination to insist that for any form of thought or action to be adjudged intelligible or rational, it had to conform to the rules of formal logic as defined by the West. That therefore meant to them that any thought system that seemed contrary to this formulation was irrational (OFFIA 2009, Web. N.P).

Against this background, Bruhl completely rejected the rationality of Africans as he claimed "that they (Africans) were largely pre-logical" (OYESHILE 2008, 57). Bruhl described a "pre-logical thought" as one that was unscientific, uncritical and one that contained evident contradictions (2008, 57). For Bruhl, people with such thoughts differed not in degree but in quality from those with a logical mind (OFFIA 2009, Web. N.P). Thus, Bruhl bifurcated of the human society into two categories: those of a "primitive mentality" and those with a "civilized mentality" (OFFIA 2009, Web. N.P). Africa by this classification fell under the former category (OFFIA 2009, Web. N.P).

While I will generally not be surprised to hear Western philosophers such as Hume, Hegel and Bruhl denying the fact that Africans have a clearly distinct philosophy, because of their (Western philosophers') misplaced belief that "Reason is Greek" and "Emotion is African," what is rather worrisome is the disturbing reality that even among Africans themselves (especially Africans of Black extraction), there is no agreement as to whether African philosophy exists. For instance, fellow African philosophers especially those trained in the Western tradition such as Wiredu, Bodunrin, Hountondji, Appiah and others have followed Western philosophers in asserting that philosophy is the same everywhere since it uses one method, and must necessarily be critical instead of being descriptive.[18]

This category of African philosophers has come to be called the Universalists and they subscribe to a school of philosophy called professional philosophy. At the opposite end of this debate, African philosophers like Tempels, Mbiti, Sodipo and Senghor among others have argued that philosophy is culture-bound. This category of African philosophers has come to be called Particularists and they are widely spread into three schools, namely; ethno-philosophy, nationalist ideological philosophy and sage philosophy. In this essay, although I will outline and explain each of these schools of philosophy that belong to the Particularist strand of thinking, I will dwell much on ethno-philosophy since it is the one that has received much criticism over the years.

To begin with, according to African philosophers that subscribe to ethno-philosophy, philosophy is not the same everywhere and the methodology of doing philosophy depends entirely on the context in which the philosophy is situated. *Ethno-philosophers* are all agreed that African philosophy exists and is that kind of philosophy that is uniquely African in terms of its brand logic, its values, its knowledge forms and its metaphysics. In the words of Kanu, African philosophy is the philosophy indigenous to Africans, untainted by foreign ideas (KANU 2013, 278).[19]

Nationalist Ideological Philosophy is another of the Particularist's approach to the search for African philosophy and it defines African philosophy

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[18] Please note that I am not suggesting that there is something wrong in philosophy being done through analysis instead of being descriptive, my point is that the idea of analysis must not be universalized. Why should we be forced, as Africans, to buy in to the Western model of critical analysis as if we cannot define critical thinking ourselves?

[19] This is notwithstanding the fact that later in this essay, Kanu argues in support of eclecticism which calls for a combination of Western methods with African thought systems in order to have a philosophy with a world wide appeal.

as a system of thought, based on traditional African socialism and familyhood (EMAGALIT 2013, Web. N.P). It is represented by the works of politicians like Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Senghor. This trend of philosophy aims at seeking a true and a meaningful freedom for African people that can be attained by mental liberation and a return to genuine traditional African humanism wherever it is possible (EMAGALIT 2013, Web. N.P).   This trend of philosophy gained momentum in the second half of the twentieth century.

In Ghana, this trend of philosophy was pioneered by Nkrumah who developed what became known as philosophical consciencism meant to help sustain African identity (KANU 2013, 280). Nkrumah's Philosophical consciencism incorporated the humanism of traditional society in this commitment and was based on deductions derived from African human conscience traceable to the style of humanism and the communitarian conception of traditional Africa (EKANEM 2012, 55).

The following paragraph best summarizes Nkrumah's philosophical consciencism:

> Social revolution must therefore have, standing firmly behind it, an intellectual revolution, a revolution in which our thinking and philosophy are directed towards the redemption of our society. Our philosophy must find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of the African people. It is from these conditions that the intellectual content of our philosophy must be created. (NKRUMAH 1964, 78)

In Zimbabwe, this trend of philosophy was popularized by Robert Gabriel Mugabe's socialism that was blended by a local ideology called *gutsaruzhinji* (promoting the interests of the majority) which resulted in the introduction of free primary education and food rationing that was meant to avert hunger in drought prone areas. The system also ensured that all children were immunized for free against the six killer diseases, namely; Polio, Measles, BCG, Tetanus, Whooping cough and Tuberculosis.

During those early years of Zimbabwe's independence, Mugabe believed that only a well-fed, healthy and educated nation would lead to socio-political and economic development and that self-seeking attitudes would be retrogressive to this development. So, *gutsaruzhinji,* a philosophy premised on the idea of communal belonging was going to be the panacea to the problems affecting this new Zimbabwe which was smarting from a protracted war of liberation. It is however critical to note that many years later, these gains were reversed when advanced stayism led to poor governance which in turn led to the collapse of the economy as well as the social and political institutions.

In Tanzania, Nyerere developed *ujamaa* socialism which was an attempt to integrate traditional African values with the demands of the post-colonial setting. As a philosophy, the central objective of *ujamaa* was the attainment of a self-reliant socialist nation (IBHAWOH and DIBUA 2003, 60). *Ujamaa* was founded on a philosophy of development that was based on three essentials—freedom, equality and unity. For Nyerere (1967, 16), the ideal society must be based on these three essentials. Thus:

> There must be equality, because only on that basis will men work cooperatively. There must be freedom, because the individual is not served by society unless it is his. And there must be unity, because only when society is unified can its members live and work in peace, security and well being. These three essentials, Nyerere further contended are not new to Africa; they have always been part of the tradition social order. (1967, 16)

What united all these ideologies was the need to develop a homegrown kind of philosophy that would lead to African renaissance (re-birth) which would see the African man and woman being able to chart his or her own destiny. Nationalist ideological philosophy led to the development of communitarian concepts such as *hunhu/ubuntu* (in Zimbabwe and South Africa), *omundu* (in Tanzania and the rest of east Africa), *umunna* and *ibuanyidanda* (among the Igbo of Nigeria), *Okra* (among the Akan of Ghana) and *Botho* (in Lesotho) among other African countries. In all these concepts, individual existence is tied to group, family and/or community existence (MANGENA 2014, 12). Thus, Nkrumah's philosophical consciencism, Mugabe's *gutsaruzhinji* concept and Nyerere's *ujamaa* socialism all fit into the philosophy of African humanism which is premised on the idea of community.

Sage Philosophy was another of the Particularist's approach to the search for African philosophy and it was developed by Kenyan philosopher Oruka. With regard to this school of philosophy, Kanu (2013, 280) notes, thus:

> Through interviews with sages from traditional groups, Oruka identified philosophical sages in different cultures who were more of the repositories of cultural wisdom. He divided them into two groups; the first he called folk sages who embodied communal wisdom; the second he called philosophical sages who held a critical stand towards that wisdom

Oruka used his findings to counter Hountondji and those Western philosophers who had argued that Africa had no philosophy (KANU 2013, 280). His central

claim was that the Eurocentric philosophical discourse was biased in favour of Western traditions and cultures. He lamented that:

> While the sayings of numerous Greek sages such as Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and other pre-Socratics, were regarded as "philosophical," those of traditional African sages were not. This bias arises out of the implicit belief that philosophy is the privileged activity of certain races. He believed that this unjustified belief had further led to the image of philosophy as the restricted property of Greeks, or Europeans, and, even more exclusively, the property of white males. Partly concerned with exposing the falsehood of this Eurocentric attitude, he recognized that what had raised the apparently simple sayings of the pre-Socratics to the status of philosophy were the subsequent sustained commentaries by later philosophers. He maintained that the ideas expressed by indigenous African sages were no different from those by the earlier Greeks. (ORUKA 1990, 47)

By way of criticism, it is clear that the Universalist's emphasis on critical thinking as a key part of the philosophical enterprise was something they got from the West since most of these had been trained in Western schools of philosophy. To my knowledge, critical thinking is a product of rationality, an attribute denied of Africans by Hume, Hegel, Bruhl and others. It therefore makes it very difficult for me to believe that the ideas of these Universlaists were not "tainted by foreign influences." If indeed, their ideas were tainted by foreign influences, then ethno-philosophers, nationalist ideological philosophers and those who subscribe to sage philosophy are justified in calling for the crafting or development of a philosophy that is grounded on African traditions, cultures and experiences.

Assuming that the Universalist approach to the study of African philosophy is also motivated by the need to come up with a philosophy that is grounded on African experiences, the problem which remains unresolved is that this kind of philosophy does not have deep roots in African traditions and cultures. While cultural encounters cannot be avoided and may have played a part on the thinking of most Universalists, I argue that indigeneity remains an integral part of a people's philosophy. As I look at the importance of cultural encounters, I reflect on the questions: When one goes to a faraway country to secure education, do they also have to take back home their cultural baggage and systems of thought? Does a discipline always have to use Western logic in order to be deemed philosophical? What justifies using Western logic and science as standards for all philosophies in this world?

It seems to me that these are hard questions which even the fiercest critics of African philosophy; the likes of Hume, Hegel and Bruhl cannot answer. Against this background, I argue that ethno-philosophy is an African philosophy which we, as Africans, should try to defend with pride and that professional philosophy remains professional philosophy at least, in the minds of its conceptualizers. In the minds of African philosophers who subscribe to Particularism, professional philosophy only seeks to uproot the African from his informal traditions and cultures and give him or her new identity and this is highly unacceptable since it is tantamount to proselytisation of African cultures and value systems. So, will Kanu's defense eclecticism take us anywhere?

A proper response to this question would probably require that I give an outline of Kanu's defense of eclecticism with a view to showing how this defense seeks to deal with ethno-philosophy's alleged failure to place more emphasis on scientificity, logic, criticism and argumentation methods which I consider to be the hallmarks of Western philosophy as defended by the likes of Hume, Hegel, Bruhl and others.

Kanu's defense of Eclecticism
In this section, I give an account of Kanu's defense of eclecticism showing how he sees it as the best alternative to the African philosophy debate, in general and the alleged shortcomings of ethno-philosophy, in particular. The argument by the defenders of the eclectic school to which Kanu belongs proceeds thus: because African philosophy has been criticized by Hountondji and Western philosophers like Hume, Hegel, Bruhl and others for being illogical, incoherent and unsystematic, there is need to combine the Universalist and Particularist approaches to African philosophy and this would involve sifting the philosophical thought of Africans as could be gotten from their various worldviews, myths, proverbs, etc., and ask professionally trained philosophers to reflect on them (KANU 2013, 283).

Defenders of the eclectic school believe that at the point of this romance between the professional and unprofessional, authentic African philosophy is realized (KANU 2013, 283). Kanu cites Uduigwomen (1995) who describes the interplay between the two schools as follows:

> The Universalist approach will provide the necessary analytic and conceptual framework for the Particularist school. Since this framework cannot thrive in a vacuum, the Particularist approach will supply the raw materials or data needed by the Universalist approach. Thus, it will deliver the Universalist approach from mere logic chopping and abstractness. These will be a fruitful exchange of categories and concepts. (UDUIGWOMEN cited in KANU 2013, 284)

With this outline of the main thrust of the arguments of the eclectic school, I now turn to the critique of Kanu's defense of eclecticism in order to buttress the foregoing.

A Critique of Kanu's defense of Eclecticism

In this essay, I argue that Kanu's claim that eclecticism is the panacea to the African philosophy debate in general and to the shortcomings of ethno-philosophy in particular is a claim that needs to be supported by very strong and unshakeable premises but it seems to me that at the moment; he does not have such premises. Eclecticism, in my view, complicates the African philosophy debate as it sounds like another Universalist position and/or another Western rebuttal of African philosophy. I say so because, the mere admission that African philosophy cannot stand alone without being anchored on the logic of the West, shows that Kanu has no confidence in having African philosophy that is anchored on its own logic and yet according to C.B Nze (2013, 418),[20] logic lies at the foundation of everything, once it is established, every other form of theorizing takes shape.

He maintains that Aristotle was the man to do it in the Western tradition, creating the foundation upon which theorists of different inclination built their thoughts. For Nze, we cannot correctly do African philosophy, mathematics, science, etc., without first laying a logical foundation for such (2013, 18). By inference, Nze is emphasizing on the importance of seeking local remedies to local problems. On this score, he agrees with most Particularist philosophers in the African domain who have argued that African philosophy must be anchored on African tools of analysis, especially African logic. He avers, thus:

> The practice which has grown uncontrolled since the colonial times in which African intellectuals seek to construct native African theories upon the logical foundation of the West is simply misguided. Western intellectuals read such works and toss it aside because they see nothing different in what they have since accomplished. (2013, 18)

While many other ethno-philosophers like Nze, Chimakonam, Mbiti, Sopdipo and others believe that African philosophy need to be anchored on its own logic, eclectics believe that we need to rely on Western logic and it is my thinking that

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[20] Excerpted from C.B Nze's review of Jonathan Chimakonam's book entitled: *Introducing African Science: Systematic and Philosophical Approach* published in 2012 (Indiana, USA) by Author House Bloomington.

this will take Africa hundred steps backwards. In my Shona culture we say: *muvhimi chaiye haavhimi nembwa dzemuvakidzani wake nokuti haazivi madzidzisirwo adzakaitwa kuvhima* (A real hunter does not hunt with his neigbhour's dogs because he does not know how they were trained). In the same vein we cannot use Western logic as the seedbed of African philosophy. I believe we need to take ethno-philosophy further from where it was left by its founders instead of trying to run away from our shadow by developing its logic. As Ada Agada (2013, 240) admits:

> It is true that ethno-philosophy (which encompasses communal and traditional African thought and the scholarly endeavour of their systematization in the light of Western philosophy) marked one tremendous leap for African philosophy, but it is only a stage, a foundational level of African philosophy**.**

Agada is probably challenging us as African philosophers of this present generation to expend all our energies in taking ethno-philosophy beyond the foundational stage in which it is at the moment. Agada is probably bemoaning the fact that as African philosophers, we are failing to develop what is ours—that is ethno-philosophy—preferring to take what is not ours—Western logic and Science—to inform what is ours—African philosophy/ethno-philosophy. According to Agada (2013, 240-241), "we are confronted with the naked fact that African philosophy has remained synonymous with ethno-philosophy long after its conception." Agada (2013, 241) thus, asks the question: Can we really count the achievements of African philosophy outside the dominant school of ethno-philosophy?

There is no doubt that Western philosophers, Universalists and those who subscribe to the eclectic school of African philosophy such as Uduigwomen and Kanu would say NO to the above question. For example, Agada (2013, 243) quotes French philosopher, Jacques Derrida who postulates that:

> Philosophy does not have one sole memory. Under its Greek name and in its European memory, it has always been bastard, hybrid, grafted, multi-linear and polyglot. We must adjust our practice of history and of philosophy to this reality which was also a chance and more than ever remains a chance.

The picture that Derrida is painting here is that it is not possible to have for example British philosophy, American philosophy, Asian philosophy or even African philosophy that is stand alone. Thus, every philosophy borrows ideas from other cultures and it should not be seen as a form of embarrassment for

African philosophy to borrow ideas from Western philosophy (AGADA 2013, 243). By way of response to Derrida and others who subscribe to this school of thought, I argue that while there is nothing wrong in having cultures borrowing ideas from each other, the problem comes when it is always African philosophy that has to borrow from the West and not vice versa. This, to me, would mean that certain philosophical traditions are supposed to be more superior and dominant than others which argument I do not subscribe to. If it can be granted with certainty that there is British philosophy, American philosophy and Indian philosophy; why should there be a debate when it comes to African philosophy?
It is against this background that I criticize Western philosophers, Universalists and defenders of eclecticism for thinking that without the input of foreign ideas, African philosophy cannot stand on its own. I particularly criticize Universalists and those who subscribe to the eclectic school of African philosophy for "running away from their burning house preferring to seek refuge next door instead of putting out the fire and refurbish their own house."

My position is that, we need to put our heads together and take ethno-philosophy to the level where we will be proud of it. The likes of Tempels, Mbiti, Senghor and Sodipo and others have laid the foundation and we, the current generation of African philosophers, need to finish the job. In order to succeed in this endeavour, we need to establish a strong logical base on which this homegrown philosophy should sit; just as the Greeks, the British and the Americans managed to establish a strong logical base on which their philosophies have sat for so many generations. It is encouraging to note that the project of developing African logic has gained currency in the last few years because of this growing disenchantment with Western influences on African philosophy. African philosophers such as Chimakonam, Godfrey Ozumba and others have already started laying the groundwork especially as they have pioneered this project of establishing the logic on which African philosophy, particularly ethno-philosophy will rest. We all have a role to play in the development of this logic through teaching and research.

Conclusion
In this essay, I reflected on Kanu's eclecticism project in which he is calling for a combination of Universalism and Particularism in a bid to solve once and for all the "shortcomings" currently besetting ethno-philosophy. These "shortcomings" I believe are part and parcel of the debate on whether or not African philosophy exists. I began this essay by giving an outline of this debate before following it up with the trends or schools of African philosophy. I then discussed some of the reasons why ethno-philosophy has not been given enough space to prove its worth in the academy. I also discussed and critiqued Kanu's ambitious project on eclecticism by arguing that this project is nothing more than just a hybridization

of African thought systems with Western thought systems and thereby passing them as African philosophy. Finally, I demonstrated that ethno-philosophy remains a philosophy that is worth celebrating despite the fact that it does not have — in the minds of those who have criticized it — a coherent system of thought (no science, no logic and no argument).

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THE QUESTION OF "BEING" IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This work is of the view that the question of being is not only a problem in Western philosophy but also in African philosophy. It, therefore, posits that being is that which is and has both abstract and concrete aspect. The work arrives at this conclusion by critically analyzing and evaluating the views of some key African philosophers with respect to being. With this, it discovers that the way that these African philosophers have postulated the idea of being is in the same manner like their Western philosophers whom they tried to criticize. This work tries to synthesize the notions of beings of these African philosophers in order to reach at a better understanding of being. This notion of being leans heavily on Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology which does not bifurcate or polarize being, but harmonizes entities or realities that seem to be contrary or opposing in being.
KEYWORDS: Being, Ifedi, Ihedi, Force (Vital Force), Missing Link, Muntu, Ntu, Nkedi, Ubuntu, Uwa

Introduction

African philosophy is a critical and rational explanation of being in African context, and based on African logic. It is in line with this that Jonathan Chimakonam avers that "in African philosophy we study reality of which being is at the center" (2013, 73). William Wallace remarks that "being signifies a concept that has the widest extension and the least comprehension" (1977, 86). It has posed a lot of problems to philosophers who tend to probe into it, its nature and manifestations. Being has given great worries to Western philosophers; many of which in trying to explain this concept have ended up giving us a misleading view of what being is.

It is against this background that this work turns to some African philosophers who developed their metaphysics or ontology respectively, claiming that it is a notion of being that is distinct from their Western counterparts. This is done with the view of having a more comprehensive and all-encompassing understanding of being. It does this by examining the notion of being in the philosophies or metaphysics of these key African philosophers. It also evaluates them showing their strengths and weaknesses. The work does this by alluding to the strengths of their ontologies. It builds on the weaknesses of their notions of being. It will, more forcefully lean on Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology which is complementary in nature and more appealing.

The Notion of Being in African Philosophy
Many African philosophers have tried to explain the concept of being but we are going to focus on some of them whose notions of being seem more appealing. It is necessary to start with the one that first gave a systematic understanding of African ontology. Placide Tempels is acclaimed and believed to be the first major proponent of African Philosophy. Hence, he is the first to put forward a more systematic African notion of being, which he believes is distinct from that of the West. He holds that African philosophy rests on African ontology—their conception of reality or notion of being as he argues that "the transcendental and universal notions of being and of its force of action, and of the relationships and reciprocal influences of beings make up Bantu philosophy" (TEMPELS 1968, 77). He also holds that it is this ontology that is the key to Bantu behaviour and thought which is centered on the idea of vital force which originates from God. With this, he placed God first in his Bantu hierarchy of being which can be pictured as follows: God, spirit of ancestors, humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects (NJOKU 2002, 18). That is to say that beings stand in relation to each other and exact influence on each other. But the superior's influence on the inferior is greater.

It is worthy of note that Bantu ontology is rooted in the expression of Tempels in which he reduced African ontology to the notion of force:
We conceive the transcendental notion of "being" by separating it from its attribute, "force", but the Bantu cannot. "Force" in his thought is necessary element in "being", and the concept "force" is inseparable from the definition of "being". There is no idea among Bantu of "being" divorced from the ideas of "force"- Without the element "force", being cannot be conceived. What has been said above should be accepted as the basis of Bantu ontology; in particular, the concept "force" is bound to the concept "being" even in the most abstract thinking upon notion of being. (1968, 50-51)
By implication, being is force and force is being. Hence, there is no way that one can talk about being without talking about force—vital force. Egbeke Aja buys into this view as he posits that for the Igbos, being is force like Tempels posits of the Bantu. For the African, the concept, force is bound to the concept of 'being' even in the most abstract thinking upon the notion of being. Similarly, the Igbo have a double concept concerning being and this can be expressed 'ife na ike ife bu otu' i.e. being is that which is force (AJA 2001, 53-54). E. A. Ruch also notes that this force is what endows being with the capacity of doing or acting as he posits, "We might say that in African conception the capacity for doing is identified with being and therefore with act or perfection… A being is defined by what it can do, rather than by what it is" (1981, 149). By this, Ruch is saying that for Tempels, force confers being. This makes his being-force a physical force thus, making being solely concrete or physical entity devoid of abstractness.

Temples also holds that African ontology is dynamic as he notes that "We hold a static conception of "being", they (Africans) a dynamic" (TEMPELS 1968, 50-51).

Tempels in this manner reduces the African notion of being to force as he argues that "force is being, being is force" (TEMPELS 1968, 51). According to Asouzu, "although he (Tempels) tells us that the Bantu notion of being is dynamic, he goes to reduce this notion to something that is fixed" (2007a, 183), as he projects force to the status of an object and freezes it to a substance. It is this substance that he converts to Bantu being, one which is static in nature but remaining dynamic. For him, force assumes a definite shape and character which never changes in its dynamism. This is the creation of substance similar to Aristotle's idea of being (1947, Book B, 5) but involves this with dynamic energy and power to resemble an idol. This comes closer to his understanding of Bantu as idol worshippers. And according to him, for the Bantu being is stone, stick, mountain, and so on. This connotes that his idea of being is not dynamic as many assume, but static. It is this point that Asouzu sees as the "Tempelsian Damage" as he notes that "Tempels in his discriminative elitist mindset, puts up a wrong premise and set to confirm it" (2007a, 193); and gives a "vital force" theory which leaves us with an ontology that has nothing elevating, except magic and superstition (2007b, 75). A deeper look at Tempels Bantu philosophy reveals that he was greatly under the influence of Aristotle whose metaphysics is a bifurcating metaphysics. This is apparent in his replacing Aristotle's substance with force. Thus, he approaches African ontology with Western thought system. This problematic notion of being could also be due to their (the West) desire to Christianize and civilize Africans. He strived by all means to look for a way of seeing a loophole in African way of life, especially in their conception of God, in other to fulfill his goal. He finds this departure in the African notion of being which for him is force and has nothing to do with essence.

In a nutshell, Tempels imposes his personal biased construction of ontology on Africans, saying that it is the collective notion of being of the Africans. This notion of being is one that is not only static, but also is disjunctive, divisive, polarizing, antagonistic and above all inherently causal, world-immanent in its predeterminism (2007a, 389). This notion of being is most debasing as it captures a special type of rationality that is so uncritical that it can hardly grasp being in abstractness of its transcendent otherness (ASOUZU 2007b, 77). Hence, for Tempels the (Africans) cannot conceive of being as substance just as the West does. They rather conceive it as accident (force). This misconception of the question of being is one that needed to be looked into and reconstructed to fit into the African concept of being. This, I believe, is what Alexis Kagame set out to do.

Alexis Kagame was a Bantu of Rwandan origin who gave very distinct version of his people's ontology. His ontology was presented in his mother tongue for probably the sake of originality and to prevent adulteration of the Bantu idea of being, which outsiders such as Tempels have done to this notion of being. He built on Tempels' notion of being but goes beyond it. He employed four categories that clearly depict beings of anything or form. These four categories include Muntu, Kintu, Hantu and Kuntu (UNAH 2009, 265). According to Uduma Oji Uduma, "Kagame presents a Bantu ontology that is built around a hierarchy or category of forces" (2003, 96), where Muntu is first, followed by Kintu, then Huntu and finally Kuntu. D. A. Masolo in his analysis of Kagame's ontology notes that Kagame's categorization of being is as follows: 1. Muntu: categories of beings or forces with intelligence. These include, spirits, human beings (the living human and the human dead). 2. Ikintu: categories of things or beings that are dependent on intelligent beings. They include: animals, plants, minerals and inanimate objects. 3. Ahuntu: categories of place and time. 4. Ukuntu: categories of mode (1994, 87).

Kagame notes that what underlies these four categories of being is force, like Tempels. What they have in common is force. And this force is what is identified as Ntu. Ntu is what acts as a relationship existing among these four categories of being. Unah captures this thus:

> Everything there is must necessarily belong to one of these categories and must be conceived of, not as substance, but as force. Forces are also related to one another. The relationship of forces is expressed by the stem Ntu which is ever present in each of the four categories; for if we remove the determinatives Mu, Ki, Ha and Ku all that is left in each of the categories is the stem Ntu. This explains according to Kagame, the relationship and interaction of forces in Bantu worldview. (2009, 266)

Hence, in the opinion of Kagame, the underlying category of being is Ntu. Ntu is the ultimate cosmic principle that permeates every nature. In other words, Ntu is the ultimate determinative force of forces. It permeates everything including particular or specific things.

Ntu, therefore, is a force that manifests itself in individual beings or things. It does not exist alone. This is why it is seen attached to categories such as Mu, Ki, Ha and Ku. Of this idea of Kagame's Ntu, Janheinz Jahn writes that:

> Ntu is the universal force… which however, never occurs apart from its manifestations: *muntu*, *kintu*, *hantu* and *kuntu*. Ntu is being itself and cosmic universal force. Ntu is that force in which being and being

coalesce… Ntu expresses not the effect of these forces, but their being. But the forces act continually, and are constantly effective. (1961, 99ff)

It is the central and focal point of all beings or forms of being. Ntu is the meeting point of the living and the dead, real and imaginary, past and future, high and low, speaking and speechless and so on.

It is also pertinent to state here that in the thought of Kagame, Ntu is what the four categories of being have equally. This leads to the belief that this Ntu, which is force, is inseparable from these four categories of beings or forces. If it is separated from them, they cease to exist. This is the only time when Ntu itself exists independent of them. Without this, Ntu always exist as Muntu, Kintu, Hantu and Kuntu. This implies that Ntu (force) has always existed with matter (which may be Mu, Ki, Ha, or Ku). This Ntu is like the spiritual dimension of being or reality while the four categories of being are the physical dimensions of being or reality. This notion of being gives supremacy to Ntu over Mu, Ki, Hu and Ku. This Ntu is closely related to substance which is considered by Aristotle to be equal to being. In the same manner, Kagame's Ntu is equated to being. It is like the Tempels' vital force or force. But it goes beyond Tempels' force as he (Kagame) notes that it is not just a physical force. Kagame gives this force an ontological meaning rather than a physical meaning. C. M. Okoro buttresses this point thus:

> Alexis Kagama differentiates clearly this ontological meaning of force from the physical force, which emanates from life as a principle of biological life. He explains that life could be defined as the union of shadow (in the case of principle of life) with the body. (2008, 34)

The shadow is the principle that is physical or material entity that ceases to exist at death. It is what is possessed by all existing reality. This is to say that it is not restricted to the human being or intelligent beings. This shadow is identical with the biological life. This biological life factor or shadow connotes that the being that posseses it is living and not dead. Kagame according to C. M. Okoro, defines life as "a union of shadow and body" (2008, 34), which "simply means union of biological life not spiritual or ontological life with the body" (OKORO 2008, 34).

Okoro further shows the variation between Kagame's and Tempels' notion of being as vital force, which involves having a powerful life, being healthy and wealthy and having a long life. He rather sees it as the essence of being. This helps to bring out the fact that being is not identical with physical force as has been implied by Tempels. But it illustrates that for Kagame force is not accidental reality; it is not just an attribute of being. Force is being itself. This view does not really give us a true picture of what being is in African

context. It rather gives us another version of Aristotle's notion of being. This is apparent in his deviation from Tempels whose idea was the foundation to his idea of being. He accepts with Tempels that Ntu or shadow is the same as force. For him, it is not a physical force but an ontological force. In this way he makes force or Ntu to be a spiritual entity. This force or Ntu is the same as Aristotle's essence since it is abstract and is what he equates to being in the African context.

Mogabe B. Ramose articulates his notion of being around a concept known as Ubuntu, which he sees as "the basis of African philosophy" (2002, 40). He considers Ubuntu to be wholeness and not fragmentary. It is one and same indivisible reality. He sees Ubuntu as consisting of two words, which he writes as Ubu-ntu:

> Ubuntu is actually two words in one. It consists of the prefix ubu-and the stem ntu. Ubu evokes the idea of being in general. It is enfolded being before it manifested itself in the concrete form or mode of existence of a particular entity. Ubu as enfolded being is always unfoldment, that is, incessant continual concrete manifestation through particular forms and models of being. In this sense ubu is always oriented towards ntu. At the ontological level, there is no stick and literal separation and division between ubu and ntu. Ubu- and -ntu are not two radical separate and irreconcilably opposed realities. (2002, 41)

By implication, ubu- and -ntu are two aspects of one reality. They are two realities within a being. Ubu- always manifests itself through ntu. Ubu cannot exist outside of ntu. Likewise ntu cannot exist independent of ubu.

Ramose holds that this ubu-ntu which is an indivisible oneness and wholeness carries with it ontological and epistemological connotations. In his words:

> Accordingly, ubu-ntu is the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of the Bantu–speaking people. It is the indivisible one-ness and wholeness of ontology and epistemology. Ubu- as the generalized understanding of being may be said to be distinctly ontological whereas ntu as the nodal point at which being assumes concrete form or a mode of being in the process of continual unfoldment may be said to be the distinctly epistemological. (2002, 41)

Put simply, ubu-is the ontological aspect of a being while ntu is the epistemological aspect of the same being. Hence, without the ubu-ntu connection or co-existence, there can be nothing like being in existence.

It is also worthy of note that this ubu-ntu realities are the Bantu categories of the Aristotle's substance-accident in his concept of being. Like Aristotle, ubu

is the substance or essence of being while the ntu is the accident of being. The only distinction between Ramose's notion of being from that of Aristotle is that he does not see the existence of ubu-without ntu. But Aristotle holds that substance (essence) can exist without accident. Despite Ramose's idea that ubu- and -ntu co-exist within being, he equates ubu to being as he notes that "ubu- evokes the idea of being in general" (2002, 41). This is purely a replication of Aristotle's idea that 'being is substance'. This negates or calls to question Ramose's earlier idea that ubu-and-ntu always co-exist. It is germane to state that an aspect of being cannot be being.

A closer look at Ramose's notion of being shows that he was not interested in stating or propagating the generic notion of being but he was interested in a more specific being. This is apparent in his remark which reads:

> The word umu- shares an identitical ontological feature with the word ubu-. Whereas the range of ubu is the widest generality umu- tends towards the more specific. Joined together with-ntu then umu- becomes umuntu. Umuntu means the emergence of homo-lonquens who is simultaneously a homosapiens. In common parlance it means the human beings: the maker of politics, religion and law. Umuntu then is the specific concrete manifestation of umu-: it is a movement among from the generalized to the concrete specific. Umuntu is the specific entity which continuous to conduct an inquiry into being, experience, knowledge and truth. (2002, 41)

Therefore, the rationale behind Ramose's choosing to move from the general to the specific being is because not all beings that are, can express themselves.. It is in this vein that he focused his attention on a particular being, that is, the human being, which he called the homo-loquens (homo-sapiens). This in his local parlance is 'umuntu'. It is this being that has the capability of inquiry into what being is, the nature and forms of being. This umuntu is therefore the same as Heidegger's 'Dasein'. It is according to Heddeiger, this *dasein* (human being) that beings can be understood in their being (2002, 67).

What Ramose is trying to make us understand is that umuntu is what can lead us to the understanding of ubuntu which he equates to ubu. This ubu, for him, is silent and unknowable except through umuntu. This is possible through the speech of muntu:

> Without the speech of umuntu, ubu, is condemned to unbroken silence, the speech of umutu is thus anchored in, revolves around and is ineluctable oriented towards ubu-. The language of umuntu 'relevates',

that is, it directs and focuses the entire epistemological domain towards the ontology of ubu. (2002, 42)

What this quotation implies is that without umuntu there can be no knowledge of ubu- which can be called the essence of Ubuntu. Hence, it is umuntu that can give us the knowledge of or an insight into ubu. He notes that the possibility is through the coupling of ubu and umuntu in indissoluble manner, through the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu nga bantu (motho ke motho ka batho)*. The closest English language translation is "to be human being is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and on that basis, establish humane relations with them" (42). Thus, ubuntu is directly linked with 'to be humane'. In other words, Ubuntu describes the condition of being that is umuntu—a being that is capable of relating with others. One can conclusively say that the being that Ramose had in mind is the human being and nothing else.

It is apparent in his further remark that the ubuntu's conception of being is onto-triadic. This idea is centered on the human being in itself who has three dimensions of relatedness, in existence. He argues that umuntu which is the real ubuntu has three dimensions which include; umuntu, the living dead and the yet-to-be born (2002, 50). In all, it is the dimension of ubuntu called umuntu that is the centre of these three dimensions of being. This is simply because the living dead and the yet-to be born are in the level of being that is unknown and unknowable u-nkulu-nkulu. This is the realm of Ubuntu metaphysics.

From the foregoing discourse, it can be deduced that Ramose in his desire to present a notion of being that is not fragmentary in nature has failed to do so. Rather, he has done the opposite by presenting a fragmentary notion of being. This is apparent in his idea that there is the Umuntu which can engage in an inquiry about beings; and that there is also the unknowable being which he called u-nkulu-nkulu.

Emmanuel Edeh is an African philosopher of the Igbo extraction. He makes an attempt to bring out the Igbo understanding of the concept of being. He did this by alluding to two Igbo terms or words, namely: onye and ife. According to him, "the Igbo has no word that exactly translates the English word "being". However, there are two hypotheses with regard to what term approximates the concept of being" these are the "onye hypothesis and the ife hypothesis" (1985, 93-94).

He argues that the Igbo word "Onye' has limited connotation for being. According to him, this word is used in three ways. It is used as a pronominal adjective such as 'who'. It is also used as an interrogatives statement 'onye'? meaning "who?". It is further used as a noun. "In this category, its nearest but not exactly English equivalent is person. Onye in this last sense is used to refer to the living entities, both humans and superhuman" (1985, 94). Onye does not take

into consideration other entities that are non-living. This is the rationale behind his discarding the term Onye as inappropriate equivalent for being. In his own way, he notes that: the principal defect in using *onye* for the Igbo concept of being is that it cannot include inanimate, vegetative or non-human animate entities. In no way can one stretch the Igbo concept of "onye" to embrace things like stones, wood or iron etc… . Hence, Onye is not comprehensive enough to translate the term *being* (1985, 94). It is on this limitation that he discarded the concept of onye and moved over to an alternative hypothesis.

The hypothesis that Edeh sees as an alternative to the onye hypothesis is the Ife hypothesis. He asserts that "the word Ife primarily means things, anything material or immaterial. It is also used to refer to a happening, an event, an occurrence" (1985, 95). This is to say that the concept ife has a wider connotation than onye since *Ife* primary refers to inanimate entities like the English word *things*. But by expansion of meaning, it can be used to designate human and superhuman beings (1985, 95). He considers this to be the most appropriate term that can be used as an equivalent for being. After endorsing ife as the most appropriate word for being in the Igbo language, he asserts that "if ife stands on its own it can be used to refer to both existent and non-existent entities" (1985, 96).

It is with this that he goes further to search for a way of making ife to depict strictly only existence, excluding non-existence or nothingness (nothing). It is in this regard that he posits that ife needs to be suffixed with idi (to exist) for it to depict existence. He, therefore, combined ife and idi to arrive at ife-di. "ife-di is the most appropriate rendering of the English concept of being because it covers all entities, both visible and invisible, as well as the note of existence which we commonly associate with being" (1985, 96). Thus, ife-di, for each depicts what is or what is in existence and not, what is not or what is not in existence. Ife-di, therefore, refers to things that have being or existence.

It is with the above idea that Edeh notes that there are three categories of being (ife-di). This categorization of beings include: the supersensory category, chineke and 'Ndi muo' (the unseen), the human category: 'Ndi di ndu' (the living) and 'ndi Nwuru' (the dead), the thing category; this is subheaded into three groups: Anu: meat meaning animals distinct from human beings and inanimate beings; Ife nkiti: ordinary things; Ogu: has no existence of its own. It is created out of ife nkiti. It is medicine. By this Edeh is saying that Ife-di is an all-embracing concept. It embraces all manner of beings that are in existence.

In spite of the good idea of being that Edeh has expressed earlier on he goes on to propagate a notion of being that is anthropocentric. This is an ontology that is based on human beings. He holds that the Igbo notion of being is derived from a good or proper understanding of the human being. He alludes to the responses from his questionnaire to substantiate his point. To the question

"what is being?" the response is: being is being and that all things are beings. And to the question "how do you know that beings are?" the response is: "I know that beings are at least from the fact that human beings are. We are". This connotes that by knowing human beings one will come to know about other beings that exist. With this, human beings became the being through which other things are known. Hence, to understand being you have to study human being (Heidegger's *Dasein*) (1962, 24).

Edeh goes on to buttress his claim that the Igbo "notion of being could be derived from our concept of man" (1985, 100), as he asserts that the word for human is 'madu'. In his opinion, this world is etymologically derived from two Igbo words namely, "mma" and di (from idi). Mma carries the connotation of 'good', a good', the good', while di connotes 'to be'. Hence, Madu which is an abridge version of 'mma-di' implies "good that is". Human being is the good that is. It is germane to state here that this human goodness is not inherent goodness in human beings. But it is a participatory good. In Edeh's opinion, it is only God that is good but that human can only participate in God's goodness as a creature of this good God (1985, 100-101).

Thus, human being is not only the 'good that is' but other created things are. Interpreting Edeh, Iroegbu remarks that "other beings also creatively (not pantheistically) participate in divine goodness by their very being" (1995, 315). By this Edeh is saying that good that is becomes the generic term that universally applies to all beings in as much as "all things are created by God and hence the notion of "good that is" can be attributed to them" (1985, 101-102).

No matter how laudable Edeh's notion of being may appear to be, it still has some lapses that needed to be pointed out. Edeh's intension in his work was to paint a picture of the Igbo notion of being. The question remains: has he succeeded in doing this? It is glaring that he has not done this. Rather he has given us his own version of being instead of the Igbo version of being. This is apparent in his remarks with respect to the two hypotheses on the Igbo notion of being. These hypotheses include: "Onye hypothesis" and "Ife hypothesis". According to him, "in the course of my field work I discovered that many of my informants favoured the onye hypothesis". This implies that majority of his respondents see onye as the most appropriate word for being, as against his "ife hypothesis". This "Onye" is much more closely linked to his idea that "a notion of being can be derived from the concept man" (1985, 97). This is true since the closest meaning of Onye is human person, according to him.

It is necessary to note that Edeh did not discuss the natural constituents of being. Unlike other philosophers whose ideas of being have been considered in this work, Edeh did not talk about what really constitutes being. He only talked about what being is in general without considering what it is made of. For instance, Tempels and Kagame opine that being consists of "force". Edeh did not

delve into issue of this nature probably because his respondents could not comprehend this aspect of being. This is where he should have come in as a trained philosopher to help us understand what being consists of. But he was silent with their silence.

Pantaleon Iroegbu who is also an African philosopher, of the Igbo extraction and who has extensively criticized Edeh's notion of being, seeks to give a distinct notion of being from that of other philosophers that he considered in his book [Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy]. He holds that the word that denotes being in the Igbo language is "Uwa". It is this word that is synonymous with reality. The word in the original sense depicts the cosmos or the world. According to him, "*Uwa* however has much deeper meaning, scope, connotation and global elasticity than the English term, *world*" (it) has larger extension than *world,* which directly and ordinarily means this material created world" (1995, 338-339). He further notes that:

> The entirety of existence, from God the highest being to inanimate beings of our cosmos can be summarized in the englobing concept of the Igbo term *Uwa*. *Uwa* is all-inclusive. It mirrors being, existence, entity all reality. It englobes all that is: animate and inanimate, visible and invisible. It is comprehensive, universal and global. It has transcendent and immanent scope as well as explicative and progressive elasticity. (1994, 144)

Uwa is just much more than the physical world. It has an elastic meaning. Its meaning cannot be confined to a particular entity or reality. It is applied to all beings; and it envelopes all of these beings.

Iroegbu also notes that there are fifteen connotations of the word *Uwa*. They include: life (existence), cosmos, field of action, time and space, destiny, fate, condition, tragedy, age-limit, nature, persons, nations, land, earth and uwa. The last connotation is:Totality. This is the abstract, unqualified subject of all speech and predication. *Uwa* in this totalitarian or universal sense is, as pointed above, all englobing. It is the most universal concept in Igbo language and culture. Whatever is, insofar as it exists, is *Uwa*. (1995, 341)

Uwa is therefore a singular concept with wider connotations and application. He further notes that there are six zones of uwa. These are: uwa anyi (cosmos-where we live), the divine-world (the world of the Supreme Being), Godian world (the world of powerful spirits), good-spirit (the spirit world where the ancestors, the living dead who are no longer remembered), bad-spirit world (the dwelling place of evil spirit), ancestral world (the place where ancestors live).

Not minding that the world is divided into six zones, all these zones are but one world (uwa) and not six worlds. This is simply because the zones interpenetrate each other. Hence, "there are not ontologically a multitude of worlds but one world; *Uwa*" (1995, 342). It is pertinent to state here that relationship exists between the fifteen connotations and the six zones of uwa. Iroegbu buttresses this in the following words:

> While the connotations are the different senses, meanings, nuances and aspects that the *Uwa* concept carries in it, i.e., the area- meanings it covers in Igbo thought and culture; the six worlds are the spatio-temporal locations of the worlds in terms of their inhabitants. These six zones are in fact broadly dual: the earthly and the spiritual, but both in dynamic mutual relationship. (1995, 342)

Uwa is a generic concept. It carries a lot of meanings and significance. It confronts us in all forms of beings. This notion of being, equates uwa to being. Being for him is nothing but uwa and all beings are enclosed within uwa; and outside uwa no being exists. It is saying that all realities are but one, uwa. This is pan-cosmic notion of being.

This idea of being by Iroegbu tends to emphasis mutuality and co-existence. But a closer look at Iroegbu's idea of "*Uwa*" points to the fact that it is related to Aristotle's substance. This is apparent in his critique of Heidegger where he notes that the essence of a thing is kpim. In his word "what makes a thing what it is, its underlying and therefore most important aspect. It gives the satisfactory reason for the being of the item" (1995, 374). This kpim might be his Uwa which can be equated to Aristotle's essence or substance (1947, Book B, 5). However, the difference lies in the fact that "*Uwa*" does not share in Aristotle's bifurcation. It is a being that is in isolation since it encloses all existing things within itself. This is similar to Sartre's notion of being, which is an isolated being (SARTRE 1958, viii, 26, 630). It is based on this bifurcating notion of being that we turn to Asouzu's notion of being.

Innocent Izuchukwu Asouzu is also an African philosopher who made use of a lot of Igbo aphorisms to discuss his philosophy as well as propagate his concept of being. His philosophy is termed *ibuanyidanda*. *Ibuanyidanda* comes from three words *Ibu, anyi* and *danda*. *Ibu* means 'load or task', *anyi* means 'not insurmountable for' whereas *danda* names a species of ants. *Ibu anyi danda* thus translates to: no load or task is insurmountable for this species of ants called *danda* (2007a, 11). *Ibuanyidanda* is therefore an Igbo idea that stands for mutual dependency, interdependency and complementarity. Hence, *Ibuanyidanda* as complementary reflection is a philosophical trend (ASOUZU 2004, 101), that is wholistic in nature.

Ibuanyidanda is an approach to ontology which wishes to bridge the artificial chasm, and overcomes all forms of bifurcating barriers, which the mind imposes on the relationship between substance and its accident (ASOUZU 2007a, 253). It also "explores a method and principles for coalescing the real and the ideal, the essential and the accidental into system of mutual complementing units" (ASOUZU 2012, 101). This is to say, "*Ibuanyidanda* ontology attempts to penetrate and grasp being, and with it ultimate reality through mediation or via the instrumentality of mutual relations" (2012, 102). In line with this complementary system of thought, Asouzu defines being as "*that on account of which anything that exists serves a missing link of reality*" (2012, 103). Within this context, to be is to be in mutual relationship with other existents. To be is not to be alone (*ka so mu adina*).

Thus, being is located within the context of mutual complementarity of all possible relations in the sense of an existent reality having head and tail-end (*ihedi, nwere isi na odu*)- the thing that exists has head and tail-end (2007a, 11). Therefore, all things that exist do so insofar as they can be grasped within a framework of mutual free interaction without encapsulation, bifurcation and exclusiveness of its constituent elements. *To be* is to have head and tail-end (*ihedi, nwere isi na odu*).

To be in *Ibuanyidanda* ontology is to serve a missing link of reality. To say that something has being according to Asouzu, "entails all the processes that enter into grasping the thing in question meaningfully within a complementary framework" (ASOUZU 2007a, 253). Hence, "what we understand as substance in its relation to accident can be grasped not in the mode of the relationship of an abstract isolated concept to a concrete one" (2007a, 254). In this ontology, both accident and substance are viewed as inseparable dimensions of being, where substance is used to describe the thing that is most important (*ihe kachasi mkpa*), and accident, the thing that is important (*ihe di mkpa*) (2007a, 254).

Similarly, to be in *Ibuanyidanda* is to be in control (*ima onwe onye*). It is in this context that *Ibuanyidanda* ontology opines that to be is to be in control of the tension laden existential situation which is caused by the phenomenon of concealment. The moment one is in control, one realizes that to exist is also to give others a chance. That is why it is said in *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy that anything that exists serves a missing link of reality.

Being, for Asouzu, can also be said to be future referential. It is that which is striving towards unity (2007a, 121). This implies that for being to be fully comprehended "there is need to consider the diverse units that are involved in any given context, not only with regard to their historical conditions" (ASOUZU 2007a, 121). This is due to the fact that being is always manifesting itself as it relates with other beings or serve as a missing link to other beings. It is in this context that "we integrate all modes of self-expression of being into one

framework of mutual interrelated units" (2007a, 57), "in view of which all forms of relativity get full meaning and authentication" (2007a, 56). Hence, to be is to be in future referential relationship since being is dynamic and not static.

Asouzu has done well in discussing extensively the concept of being. He has discussed the nature of being stating categorically that being cannot be identified with any aspect of being. That is to say being cannot be equated to matter or spirit, substance or accident. But that it consists of both of them that are in mutual complementary relation and service within each being. It also posits that this being is dynamic since it continually manifests itself in its relationships. The problem with this notion of being is that it contradicts being with existence. This is apparent in the way Asouzu uses interchangeably the words 'being' and 'to be'.

Conclusion

It is quite true that the concept of being is very difficult to articulate and understand (UNAH 2009, 2). This is why the African philosophers whose notions of being have been studied in the cause of this research have been found not to give a complete or more acceptable conception of being. Even when they have tried to assert a notion of being that is distinct from the Western notion of being, they end up postulating the idea of being that replicates that of their Western counterparts. Although they have tried to use different languages to discuss this concept called being, they do not say anything really new. They have succeeded to give us an understanding of it in some of the languages of African tribe. Hence, a notion of being that reflects the language and culture of a particular African community is what is reflected in their metaphysical thoughts. This has left us more confused than clarified on the question of being in African philosophy.

For instance, Tempels holds that what is termed being by the Africans is the attribute of being-force. This is not quite true of the African notion of being. For he (Tempels) has only given us another version of Aristotle's being. This force or vital force is taken to be a concrete or physical entity. It is in this light that he notes that they (the West) have a transcendental notion of being as they can separate being from its attribute force (1968, 50). It is necessary to state here that Tempels got it wrong. That the Bantu preferred to dwell most often on the attribute of being does not mean that they could not frame it in its abstract nature. After all, it is the attribute that defines being. This could possibly be the justification why the Bantu prefers approaching being through its attributes. This approach is in no way opposed to the abstract conception of being. It simply reveals that being has two dimensions. Hence, being in the thought of Tempels should be that which is both concrete and transcendental in nature. Being must have both the essence and the attribute (force) for it to be being. By way of

extension, it is important to note that being is being whether it is an intelligent being or not and that being cannot be limited to an aspect (Ntu or force), as Kagame opines. This cannot be the essence of being rather must be being if it (Ntu) exists with other categories such Mu, Ki, Ha and Ku. It is these categories that complement Ntu in each form of its existence that makes it being. This is what he had tried to do as he notes that life is "a union of shadow and body" (2001, 34). But he deviated as he linked being to shadow or force. This type of problematic notion of being can also be seen in Ramose's idea of being. He sees being as Ubuntu, consisting of Ubu- and –ntu. But he goes ahead to limit being to an aspect of being as he asserts that Ubu is what really reflects being as he notes that "ubu- evokes the idea of being in general" (2002, 41). This is like saying that Ubu is more important than ntu and can exist without ntu since it is what depicts being. Using our knowledge of complementary ontology, one cannot see Ubu as independent of ntu or being more important than ntu. Both of them are important and must co-exist for being *to be*. From the position of *ibuanyidanda* ontology, being is that which is both abstract and concrete as well as can be known and discussed objectively.

"Being or reality is what is, and cannot be something else" (INYANG 2000, 162). It is "the whole range of existent things" (OZUMBA 2004, 26). In other words, being is "everything that is so far as it is" (TILLICH 1951, 163). Being is that which is as it is. It is that which is both abstract and concrete in nature. These abstract and concrete entities co-exist in mutual complementary sense. They cannot exist independently of each other and therefore cannot on their own be considered to be being. If being must be, it must consist of both abstract and concrete entities that are in harmonious mutual complementary relationship. This helps to solve the problem of Edeh's metaphysics, which has no distinct idea of the nature of being. Being cannot just be ifedi or ihedi (what is or what exists), it is more than ifedi (ihedi) nwere isi na odu—being is whatever is that has head and tail-end. This agrees with the saying that nkedi nwere ihu abuo—what is has two sides. In other words, there are always two sides to a coin or a thing. Whatever (being) that is has two sides that are indispensable. Thus, being is that which is in–as-much-as it consists of, essence and its attribute-force (Tempels), Mu, Ki, Ha and Ku and Ntu (Kagame), ubu- and -ntu (Ramose). In each case of the pair, each of the entities is in mutual complementary relationship with the other for it to be being.

It is also germane to state that being cannot be restricted to a particular being or entity such as uwa, umuntu, madu and so on. Being includes all existing realities whether intelligent or not intelligent. It is an elastic term that includes: being-with-force and being-without-force, shadow and body, animate and inanimate, visible and invisible realities that are in existence. Being (nkedi, ihedi) is not existence (idi-to be). Being is that which exists. It is that which has

existence. But its existence is in relation to other existing realities. Being is that which cannot exist alone. For to exist alone, implies *being* not being known as well as conveying no meaning. It can never exist in isolation. It always exists with others. It is in this relationship of mutual complementary nature that its meaning is conveyed and affirmed. Hence, Asouzu asserts, "being is that on account of which anything that exists serves a missing link of reality" (1990, 82; 2007c, 62; 2003, 58). Outside of this mutual complementary relation which in turn leads to mutual service and dependent, being does not exist. Hence, being goes beyond an isolated being to a relationship being. Being is also both static and dynamic. It is static in the sense that the nature of being is the same for all beings. Chris Ijiomah rightly puts it that all beings or realities consist of spirit and matter (1996, 43; 2005, 76-77; 2000, 143). It is dynamic in the sense that it always manifests itself as it continuous to relate with others. Hence, in various relationships being manifests itself differently. Therefore, to understand being one needs to take into consideration all of these independent manifestations of being.

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THE QUESTION OF THE "AFRICAN" IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY: IN SEARCH OF A CRITERION FOR THE AFRICANNESS OF A PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract
The African question in African philosophy is enigmatic because of the intentional attempt to rationalize Africans out of humanity. Eurocentric scholars and missionaries mutilated history and concocted a false image of Africans which they presented as the substantive African identity (MUDIMBE 1988); an identity that presents the African as pre-logical, barbaric and as such incapable of philosophic thoughts. This identity was foisted and consolidated on humanity including Africans, and intellectually accepted as the true African identity for over four centuries. Consequently, while the racist Eurocentric description of the African makes it impossible for one to suggest that there can be anything like African philosophy, the enslavement, balkanization, colonization and the introduction of a Western-oriented formal education into Africa further dehumanized, traumatized and alienated Africans from their culture. This experiment is what precipitated the identity problem in Africa. Hence, the issue of a criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy is a contentious one because Africans were by their intellectual orientation trained to believe that there is nothing as such. This training and orientation also makes it difficult for those who think that there is a distinct African mode of thinking to be able to present it in a clear and unambiguous manner. This is because such a criterion will restrict the scope of African philosophy to a given epoch. In this sense, African philosophy will be concerned with only a part of the African historical experience. Given the comprehensive nature of philosophy, we are inclined to the persuasion that a criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy ought to be derived from the totality of the African experience.
KEYWORDS: African philosophy, African, Africanness, criterion

Introduction

Although in spite of the intellectual disquiet of racist Eurocentric scholars, it is "unarguable that today, it is generally accepted that there is a distinctive formal study called African philosophy" (UDUMA 2004, 173), yet the unwillingness to admit of African Philosophy persists. The general reaction is: yes, we agree there is African philosophy, but what makes that philosophy Africa? This explains why

the question of the African in African Philosophy was in fact raised in the first place.

In essence, as a corollary to the question (more aptly, denial) of African philosophy is: what is it that makes a philosophy "African"? In this context, is a literary piece classified as "African Philosophy" because it is written by an African? or because it was written within the geographical location of Africa? Besides, who is an African? Is it someone who is born of African parents?; those blacks in Diaspora? Or, someone who is an African in his "heart"? On the other hand, can all these people produce authentic African philosophy?

In trying to deal with these and cognate questions two senses of "African" has been identified. Sometimes the word "African" means in the style of but they can also mean "within the geographical area of" (BLOCKER 1989, 198). There also appears to be a third sense which is "a person of ". In the context of this third sense, one can still act or write in "the style of" or be "within the geographical area of" Africa, and still not be concerned with African philosophy. There is no doubt that this is the contention of Hountondji when he rejects Father Tempels' Bantu Philosophy "because ... we cannot exclude a geographical variable" (HOUNTONDJI 1983, 70). The geographical variable here has to do with "a person of" not in the context of "within the geographical area of." The point, for him, is that that Tempels wrote his work within the geographical location of Africa makes no much sense. This is because his (Tempels') not "being a person of" African origin rules out the possibility of anything from him becoming African philosophy. This contrasts with the works of Alexis Kagame, which just because Alexis Kagame is an African, to paraphrase Hountondji, makes his work "an integral part of African philosophical literature" (HOUNTONDJI 1983, 70).

Regrettably, the question of the African in African Philosophy goes beyond these innocuous distinctions. In this essay, therefore, I am concerned with examining Richard Wright's disguised denial of African Philosophy under the question "what is it that makes a philosophy African"? In this regard, it is pertinent to underscore that African philosophy is an answer to some racist philosophical questions (is the African a human being? Can the African think, reason, plan or act morally?). The vibrancy of African philosophy in the contemporary world was attained and can only be sustained through the attempt to answer as well as question the answer to such disguised denials.

The "African" Question

To be able to understand the context that gave rise to the African question adequately, a succinct prelude is necessary. One needs to understand that the "humanity" of Africans, unlike that of any other race, is "a contested humanity" (ASIEGBU and AGBAKOBA 2008, 9-10). There was a deliberate attempt to

rationalize Africans out of humanity. Perhaps, this deliberate attempt reached its apogee in the 19th century when most European philosophers, scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, ethnologists, and even theologians and ministers of the "Good News" got their tools ready to rationalize the blacks out of humanity (ODEY 2005, 34). Prominent scholars such as David Hume, G. W. F Hegel, Charles de Montesquieu, Levy Bruhl, Buckner H. Paine gave credence directly or indirectly, to the view that Africans are sub-human and inferior when compared with the Caucasian race (OGUEJIOFOR 2005, 86-93). Hiding under the pseudonym Ariel, Buckner H. Payne (2010) in 1867 argued that the Negro is neither a descendant of Adam nor have a soul .The import of this is that Africans are not among the class of human beings created by the Judeo-Christian God, and perhaps, the God of Islam.

The validity of the above inference from Payne's position can be seen in Charles de Montesquieu's position that to regard the African as a human being implied that "we (the Caucasians) are not Christians (1952, 259). This perception of Africans flourished as: "some great universities in Europe and America competed among themselves in propounding theories that would prove that they (Africans) were not human" (ODEY 2005, 34). The explicit consolidation of this perception of Africans into Western education infested most recipients of Western education with an erroneous conception of Africa/ns. In this regard, E. W. Blyden brazenly asserts:

> The Negro of the ordinary traveler or missionary—and perhaps, of two thirds of the Christian world—is a purely fictitious being, constructed out of the traditions of slave – traders and slave-holders, who have circulated all sorts of absurd stories and also prejudice inherited from ancestors, who were taught to regard them as a legitimate object of traffic. (1967, 58)

The point on prominent relief here is that the African question in African philosophy is an offspring of the Eurocentric derogative description and vilification of Africans. The problem of identifying an acceptable and plausible criterion or criteria that make a philosophical theory, idea, system or work African appears to be a perennial one because the heinous Eurocentric perception and presentation of Africans as sub-humans was woven and almost unabatedly reinforced and consolidated by centuries of perverse Western supremacist philosophy, anthropology and education (OGBUNWEZEH 2005, 163). The fundamental reason why Eurocentric scholars were able to peddle their racist views about Africans for over four centuries without any form of serious intellectual challenge from Africans is the phenomenon of the Trans Atlantic slave trade and the colonization of African. In Addition, I. C. Onyewuenyi

includes the colonization of the means of information dissemination and formal education by the West (1993).

Against this back drop, it is important to note that the colonization of Africa by the West led to the introduction of Western education as the official formal education in Africa. In this direction, the incorporation of the Eurocentric vilification of Africa/ns into the Western education introduced into Africa made most Africans to "automatically uphold and habitually employ the colonizers' viewpoint in all matters in the strange belief that their racist, imperialist, anti-African interest is the universal humanist interest, and in the strange belief that the view defined by their ruthless greed is the rational, civilized view" (CHINWEIZU 1978, xiv).

Walter Rodney buttresses the veracity of this point when he among other things describes Western education as education for "the creation of mental confusion" (2009:2 93). Western education alienated Africans from their culture, incarcerated our best minds and made most of them to accept the distorted Eurocentric view about Africa/ns as sacrosanct. As J. O. Oguejifor asserts:

> The level of education the African acquired was a seal of his cultural alienation. Left in a state of uncertainty, with horrendous contempt of his own traditional heritage, and hamstringed in his patent undersized coat of modern education, he became a sorry sight both to himself and his observers. (2001, 43)

Though, there were some voices of dissent in the 19th century against the Eurocentric perception of Africans, it was however in mid 20th century when most African countries have regained their political freedom that the view was vigorously challenged by African scholars. The reason for this is not far-fetched; one needs political power to be able to assert his/her dignity and identity properly. It was, therefore, at the dawn of political independence that African intelligentsias "joined issues with one another with vigour and determination to salvage the tarnished image and dignity of the African" (ASIEGBU 2009, 59). The immediate goal of African intelligentsias at the dawn of political independence was to achieve on an intellectual plane what African militants, political activists and revolutionaries have accomplished––the deconstruction of the battered image of Africa/ns, and *ipso-facto* demonstrate the humanity, rationality and nobility of the African (ASIEGBU and AGBAKOBA 2008, 9; ACHEBE 2012, 52-3). Kwasi Wiredu concurs with this view when he opines that: "The principal driving force in post colonial African philosophy has been a quest for self- definition" (2004, 1).

From the foregoing, one will understand that the African question is a question of an authentic definition of the African. An authentic definition of the

African will not only substantiate their humanity but will also restore their dignity. This is because the Eurocentric definition of the African buttresses the position that Africans were originally "sub-human" and as such were incapable of logical thoughts and moral acts before their contact with the Caucasians (HEGEL 2001, 109-112). The corollary of this is that traditionally, Africans lack the ability to philosophize; hence to talk of African philosophy is abnormal.

This is because any being that cannot think can neither philosophize nor have a philosophy. The off-shot of this is that for one to talk of African philosophy, he must first of all define what he/she meant by "African" and as well pin-point what makes a philosophy "African". It is in view of this that Gene Blocker asserts that "we cannot resolve the problem of African philosophy until we first of all settle the meaning of African"… (1991).

However, owing to the fact that all first generation African intelligentsias were formally trained by Western oriented scholars, in Western institutions or Western founded institutions they were wont to habitually use and approach reality using the Western conceptual scheme as a telescope. It is this orientation that makes the adjective "African" very problematic when it is used to predicate philosophy. Accordingly, C. S. Momoh (2000:1) poignantly observes: "for many years some scholars, intellectuals and philosophers dissipated a lot of precious energy on denying the existence of African philosophy."

It is thus not surprising that the adjective "African" is both significant and problematic in African philosophy (OKOLO 1987, 42) even in the contemporary world. While the humanity of Africans and their ability to philosophize is no longer in doubt, there is still skepticism over the plausibility of attaching the adjective "African" to philosophy in the same sense the adjectives "Western" and "Oriental" are attached to it. Sequel to this is the disagreement over the peculiar criterion/criteria which a given philosophical work must meet in order to qualify as African philosophy. We shall attempt to see how these two unresolved issues in the history of African philosophy can be properly addressed.

Between African Philosophy and African Philosophies
One of the essential facts about philosophers is that they hardly agree with one another on any given issue. It is difficult to find different philosophers that totally agree with each other on any particular issue without a point of divergence. For instance, both Jeremy Bentham and J. S Mill are utilitarians but their exposition of utilitarianism is strictly speaking not the same. In the same vein, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey all agree that pragmatism is the best philosophical system yet their exposition of pragmatism have different points of divergence. Jean Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger are both existentialists and phenomenologists yet their exposition of the nature of existentialism as well as phenomenology is not identical. What accounts for this

situation is the fact that every philosopher approaches reality from a given perspective; "a particular pigeon-hole, or what is generally referred to as a conceptual scheme" (AGBO 2003, 193). The disposition of any philosopher toward any given phenomenon is a product of his intellectual, cultural as well as social experience. And since habit die hard, a philosopher does not abandon his/her disposition/position on any phenomenon once and for all. He/she only shifts his/her position gradually by emendating and repudiating his/her original position in order to insulate them against valid criticism without necessarily abandoning them. What philosophers do is that they often look for better arguments that will validate their punctured convictions, theories or positions.

Accordingly, when it became obvious that the denial of the humanity of the African is a rationally unfounded thesis, that Africa was the cradle of human civilization, the denigrators of Africa/ns grudgingly accepted that though the African can speak, speculate and reason but due to the diversity of African cultures, we cannot talk of African philosophy in the sense we talk of Western philosophy, rather what we at best can have is African philosophies. The point on relief here is that the opponents of African philosophy in the light of overwhelming evidence abandoned the porous argument that there is no African philosophy because Africa is originally sub-human, nay incapable of philosophic thoughts and replaced it with what appears to be a more plausible position—there is no African philosophy because Africa as a continent is made up of people with diverse cultures. One of the major proponents of this position is Richard Wright. The major point Wright buttresses is that given fact that there are over 40 different countries in Africa, each with a number of different language groups, it is impossible to have such a thing as African philosophy (1984, 43-44).

A good grasp of the position of Wright shows that it is a disguised denial of African philosophy. This is because the import of Wright is that the predicate "African" cannot be attached to philosophy. In other words African philosophy does not exist because we have many African cultures and not just one African culture. The plausibility of Wright's argument can be deduced from the fact that the African continent is a conglomeration of many ethnic nationalities with diverse cultures, languages, religions, and world-view. Nigeria for instance has over 250 ethnic nationalities. Thus, given the strong affinity between philosophy and culture, a continent that has different distinct cultures will definitely house different philosophies, and since Africa is necessarily housing people with distinct cultures, to talk of African philosophy is a misnomer because the term African philosophy suggests that Africa has a univocal philosophy and this is not factually true. Indeed, the multiplicity of diverse cultures in Africa is an indisputable fact. In this regard, anyone who subscribes to the truism that every philosopher is a child of circumstance will immediately discover that the phrase African philosophy is in fact misleading. According to C. B. Okolo:

> The materials of culture are objects or materials for philosophical reflections. The philosopher cannot think, interpret and find meaning in a vacuum. This he does through his particular culture. African philosophy emerges out of [the African] culture. The African philosopher critically reflects on the language, religion, history, works of art, folklore, idioms, collective beliefs, etc., of the African people. (1987, 47)

The implication of the foregoing is that every philosophy flows from a culture and since the culture of a people comprises of their language, religion, beliefs, arts, idioms, etc., authentic African philosophy must be a product of, and from the works of arts, religions, idioms and beliefs of the African people. The strict import of this stance is that African philosophy must be a product of a homogenous African culture, language, arts, beliefs, idioms. Unfortunately, a homogenous African culture does not exist. What we have is African cultures. The strong affinity between philosophy and culture makes it impossible for a homogenous philosophy to emerge from the multiple cultures in Africa. It is more proper to expect that different philosophies will be excavated from the multiple cultures in Africa. Therefore, the phrase African philosophy is at best misleading. The proper designation should be African philosophies.

Although scholars such as Jacques Maquet (1972) and C. B. Okolo (1987) have successfully unveiled and buttressed the cultural affinity between black African people, their arguments are not strong enough to repudiate the fact that Africa has no homogenous culture or world-view. The fact that Macquet (1972), talks of the cultural unity of 'black' Africa and not Africa substantiates the non-existence of a homogenous culture in Africa. Moreover, a hermeneutic engagement and analysis of the culture—world-view, language, idioms, religion, symbol, and arts of the ethnic groups within an African country would lead to the emergence of different philosophies. For instance, in Nigeria, due to the cultural diversity between the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa people, we have works on Igbo philosophy, Yoruba philosophy and Hausa philosophy. As Agbo rightly observes, "to the extent that every philosophy is a product from (not just of), a culture, there are differences in philosophies from various cultures" (2003, 192).

The point is that the position of Wright against the existence of a homogenous African philosophy is factually indisputable but this fact can only render the phrase "African philosophy" non existence, if and only if there is a homogenous Western philosophy. This is because, the term West refers to anywhere from Europe to America and Europe is a very large conglomerate of nations, peoples and languages (ETUK 2002, 110). Yet we talk of not just European philosophy but Western philosophy. Even a cursory glance at the history of Western philosophy from its very beginning in the Milesian school to

its contemporary trends of individual thoughts reveals that Western philosophy is not in any way a homogenous system. Of course, it is also an offspring of cultural diversities in the West. The whole of Europe is not a cultural homogenous continent with the same language, works of arts, traditional beliefs, idioms and proverbs. Hence, to assume that Western philosophy, which refers to the whole of Europe and America, is a product of a homogenous Western culture is untenable. In effect, a Western philosophy that specifically refers to a homogenous philosophy produced from a homogenous culture is non-existent. In this regard, the term African Philosophy is as erroneous and misleading as the term Western philosophy.

However, if cultural homogeneity or strict logical consistency/compatibility is the major criterion for the classification of philosophy into trends, strands, schools, movements or systems, phrases such as Western philosophy, American pragmatism, German Idealism, British Empiricism, Existentialism, Feminism would not have emerged. This is because all the aforementioned philosophical trends have a great deal of internal diversities that are logically incompatible. For instance, both John Locke and David Hume are classified as British empiricists, yet their versions of empiricism are logically incompatible. If Hume's British empiricism is valid, Locke's British empiricism is invalid. Therefore, the fact that different philosophies that are logically incompatible are often grouped together evinces the fact that cultural homogeneity and/or logical compatibility are not the major criteria for the classification of philosophical trends.

In view of this, we understand that the adjectives "African", "Western", "Oriental", "European", or "American" are not employed to designate a homogenous philosophical trend that emerged from a homogenous African, Western, Oriental, European or American culture. They are rather employed to predicate a group of philosophies that emerged from, and are products of the multiple cultures of any given continent, region or country. Richard Wright and all those who argue that the multiplicity of cultures in Africa render African philosophy non-existent should also know that if the same principle is applied to Western philosophy, the logical conclusion will be that Western philosophy does not exist. What this entails is that one can neither validate the plausibility of the phrase "Western" philosophy without simultaneously validating the plausibility of the phrase "African" philosophy; nor can one invalidate the plausibility of the phrase "African" philosophy without at the same time invalidating the plausibility of the phrase "Western" philosophy. The import of this is that the word "African" stands on equal footing with the word "Western" when it is used to qualify the term "philosophy". In other words, the traditional method of classifying different groupings of philosophies into different trends justifies the plausibility of the phrase "African" philosophy. Just as the phrase "Western"

philosophy refers to the various philosophies that are excavated from the existential experience of diverse cultures, and historical experience of Western people, the phrase "African" philosophy also refers to the various philosophies that have been/can be excavated from the cultures, and diverse experience of the African people. Viewed from this perspective, one will immediately discover that to accept the phrase "Western" philosophy and reject the phrase "African" philosophy is philosophically unfounded. The question then is: what is it that makes a philosophical work African?

The Africanness Question
While the African question deals with whether African philosophy exists or not, the Africanness question deals with the issue of the major characteristics/criteria that make a philosophical work African. The significance of this question lies in the fact that unless one is able to specify the traits or principles or features that make a philosophical work African, it will be difficult to separate African philosophy from other philosophies such as Western philosophy and Oriental philosophy. The point on relief here is that the failure to specify the basic traits, principles or features of African philosophy will negate the existence of African philosophy as a regional philosophy that is distinct and independent of Western philosophy. As a result of this, different scholars have responded to the challenges posed by the Africanness question by proposing different criteria that make a philosophical work African.

According to Paulin Hountondji, African philosophy refers to a set of texts, specifically, the set of texts written by Africans and described as philosophical by the authors themselves (1996, viii). The basic import here is that what makes a philosophical work African is the author of the work. And that a work is said to be philosophical if the author described it as such. What this comes to is that for Hountondji, if an African biologist writes a biology textbook and described it as philosophical, the textbook will invariably qualify to be a text in African philosophy. By implication, African philosophy can only be done by Africans and all works done by Africans can be said to be African philosophy if their authors declare them philosophical. In this sense, any philosophical work done by an African philosopher is African philosophy; and any philosophical work done by a non-African is not African philosophy. This characterization of African philosophy is purely geographical. J. I. Unah (1988, 49) rightly pin-points the proponents of this characterization of African philosophy and its logical imports. According to him:

> Professor Peter Bodunrin has classified himself and a few others—Kwasi Wiredu, Paulin Hountondji and Odera Oruka—as professional philosophers. Dr Campbell Shittu Momoh has identified the four among

others as "African logical neo-positivists" which they seem to have accepted stoically. The key position of this group of philosophers—the African logical neo-positivists—is that there is no uniquely African philosophy any more than we can talk of a uniquely African mathematics or African physics, that whenever any African philosopher engages in a debate on Plato's epistemology or German idealism he would be doing African philosophy.

The point buttressed here is that the major proponents of the geographical origin of a philosopher as the sole criterion that makes a philosophy African is the school of thought known as African logical neo-positivists. The African logical neo-positivists are professional African philosophers that adhere to the position of the logical positivists that the sole end of philosophy is the critical analysis, clarification of thoughts through argumentation. Hence, wherever there is no critical analysis and argumentation, there is no philosophy. In this regard, the African logical neo-positivists argue that African philosophy lacks any identity apart from when it is viewed as the works of African professional philosophers. This is because what is paraded as African philosophy is at best the communal thoughts/beliefs of African people and since these thoughts/beliefs lack the critical rigour and argumentation that make a work to be called philosophy, a peculiar African philosophy as a distinct philosophical trend does not exist. Hountondji (1989, 122) seems to buttress this point on behalf of the African logical neo-positivists when he asserts:

> The essential point here is that we have produced a radically new definition of African philosophy, the criterion now being the geographical origin of the authors rather than an alleged specificity of content. The effects of this is to broaden the narrow horizon which has hitherto been imposed on African philosophy and to treat it, as now conceived as a methodical inquiry with the same universal aims as those of any other philosophy in the world. In short, it destroys the dominant mythological conception of Africanness and restores the simple, obvious truth that Africa is above all a continent and the concept of African an empirical geographical concept and not a merely metaphysical one.

What the foregoing comes to is that a philosophy is African by virtue of its authors and not its content. The corollary of this is that every engagement of an African professional philosopher in a debate, analysis, critique or discussion on any topic in Western philosophy is African philosophy. But the engagement of any professional African philosopher or non African philosopher in the unwritten or documented traditional beliefs, myths, artifacts, worldview, idioms, proverbs

and thoughts of African people is neither doing Western nor African philosophy. This is because the African logical neo-positivists are of the opinion that for anything to acquire the status of philosophy, it must be written, critical, personal and reflective (HOUNTONDJI 1982, 122; BODUNRIN 1989, 157-160). One cannot accept the geographical origin of a philosopher as the criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy without simultaneously implying that African philosophy lacks a substantive identity that differentiates it from Western philosophy, thus, its acceptance by the African logical neo-positivists underscores their commitment to their original explicit denial of the existence of African philosophy in a disguised manner. This buttresses my initial proposition that philosophers hardly abandon their original position, even in the light of overwhelming evidence, without a serious intellectual battle

Be that as it may, the thesis of the African logical neo-positivist concerning the criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy (specifically as expressed by Hountondji) is absurd, porous and unacceptable. This is the case because their criterion of the geographical origin of a philosopher makes the scope of African philosophy too big and too thin at the same time. The position that every work done by a professional African philosopher is African philosophy makes African philosophy scopeless in the sense that it accepts every work by a professional African philosopher, be it in Western or Oriental philosophy, as African philosophy. Another import of this argument is that African philosophy has no distinct identity that separates it from Western philosophy and Oriental philosophy. It is totally empty of any unique geographical spice, nay ingredients. It is purely nothing but a philosophical work by African Western-trained and Western-oriented professional philosophers.

Furthermore, the criterion of geographical origin of a philosopher is unacceptable because it also makes African philosophy very thin and restrictive. It makes African philosophy an exclusive academic discipline that can be done only by Africans. What this implies is that the criterion opines that only Africans have the mental ability to do African philosophy. The absurdity of the position of the African logical neo-positivists is that their criterion accepts that the works of professional African philosophers on Western philosophy/philosophers can be properly called African philosophy but rejects that the works of any professional Western philosopher, no matter how African the content is, can be properly called African philosophy. This is because they tend to portray the view that philosophy cannot be African in content, for philosophy is a product of written literature in a literate society and the illiteracy of traditional African society implies the non-existence of neither philosophy nor African philosophy or philosophers in traditional African societies (HOUNTONDJI 1989, 122; BODUNRIN 1989, 159-160). Thus, the African logical neo-positivists label

anyone and every work on a substantive African philosophy excavated from the traditional African oral literature and worldview as *ethno-philosophy*.

However, the attempt to salvage the inherent absurdity in the geographical origin criterion by Bodunrin created more confusion instead of a resolution. Bodunrin emended the geographical criterion by arguing that the works of professional philosophers on African traditional beliefs, religions, idioms or proverbs are not African philosophy because of either the geographical origin or geographical location of the philosopher. In the words of Bodunrin, any group of philosophers discussing traditional African worldview "are doing African philosophy only because the participants are Africans or are working in Africa and are interested in a philosophical problem (howbeit universally) from an African point of view" (1989, 159). The introduction of the issue of geographical location here by Bodunrin as another criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy is an attempt to include non-African philosophers working in Africa among those that can do African philosophy. The major merit of Bodunrin's position lies in his recognition that non-African philosophers can do African philosophy but his insistence that such non-African philosophers must be working in Africa is illegitimate and not persuasive. We have African professional philosophers that were educated in Africa and are working in Africa, yet they neither write nor teach African philosophy.

Admittedly, the plausible idea in Bodunrin's assertion is that those doing African philosophy are those that are interested in a philosophical problem (howbeit universally) from an African perspective. The implication of this is that the geographical origin or location of a philosopher does not necessarily make his/her works African. This point necessarily contradicts and falsifies the geographical origin or location criterion of the African logical neo-positivists.

Contrary to the geographical origin /or location criterion proposed by the African logical neo-positivist is the identity criterion. The major thesis of the identity criterion is that every regional philosophy has certain unique features in common. Hence, a philosophy can only be African if we can identity a unique theme, goal or structure or mode of thinking that is peculiarly or predominantly characteristic of African cultures. S. B. Oluwole is perhaps the most explicit exponent of this criterion. According to her, for a philosophy to be authentically and culturally African, it must not be a product of an indigenous African professional philosopher rather it must contain a literary tradition that is peculiarly or predominantly African. Be this as it may, Oluwole explains that though the task of identifying the peculiar or predominant African literacy tradition appears simple in theory, it is a herculean task. Hence she elucidates:

This task appears at first sight simple and straightforward. A literary piece from Africa is naturally African by the very token that it originated

from Africa. But even if this were so, there is still the need to identify, characterize and if possible, rationally justify such works as constituting a literary tradition with specific features which make the group a distinctive cultural phenomenon probably different from some other well known cultural types. (1991, 2009)

The point Oluwole is buttressing here is that for a philosophy to be African, it must possess an African identity that distinguishes it from other regional philosophies such as European, Asian or American philosophy. The offshoot of this is that the Africanness question is fundamentally an identity question. Little wonder M. F Asiegbu (2008, 39) avers that: "The debate about the possible existence of African philosophy is in a more nuanced sense, a dispute about African identity". We noted somewhere else (see UDUMA 2010, 1) that the preoccupation of African philosophy with the search for an authentic African identity is natural, legitimate and necessary. It is natural and legitimate because it is a response to the natural instinct for self preservation. It is also necessary because it will help to reconstruct the tarnished image of Africans constructed and foisted upon us by Eurocentric scholars. Yet the quest for a common feature, theme, structure or disposition of the African traditional thoughts that will serve as the criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy is also a controversial one.

Accordingly, Oluwole (1991, 219-221) identifies three reasons why this is the case. The first is that most scholars mistake the part for whole; the identification of African thoughts as a whole with a particular metaphysical or epistemological disposition or tradition of a given African people for instance Nigeria, Igbo, Yourba, Bantu, Akan—is guilty of over generalization and as such inadequate. Buttressing this point further, Oluwole analogously explicates:

It may be argued that Africa, unlike Britain, is not a country but a whole continent. Thus nobody identifies European philosophy as empiricism, rationalism or idealism even though each of these brands occurs at different times and in different countries of Europe. This shows that the demand cannot be for the identification for a characterizing of the Africanness of one particular philosophy that is predominant over all others produced here in Africa. Rather the search is for some features that unite several local/national philosophies into the "international group'' classifiable as African. (1991, 214)

The basic import here is that one of the controversies surrounding the identity criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy is the attempt to impose a certain metaphysics and epistemology of a certain African peoples on the whole of Africans. The second reason is the restriction of the scope of a unique and distinct African philosophy to the contemporary period. This restriction presents

the universal features of Western philosophy—analysis, logical consistency and argumentation—as the standard for a work to be philosophical and African; and of course, the acceptance of this position will deny African Philosophy of any substantial identity.

Closely connected with this is the equivocation of the geographical connotation of the word "African" with its racial connotation. Unfortunately, even though the geographical and racial connotations of the adjective African have the same *referent*, they do not have the same *sense/meaning*. As an adjective, "African" geographically connotes someone that is strictly speaking, a citizen of a given country within a given continent known as Africa. Racially, the adjective "African" connotes a group of individuals that are indigenes of any country in a continent known as Africa and are believed to have certain characters and qualities. The geographical sense of African cannot be used to analogically describe a non-African citizen, but the racial sense can be used to describe whoever behaves, thinks, or looks like what has been portrayed as the general racial traits of Africans. Thus Oluwole further elaborates the challenges of identifying a unique criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy. She writes:

> The fourth and perhaps most important observation is that several discussions of African philosophy show a misidentification of elements of particular traditions within philosophy as the only features that can identify a work as properly classifiable as African. Of course, we use the word "tradition" to refer to various schools of philosophic thoughts in the work of authors which constitute a particular stance in Western philosophy. But here our search is for a literary heritage, our concern is to map out a general outlook whose distinctive form permeates and thus supersedes division into schools of thought or even disciplines. We are looking for the features of one particular Literary Tradition as it occurred within a specific geographical region of the world. An African or Western Literary tradition of thought in general is determined by the style, the approach, the goal and all else that go to characterized both the content, the features and style of expression as these commonly occurred within that tradition. To reveal this and should be the object of or analysis. (1991, 220-221)

It is clear from the above that what the identity criterion calls for is the identification of a unique African tradition of thought—the unique style, approach, content and features—that characterizes the thought of all Africans and not just a particular group of Africans. It demands for a peculiar or predominant African scheme of thought that underlines or colors the thought of all Africans. Given the cultural diversity in Africa, the question that erupts at this point is how

one can explicate, discover and identify a unique African scheme of thought. Appositely, Oluwole argues that such a peculiar African conceptual scheme exists in the traditional thoughts of Africans concerning human existence:

> Like all attempts to locate existing traditions in their various forms, we must start with the collection, analysis interpretation, and synthesis of African literary piece because they come down to us mostly in fragments. This was what was done to early Greek thinkers. In other words, I am proposing that we go back to study African traditional thought which bear on problems of human existence. The purpose is not just an exercise in the documentation of different ideas and beliefs native to Africa. The aim is to unveil an existing literary tradition as an objective which is common to every rational endeavor of African thinkers. This is the only way in which we can come up with a cogent analysis of a tradition that genuinely constitutes African philosophy. (1991, 218)

What the foregoing comes to is that an authentic identity of African philosophy can only be excavated from any analysis of the unwritten/documented thoughts of traditional Africans encapsulated in the African oral literacy tradition of proverbs, idiom, myths, rituals, religious beliefs and folk-tales. This suggestion derives its plausibility from the fact that there is a strong affinity between philosophy and culture; for underlying every culture is a conception of philosophy. In this connection, the philosophical thoughts of a people are necessarily encoded in their proverbs, myths, folktales customs, laws and religious beliefs. These areas of culture though not philosophy but they are both the material for philosophizing and as well constitute the background to philosophy. Buttressing this point, M. F. Asiegbu (2008, 41) explicates:

> Conceived in this way, philosophy is not culture neither does a popular conception serve as philosophy properly understood. Actually, if culture defines the way of life of a people, then it is not philosophy. A people's way of life embraces a long list of unending items, embracing their lore of knowledge, their philosophy, and proverbs, their artifacts, their feasts, their pride and prejudices, celebrations, songs, and funerals, patterns of doing things and poetry, language and medicine, commerce and craft, their cosmology, legends, myths, witticisms, wise-sayings, laws, and customs, religion and their conceptual framework and indeed, whatever makes their pattern of—together, all form their culture. Considered in this way, one cannot equate culture to philosophy. While culture is no philosophy, culture provides the raw material for philosophy. As a result, a philosopher, however intense his love for wisdom would be devoid of

any material for speculation should he do away with culture. In short, without culture philosophy is impossible. In relation to culture, philosophy is but the fruit of personal reflection, or in Okere's phrase an "individual mind" reflecting critically on culture.

The point here is though philosophy is neither identical nor synonymous with culture; it is necessarily a product of, and from a culture. This is because philosophy is the product of human wonder, reactions and reflection on their immediate environment. This is what is meant when we say that philosophy is a child of circumstance. Therefore, what makes a philosophy African, Western or Oriental is the cultural background it is excavated from, the cultural background it reacts to, the cultural background that provides the material object for philosophizing.

Conclusion
What the foregoing analysis comes to is that the African question in African philosophy is enigmatic because of the intentional attempt to rationalize Africans out of humanity. Eurocentric scholars and missionaries mutilated history and concocted a false image of Africans which they presented as the substantive African identity (MUDIMBE 1988); an identity that presents the African as pre-logical, barbaric and as such incapable of philosophic thoughts. This identity was foisted and consolidated on humanity including Africans, and intellectually accepted as the true African identity for over four centuries. It was in the mid twentieth century that African intellectuals were able to deconstruct the Eurocentric view and reconstruct the battered image of Africans. It is against this backdrop that K. A. Appiah following Achebe argues that a unique African identity is in the making (1992, 175).

Consequently, while the racist Eurocentric description of the African makes it impossible for one to suggest that there can be anything like African philosophy, the enslavement, balkanization, colonization and the introduction of a Western-oriented formal education into Africa further dehumanized, traumatized and alienated Africans from their culture. This experiment is what precipitated the identity problem in Africa. For the Africans that emerged from these experiments were tailored-made to see themselves and their cultures as inferior (OGUEJIOFOR 2001) to the Caucasian. Hence, the issue of a criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy is a contentious one because Africans were by their intellectual orientation trained to believe that there is nothing as such. This training and orientation also makes it difficult for those who think that there is a distinct African mode of thinking to be able to present it in a clear and unambiguous manner. Senghor's position is a classic example.

Moreover, the fact that some scholars—Wiredu and Bodunrin—argue that the unique criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy can only be found in the works of professional African philosophers, while others—Momoh, Onyewuenyi, and Oluwole—argue that the criterion is to be found in traditional thoughts of Africans embedded in their oral tradition reveals the level of mental confusion nay, identity crisis Western education inflicted on Africans. It is, however, pertinent to note that it is erroneous to restrict the criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy to either the thoughts of anonymous preliterate traditional Africans or to the thoughts of literate modern Africans. This is because such a criterion will restrict the scope of African philosophy to a given epoch. In this sense, African philosophy will be concerned with only a part of the African historical experience. Given the comprehensive nature of philosophy, we are inclined to the persuasion that a criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy ought to be derived from the totality of the African experience.

The point here is that what makes a philosophy African is its identification with the cultural, historical or existential experience of Africa/ns (OKOLO 1993, 33-4). In this connection, African philosophy refers to a critical reflection either on a given universal phenomenon or a unique problem in Africa through the glasses of an African culture (OKERE 1976, 5). It also connotes a critical, comprehensive and systematic reaction to the traditional or modern thoughts/the historical or contemporary predicaments of Africans in the form of critical analysis and reconstruction. What this comes to is that what makes a philosophy Western, African or Oriental is neither the geographical origin nor location of the author; rather it is the cultural and geographical content. It is, therefore, the cultural/geographical background/content of a philosophy that makes it African. For any philosophical work, system, theory or idea to be African, whether it is written by an African or non-African, it must have an African flavor. It must be a product of wonder from or on the African experience and the African world.

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BOOK REVIEW

Title: **NJIKOKA AMAKA: FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTEGRATIVE HUMANISM** (A Contribution to African and Intercultural Philosophies)

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A philosophic system is the general trend or course of thought of a particular time, school or group of thinkers. Indeed, throughout the history of philosophy, Western philosophy, for instance, many philosophers have had the same fundamental concerns in philosophy and maintained more or less the same views about man and the universe. Their theories and beliefs tend to form clusters pivoting around the same or almost the same belief. Thus there are not only different philosophers, but also groups of philosophers, distinguished by their own particular views or outlook on reality, that is to say, man, life, society, knowledge, human history, human destiny, and the universe itself, etc.

It is in this context that we speak of Rationalism, Empiricism, Existentialism, etc., in Western Philosophy. Or we speak of Yoga philosophy, Nyaya philosophy, Mimamsa systems, etc., in Oriental Philosophy. These are philosophic systems. These philosophic systems are also different modes of philosophizing. It means also that those who philosophize under a particular system share more or less the same general outlook on reality.

Until quite recently African philosophy lacked this system-building approach to philosophical inquiry. In an essay entitled "The Yesterday and Today of African Philosophy: Towards a New Prospect", Chris O. Akpan made the point that one of the challenges of contemporary African philosophy was "System-building" with the required "genuine Africanness". According to this scholar, "indeed if African philosophy has to be relevant in our contemporary

world, then there is need for system-building, as a common front from which the African experience could be explained and understood"!

Very cheeringly work has begun on developing philosophies, systems and schools, with their unique methods and approaches in African philosophy inquiry. The book [Njikoka Amaka: Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism (A Contribution to African and intercultural Philosophies] authored by Godfrey O. Ozumba and Jonathan O. Chimakonam seeks to consolidate the African philosophic conversation in respect of system-building within the context of the philosophy of Integrative Humanism, a trend or tradition which has emerged from the Calabar School of Philosophy (CSP) and has become quite popular and dominant in contemporary African philosophy.

Since its formulation by Professor Godfrey O. Ozumba, the philosophy and method of Integrative Humanism, as an authentic system of African philosophy whose insights have universal applicability, has been work in progress. Several scholars have been attracted to Integrative Humanism and there has been an avalanche of critical essays and works written on Integrative Humanism with efforts to apply the basic assumptions, principles and method of this system to diverse areas of knowledge (see p. 138). However, in my view, there is such rich insight on each of the pages of this one book, than one may find in the many journal papers, reviews and researches which I have read concerning this scientific system of thought called "Integrative Humanism" or the philosophy of "Njikoka".

I do not hesitate to declare that this must be the magnum opus of Integrative Humanism, because from the hindsight of my personal acquaintance with the authors, recognizing their vibrancy and intellectual dynamism and in acknowledgement of the breadth of scope and applicability of Integrative Humanism in diverse areas of human experience and knowledge, I have no doubt that the authors will further the discussions on [Njikoka Amaka: Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism (A Contribution to African and Intercultural Philosophies)].

The present work is written in twelve chapters. The language is lucid and penetrating but devoid of the linguistic jargon that usually characterizes much contemporary philosophical writing. However, one notices in the book, another trend which is gaining currency in the way contemporary African philosophy is conducted and written. This is the creative use of African indigenous languages, concepts, terms, expressions, proverbs in enriching and spicing the philosophical discourse. We have seen this approach in the writings of Innocent Asouzu who is the originator of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy and in the works of M. B. Ramose who investigates African philosophy via *Ubuntu*. Asouzu and Ramose respectively, apply their Igbo and Nguni Bantu backgrounds in the development

of their philosophical theories and postulations. Thus our philosophical vocabulary is positively enriched.

However, these latter scholars take this approach as given or granted and offer no explanation or rationale for justification of this approach. We find justification of this approach in contemporary African philosophy in Ozumba's and Chimakonam's call on African philosophers to assume "a new consciousness which would enable them to do African philosophy, even if not yet in an African language but in an Africanized Western language" (iv). This call must not be misunderstood to be a reiteration of Wiredu's call for "Conceptual Decolonization" in African philosophy. Contrarily, without being contradictory, it is a radical call on African philosophers, all black people to:

> …respond to the ruse of the colonizer. As the oppressor adamantly remains present through his language which Africans yet speak, Africans should then seek to speak that foreign language in order to destroy it. The Englishness or the Frenchness of those colonial languages must be broken; traditional meanings of words must be altered; words must be reshaped in various forms to reflect what the African has in mind and what he means; idioms must be reinterpreted to reflect the unabashed and highest degree of indomitable Africanness; this is because a language that would bear forth African truths if it yet remains foreign can only emerge from the ruins of the one that bore Western truths. (OZUMBA and CHIMAKONAM 2014, iv)

Based on this propelling logic of the authors, one notices an avalanche of Africanized usage of foreign words, because the authors believe that at this time "the African philosopher must now learn to write his philosophy primarily for Africans, regardless of the impressions it makes on a non-African".

Each chapter of the book builds towards a rewarding crescendo, revealing insightful perspectives of the nitty-gritty of Integrative Humanism. Chapter one provides a general background of the philosophy and method of Integrative Humanism. Integrative Humanism is the philosophical orientation that sees reality as having both physical and spiritual dimensions, past and present; as well as harmonized framework in which seemingly opposed variables unite without contradiction to achieve progress and epistemic wholeness. It is a human centered theory which derives its insights from electronics and mathematics and from the Igbo culture. Integrative Humanism is grounded on the Igbo cultural injunction "Njikoka Amaka", which translates "to integrate is better than to disintegrate". It is thus a contribution to African and intercultural philosophies, and integrativism is its method and its methodology (6-14).

The second chapter articulates the logic of Integrative Humanism. Its logic is founded on Njikoka, which according to the authors is the root of the trivalent African thought system. Thus the authors declare: "The African three-valued logic becomes the logic of Integrative Humanism" (16).

Chapter three introduces Integrative Humanism as a philosophy of life and living. Humanity and all earthly realties are exposed as being on a journey through time from uwa mgbe nta to uwa mgbe ebi-ebi. The ultimate destination of all earthly realities, including man, as a quest to beat and overcome the influence of time. When this is achieved, one sees being in its true light, eternal, one and united in Nke-Mbu. Nke-Mbu is the eternal God and man is a being unto eternity (21-23).

The fourth and fifth chapters of this monumental work of Ozumba and Chimakonam deal with the metaphysical and epistemological dimensions of Integrative Humanism respectively. For the Integrativist, being is one and many; physical and spiritual; active and passive. Hence, the Integrativists maintain that in the grand scheme of things, every being is from "Nke-mbu, as part of Nke-mbu in Nke-mbu! Nke mbu is the "first principle", but there are other levels of beings, in their actuality and in their potentiality, present and future; but Integrative Humanism aims to ultimately transcend all lower levels and attain that level of knowledge of the absolute. This level is attained through revelational knowledge or the illumination of Nke-Mbu in uwa mgbe ebi-ebi (25,30-31).

What strikes me as I try to understand this metaphysical foundation of Integrative Humanism is the very skillful, tactful ard ingenious way the authors have stripped of Spinoza and introduced a somewhat refreshing pantheistic metaphysics. In Epistemology, for the Integrativists, human knowledge transcends empirical, psychological, linguistic or cultural truths. Authentic knowledge must include spiritual, mystical, revelational and soulish truths. Ultimately, the criterion for knowledge is not just "justified-true-belief", but Integratively-Justified-Contextually-True-Belief " (43).

Chapter six of the book focuses on the ethical question. Integrative Humanism has informed moral maxims that prescribe and sanction actions and propositions. These are:
1. Biri ka mbiri
2. Egbe bere ugo bere
3. Onye aghana nwanne ya
4. So mu adina
5. Ka so mu di (56)

Although these moral maxims are translated into English, the authors are evidently proud of their Igbo rich cultural heritage, but aspire to weave an integrativist moral philosophy aimed at a global audience.

Consequently, there is the attempt to respond to the myriad of perennial questions of moral philosophy. In the final analysis Ozumba and Chimakonam prescribe inclusive religious-legalistic global ethics. This is an ethics based on "religious insight, legal fortification and ethical rationality"(63).

The seventh and eighty chapters of the book explore themes in the philosophy of mathematics and in political philosophy respectively. The ninth chapter is in one word: profound! It deals with the "laws of thought in African logic". The authors maintain that "African logic in its trivalence is an extension of Western classical logic which is bivalent. The extent to which each applies in the opposite culture demonstrates its lack of absoluteness. The ideal of logic therefore is universal but never absolute" (81). Thought in Western logic is evaluated either true or false, while in African logic it is evaluated true, false and integrated.

Chapter ten examines the place of Integrative Humanism in African science. The age-long perplexing question of philosophy of science—"can science explain everything or are there some phenomena that must forever elude science? is addressed. "The Integrative Humanism model of explanation (hereafter referred to as IHM) stipulates that every reality (physical or metaphysical) is connected in one form or another to the whole (Nke-Mbu) in the massive web of reality. Since African Science deals with reality, it follows that every phenomena can be explained using IHM" (90). This is the bold assertion of the authors, and they, I expect must be ready for reaction and challenge.

The penultimate chapter is concerned with how Integrative Humanism can find relevance in the philosophy of education. In the Integrative Humanist model, curriculum is crucial and the goal is to achieve a transformational curriculum through the principles of Integrative Humanism. But the authors insist that just as the colonial curriculum was efficiently structured to miseducate the people with an erroneous Western thought system that would turn black people to black-Europeans, a restructured transformational curriculum must be "drafted by Africans and for Africans but with intercultural outlook" to efficiently deliver our educational needs in the face of unremitting global challenges (96-104).

The twelve-chapter book reaches its climax as it addresses critics of Integrative Humanism. There is a systematic reaction to each of the objections that have been raised against the tenets of Integrative Humanism. Especially, there is a reproduction of Professor Godfrey Ozumba's essay in reaction to Mesembe Edet's (this reviewer) criticism of the idea of a spiritocentric and a bibliocentric humanism (113-117). Indeed, the critical reviews, misunderstandings, misinterpretations, misperception and misreading which have been sorted out and addressed in the "Rely to Critics" hopefully will lead to better understanding and appreciation of the tradition of Integrative Humanism.

All said, the authors have done a marvelous job. The book, [Njikoka Amaka: Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism (A Contribution to African and Intercultural Philosophies)] Published by 3rd Logic Option Publishing is technically and aesthetically well packaged and the expected "Printer's Devil" is very meticulously eliminated and some kudos must go to the publishers. This challenging, intellectually provocative and stimulating book provides an incredibly stable foundation upon which to build Integrative Humanism and the authors—Professor G. O. Ozumba ad Dr. Jonathan O. Chimakonam must be the human pillars upon which the supper structure of integrative humanism can be erected as they continue in their work to act as the compass for those who wish to navigate the streams of Integrative Humanism. The book is a must read.

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