

**IS THERE A PLACE FOR CONVERSATIONAL THINKING  
(CT) IN EUROPE?: GERMANY/AUSTRIA IN PERSPECTIVE**

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Christiana IDIKA, DMMM  
Catholic University of Mainz  
Mainz, Germany

**Abstract**

“Is there a place for conversational thinking (CT) in Europe? – Germany/Austria in perspective interrogates the visibility of the African philosophical method, namely Conversational Thinking in the philosophical praxis, teaching, and research in Germany and Austria. It will be considered in the light of epistemic injustice. The paper argues that the emergence of intercultural philosophy in the German/Austrian academic and intellectual cultural space affirms that conversational thinking should have a place. However, uncertainty points to a historically shaped academic, cultural consciousness informing cognitive orientation in engaging with African philosophy. The paper argues that for conversational thinking to have a place, it demands openness beyond the current approaches to intercultural philosophical engagement, which includes German and Austrian philosophers’ readiness to question the logic that shaped their thought and philosophical investigation. By logic, I mean something other than formal elite logic that shapes the context of thought and praxis.

**Keywords:** African philosophy, Conversational thinking, space, place, Germany, Austria, Intercultural Philosophy, conversational philosophy, the primacy of question, hermeneutics, contingent reason

**Introduction**

The most critical factor propelling the contemporary practice of African philosophy is the vicious encounter of the African world with European modernity - an encounter embodied in the phenomenon of colonialism. Therefore, the historical epistemological struggle between reason born in Europe and reason born in Africa, which

rotates in many ways around the knowledge Europe constructs about Africa and the contestation of knowledge produced from the African place, e.g., African philosophy, makes the question of the place of conversational thinking in Europe very relevant and unavoidable. The contention is the assumption that the European mind is the only logical mind that could engage with philosophical reasoning and, consequently, the indemonstrable labels such as “pre-logical,” “non-rational,” and “emotional” used to define and represent the African. Therefore, in the face of the emergence of the contemporary practice of African philosophy and intercultural philosophy, asking the status of African philosophy in Germany/Austria also means asking the acceptability of the logic and method in African philosophy, namely conversational thinking. This paper proposes that the openness of German and Austrian philosophical praxis and the genuine intercultural engagement devoid of epistemic injustice must, failing other things, be conversational.

To achieve the objective of this paper, using the conversational philosophical method, the article is organized in seven subsections in addition to the prospective outlook that will serve as a conclusion. The ongoing introduction presents the problem of reason, method, and logic in African philosophy and the thesis proposed and established in this paper. Hence, it will begin with the argument that Conversational thinking interrogates conceptual oppositions that form the logical foundation of everyday hermeneutical experience of a German and Austrian consciousness, or apprehension and interpretation, of reality. This is followed by the subsection that puts the topic in perspective by analysing the question of place; which place and whose place? The paper goes ahead in the second subsection to review Germany and Austria as a place or space for CT as a philosophical method within a historical framework of the encounter between Africa and Europe. The demonstration of conversational thinking will follow this as a relationship threshold with related methods in German and Austrian philosophy, namely hermeneutics, analytic (Language), rational consensus, among others. Then the subsequent sub-section will focus on the space of encounter between African and German/Austrian philosophy, which is intercultural philosophy. In the final subsection, the paper outlines possible answers to the question by first looking at intercultural philosophical engagement and the challenges of system-epistemic racism.

### **Logic as the Foundation of Everyday Hermeneutical Experience**

The root of the word ‘hermeneutics,’ lies in the Greek verb *hermēneuein*, translated to mean ‘to interpret,’ and the noun, *hermēneia*, also means ‘interpretation. (IDIKA 2018, 209 – 210). Aristotle had already analysed the problems of Western logic in his treatise “On interpretation” (*Peri hermeneias*) and by implication relates logic to interpretation, although the content of the treatise does not speak directly of interpretation as seen in later works of Western theorists on hermeneutics as a study of interpretation and understanding. In the *Peri hermeneias*, Aristotle treated “the logic of statements: the grammatical structure by which subject and predicate are united in human speech to reveal the character of things.” (MUELLER-VOLLMER 1985, 1). This Aristotelian claim became a principal part of the analytic philosophy, where philosophy became reduced to an analysis of words and propositions. One finds this structure of argument in the works of Frege, Wittgenstein, Russell, among others. Chimakonam, in his development of conversational thinking, presented a similar argument, though differs from these in that he argues for a context of meaning-making beyond words (CHIMAKONAM 2021). This paper will agree with Chimakonam that meaning-making is context-related but will argue that his argument reduced the context of conversation. Nevertheless, conversational thinking challenges the hermeneutical frame of reference with which a German or Austrian historically shaped mind interprets his or her everyday experience. We can call this everyday epistemic practice – that is, everyday conveyance of knowledge to others and making sense of one’s own social experiences. (FRICKER 2007, 2). The logical foundation of everyday Hermeneutical experience of human consciousness means more than application of formal logic or rules of thought to communicate meaning, engage in discourses, etc. Rather, it is also applied informally in the interpretation of experiences and encounters from the very time one wakes up from bed till one goes to bed, understanding our environment, events, and activities, actions, etc. To understand anything at all requires some level of interpretation primarily, and to interpret is to make meaning. This makes sense the moment we ask what we do when we associate the time on the Clock with morning, day, or night and consequently, decide whether to go to work, have a

midday meal, or go to bed, regardless of differences in the dynamism in the association from person to person or from place to place.

Accordingly, the tools for the everyday epistemic experience and in this case, a German/Austrian mind, is drawn from the formative logic that has shaped it. There is the need to be sceptical and critical of the controlling influence while dealing with other world philosophies shaped by a different sequence of thought. It will be a disturbing but necessary path out of that way of thinking that arranges oppositions and antagonisms in ways that create biased relationships because of the entanglement with coloniality. Reason is not an exclusive property of an academic or intellectual culture. Wherever there are epistemic agents, there is also reason. However, each intellectual context has its own system of thought consisting of its logic, methods, and theories, which are interrelated. The binary opposition that forms the logical foundation of European modern thought, e.g., man/woman, superior/inferior, either/or, body/soul, reason/emotion, adopts methods that support it and from which theories, such as otherness, emerge. Africa has its own logic, which is not 2-valued but 3-valued and complementary. The method of African logic is conversational, and it is found in theories such as Ubuntu, Ibuyidanda, Igwebuike, including the commonly defended communo-centric ethics in African philosophy, etc. That means, in the same way, the individual-society dichotomy is shaped by two-valued logic in European thought, so the three-valued logic shapes the we-existence argument in African philosophy. The question is whether this African logic has a place in the German/Austrian intellectual system in a way that avoids the coloniality of power. As a result, a successful conversation between contingent reason - German/Austrian on the one hand and Africa on the other makes CT's place/space unavoidable. The contingency of reason means that there is no absolute reason, rather reason arises in the context of epistemic agency. The idea of reason has been overlaboured, exaggerated, estranged, and absolutized because of the muddiness and ambiguity inherent in its conceptualization. Reason is contingent, and philosophy is born when contingent reason encounters reality. George McLean (2003) must have the same thing in mind when he argued that philosophers and philosophy all come from this or that culture and civilization which develop its distinctive characters over vast Spatio-

temporal distances, making both philosophy and philosophers products of time and place.

The contingency of reason and its idea used earlier is not to be taken for granted. The claim for the contingency of reason stands in opposition to the Western claim to the moral necessity of reason. There is nothing in the reason that makes it morally necessary and universal in the way that Kant and his followers claim. Reason or reasons emerge within the paradigms of conversations, in which people inquire, argue, disagree, agree, explain, and justify their position with regard to an issue or question about reality. (HIGGS 2003, 193). As amorphous as it is, Reason itself could be grouped into technical and ontological (TILLICH 1951, 71–84, IDIKA 2018, 225 – 228). Reason as ontological refers to “the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and to shape reality,” whereas technical use of the word reason covers its use as justification, explanation, rationalisation, and faculty or mental state. Therefore, if reason is contingent as already demonstrated, and globalization involves global expansion of thought, a successful encounter between contingent reason – Africa and Germany/Austria, devoid of injustice must failing other things, look towards conversational thinking. It implies recognizing it as a research method as well as teaching it in schools and universities.

### **Putting the question in Perspective: Is there a place for CT? Which place and whose place?**

In order to understand the question of place, it must be taken from the context of the general view of the relationship between Africa and Europe. A story was told about a feast to which the Tortoise was invited. Though every invitee had an equal place on the table of the feast, each invitee can eat what it wants and however it wants. However, there was a general condition applied to every participant, namely that before the meal, each invitee must wash its hands, but the wash-basin was kept a little far away from the location of the meal. The Tortoise went and washed its hands, but then before it could take a step towards the table to take its place and join others to eat, the washed hands became dirty again. It went back and washed it again, but it turned out that it never made a step because the hands consistently became dirty once it made a move. In the end, it neither had its hands cleaned nor was it able to make it to take its place among

other invitees to eat its own share on its own terms. This story was meant to overstretch the minds of those who argue or question the ability of Africa to represent, articulate and explicate itself if given a place at the table of discourse on global issues. Certainly, how could the Tortoise make it when the standard for participation on the table excluded it from the beginning. It seems that one cannot talk about Conversational Thinking having a place within the German and Austrian intellectual systems without understanding the history that shaped the relationship of both two philosophical systems in knowledge production.

Therefore, the question does not refer to the conventional admittance to the plurality of philosophies, especially within intercultural or transcultural, or even cross-cultural philosophical engagements. It is a question of visibility in the academy, teaching, and research. The question is about CT taking its place, not the one assigned to it or the one defined by another, but its place in its terms as an equal partner in philosophical engagement and discourses. Another way of putting the question could be to give CT a space. Both CT taking its place and having a space are implied in the question because it cannot have a space without a place. Whereas the philosophical concept of place and space is consistently debated whether they mean the same thing in terms of location. Both suggest the same thing, however, there are epistemological and ontological differences between them. One is abstract (space), and the other is concrete (place). Chimakonam defined a philosophical place as where questions are raised, and answers sought within the context of a philosophical place or tradition where philosophy must pay its debts and duties (CHIMAKONAM 2015a). This paper will designate this philosophical place where questions are raised, and answers sought as the site for the contingency of reason. As earlier argued, philosophy is born when contingent reason encounters, confronts and questions reality. Jonathan Chimakonam further conceptualised philosophical space as a space in which the concerns of a definite philosophical place or tradition are resonated in the questions and answers of other philosophical traditions. This paper assigns the idea of philosophical space, in the sense meant by Chimakonam, as the intelligibility of philosophies born of contingent reason and reality. According to Chimakonam, CT transforms a philosophical place to a philosophical space through what he called Global Expansion of Thought (GET).

Whereas this paper agrees that CT as a philosophical method expands the horizon of contingent reason, nevertheless, a philosophical place is also contained in the philosophical space, since contingent reason creatively struggles to become intelligible reason within the ambient of a globally expanded thought. What is conventionally known as the universality of thought or ideas is only possible on the condition of its intelligibility. Every idea is conceived in a place and cannot be conceived in the same way, using the same logic and method in every other place, which is what the notion of universalism suggests. It is not only Derrida that affirms the context-relatedness of philosophy, which is a product of contingent reason, Thomas Hobbes (1588 -1679) in the same way argue in 'Leviathan' (1651) that no human person can conceive anything, but he must conceive it in someplace.

In other words, to argue for a place for CT implies taking its place in the space. It means making CT visible, that is, it, taking a place as a contingent reason, as an epistemic partner on the philosophical space forum with other contingent reasons, e.g., Germany/Austria. Derrida's question of where the right to philosophy takes place and where it ought to take place cannot be reduced to the birth of different philosophical traditions. It points to a concrete place as well as a place within the space, whereby the question then includes who has a right to philosophy in such place and space. Moreover, as Bruce Janz (2016) argued, place becomes more than simply where intellectual life happens but also a moment of virtuality where new concepts and ideas give birth to freedom (JANZ 2016, 44, 47). Therefore, the question of the place of CT in the German and Austrian intellectual and academic system is also a question of its right to interrogate and be interrogated on equal terms.

### **Why Germany/Austria: Place or Space**

The choice of Germany/Austria rather than Europe in general, or other European countries is not arbitrary. This must be viewed as an interaction between the past and the present philosophical encounter between Africa and Europe (Germany and Austria). Hence, it exposes the relevance of this philosophical place as a place that constructed the absence of reason in Africa. Furthermore, it is also because, in the argument for CT, three philosophical, methodological approaches in German/Austria philosophical place shares some similarities with and

differ from CT from the African place. The justification will also present it as a place-space holder of intercultural philosophy, where reasons from different places encounter each other. And finally, as a place that gives birth to methods that can engage with CT that emanates from the African place.

Germany and Austria were philosophical places that gave birth to racist philosophies while exaggerating their contingent reason. Kant and Hegel held that reason, whether historical in the Hegelian context or as a sign of man's maturation or perfection in the Kantian context, is absent from Africa and that Africans lack this capacity. This basic faulty assumption, in addition to the prevailing foundation of two-valued logic, shaped not only the formal way of reasoning but also the everyday way of reasoning in Europe (there are few exceptions among scholars, thinkers, and intellectuals who opposes such binarism that has resulted from that two-valued logic).

Germany and Austria are also of interest because of the philosophical methods from the German/Austrian place, which shares a lot in common with CT in terms of similarity and differentiation. These methods include Wittgenstein's language and meaning, Gadamer's hermeneutics – the primacy of question, and Habermas rational consensus discourse. The section that follows will discuss CT as against these methods.

### **Conversational philosophy as meaning-making**

Conversational Thinking shares something with Wittgenstein's philosophy of meaning. It is a name that features in Chimakonam's argument for conversational philosophy. In Wittgenstein, meaning is only possible in the context of use. Meaning in Wittgensteinian philosophy of language focuses on words, whose meaning can be determined in the proposition (WITTGENSTEIN 1958, 43). Worthy of note is that although he never made mention of the cultural dimension of language, nevertheless, his argument on sign and symbols as signifiers and carriers of meaning may not exclude that language, including signs and symbols are equally the art of language. Hence, if Wittgenstein's approach to meaning differs from meaning-making in CT, it is not because Wittgenstein's meaning focused on language – words, but because the speaker or signifier in the interlocution is not a concern for Wittgenstein.

Consequently, whereas in CT the interlocutors search for meaning in the meaning-making process, Wittgenstein assigns meaning in a monologic way only by considering the role the word or sign or symbol plays in the linguistic expression within which it is used. It also helps in knowing the language game in which it occurs in addition to the circumstance and occasions surrounding its use. Meaning in Wittgenstein is like a closed system because it is contained in the linguistic context, unlike in Conversational thinking in which meaning is discovered (CHIMAKONAM 2021, 7). For Chimakonam, meaning-making as a conversational practice that proceeds through communication and understanding within specific contexts does not place premium on words.

### **Conversational Thinking and Hermeneutics**

Another point of an interface when asking the place-space for CT in German/Austrian academia is hermeneutics. Chimakonam correctly identified the fulcrum point of philosophical hermeneutics as interpretation and understanding. However, the use of Schleiermacher as a representation of philosophical hermeneutics ignored the significant changes that took place after him, particularly with Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2002). Indeed, Friedrich Schleiermacher was the first to pull together the intellectual currents of German romanticism and idealism so as to articulate a coherent conception of a general hermeneutics, i.e., hermeneutics which does not relate to one particular type of textual material such as the Biblical or ancient texts, but to linguistic meaning in general. One should not take lightly Schleiermacher's argument that "understanding is an unending task" (MUELLER-VOLLMER 1985, 9) and that "logic cannot fully account for the workings of understanding." (PALMER 1969, 87). Although for Schleiermacher, understanding is a reconstructive process, which includes the context of the author of a text, as Chimakonam rightly argued, it is more than a sender-receiver event. As a result, this paper argues that Gadamer provided what is absent in Schleiermacher and what makes the "striking divergence" emphasized by Chimakonam (HARE LECTURE 2021, 44) more or less a tin line.

Chimakonam criticized Schleiermacher's perspective on hermeneutics as the art of avoiding misunderstanding. Gadamer

actually asked if the phenomenon of understanding is defined appropriately when we say that understanding is meant to avoid misunderstanding. (GADAMER 1966, in LINGE 1977, 7). For Gadamer, “the operation of the understanding requires that the unconscious elements involved in the original act of knowledge be brought to consciousness” (GADAMER 1962, in LINGE 1977, 45). This could be placed or reconstructed in line with Chimakonam’s idea of the metaphysics of the absent and present. Hermeneutics for Gadamer is an event, and he argued that:

philosophical hermeneutics takes as its task the opening up of the hermeneutical dimension in its full scope, showing its fundamental significance for our entire understanding of the world and thus for all the various forms in which this understanding manifests itself: from interhuman communication to manipulation of society; from personal experience by the individual in society to the way in which he encounters society; and from the tradition as it is built of religion and law, art and philosophy, to the revolutionary consciousness that unhinges the tradition through emancipatory reflection (GADAMER 1967 in LINGE 1967, 18).

Thus, for Gadamer, philosophical hermeneutics is everyday interaction between agents and the world. The world includes humans and non-humans in their search for meaning or to form meaning. Therefore, for him, interpretation and understanding, which without a doubt is the domain of hermeneutics, is in this context a meaning-making adventure, a creative struggle in which an agent struggles to make meaning. Conversational thinking is hermeneutical because, creative struggle to make meaning presupposes both interpretation and understanding, though it does not end there because the aim is not to avoid misunderstanding, as Schleiermacher suggests. Instead, for Gadamer, the goal of hermeneutics is to overcome hindrances, obstacles and alienation between humans and their experiences, whether in the form of dialogical encounters with text or everyday experiences. Nonetheless, under the Gadamerian meaning-making, in the encounter between agents or agents and reality, one finds the unequal binary opposition characteristic of Western logic. In

conversational thinking, the relation is “binary complementarity” (CHIMAKONAM 2021). Furthermore, the conversation between the two signifiers, *nwa nsa* and *nwa nju* (CHIMAKONAM 2015; CHIMAKONAM AND EGBAI 2016, 105), is built on questions which, according to Chimakonam opens up new vistas of knowledge (CHIMAKONAM AND EGBAI 2016, 106). Here again, Gadamer would agree with Chimakonam, because according to Gadamer, “the essence of question is to make sense. Sense involves a sense of direction from which the answer can be given if it is to make sense. A question places what is questioned in a particular perspective” (GADAMER 2003, 362). He went further to say that “the openness of what is in a question consists in the fact that the answer is not settled.” (363). The method of CT makes realistic the primacy of question in epistemic engagement between the western system of thought and the system of thought in African philosophy.

Conversational thinking is consequently not a search for consensus or agreement. Nicholas Rescher argues that consensus is only possible under uniform experience because human conditions and experiences are an unavoidable constituent element in their cognitive valuation and epistemic methodology. For him, therefore, “consensus as such is neither an indispensable means to nor a necessary effect of, people’s commitment to rational cogency” (RESCHER 1993, 11). The point is, there are no common human experiences, and because these non-uniform human experiences remain a constituent element that shape human cognitive evaluation and epistemic methodology, the idea of consensus fails at its very attempt. The relationship between the two signifiers, which may be conjunctive or disjunctive, is constituted by a creative struggle to make meaning, remain in the search for meaning without dissolving into identity dissipation or incommensurables. The agents are not in search of consensus on which conversation ends or disappears. Additionally, whereas Jürgen Habermas’ (1989; 1990; 1991), rational consensus discourse, which is a reconstruction of Kantian practical reason, bears a character of logical engagement which the CT advocates, the idea of rational consensual discourse is a closed system, manipulated towards a consensual end, i.e., towards agreement. But the conversationalists do not have to agree, in fact, they very often disagree. According to Jacques Rancière (1999), disagreement is one in which those engaged in conversation understand and at the same

time do not understand what the other is saying. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948 when half of the world's population was colonized and dehumanized. Besides being chameleonic and political hypocrisy, those who signed the declaration meant different things while saying the same thing. In other words, rational consensus is nothing but a manipulation that ends up excluding people under the pretence of what satisfies general rational impartiality. On the other hand, unlike rational consensus discourse, CT is not a search for consensus because the very nature of philosophy defiles it. Hence, conversationalists disagree, which gives rise to questions and more questions, although at some point, they will stop, not because they have reached a consensus or agreement, but because the conversation remains open with new vistas set in place.

**Intercultural Philosophy in Germany/Austria place or space?  
Outline of an Answer – Is there a place for CT in Germany and  
Austria Philosophical place?**

This section is an outline of an answer rather than answers because there is a lowest common factor in deciding for an answer, namely openness and interest, and what Bruce Janz presents as a matter of whether it matters to the West whatever African philosophy is offering. Thus, an outline of an answer suggests answers: dilemmas of justification, intentional ignorance, and rigidity that constitute every epistemic encounter between German/Austrian and African academia. One of those moments of encounter is within the sphere of intercultural philosophy.

The society for intercultural philosophy in Germany/Austria and the engagements with non-Western philosophies made the question set out in the article legitimate. It responds to the question of whether the idea promoted by intercultural philosophical engagement is a place or space for CT. This article disagrees with Chimakonam, who reduces intercultural philosophy to the analysis of the prefix 'inter' and his use of border-crossing as an element present in trans-, cross, multi, and intercultural philosophy. The former three are different from the last in the list. Whereas, transcultural, cross-cultural and multicultural are descriptive, in the sense that it describes the encounters of culture. In one of his online lectures (CHIMAKONAM March 23, 2021), he argued that intercultural philosophy had been

thematized by Ram Mall (2002), as an analogous hermeneutical endeavour, by Innocent Asouzu (2004, 2007) as complementary reflection, by Frantz Wimmer (2007) as a philosophical polylogue, and by Heinz Kimmerly (2012) as philosophical dialogue. Whereas this article agrees with Chimakonam (2019) that it is not yet clear whether intercultural philosophy is a discipline in philosophy in need of a method or an orientation, or a method in itself, it disagrees with his position that intercultural philosophy has the challenge of discrepancy of logical principles, incompatibility of methods and incommensurability of theories. This disagreement could be developed extensively somewhere else.

However, suffice it to be said that this claim follows a presupposition of a particular understanding of intercultural philosophy that builds around the prefix ‘inter’ (CHIMAKONAM 2021). Chimakonam used the prefix ‘inter’ in a word such as international, and so inter-national world cup, games, etc., which illustrates competition to define intercultural philosophy. For example, the prefix ‘inter’ before national or philosophy does not in itself say anything about competition. The prefix ‘inter’ presupposes a liminal space. Its content is undetermined and not predetermined. The same reason for promiscuity in the use of the word ‘intercultural’ as an appendage to whatever and wherever different cultures are present. Without getting into the complex understanding of culture which has developed over time, nonetheless, ‘if culture is a noun, cultural is the adjective, which moves one into a realm of difference’ (APPADURAI 1996, 12). Thus, intercultural implies the space where difference negotiates itself. This is not far from Chimakonam’s argument on the relationship between those engaged in *arumaruka*. He writes, “in conversational thinking, thoughts are expressed as variables, and two seemingly opposed variables are considered to be in a disjunctive motion determined by their ontological variance. However, because conversational thinking conceives reality as one big network of interconnected and inter-dependent variables, even opposed variables, at some point will discover the necessity of mutual interaction” (CHIMAKONAM 2018, 145).

Indeed, the conjunctive-disjunctive relationship between the dynamic positions of *nwa nju* and *nwa nsa* within the framing of intercultural philosophy is primarily conversational. It is the same that differentiates intercultural philosophy from consensus philosophy. In

fact, intercultural philosophy is the space for the creative struggle. Therefore:

intercultural philosophy is not a complementarity of world philosophies, it is not a comparative philosophy since for a comparative to take place there is always the slippery slope of looking for standard of comparison. It is not a philosophy of pure alterity of other philosophies. Alterity, lay emphasis on the absolute otherness of world philosophies, the globalising processes of knowledge, and mobility in which realities are being encountered from different perspectives, an intermingling of thought and hybrid structures in thinking and knowledge production make an absolute otherness of philosophies unthinkable. It is not simply about equal consideration of world philosophies as bearer of partial or complete truth about the subjects of philosophy, because it would entail getting into the whole difficulties of equality and terms of equality (IDIKA 2018).

For the same reason, if Global Expansion of Thought GET is possible, it can only be within the space of intercultural philosophy. Furthermore, since the crux of GET is to:

sustain conversations among world philosophies; to demonstrate that two different philosophical visions on the same issue could be tenable and possible; to demonstrate the possibility of a new synthesis from two or more rival visions; to demonstrate that no synthesis is sacrosanct and that every new synthesis is a new vista from which new questions can emerge to sustain the conversation; and above all, to demonstrate that a synthesis is not even the main target of dialectical conversations but the unveiling of new thoughts and concepts from old ones (CHIMAKONAM 2015b, 464).

As a result, to the question set out by the society for intercultural philosophy on what it takes for philosophy to be intercultural, the answer should be conversational thinking. In other words, it is not dialogue, not polylogue, not complementary reflection, not simple analogue hermeneutics but conversational thinking that bears the

elements mentioned above and at the same time supports the global expansion of thought and creative struggle in meaning-making. However, this is what intercultural philosophy ought to be. The practice of intercultural philosophy suggests otherwise because the engagement with philosophy from the African place has been filled with hegemonized sympathy, which brings us to the final section of this article.

### **Challenges: System-Epistemic-Racism**

In order to understand what is at stake in positioning the place for CT in German and Austrian philosophical place, it is necessary to view it within a wider scope that also interrogates other basic questions such as: How is African philosophy, texts, and works received in Germany? How do contemporary German or Austrian philosophers engage with African philosophy, both texts and thinkers, and if so, with whom and why? Is African philosophy taught in German schools? Are there chairs for African philosophy at German and/or Austrian universities? It is understandable that most books on African philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, logic, moral theories, political philosophy, the idea of justice, etc., are mostly written in English or French. Therefore, the possibility of them getting a place in Germany or Austria is a big challenge. Nevertheless, as a presumption or as a reality, there should be openness and the will to engage in debate on an equal footing, which, I think is still very far away.

The continuity of the colonial period is not only in the area of global economic inequality but also in the equality of knowledge sources and reserves. Unequal relationship in philosophical thought and system European philosophy in this case German or Austrian philosophy and African philosophy is still consciously or unconsciously shaped by the racial prejudices of the past, hence the need for self-interrogation. African philosophy needs to be more visible in order to have a place and a space to interrogate and be interrogated on that liminal space, where CT is the defining characteristic of such intercultural philosophizing.

Finally, is the question of openness. There is no better way to summarise the outline of an answer to the question: what is the place-space of CT in Germany and Austria with their advancement in intercultural philosophical engagement. Janz's remark is worth noting:

Care is part of what matters in place—our concepts develop because they make a difference in that place, which is to say, people care about them. Out of the infinite number of concepts we could have, we do have a small subset, ones that matter. Can anything matter in philosophical space, and what is the nature of that mattering? Is it a shared mattering, that is, do different places come together to engage in thought because they both care about something, and if so, what does that mean? When we think about space geopolitically, it is usually about resources, territory, proximity, and so forth.” “if how these places can remain true as places while at the same time striving for universal engagement. That engagement cannot fall into the patterns of domination and exclusion from the past, and so the usefulness of place is that it gives legitimacy to all forms of philosophy and allows engagement to happen. But the question of care still hangs over this project. We can say that this interaction ought to happen, but what if no one cares to make it happen? Or what if the care is only on one side? It remains the case that African philosophers are far more open to engaging Western philosophy than the reverse. This, in my opinion, is very sad for the West and for the world, but if Western philosophers don’t care, there is going to be little way of changing their minds (JANZ 2016, 45).

### **Conclusion: A Prospective Outlook**

Where there is a will, there is a way. If there is academic will on the part of intercultural philosophers, because CT legitimizes Intercultural Philosophy, it offers the space for conversations. At the same time, it will also mean working towards introducing CT in Philosophy in Germany and Austria, teaching it in the schools, and using it in adult education programs to re-orientate the historically shaped German/Austrian consciousness and their relation to difference. Moreover, “the methodological disposition of conversational philosophy, ... from the African place, aims at not merely bringing humans together to talk to themselves but, more importantly, it focuses on getting them to talk meaningfully and to understand themselves” (CHIMAKONAM 2017, 13).

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