

Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions

**FILOSOFIA THEORETICA
JOURNAL OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY,
CULTURE AND RELIGIONS**

A Publication of

**The Calabar School of Philosophy (CSP)
Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar**

www.csp.unical.edu.ng



SPECIAL ISSUE:

POSTMODERNISM AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2 JULY-DECEMBER, 2014

ISSN: 2276-8386 (Print)

E-ISSN: 2408-5987 (Online)

<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ft/index>

ISBN: 978-150-58521-5-8

Editorial Board

Dr. Jonathan O. Chimakonam	Editor-in- Chief
Dr. Mesembe I. Edet	Assoc. Editor
Dr. Mulumba Obiajulu	Managing Editor
Sunny Nzie Agu	Secretary
Dr. Oduora O. Asuo	Member
Lucky U. Ogbonnaya	Editorial Assistant
Victor Nweke	Editorial Assistant
Aniyom Grace	Computer/Typeset
Segun Samuel	Graphics

Editorial Consultants

Professor Innocent Asouzu	University of Calabar
Professor Andrew Uduigwomen	University of Calabar
Professor Udobata Onunwa	University of Birmingham UK
Professor Godfrey Ozumba	University of Calabar
Professor Oladele Balogun	Olabisi Olabanjo University
Professor Udo Etuk	University of Uyo
Professor Apollos Nwauwa	Bowling Green State University
Professor Olatunji Oyeshile	University of Ibadan
Professor Dorothy Olu-Jacob	University of Calabar
Prof. Uduma O. Uduma	Ebonyi State University
Professor Fainos Mangena	University of Zimbabwe

Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions is a publication of the Calabar School of Philosophy. It publishes twice each year, January-June and July-December.

Manuscripts are to be submitted electronically to

filosofiatheoretica@unical.edu.ng

Note to Contributors:

General Information: *Filosofia Theoretica* Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions is dedicated to the promotion of conversational orientation and publication of astute academic research in African Philosophy, Culture, History, Art, Literature, Science, Education and Religions, etc. The articles submitted to *Filosofia Theoretica* must be presented in defensive style i.e. defending or promoting some theses and review of books are also covered within the standard range of this journal. The journal has a vision to put Africa and African intellectuals on the global map. However, this does not imply that non-Africans cannot submit articles for consideration insofar as the title fall within the focus of the journal.

Submission Requirements: All manuscripts must be original (hence, not under consideration anywhere) and submitted to the editor in MS word format via e-mail: filosofiatheoretica@unical.edu.ng. The entire work can range from 2000 to 6000 words maximum excluding citations with a concise title and a 150 word abstract. Authors are not to place page numbers or paper title (on each page) on the manuscript; we no longer accept endnotes and footnotes. Articles (or parts of articles) in languages other than English will no longer be considered. All submissions must list the author's current affiliation and contact points (location, e-mail address, etc.). In regards to style the Calabar School of Philosophy Documentation Style which is downloadable from the journal's site is the only acceptable reference style. Camera ready manuscripts will receive first preference in the publishing cycle. Any manuscript not well proof read will not be considered for review. All manuscripts are peer-reviewed and those considered acceptable by the editors will be published after recommended corrections free of any charges as quality and originality are the ONLY conditions for publishing essays in this journal.

Aim:

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, promoting and sustaining conversational orientation in African Philosophy. It is published twice a year with maximum of ten (10) articles including book review on each volume in both print and online editions with separate ISSN. The Online version is published by

Review Process:

Generally, Editors should be able to reach a decision including recommending corrections if any or acceptance of any paper within three months of receipt which is communicated to the author subsequently. Authors are therefore advised to avoid needless correspondences. Also, Editors are not committed to the views expressed in articles. Contributors may receive one copy of the journal free of charge but additional copies may be obtained at the normal price. Copyright to articles published in the journal shall remain vested with the journal. All correspondences including subscription, copyright and sponsorship to the Editor via: filosofiatheoretica@gmail.com or csp.info@unical.edu.ng Visit us at:

www.csp.unical.edu.ng, www.africanphilcongress.com, or at:
<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ft/index>
<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/813461588>

Indexing Information:

Filosofia Theoretica is indexed by many depositories such as Ajol, Google Scholar, OCLC Worldcat, Archive.org, Scribd, Academia.edu, AfricaBib, Stanford.edu, etc. This makes essays published in the journal widely accessible.

Contact:

C/O, Editor

Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy,
Culture and Religions,
The Calabar School of Philosophy,
Department of Philosophy,
University of Calabar,
Calabar.

PO BOX 3684, Cross River State,
Nigeria.

Telephone: +234-7035254923

E-mail: csp.info@unical.edu.ng

Editorial

Our readers who have read the previous issues of this journal know exactly what to expect in this Volume 3 Number 2. Like we always say, *Filosofia Theoretica* has emerged as one of the vocal outlets for rigorous essays on African philosophy and sundry fields. Now, we encourage contemporary African philosophers to engage in critical discussions aimed at building an architectonic individual-based episteme for African philosophy in keeping with our founding principle of promoting and sustaining conversational African philosophy. This special issue is dedicated to the theme of postmodernism where African philosophy is presented as a postmodern resistance to the hegemony of Western philosophy.

To this end, Joseph Agbo writing from Ebonyi State University explored some nagging issues on the post-modern scientific thoughts of Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend taking special interest on their Implications for Africa. For those hoping to see the foot-prints of postmodernism on African thought and a lucid textual interpretation of Kuhn and Feyerabend,, this essay is a must read.

And from Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Jacob Adetolu writes on the subject of Religion, Postmodernism and Postmodern Scholarship in Africa. This essay makes a stunning reading on the appraisal of postmodernism in a broader sense and specifically in the area of postmodern scholarship in the discipline of religious studies in Africa. This essay is critical, prescriptive and novel most of all.

Writing from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Dr. Augustine Atabor discusses the question of objectivity, its implications for the social sciences in the era of postmodernism and in particular, from an African perspective. Those who know the importance of objectivity in any philosophical discourse would relish the idea of an African philosophy perspective to it.

Also from the Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife writes David Oyedola on The Culture-oriented Bias of African Philosophical Inquiry. Does culture merely influence a philosophy or is culture philosophy? What sort of influence has African culture on African philosophy? Questions like these inform the critical investigations carried out by the author in this deeply incisive essay. Those who cherish surprising and unexpected insights would love this essay.

Coming from the Federal University Lafia, Dr. Isaiah Ngedu writes on the Scientific Progress and Postmodern Culture: The African Experience. This scintillating essay welds the radicalism of postmodernism and the dynamism of African thought in one piece of adorable writing. Any serious scholar would love to read this essay.

Dr. Jonathan Chimakonam writing from the University of Calabar dwells on the curious subject of Ududo Reasoning in African Thought as a

Postmodern Formalist Method in Logic. All logic freaks and indeed, every scholar who love to read original thoughts would find this essay quite compelling.

Also from the University of Calabar writes Segun Samuel writes on the controversial Prefix “African” and its Implication for Philosophy in Africa. All those who enjoy the writing style of the greats like Peter Bodunrin would love this essay. Segun unleashes his arguments with rare candor that makes for joyous reading.

And from far away University of Zimbabwe, Prof. Fainos Mangena inquires: Can Africana Women truly embrace Ecological Feminism? Those who are keen on the subject of feminism and the debates on environmental philosophy and Africana agitations cannot afford not to read this new and fresh perspective.

And finally from the Erasmus University Netherlands, Prof. Heinz Kimmerle sends in his review of Sophie Oluwole’s mind-bugling book on *Socrates and Orunmila: Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy*, first published by the German-based Journal *Confluence* (2014). To the duo of Kimmerle and the editorial management of *Confluence*, we owe enormous gratitude for granting us the permission to reprint this scintillating review here. Those who wish to read a great summary of the book on the great Greek thinker Socrates and the Great Yoruba thinker Orunmila would have Kimmerle to thank. Oluwole’s book is curious; the review of it by Kimmerle is superb.

As this is a Special Issue of *Filosofia Theoretica* focusing on Postmodernism and African Philosophy, we enjoin African and scholars in African thought to freely send in their comments or discussions on any of the essays in this issue for publication in a subsequent issue. Comments and discussions should not exceed 750 words on a 12 point time new roman. We are glad to serve you once again this intellectual menu. An anonymous African thinker once said that if the agama lizard fell from the top of iroko and no one praised him, he will nod his head and praise himself. We praise our contributors who are the real heroes ceaselessly penning down essays that promote and sustain conversational African philosophy. *Hakuna Matata!*

Editor -in- Chief

CONTENTS

Editorial **5-6**

The Post-Modern Scientific Thoughts of Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend: Implications for Africa

Joseph N. AGBO 9-37

Religion, Postmodernism and Postmodern Scholarship in Africa

Jacob O. ADETOLU 38-49

The Question of Objectivity, its Implications for the Social Sciences in the Era of Postmodernism: Africa in Perspective

Augustine A. ATABOR 50-61

The Culture-oriented Bias of African Philosophical Inquiry

David A. OYEDOLA 62-80

Scientific Progress and Postmodern Culture: The African Experience

Isaiah NEGEDU 81-89

Ududo Reasoning in African Thought: A Postmodern Formalist Method for Logic

Jonathan O. CHIMAKONAM 90-105

The Prefix “African” and its Implication for Philosophy in Africa

Samuel T. SEGUN 106-123

Can Africana Women truly embrace Ecological Feminism?

Fainos MANGENA 124-139

An Amazing Piece of Comparative Philosophy

Heinz KIMMERLE 140-142

THE POST-MODERN SCIENTIFIC THOUGHTS OF THOMAS KUHN AND PAUL FEYERABEND: IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA

Joseph N. AGBO

Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy,
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria.

Abstract

Postmodernism is like a spectre hunting the intellectual world, and there is a sense in which the attitude is, first and foremost, against modern science. This essay is, therefore, an expository analysis of the thoughts of Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend, as classical representations of the postmodern reaction against modern science. The paper argues that the colossal image of science, as well as the idea of a “unity of sciences” had to be jettisoned by postmodernism in order to make way for the relativism and multiplicity of points of view that are symptomatic of postmodern thinking. The paper concludes with some critical reflections of the thoughts of the two scholars, and notes that postmodernism opened the door for the recognition of African ideas and ideals. The implication is that postmodernism not only vitiates the hold exercised by Western European models of reality but equally gives fresh cultural confidence to other modes of cognition, especially in Africa, that have long been pushed to the periphery.

Keywords: Modernity, Postmodernity, Transmodernity, Science, Paradigm, Pluri-versality, Incommensurability.

Introduction

It does appear, and there are cogent reasons for it, that one does not need to be neck deep in logical rigor to argue that there is a sense in which postmodernism is first and foremost a reaction against science; that is, modern science. Understanding the background to and of modernity as well as grasping the core of postmodern thinking, would be enough to let any minimally intelligent person know that the claims of modernity are science-anchored; and consequently, one cannot attack modernity “postmodernly”, without at the same time (and simultaneously) attacking science.

When modernity became referred to as the “Age of Reason”, it was not an attempt to aver that the periods before it (the ancient and medieval periods, for example) were characterized by “un-Reason” or that “Reason” was, as it were, given birth to during the modern period. No! The Reason in question is the Reason of Rationality, or better stated, logical consistency. In W.H. Newton-

Smith's lucid and popular book, [The Rationality of Science], he states that science and the scientific community "is taken to be in possession of something, the scientific method, which generates a logic of justification (1). He goes on to aver that at the majestic dawn of modern science, it became the very "paradigm of institutionalized rationality" (1).

This essay argues not only that postmodernism represents a heavy reaction against science, but goes on to unveil the thoughts of Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend as typologies or classic representation of the postmodern attitude in science. After this introduction, we shall, for the purpose of those who may not be very familiar with the concept, briefly capture the meaning and basic tenets of postmodernism. We would then proceed by exploring what postmodernism had to do to modern science, in order to pave the way for the postmodern conception of science.

Having done the foregoing, we shall then proceed to do an exposition of the thoughts of Kuhn and Feyerabend as examples of the kind of things that postmodernists are saying about science. Although the scholars are not saying the same things (well, no one should expect them to) if we understand the kernel of postmodernism, we would discover that the authors all arrive at the postmodernism shores, eventually, from different departure harbors. After all, postmodernism is not really a *school of thought but an attitude to and of philosophizing*.

Showing the meaning of postmodernism and its root in modern science and the "how" and "why" the thoughts of Kuhn and Feyerabend are [postmodern scientific attitudes, and how this attitude pluralized the conceptions of reality to the advantage of Africa's modes of cognitions, would be the modest purpose of this essay. Gleaning postmodernism from Kuhn and Feyerabend would be interesting because since postmodernism is an attitude, many postmodernists do not even know that they are. We would, however, end this essay with some critical comments on both the positions of Kuhn and Feyerabend noting briefly some implications for Africa, as well as on the project of postmodernism as a whole.

After all, one of the most crucial challenges faced in the attempts to present African thought system or articulate Africa's conceptions of reality was the accusation that they were "unscientific" (science as modern science). Rationality was ultimately interpreted in Western European terms, with modern science as its legitimate *herald* and accredited distributor. And so any view or theory that would not just for the purpose of arguments, but as a matter of fact, debunk the colossal and gargantuan image of modern science should necessarily be of interest to Africa. For it would be the dawn of epistemological and ontological freedom.

A Brief on Postmodernism

Anyone familiar with postmodernism knows that it is sometimes easier to say what postmodernism is NOT than what it IS. In other words, it would be simpler to say what a postmodernist rejects than what he accepts. What this section would do is to provide a brief information on what postmodernism is, in order to give the reader a key into the scientific thoughts of Kuhn and Feyerabend.

To understand the “postmodern”, one needs to understand the “modern”; for what postmodernism rejects are all that makes modernism tick. The “post” in postmodernism has been given two interpretations. While some see it as “anti”, others perceive it as “beyond” or “after” modernity. In his paper, “Postmodernism is Existentialist Phenomenology” Jim I. Unah argues that to conceive postmodernism as just anti-modernity is to betray a truncated understanding of what it is and indeed should be. For him, this limited conception is tantamount to saying the “mainstream Kierkegaardian Existentialism had only the task of combating the ‘system’ and its principal expositor—the professor” (114). For him, postmodernism is “beyond modernity”; that is, an improvement on, not opposition to, modernity.

To be candid, unless we discuss postmodernism in an “unpostmodern” way, we may get stuck with dumbness at worst, and intelligibility at best. This is because discussing postmodernism in a historical or chronological way is not useful, for according to William Spanos, in his “De-struction and the Question of Postmodern Literature: Towards a Definition”, Postmodernism is not a chronological event, but a permanent mode of human understanding” (107). For how does one begin to grapple with a term whose proponents even abhor definitions? In his edited book, [The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology], Kevin J. Vanhoozer writes that, those who try to define or even analyze the concept of post modernity usually do so at their own peril; in the first place, no definition is neutral and, secondly, definitions give “totalizing” accounts. Consequently, in Vanhoozer’s understanding of what the postmodernists are saying, “a definition of postmodernity is as likely to say more about the person offering the definition than it is of ‘the postmodern” (1). Unfortunately, while those who agree that they are postmodernists are not in agreement as to what it is they are, some of those whose thoughts tilt towards the postmodern reject the term. Is it any wonder then that in his book, [The Idea of a Postmodern: A History], Hans Bertens comments that the term “postmodernism” and other terms derived from it, such as “postmodern”, “postmodernity”, “postmodernize”, “postmodernist”, “are not only exasperating, but equally confusing and compounding” (3).

In his essay “Process Thought and Harmony”, Warayuth Sriwara Kuel says that despite the ambiguous and multiple meaning of the word “postmodern”, the term has become a “specter” roaming around the academic world, since “more

and more intellectuals from various fields like to use the word to label their ideas and positions” (101). However, for Lawrence E. Cahoon, in [From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology] gives 3 main connotations that philosophical reflections on postmodernism revolves around, and then argues, in my opinion, falsely that “all three reactions are misguided. Certainly the term ‘postmodern’... can be subjected to easy riddick as hopelessly ambiguous and empty” (1). The 3 connotations of postmodernism identified by Cahoon are: one, it refers to the last escape from authoritarianism, colonialism, racism and domination which are all legacies of modern European thought; two, it connotes the attempt by intellectuals on the Left to destroy Western Civilization; and three, a collection of hermeneutic writers and scholars whose obscure presentations make it look as though they are not saying anything. What is significant, for us Africa, the Cahoon’s classification is that the first one appears to be the major goal of postmodernism- an escape by those that have long been on the periphery of Western intellectual domination. If postmodernism is concerned as a “going beyondness” hardly will it be of interest to us as Africans. The second characterization appears to be a reaction by Western intellectuals to paint postmodernism in bad light. And on the fact that some postmodernists appear obscure, I think it is part of the protest character of postmodernism itself- it is a reaction against the simple and naïve progressiveness of modernity

I do not think, however, that we should get trapped or lost in the labyrinth of the excessive and polemical “scholarshipism” of postmodernism. For if postmodernists disagree about many things, they would never disagree on the fact that postmodernism is a rejection of absolutes, essences and foundations. Jean Francois Lyotard, one of the contemporary proponents of postmodernism captures its meaning succinctly when he says in [The Postmodern Condition], that postmodernism is “incredulity towards metanarratives” (109). By this, he means that we should abandon all attempts we make to find a grand, universal, trans-historical, transcultural scheme, paradigm or algorithm with which we can legitimize knowledge or justify the choice of one theory over another. Having abandoned the search for a grand norm, we are then left with heterogeneous, pluralistic multiplicity, incommensurable differences. No wonder James Morley, (UNAH 117) opines, as a corollary, that postmodernists “see the dissolutions of distinction, the merging of subject and object, self and other... a sarcastic playful parody of Western modernity and a radical anarchist rejection of all attempts to define reality or re-present the human subject”. Postmodernism rejects the essential pillars of the modern period: Reason (Rationality) and Method (Science). In his [Multicultural Citizenship], Will Kymlicka writes about “the debate between...rationalists and postmodernists” (153), thereby juxtaposing postmodernism and rationalism.

Post-modernism, therefore, is a calculated and frontal rejection of the various rationalist and modernist, models of interpretation of reality, especially those ideas that lay tenacious grip on the immutability of knowledge, truth and essentialism. Post-modernism sees reality as a social construct, given meaning only within the context of certain defined cultural conditions. For them any reality not defined and characterized by communities or societies, based on their cultural particularity, is no reality at all. Consequently, post-modernism rejects all ideas and theories that lay claim or essay to be cross-cultural; such as Marxism, Humanism, Existentialism, Socialism, Essentialism, Darwinism, Creationism, Evolutionism, Spiritualism, Religionism, etc. These theories are regarded as being authoritative and possessive of absolute truth, and therefore, unable to access reality.

Writing in an essay titled, “Richard Rorty and the Postmodern Rejection of Absolute Truth”, Dean Geuras quotes Rorty (Geuras calls Him “postmodernism’s most-gifted defender”) as saying that there is no “Skyhook” which removes us from our subjective condition to reveal any reality existing independent of our perception. Recall that in his earlier book [Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature], Rorty had laid the blame of the “evils” of the modern period on Kantian Foundationalism, and argues in chapter 3 “The Idea of a ‘Theory of Knowledge’” that it was this attempt to “Theorize” on knowledge that created the castrating hegemony of modern epistemology, to which postmodern hermeneutics stands opposed. For Rorty, therefore:

Hermeneutics is an expression of hope that the cultural space left by the demise of epistemology will not be filled, that our culture should become one in which the demand for constraint and confrontation is no longer felt. The notion that there is a permanent neutral framework whose “structure” philosophy can display is the notion that the objects to be confronted by the mind, or rules which constrain enquiry, are common to all discourse, or at least to every discourse on a given topic. Thus epistemology proceeds on the assumption that all contributions to a given discourse are commensurable. Hermeneutics is largely a struggle against this assumption. (315-316)

The ambivalence between epistemology and hermeneutics is not strictly our concern here. I have addressed it more closely in my essay, “Science and the ‘End’ of Epistemology”. But our interest is on the fact that the postmodernists see the modern period as the dawn of Reason and Science, and the grand theorizing led to, as the [Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy] puts it, “a naive and earnest confidence in progress... in objective and scientific truth”, the result is that postmodernism became, in philosophy, “a mistrust for the *grand’s recites* of modernity, the large scale justifications of Western society and confidence in its

progress visible in Kant, Hegel or Marx or arising from ‘utopian’ visions of perfection achieved through evolution, social improvements, education, or the deployment of science”(294-5).

A mere cursory glance at postmodernism would reveal that it does appear that if modernity would survive, if one could still hoist what James F. Harris, in his challenging book, [Against Relativism: A Philosophical Defense of Method], “the tattered flag of modernity” (4), then we must save modern science and the epistemological foundation that stands at its philosophical base. Otherwise, the collapse of science marks the collapse of the Modern Enlightenment project. But that’s not the fundamental desire of postmodernists. They want to, as Rorty puts it, open “cultural space” to multiple and plural criteria of justification and legitimization. At this point, we must move on.

Postmodernism and Modern Science

I must observe from the onset that before what we come to know as modern science, whatever was baptized “scientific” or “science” was mainly developed from the philosophy of the encyclopedic-minded Greek philosopher, Aristotle. Most of what later became the concerns of Astronomy were based on Aristotle’s musings on theories. As a matter of fact Claudius Ptolemy’s geocentric conception of the universe (that the Earth was the centre of the solar system, and all other planets; including the Sun, revolved round the Earth) was directly deduced from Aristotle’s theories. Ptolemy, an astronomer who did most of his works in Alexandria, Egypt, had to publish a work with the title *The Almagest* in A.D. 150.

The geocentric theory was the dominant view of the universe for several centuries. As a matter of fact, it was not until 1543 when a Polish monk named Nicholai Copernicus proposed a heliocentric theory, according to which the Sun was seen as the centre of the Universe, with all other planets, including the Earth, revolving round the Sun. In his essay, “The Fall of Aristotelian and Ptolemaic System”, Enyimba Maduka notes that one of the reasons why the Copernican system overthrew the Aristotelian/Ptolemaic system was that “Copernicus geometrically placed the sun at the centre of the universe and had the earth orbit it, thus, reducing the unweidling number of epicycles from 80 to 34” (210), a claim he attributes to Chris Butler. Of course, as at that time, the idea of a moving Earth was absolutely mind-bogging to men without secular mentality, especially religious bigots. Indeed, it was branded “Heresy”. And even for those

4
1
Page
who understand the veracity of the Copernican position, it was thought at that time that the planetary motion was *circular*. However, that was to change later when the young mathematician, Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), discovered an *elliptical* rather than a *circular* orbit.

For the postmodern attitude in science to be proposed, propagated and grounded, certain conceptions and perceptions of the scientific enterprise had to be jettisoned. That science is a rational endeavor is a view vigorously and rigorously pursued by the Austrian philosopher of science, Karl R. Popper (1902-1994). This accounts for why he spent a large chunk of his 92 years, resources and works trying to distinguish science, not just from non-science, but equally from what he called “pseudo-science”. His battle with historicism, especially of the Marxian type, is well expressed in his popular works; notably, [The Poverty of Historicism] and the two volumes of [The Open Society and its Enemies], as well as [Conjectures and Refutations]. Popper argues that science makes progress by “bold conjectures and the critical search for what is false in our various competing theories”(52) which, for him, materialist dialectical method is not capable of doing. He, therefore, holds Marxism guilty of what he called “reinforced dogmatism”. In [Conjectures and Refutations] for example Popper writes that:

Hegelian dialectic, or its materialistic version, cannot be accounted as a sound basis for scientific forecasts. Thus if forecasts based on dialectic are made, some will come true, and some will not. In the latter case, obviously, a situation will arise which has not been foreseen. But dialectic is vague and elastic enough to interpret and to explain this unforeseen situation just as it interpreted and explained the situation which it predicted and which happened not to come truth. (333)

Our interest here is not really on Popper’s intellectual battle against Platonism, Hegelianism or Marxism. We are citing him because he represents a classical expression of what modern science represented: methodological exactness and the dogged search for truth.

Consequently, the very first thing we notice about postmodernism in science is that it had to attack the colossal image of science, it had to debunk the view not only that rationality is the basis for modernity, but equally the view that sees in modern science the best representation, glorification and expression of that rationality! The issue gained currency that modern science cannot become the ground for the justification of reality when it rests on grounds that themselves need to be justified. In other words, how can we accept (or justify the correctness of) the measurement taken with the ruler (or metre, or tape) of modern science when we are asking for the justification for using the ruler, in the first place? John Kekes, in his essay, “Recent Trends and Future Prospects in Epistemology”, explores some of these arguments.

The next edifice that had to be pulled-down to pave way for the postmodern conception of science was the idea of the “unity of science”, that is, that “science is science” irrespective of what the subject-matter is. For instance,

at inception, and in order to be listed in the fashionable and “respectful” science “hall-of-fame”, what became known as “social sciences” wanted to ape the method of physical sciences hollow. Of course, at the dawn of modernity in the 17th century, when the idea of a prescribed methodology, was muted, it was possible to even imagine it because there was only one fully developed science, physics, or more specifically Newtonian Mechanics. Newton was so permeating in the modern period that his six-step of scientific enquiry was for long the dominant “method of science”. Bertrand Russell, in [History of Western Philosophy] makes a parody of the Biblical story of the beginning of all things. In a poetic expression Russell writes: “Nature and Nature’s laws lay hid in the dark, God said, Let Newton be”, and all was light”(523) for Russell “almost everything that distinguishes the modern period from earlier centuries is attributable to science, which achieved its most spectacular triumph in the seventeenth century (512).

The purpose of the postmodern rejection of a “unified science” is *postmodernly* simple: a unified science is an attempt to create a grandstand where all sciences would converge and that would lead to the demand for a single standard for legitimization. The result would, obviously, be a regimentation—the emergence of a trans-scientific, narrative for all the sciences. Yet, but what the postmodernists want is a multiplicity of methods; that is, let each science or scientific enquiry articulate its methods and procedures in line with its subject-matter.

Having laid these brief foundations, I think that the stage is set for us to discuss Kuhn and Feyerabend as exemplars of the postmodern attitude in science.

Kuhn on Scientific Revolutions

A clearer and better understanding of what we have called “postmodernism in science” now begins with a consideration of the thoughts of Thomas S. Kuhn. Kuhn begins his ground breaking book, [The Structure of Scientific Revolutions] by beaming a critical searchlight on the colossal, or rather bogus, image of science as the paradigm of institutionalized rationality. With an exploration of the history of science and an examination of the actual practice of science, Kuhn’s discovery and conclusion was that this towering image can be debunked.

The radical form of epistemological relativism usually associated with and charged to Kuhn emanated from the theory of the incommensurability of paradigms which he espoused. In the opinion of Harris, although many of the issues that have led to the rise in the plethora of views about the image of science have been raised earlier by people like David Hume and Charles Pierce, “these debates are now explicitly formulated within the philosophy of science, and the stakes certainly have been raised. On the table now are the very rationality of science itself and the viability of epistemology as a philosophical enterprise. The

ugly specter of relativism is raised, Skepticism is clothed in new sheep's clothing, and science is in danger of becoming... just another ideology" (73).

After laying the foundation of his discussion by throwing a swipe at the image of science via a consideration of the history of science and what scientists themselves do, Kuhn proceeds by considering what he calls the period of normal science. This period is the period when the members of a particular scientific community share a common model or paradigm; that is, when every member of that community refers to or works from a common "theory laboratory". Many commentators find Kuhn's idea of paradigm very vague and too elastic. In fact, in their edited work, [Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge], Imre Lakatos and A. Musgrave (59-90) quotes one Masterman as identifying about 22 different senses in which Kuhn used the term "paradigm". We shall get back to this challenge later when we would be carrying out a concluding critique in this essay; but our major concern here is that understanding the idea of a "paradigm" is crucial to understanding Kuhn's conception of "normal science". Early in *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Kuhn refers to paradigms as what "provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research" (10), but later in the book (174- 190), he launches into a fuller expression of the meaning (s), content(s) of paradigms. Kuhn captures the relationship between paradigms, the scientific community and normal science, in the following words:

The study of Paradigm ... is what mainly prepares the student for membership in the particular scientific community with which he will later practice. Because he there joins men who learn the basis of their field from the same concrete models, his subsequent practice will seldom invoke overt disagreement over fundamentals. Men whose researches are based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. That commitment and the apparent consensus it produces are prerequisites for normal science, i.e., for the genesis and continuation of a particular research tradition. (10-11)

This kind of "gentleman's agreement" and respect for a particular paradigm (it is not a legislated action, there is some sought of voluntary compulsion to have a feeling of not just belonging but equally belongingness to the "exalted scientific community), and the continued reliance on that paradigm to solve problems within the scientific community, clearly define the period of normal science. As Newton-Smith correctly captures it, "during this period, the energies of members of the community are given over to solving Puzzles defined by the paradigm, which is itself based on some significant achievement" (107).

He, however, argues that because Kuhn's use of the term "paradigm" is "vague", it would be hard to suppose that the periods of what Kuhn called

“normal science” can be clearly defined. However, as to whether there can be periods of agreement, by a scientific community, on both theoretical assumptions and on the problems to be solved, there can be no doubt. If anomalies are detected during normal science, they are treated as problems to be solved rather than as something that refutes the theory.

According to Kuhn, there would come a time when the number of unsolved puzzles as well as the anomalies would mount. This would automatically result in a crisis of confidence by the sharing scientific community. The agreement that was the basis for the sharing of the paradigm would begin to break as alternative theories are articulated. At this period, when faith is lost in an existing paradigm, a revolution, analogous to political revolution, would occur within the scientific community. In drawing this analogy with political revolution, Kuhn argues that under “normal” political circumstances, there is agreement on the means of decision making, but in revolutionary situations, some individuals attempt to change the society by force through the creation of a new framework for decision making. In Kuhn’s own words:

As in political revolution, so in paradigm choice—there is no standard higher than the assent of the relevant community. To discover how scientific revolutions are affected, we shall, therefore, have to examine, not only the impact of nature and logic, but also the techniques of argumentative persuasion effective within the quite special groups that constitute the community of scientists. (94)

The implication of the above is that historical and sociological factors are indispensable in science. Propaganda becomes a crucial factor in science. As Kuhn again says; “the normal scientific tradition that emerges from scientific revolution is not only incompatible but often actually incommensurable with that which has gone before (102).

The focus on paradigm is about the most important contribution made to the philosophy of science by Kuhn’s *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. From a somewhat “preparadigmatic” era, Kuhn characterizes a period of agreement among the scientific community on the model for methods, techniques and questions in science. According to Harris, ‘the single most-important and, at the same time, one of the most controversial aspects of Kuhn’s science is that it is paradigm based” (76).

That an aspiring scientist must be aware of the paradigm of a scientific community, that only there from can he consciously proceed if he wants to be a fruitful and accepted member of that community, and that the loss of faith in a particular shared model (paradigm) results in a situation similar to that of the Biblical “to your tents Oh Israel”, appear to be Kuhn’s innovative position. It is in the emergence of a new paradigm after the revolution (let us call it Normal-

Science-Next, NS-N) that our postmodern interest in Kuhn lies. According to Kuhn:

If two men disagree, for example, about the relative fruitfulness of their theories, or if they agree about that but disagree about the relative importance of fruitfulness and say, scope in reaching a choice neither can be convicted of a mistake, nor is either being unscientific. There is no neural algorithm for theory- choice, no systematic decision procedure which, properly applied, must lead each individual in the group to the same decision. (199-200)

The Kuhnian position has been perceived as post-modernist or post-positivist because of the way he characterized the nature of the occurrence of the revolutionary shift from the old to the new paradigm. Kuhn has characterized that change as a “sudden and unstructured event” and it would appear that reasoning oneself into a new paradigm is impossible since Kuhn says that the guiding motivation for accepting the new paradigm “can only be made on faith”. Science becomes another ideology like religion. For him, “proponents of competing paradigms are always at least slightly at cross-purposes” (148). James Harris clearly explains Kuhn’s position in the following words:

The new paradigm which replaces the old one during a scientific revolution is, according to Kuhn, “incommensurable” with the old paradigm, that is: since the new paradigm “necessitates a redefinition” of the old and since the standards and criteria for the evaluation of paradigms are internal to the paradigms, it follows that the change from the old paradigm to the new one cannot come about by appealing to some neutral criteria or method of paradigm selection. Perhaps most importantly, the replacement process is not the old, familiar falsification/ verification process from science before the revolution where certain data might either falsify or verify one paradigm or the other. Since the new paradigm is incommensurable with the old, the process of abandoning the old in favor of the new cannot be a gradual, logical or “scientific” process based upon evidence or some form of reasoning. (78)

Page 19
Let us try to itemize Kuhn’s position from what Harris has just said: the emergence of a new paradigm for NS-N is seen as postmodernist because: one, the new paradigm was not a logical or systematic (or even dialectical) deduction from the old paradigm. This means that the question of building from the past upon which science thrives does not arise; Two, the new paradigm was not selected from a kind of neutral pool of paradigms whose legitimacy is vouched for by the members of the scientific community. In other words, there is no

“respectable” or “respected” paradigm or class of paradigms that the scientific community accepts (or had accepted), and which the community invests with the toga of finality or authority when it comes to paradigm choice, no paradigm adjudicator with a mandate such as: “if there is a disagreement on paradigms choice or if there is loss of confidence in or failure of an existing paradigm, provide a new one”. A third reason for the postmodernist characterizing of Kuhn is because the new paradigm that emerges from the revolutionary period is not based on the old principles of falsification (a la Popper) or verification (a la Logical Positivism).

However, a major question needs to be asked at this point, especially as it relates to the third reason given above: why must the failure of the new paradigm to have its base on Popper’s Falsification and the Verification principle of logical positivism become an issue? Are the Logical positivists and Popper the only *propounders* of scientific methodologies? Well, to address the matter straight away, we need to remember Popper’s frontal important role in perceiving science as a rational enterprise. He was a leading figure in the conception of the place of science in the overall development of the twentieth century. When it comes to Logical Positivism, the place of the movement in the growth of science is more of a reference point in almost all discussions on and about science. In his small but insight-lending book: [The Philosophy of Logical Positivism and the Growth of Science], G. O. Ozumba reminds us that the movement marks “a turning point in the history and development of ideas” (9), and notes the fact that the movement concentrated on the “observable” and the rejection of metaphysics. But if Ozumba did a critique of logical positivism, Harris was more critical of the project of the logical positivists. In fact, according to Harris, it was the failure of the project of logical positivism that opened up the modern period to a barrage of punches (of criticism) and then inaugurated the postmodern relativistic alternative. For Harris, the disappointment of a few men promising a lot to many (with their Verification Principle) and failing to deliver, just led to the belief that the last stronghold of modernity has collapsed (7). The issue here is not really on logical positivism. We rather want to provide explanation for why the failure of Kuhn’s analysis to conform to the Verification Principle should become important. The objectivity usually claimed for the Verification Principle is denied in Kuhn since the criteria for judging or evaluating each paradigm is internal not external to it.

20
Page
However, before we proceed to look at Feyerabend, it is important to briefly look at the so-called “shift of position” by Kuhn. We need must note that every (philosophical) position taken by a scholar is read, studied, analyzed and interpreted. The thesis of the “incommensurability of paradigms” put forward by Kuhn was interpreted to mean that he has voted for “irrationality” and of courses, radical relativism, with the legendary difficulties associated with them. In his

essay, “Reflections on My Critics”, Kuhn attempts further explanation and clarification of his position when he writes that:

My critics respond to my view on this subject (the incommensurability of paradigms) with charges of irrationality, relativism and the defense of mob rule. These are all labels which I categorically reject even when they are used in my defense... To say that, in matters of theory choice, the force of logic and observation cannot in principle be compelling is neither to defend logic and observation nor to suggest that there are not good reasons for favouring one theory over another. (234)

Relativism of the radical incommunicating type as well as irrationality juxtaposed with the Western conception of rationality (as logical consistency), is so emptily and negatively construed that no Western scholar would want to proudly and brazenly be associated with them, because they do not see the complementarity between the rational and the irrational, the relative and the objective. So, no one needs to blame Kuhn for wanting to wash his hands off such associations, either positively or negatively.

Kuhn, in this shift of position is interpreted as suggesting simply that there is no “neutral algorithm for theory choice” (200) and not that one cannot proffer “good reason” to justify the preference of one theory over another. Understood in this latter sense, Kuhn, it is assumed, would not be seen as a brash irrationalist. In the opinion of Harris, Kuhn, in the explanation for the so-called shift, wants to retain the notion of incommensurability but in a “moderate” (89) and “weakened” (90) way. We must pause now on Kuhn (we would return to it when we carry out a critical conclusion of this essay) to consider another iconoclastic analyst of the image of science, Paul Feyerabend.

Feyerabend and the two Pillars of Modern Science

Maybe it was intentional, maybe it was not; but when Paul Feyerabend wrote his two most popular books, [Against Method] (1975) and [Farewell to Reason] (1987), he struck two bomb-like blows at the two Pillars of modernity: Science and Reason. When Feyerabend’s book, [Against Method] appeared, it sought to provide equal access to questions of *method* and perception of result for other traditions such as astrology, Witchcraft and traditional medicine. Newton-Smith called [Against Method] the most “lively or entertaining critique of the scientific method” (125). For him the work could have been titled [Against Received Opinion]. For Feyerabend, there is nothing sacrosanct or special about science because there is no clear difference, in method and result, between science and other traditions.

Although Feyerabend usually rejects the influence of Karl Popper on him, it is not difficult to observe that influence. After all, both of them, at one

time, taught at the London School of Economics and Political Science. What Feyerabend opposes when he speaks of “method in science is the idea of selecting, adopting or relying on a system of rules that would generate a logic of justification or guiding compass that would help scientists to legitimately make theory choices. Science thrives and makes progress by claiming that there is such a universal notion of human understanding and that if humankind is able to grasp it, then progress can be made at all fronts In [Farewell to Reason].”Feyerabend pejoratively describes such claims as “conceited, ignorant, superficial, incomplete and dishonest” (25). In a yet to be published essay, “On the Diction of Postmodernists” I have not only discussed and analyzed a plethora of such adjectives, I have equally suggested reasons why postmodernists use such derogatory, debasing, confrontational and polemic terms when discussing modernity and its harbingers.

Newton-Smith appears to summarize Feyerabend’s project in [Against Method] when he says that he (Feyerabend) “stands against the venerable tradition of searching for a system of rules which it is held ought to guide scientists in the business of theory choice” (126).

Feyerabend does not accept the doctrine or principle of Cummulativism, according to which scientific knowledge is acquired piecemeal through observation, formulation of theories and experimentation. Cummulativism, as Princewill Alozie explains, in [History and Philosophy of Science]:

If T1 is an accepted scientific theory for a given period and there emerged a new theory T2 which could explain things that T1 could not explain; as long as T1 was empirically confirmed initially, then T2 will necessarily include T1. But T1 and T2 are about a given phenomenon. If there is a third theory, T3 which has more explanatory power than the first two, then we shall be having series is knowledge that are linked up thus: T1–T2-T3-. (155)

In rejecting the cumulative model, Feyerabend argued that the words used in formulating the different theories would have had changes in their meanings and so the theories cannot be linked with themselves in the attempt to address a particular phenomenon. This rejection of piecemeal acquisition of theories is similar to Kuhn’s view that a new paradigm is incommensurable with an old one.

We must remember that Feyerabend’s attack on science is on the concept of method. Of course, there are two activities which methodological concerns in science usually cover: First, what rules are there for the discovery of theories and what principles can we objectively use to justify our evaluation of rival theories. In other words, if we want to discover theories in science, are there laid-down rules to be followed in doing so? Second, when it comes to preferring one theory over another or evaluating the explanatory content of two or more theories are

there principles (as fundamental truths) that we can possibly rely on to justify our choice? These are the two broad issues that are traditionally held to be the focus of methodological concerns in modern science.

Not only does Feyerabend reject a distinction between these two activities of discovery and justification; he proceeded to reject that science has a method. For him, in [Against Method]:

The idea of method that contains firm, unchanging and absolutely binding principles for conducting the business of science meets considerable difficulty when confirmed with the results of historical research. We find then, that there is not a single rule, however plausible, and however grounded in epistemology, that is not violated at some time or other. (23)

Feyerabend rejects the view that science is a rational activity; he debunks the claim that science, in method and result, can be clearly distinguished from myth, religion, philosophy, astrology and even ideology. The charge of “epistemological anarchism” is usually leveled against Feyerabend. This is sequel to his claim that:

It is clear then, that the idea of a fixed method or of a fixed theory of rationality, rests on too naive a view of man and his social surroundings... it becomes clear that there is only one principle that can be defended under all circumstances and in every stage of human development. It is the principle anything goes! (27-28)

The charge of “mob-psychology”, “cognitive egalitarianism”, “anything-goes relativism” etc., have been variously leveled at Feyerabend and his postmodern colleagues in the philosophy of science. But no matter the charge, Feyerabend’s focus should not be forgotten: that there is nothing special about science. As he says again that logic and arguments cannot make science any better than it is. In another monumental later book, [Farewell to Reason], Feyerabend says that “the idea of a science that proceeds by logically rigorous argumentations is nothing but a dream (43)”.

What Feyerabend means by “anything goes” is not that there are no methods which sciences in various forms or which scientists use. What he is against is the thought of making or perceiving science as rationality per excellence, which contains one method. Again, he says that his argument does not directly encourage the proliferations of methods or theories. He later argued that all he had done was to show that the rationalist cannot possibly exclude proliferation of methods. He suggests that the Galilean example should be imitated: he did not succumb to the paradigm or method of his day. That way,

progress was ensured. No wonder Newton-Smith refers to Feyerabend as “a paradigm case of ... a non rationalist” (126).

What Feyerabend appears to be arguing for can be expressed thus: “Hey”, dear rationalists, would you by adopting your rationalist method/theory also (at the same time and automatically) exclude someone else from holding on to and adopting a method/theory that does not conform to your criterion (or criteria) of rationality? In other words, the rationalist cannot simply by adopting a position assume that the mere fact that he took that position would prevent, stop, prohibit or disallow the possibility of holding on to a counter rational position.

In [Science in a Free Society], Feyerabend disagrees that proving that a system is inconsistent, as the rationalists do many times is even a proof that there is something wrong with the system since even inconsistent theories, have brought about progress in science (210-211). He further posits that this desire and demand for rules of logical consistency without exceptions would end up becoming indefinite and, consequently embracing of everything (128).

At the end of the day, Feyerabend was overall interested in showing that science is just one ideology among many others. He chose to critically strike at the two fundamental pillars of modern science: Method and Reason (Rationality)!

Although, science has laid claim to several technological breakthrough, the consensus of opinion appears to be that science (and its method) is only but one cognitive approach to the vast array of reality. As Alozie concludes for us:

The history and method of science give it the colour of any other ideology or world-view. Some of the claims of science are similar in character or “truth-content”, to myths and religion. There is the excellence and superiority of science and also the imperialist powers who do not allow other cultures to make their contribution to the body of knowledge that can improve the world. Might appear to be right. In quite a large measure, Paul Feyerabend is correct in his criticism of how science is perceived... it has been discovered that the word “science” may not have a great technological value. Science has to be co-joined with technology for political and economic reasons. The under-developed and impoverished majority of world population need to learn that there is an ideology which is superior to their various religions, myths and cultural values. That superior ideology is science. (160)

Page 24 Of course, science is philosophy, especially when we realize that “Scientia” means “to know”, which is the same thing as “episteme”, from where the term “epistemology”, a major branch of Philosophy, is derived. Science, as Alozie has just noted had to become “science and technology” in order to become a practical

discipline. As “science”, building theories and discovering laws are the central concerns, but as “technology”, it would involve lighting bursen-burners and mixing chemicals.

Conclusion: Implications for Africa

Fortunately, the only thing being concluded here is the text of this essay, the issues at stake here are not being concluded (and may never be). There are so many things involved in addressing the thoughts of Kuhn and Feyerabend, on the one hand, and the debate between postmodernists and modern science/rationality, on the other. We have only used Kuhn and Feyerabend as examples of the postmodern attitude to science. Attempting to grapple with the complexities of the issues would be unnecessary, even impossible, here.

While Kuhn considered the history and actual practice of science as the basis for rejecting the bogus image of science, Feyerabend argued that in terms of method and result, modern science is just one way of cognizing reality, among many others. No doubt, like all other issues that domiciles within the philosophical discourse, they have many supporters and critics, but we won't go into much details to consider the (de)merits of each. A fundamental question needs to be asked at this point: what really was the problem with modern science that makes postmodernism get so much attention, even when one disagrees with it? In other words, is the postmodern attitude in science (and postmodernism in general) just some gibberish, some play with words?

This way of interpreting or understanding the word “science” is too exclusive, too restrictive for participation by other cultures. But what is “science” but an articulation of an understanding of the Laws of nature? And are we concluding that only the Western world had the capacity to understand nature? It is also the case that when tools or equipments are fashioned or adapted, in line with this understanding, in order to confront the environment and improve humankind's existence, it is called “technology”. Neither science, nor its practical output, technology, is an exclusive preserved of any culture. Having set the pace, as a result of colonial conquest, the West has made those of us in Africa to get into a desperate rat race to “prove” that we “have” philosophy, science, religion, history, etc in line (unfortunately) with the conceptual schemes of the West.

Newton-Smith has argued that “Feyerabend... is much more radical in his critique of rationalism than Kuhn. Kuhn holds that there are rules held in common by all members of the scientific community” (126). But from history, practice and results of science, we have agreed to a large extent, that the theorization, systemization and *Kant-ization* of knowledge in the modern period led to a visceral regimentation of reality. Modern science appeared not only to have appropriated knowledge, but actually “arrested” and “detained” it in the

intellectual and scholarly “Concentration Camp” of Western bookish, scholarship, nay school-ship form. Anyone that wants to have access to knowledge must have to pass through the guarding-Gestapo of an imposing Epistemology, the allusion to Kant here is crucial because he is the source of the foundationalism that postmodernists reject. In my essay “A Critique of the Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant”, I have discussed some of these issues, especially with regard to Rorty’s claim that it was Kant that made epistemology “self conscious”

Liotard has argued that knowledge is broader than science, since scientific knowledge is “narrative” which means that it appeals to a single, grand scheme (78). For him, science rejects other narratives, branding them “fables, myths and legends”. But the postmodern condition contains measures that build competence and they are derived from culture and custom. Legitimization, therefore, must be based on socio-political and on ethnocentric grounds. The result is that epistemology becomes sociology. For Lyotard, therefore, “all we can do is gaze in wonderment at the diversity of discursive species, just as we do at the diversity of plant and animal species (80).

Of course, when we use “science” here, we mean specifically “modern Western science”, because “science” is not a Western word. It is a way of understanding or explaining reality, and it exists in all cultures. Without getting into the semantic battle of what it is for any concept to be “African” (see for instance, S.B. Oluwole’s) “the Africanness of a Philosophy”, J.I Unah’s “Can a Work Be Both African and Philosophy”, and J.O. Oguejiofor’s “How African is Communalism”), I want to suggest that Jonathan O. Chimakonam’s new, courageous and insight- lending book, [Introducing African Science...] is a work given birth to by the spirit of multiplicity and plurality championed by the postmodern attitude. What Chimakonam refers to as “letting other cocks crow besides one”, a condition which is perceived as a transgression of “the boundaries of reason and the custom of the salient community” (3), is an allusion to and opening of what Rorty had earlier called “cultural space”.

In my paper “Africa Within the Globe: Confronting the Parameters of Cross-Cultural Philosophy”, I had argued that those of us in the African continent, and others in the Diaspora committed to Africa’s course, appeared to have shot ourselves in the foot when we began to talk of “African Philosophy” instead of “philosophy in Africa”. For philosophy is a universal endeavor and activity which exists and is carried out anywhere *Homo sapiens* dwell. The debate as to what makes anything “African” appears to be unresolved, since geography, birth and color may not be very helpful. The issue at stake here is not these debates. The point of interest here is the fact that postmodern hermeneutics created the pedestal for the thoughts of different cultures to be displayed, not to be *judged* against the backdrop of Western cannon of rationality, but to be

appreciated and described within the context of its own natural habitat. In my essay, “The Spectacles of Inter-cultural Philosophy: Same Frame, Different Lenses”, I have discussed the possibility; goals, need and challenges of an intercultural philosophy. At least, the possibility of an intercultural philosophy is a pointer that we do not have to, as it were, be conquered by the radical, non-communicating relativism that postmodernists often brandish.

Although many have regarded as gross distortions” the interpretation that Kuhn’s positions are skeptical and relativistic, it is obvious that his claim of emergence of competing paradigms at the dawn of “revolutionary Science”, aligns him with the plurality that is the hallmark of the post-modern era. No wonder Robert Baun and Feyerabend, in “Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos: A Crisis of Modern Intellect” regards as “intellectual anarchism” any position that could be interpreted as being the end of the reign of Reason (181).

Now, does Kuhn’s claim that the criterion for problem solving is INTERNAL to a particular paradigm also mean that the criterion for selecting or choosing one paradigm over another is also internal? One of the mercurial philosophers of science of our era, Israel Scheffler, in his book, *Science and Subjectivity*, said, and rightly too, that the kind of puzzles and their solutions may, and in fact does differ, from paradigm but it does not mean that one cannot reasonably argue over paradigms (202). Kuhn’s famous “irrationality thesis”, therefore, cannot be defended. The limitations imposed by the incommensurability of paradigm are enough for the acceptance of the impossible rational theory choice. For Kuhn, that limitation makes it both difficult and impossible “for an individual to hold both theories in mind together and compare them point by point with each other and with nature. That sort of comparison is, however, the process on which the appropriateness of any word like “choice” depends (Kuhn, *The Structure...*, 168).

Kuhn had hinged his decision on the incommensurability of paradigms on the view that the concepts used in formulating the paradigm have different meanings and applications. Kuhn’s popular example of what he means is shown in his claim that when Copernicus’ heliocentric view of the solar system was accepted in place of Ptolemy’s view, it was made possible via the denial of the title of “Planet” to the Sun, while it was not denied to the Earth. (Kuhn, *The Structure...* 128). That way, there was a change in the very meaning of the concept “planet”.

Those who accuse the postmodernists of playing with words or relying heavily on analysis of worlds forget that we communicate our thoughts with words or language. When it is argued that the postmodernists reject the very idea of “truth” (Kuhn, for e.g., SSR, 170), it is truth absolutized, regimented and canonized. However, in the essay “Reply to Criticism”, Feyerabend clearly argued that the notion of incommensurability is actually independent of the theory of Invariance in meaning (231-234). Andrew Sayer, in his

“Postmodernism and the Three ‘pomo’ Flips” says that in the final analysis, postmodernists end up “refusing all talk of truth and falsity, denying any kind of relationship between thought and world” (69)

This type of attack on and defense of relativism (especially) is popular and available within scholarly circles, so much so that they are beginning to sound like cracked records. For example, against the type of criticisms pursued by people like Sayer, Jonathan Chua Yi in his paper “A Postmodern Defense of Thomas Kuhn” argues that:

Despite showing all signs of belonging to the postmodern camp, Kuhn can be defended by arguing that relativism is necessitated by the way human understanding is itself structured. Although critics like Andrew Sayer might want to argue that reliable knowledge is still possible, it remains an unfortunate “truth” that even the standards of scientific objectivity are socially determined by the prevailing paradigm of science. What is important is not to ignore postmodernism or take a defeatist attitude toward it, but to approach it positively, for by disclosing the sociology underlying knowledge itself, we are made more aware not to take things at face value, not even truth itself. (Web N. P)

It does appear, in the long run, that those who feel the jitters when relativism comes to the fore, forget that the world needs the individuality and particularity offered by a relativistic attitude to build bulwark against the mental castration created by a standardization that is itself a product of a few. What Kuhn and Feyerabend appear to be saying, and which I agree with, is that one requires more than theories and method to be part of a community of scientists. The rules and principles that guide one’s choice of the theory or method, and which set the standards for justification of the choice, are not intrinsic to the theory or method. They must be sought outside them; they must be society-determined. Besides, Harris has voted for the relativism of the Goodman-type. According to him “Goodman’s version of relativism is a relativity mild-mannered, one with little or no serious consequences for the traditional scientific and epistemological notions of rationality” (72). Again, this is stark-raving Western intellectual bigotry. Does the mere fact of a lack of “serious consequences” for traditional Western notion of rationality, secure the acceptance of a particular brand of relativism? Who is making the rules here? Once again, Harris’s defense of *Rationality Westerna* throws it face down with a broken nose! That’s exactly the point that postmodernists are making: you don’t set the standards *from* your own pedestal, with your own conceptual schemes, and then illegitimately legislate it as standard for all cultures.

If there is anything the postmodern attitude in science has done, it is to apply speed-breakers on the racing track of modern science, a break that ensures that modern science does not race into its own destruction. Somehow, postmodernism's speed breakers on the tracks of modern science have provided liberation for the models of knowing and given them a voice to be liberated from this modern authoritarianism.

This is why in, [African Philosophy Through Ubuntu], Mogobe B. Ramose insists that the way the colonized people conceive reality, knowledge and truth has been in the penitentiary of "European epistemological paradigm" and would need to be released in order to engender what he calls "a common, authentic and liberating universe of discourse". And to be candid, I agree with his insistence that "African philosophy contains an ineliminable liberative dimension". For him, "the imperative for the authentic liberation of Africa requires neither a supplicative apologia nor an interminable obsequious defense of being an Africa" (4). Part of the reason why I appreciate Ramose's work is the "liberating dimension" it pursues. For indeed Africans need mental liberation before Africa would be socio-economically liberated.

The postmodern hermeneutic cleaning of the cultural space of all the occupying tendencies of Western epistemological theories should be an entry point for Africa to demand to be heard- and in her own terms. This is why I suggested that African philosophers should quit "Reflection" and develop a "Refl-active" mentality. In my essay "The Principle of Refl-action" as the Basis for a Culture of philosophy in African", I had suggested that the need to create a culture of "philosophizing" in Africa can best be served by a principle that ensures that the African "thinks -to- do" (refl-acts) instead of the luxury of the armchair philosophy introduced by colonial education.

Modern science, with its concomitant rationality and method, should be conceived and perceived as just another mode of cognition. In her daring book, [The Earth Unchained. A Quantum Leap in Consciousness], Catherine Acholonu has noted that "Quantum Physics is a science that has proved classical scientists wrong and the philosopher right. Quantum mechanics is the science of the humanist, the psychologist, the philosopher, the mystic..." (69). At the level of "quanti", exactness disappears in science. After all, at the time when modern science was talking about a prescriptive methodology that would suffice all the sciences, there was only one fully developed science- physics, or more specifically, Newtonian Mechanics. But now, the discussion of methodology has superseded the Newtonian type.

In an earlier paper, "The Mode of Knowledge in Science and Social Science", I observed that under the influence of Ernst Mach, Karl Pearson etc.. A new idea emerged to the effect that science is merely an accurate description of the world. For Mach, it did not matter what *method* the scientists followed in

describing as economically and as accurately as possible so as to be able to make *predictions*; what really mattered was that his predictions came out with a high *probability*. Also recent development in Cybernetics has shown that the traditional structure and method of science could not suffice the needs of contemporary science. Mach's *Sensationalism*, with its emphasis on *sense data*, has stimulated a new interest in the nature of the *empirical evidence* on which science is based. Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity and developed quantum mechanics precipitated a new crisis in Physics. This crisis later generated the methodological doctrine of P. W. Bridgeman. Bridgeman formulated the theory known as *Operationism or Operationalism*, according to which the *concepts* employed in scientific theories, must be defined in terms of *actual Operations* carried out by the scientists in measuring their *quantitative values*. Rudolf Carnap advocated an *inductive logic* according to which the important thing about scientific propositions is that they are confirmable in terms of available evidence, while *Karl Popper* believes that science does not use the *inductive* method but rather uses the hypothetico-deductive method.

Contemporary discussions of methodology have a tendency to pass into metaphysical or epistemological considerations. Such discussions do not really affect theory choice by working scientists. The philosophical content of methodological enquiries has changed also. Instead of the search for a unique scientific method, the general conclusion seems to be that the method of science is an admixture of logical construction and empirical observation.

The capacity to be logical and empirical are not exclusive preserves of any one culture or people. Globalizing Western science marked the season of bondage for other narratives. Cahoon's characterization of the many conceptions or connotations of the goal of postmodernism becomes necessary when postmodernism is taken as a global topic. However, seen in its true postmodern pluralistic fashion, there is nothing preventing the Western intellectual from continuing to hang on to the "tattered flag of modernity"- as long as from the point of view of Africa, postmodernism is perceived in its liberating dimension. Indeed, it is both conceptually and practically impossible for a thorough-going modernist to embrace postmodernism.

In life, nothing is also absolute; sometimes we win some, sometimes, we lose some. Perhaps, relativism is the prize we must pay to appreciate the plurality of cultural space provided by the postmodernists. And indeed, what is really wrong with relativism? Why do we not complain about the fact that no two human beings have the same deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)? Why do we attack relativism so much in epistemology when it exists in bio-ontology? The popular criticism of postmodernism which says that its rejection of a grand norm, if accepted as true, will also become a grand norm is an attempt to trivialize the substantial issues about modernity which postmodernity addresses. Besides,

postmodernism, as the next-after of modernity is a useful continuation of the attempt to develop modern concerns.

Although, I share some of the views of Edwin Etieyibo about the release of philosophical discourses in Africa from the totalitarian and universalizing hegemony of the Enlightenment project, I have certain areas that I feel uncomfortable about his analysis. One, the fact that we are still struggling to explain the content and nature of the concept “African philosophy” appears to be a self-imposed challenge. If one goes through Sophie B. Oluwole’s “The Africanness of a Philosophy” (1989) and Jim. I. Unah’s “Can a Work Be Both African and Philosophy?” (2002) Problem of the Locution “African philosophy” unveils itself to us. For indeed, what makes a work in philosophy “African” becomes altogether difficult to decipher with any degree of exactness. On several occasions, I have argued that philosophy is a specific human activity and exists anywhere humans are. It is not a Western, African, Asian or Biafran activity, but it is found in the West, Africa, Asia, Biafra or wherever.

What we have called “African philosophy” or (imagine) “African Ethics” are nothing but philosophical or ethnical reflections in and for Africa. When systematic academic philosophy began in the West, it was not called “Western Philosophy”. It was simply called “philosophy”!

Second, Etieyibo’s identification of human-centeredness, prescriptivity and normativity as features of what he calls “African Ethics” and which make it “susceptible to the same sort of worries that post-modernity raises for modern thinking” (79) gives the impression that these features are exclusive to ethical discourses in Africa. But it is not so, before the advent of linguisticism in philosophy, Ethics was (and still remains largely) a normative discourse. Metaethics came later when philosophers, in their self-styled desire to remain relevant and “keep-communicating”, decided to begin word-analysis. Although this may be necessary, but how significant does my coming to know the diverse meaning of the term “good” contribute to my being a good man? A careful reading of Etieyibo’s essay, seems to place before those who reflect on Africa’s realities a choice to make: either they accept postmodernism’s pluralistic opening of the “cultural space” which provided them the platform to (at least) be heard in their own terms or remain in the foundational objective state imposed by their orientation and pedagogic introduction to Western philosophical thinking.

We cannot end this essay without a word on what is known as Transmodernity, a term coined in 1989 by the Spanish philosopher (and feminist) Rosa Maria Rodriquez Magda. Transmodernity is a dialectical passage from modernity to postmodernity and then the transmodern Transmodernity is more of an attempt to salvage the best of modernity. It is the return and survival of the part of modernity that seems submerged by the invading radical relativism of postmodernism. Similarly, transmodernity is also post-modernity, but it is post-

modernity without the tendency to rupture reality, albeit innocently. According to Enrique Dussel, in his essay “Transmodernity and Interculturality: An interpretation from the perspective of the philosophy of liberation”, “Transmodernity points toward all of those aspects that are situated ‘beyond’ (and also ‘prior to’) the structure valorized by modern European/ North American Culture, and which are present in other non- European universal cultures, and have begun to move towards a pluriversal utopia” (19). The implication of the above is that, as a utopia, pluriversality keeps us always on the expectation for the best without losing hope.

Transmodernity believes that modernity is not even an exclusive West-European phenomenon and argues that although colonialism may have ended, coloniality and its basic logic has remained. Transmodernity has a focus on the liberation of cultures that has long been under the epistemological hold of coloniality. What this means is that transmodernity is a dialectical synthesis of the opposition between modernity and postmodernity.

Philip Idachaba and Sylvester Ogba, in their essay “Decolonizing African Philosophy: Perspectives from Afro-Constructivism and Transmodernity” discuss the transmodern triune dialectical movement from “particulars to universals and then to Pluri-versals” (42-60). What makes their essay significant is that they discuss it against the backdrop of African Philosophy; that is they analyze the part that Transmodernity can play in the decolonization project/process within African philosophy.

For transmodernity, pluri-versality is a universal project. What this means, if we interpret it properly, is that instead of the “uni-versality” of modernity, or the ordinary plurality of postmodernity, there is a new tilt towards “pluri-versality”. I am not, at this point, really concerned with a deep plunge into transmodernity. It will be the focus of further research, especially on its relationship to philosophical concerns in Africa. The implications of our discourse for Africa can range from the acquisition of a cultural space on the wings of postmodern thinking to the expression of ideas from a wide range of African thought—science, philosophy, art, etc., which were hitherto silenced by the roar of one universal reason. I simply would want to also point out that the dispute between modernists and postmodernists is no longer germane, it is now stale.

Modern science is no longer, ultimate wisdom.

Postmodern plurality appears to have been overtaken.

Transmodern pluri-versality is on the stage now and Africa surely has a lot of space on that stage!

Relevant Literature

1. ACHOLONU, Catherine. O. [The Earth Unchained: A Quantum Leap in Consciousness], 1995. AFA Publications: Owerri. Paperback.
2. AGBO, Joseph N. “A Critique of the Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant”, [Flash: Journal of Philosophy and Religion], pp76-82, 2008. Vol 2. No 1. Paperback.
- 3.— . “Africa within the Globe: Confronting the Parameters of Cross-Cultural Philosophy”, [Journal of Cultural Studies], pp182-213, 2003. Vol 5. No 2. Paperback.
- 4.— . “Science and the ‘End’ of Epistemology: The Implications of the Postmodern Philosophical Hermeneutics for Africa”, [paper presented at the Bi-annual Conference of the Nigerian Philosophical Association (NPA), Benue State University, Makurdi], 12-15 May, 2010. U.P.
- 5.— . “On the Diction of Post-Modernists”. U.P.
- 6.— . “the principle of ‘Refl-action’ as the Basic for a Culture of Philosophy in Africa”, [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp423-460, July-December, 2013. Vol 2. No 2. Paperback.
- 7.— . “The Mode of Knowledge in Science and Social Science”, [Philosophy and Logic, EZE Nwokereke Ed.], 2003. Jones Publications: Enugu. Paperback.
- 8.— . “The Spectacles of Inter- Cultural Philosophy: Same frame, Different Lenses”, [New Era Research Journal of Human, Educational and Sustainable Development], pp43-54, 2011. Vol 5. No 1. Paperback.
9. ALOZIE, Princewill I Ed. [History and Philosophy of Science, 2nd edn.], 2001. Clear Lines Publications: Calabar. Paperback.
10. BAUN, Robert F. and FEYEREBEND, Paul. “Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos: A Crisis of Modern Intellect”, [Science and Culture in the Western

Tradition: Sources and Interpretations], 1987. Gorsuch Scarishrick: Arizona. Paperback.

11. BERTENS, Hans. [The Idea of A Postmodern: A History], 1995. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London. Paperback.

12. BLACKBURN, Simon Ed. [Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy], 1996. Oxford University Press: Oxford. Paperback.

13. CAHOONE, Lawrence E. [From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology], 1996. Blackwell Publishers Ltd: Oxford. Paperback.

14. CHIMAKONAM, Jonathan O. [Introducing African Science: Systematic and Philosophical Approach], 2012. Author House: Bloomington. Paperback.

15. CHUA YI, Jonathan. “A postmodern Defense of Thomas Kuhn”. N. P. Retrieved 23rd August, 2014. Web.

16. DUSSEL, Enrique “Transmodernity and Interculturality: An interpretation from the Philosophy of Liberation”. N. P. Retrieved 24th August, 2014. Web.

17. ENYIMBA, Maduka. [The Fall of the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic System, Philosophy and the Rise of Modern Science, UDUIGWOMEN, Andrew F. Ed.], 2011. El- Johns Publishers: Uyo. Paperback.

18. ETIEYIBO, Edwin. “Postmodern Thinking and African Philosophy”, [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp67-82, Jan-Jun, 2014. Vol 3. No 1. Paperback.

19. FEYERABEND, Paul K. [Against Method], 1975. Verso Press: New York. Paperback.

20. — . [Farewell to Reason], 1987. Verso Press: New York. Paperback.

21. — . “Reply to Criticism”, [Boston studies in the Philosophy of Science, COHEN, R.S. and WARTOFSKY, M.W. Eds.], 1965. Humanities Press: New York. Paperback.
22. — . [Science in a free Society], 1978. New Left Books: London. Paperback.
23. GEURAS, Dean. “Richard Rorty and the Postmodern Rejection of Absolute Truth”. N. P. Retrieved July 23, 2014. Web.
24. HARRIS, James F. [Against Relativism: A Philosophical Defense of Method], 1993. Open Court: Illinois. Paperback.
25. IDACHABA, Philip and OGBA, Sylvester. “Decolonizing African Philosophy: Perspectives from Afro-Constructivism and Transmodernity”, [Frontiers of Knowledge in Philosophy: Cutting Edge Issues, ASIEGBU, Martins and CHUKWUOKOLO, Chidozie Eds.], pp42-60, 2014. Jones Publications: Enugu. Paperback.
26. KEKES, John. “Recent Trends and Future Prospects in Epistemology”, [Meta-Philosophy], April to July, 1997. Vol 8. No 2. and 3. Paperback.
27. KUHN, Thomas S. [The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd edn.], 1970. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago. Paperback.
28. — . “Reflections on My Critics”, [Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, LAKATOS Imre and MUSGRAVE, Alan Eds.], 1970. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. Paperback.
29. KYMLICKA, Will. [Multicultural Citizenship], 1995. Clarendon Press: Oxford. Paperback.
30. LAKATOS, Imre and MUSGRAVE, Alan, Eds. [Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge], 1968. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. Paperback.

31. LYOTARD, Jean-Francois. “The Postmodern Condition”, [After Philosophy: End or Transformation, BAYNES, Kenneth et al Eds.], 1987. MIT Press: Cambridge. Paperback.
32. NEWTON-SMITH, W. H. [The Rationality of Science], 1981. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London. Paperback.
33. OGUEJIOFOR, Obi J. “How African Is Communalism?”, [Perspectives on African Communalism, ODIMEGWU, Ike F.H. Ed.], 2007. Trafford Publishing: Canada. Paperback.
34. OLUWOLE, Sophie B. “The Africanness of a Philosophy”, [Readings in African Philosophy: An Anthology, OLUWOLE, S.B. Ed.], 1989. Maastech: Lagos. Paperback.
35. OZUMBA, Godfrey O. [The Philosophy of Logical Positivism and The Growth of Science], 2001. Bacos Publishers: Calabar. Paperback.
36. POPPER, Karl R. [Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth Of Scientific Knowledge], 1963. Routledge: London. Paperback.
37. — . [The Open Society and Its Enemies: Vol. 2 Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath Princeton], 1963. Princeton University Press: Princeton. Paperback.
38. — . [The Poverty of Historicism], 1957. Basic Books: New York. Paperback.
39. RAMOSE, Mogobe B. [African Philosophy through Ubuntu], 1999/2005. Mond Books Publishers: Harare. Paperback.
40. RORTY, Richard. [Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature], 1979. Princeton University Press: New Jersey. Paperback.
41. RUSSELL, Bertrand. [History of Western Philosophy], 1971. George Allen and Unwin Ltd: London. Paperback.

42. SAYER, Andrew. “Postmodernism and the Three ‘Pomo’ Flips”, [Reason and Social Science], 2000. Sage Publications Ltd: London. Paperback.
43. SCHEFLER, Israel. [Science and Subjectivity], 1967. Hackett Publishers: Indianapolis. Paperback.
44. SPANOS, William. “De-struction and the Question of Postmodern Literature: Towards a Definition”, [Par Rapport], 1979. Vol 2. No 2. Paperback.
45. SRIWARAKUEL, Warayuth. “Process Thought and Harmony”, [Christianity, Culture and the Contemporary World: Challenges and New Paradigms, Alam Edward J. Ed.], 2009. Nortre Dame University Press: Louaize, Lebanon. Paperback.
46. UNAH, Jim I. [Essays On Applied Phenomenology], 2002. Foresight Press: Lagos. Paperback.
47. VANHOOZER, Kevin J. [Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology], 2005. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. Paperback.

RELIGION, POSTMODERNISM AND POSTMODERN SCHOLARSHIP IN AFRICA

Jacob Olu ADETOLU, MA
Department of Religious Studies
Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife

Abstract

There is a somewhat agreement among the world academia and intellectuals that the world has moved beyond the stipulated margins of modernism into what is called the postmodern era. Consequently, postmodernism as a school of thought has become a subject of scholastic discourse among its protagonists and antagonists. What is done in this paper is an appraisal of postmodernism in a broader sense and specifically postmodern scholarship in the discipline of Religious Studies in Africa. The paper is divided into three sections: The first section examines the postmodernism project; the second focuses on the spirit of postmodernism within the academic study of religion with special interest in Africa, while the third section concludes the paper by examining some criticisms against postmodernism.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Deconstruction, Post-structuralism, Decolonization and Modernism

Introduction

The academic discipline of religion has had a long history of scholastic ground-breaking discoveries encapsulated in the works of certain figures that have been accorded the privilege position of ancestors as far as the academic study of religion is concerned. Durkheim's discourse on the nature of the sacred, Weber's *Verstehenden* methodology, Malinowski's exploration of the distinctions between religion and common sense and Freud's parallel between religious personal rituals and collective ones represent some of the foundational discourses that constitute the root of academic study of religion and as well remain reference points for contemporary Religious Studies scholars (GEERTZ 1973, 88). One important issue that must be noted in this regard is that, virtually all of these ground-breaking discoveries by these ancestors were made during the modern era and within scholastic framework and positivist frame of mind provided by, and characteristic of modern western thought (KUNIN 2006, 24).

Postmodernism as a scholastic phenomenon could be taken as a child of philosophical temperament. This assertion is compatible with the fact that Philosophy is about the only discipline that asks critical question about its validity as a subject of enquiry. Philosophy usually questions its method, its claim of its ability or competence to handle the task it sets before itself. These

philosophic dispositions are unconnected with the fact that, it is the nature of philosophy to ask fundamental questions. In answering these questions, nothing is accepted at its face value. Consequently, issues of whatever kind hardly get resolved in Philosophy.

The age of enlightenment and the modern era have brought about some level of consensus in the humans' quest to configure the nature of their being, their existence and of their natural environment and other phenomena with which the human existence are inevitably interwoven. Moreover, human progress and advancements expressed chiefly by the industrial revolution and technological innovations seem to have suggested that, there can be some objective truth and knowledge that could be granted consensus privilege as far as the humans' quest to know and to resolve his conflict is concerned. Indeed, the modern era has recorded some progress in the evolution of universal consensus in the scientific disciplines as well as in the humanities.

The dawn of the twentieth century seems to have reawakened philosophical temperaments that began to question discourses across disciplines which have reached varying levels of consensus in the human quest for knowledge. This is the origin of what has been termed "postmodernism" of which according to Lyotard, as discussed by Gary Aylesworth, its main goal is the rejection of the notion that inter-subjective communication implies a set of rules already agreed upon, and that universal consensus is the ultimate goal of discourse (GARY 2013, 21).

The aim of this paper is to appraise postmodernism and postmodern scholarship in Africa. This will be done in three parts. The first part will examine the postmodernism project; the second part will focus on the spirit of postmodernism within the academic study of religion with special interest on Africa. The third part, which concludes the paper examines some criticisms against postmodernism.

The Postmodernism Project

Two eras could be said to have preceded the postmodern era, the premodern and the modern. Premodernism, which originally means "possessed by authority" (for example, the religious authority of Catholic Church) was an age in which the individual was dominated by tradition (MORLEY 2013, Web. N. P.). Modernism on the other hand was birthed by the enlightenment-humanist rejection of tradition and authority in favor of reason and natural science, grounded upon the assumption of the autonomous individual, as the sole source of meaning and truth within a linear conception of history of a "real" world that becomes increasingly real and objectified (MORLEY 2013, Web. N. P.). Postmodernism can therefore be taken as a philosophical efforts targeted at examining the nature of meaning, knowing, and of knowledge in general even though academics in many fields

have debated over its precise definition. Postmodernists moreover question the validity of the faith in science and rationalism that originated during the Enlightenment and that became associated with the philosophy known as modernism.

The postmodern “boundary” is not so much of the period it begins, but more of the body of discourses that separate it from the modern era. It has been observed that postmodernism is so diffuse to an extent that its plural form ‘postmodernisms’ would be much more correct in referring to it. Thus, it is its somewhat fluidity and open-ended nature that makes it an epistemological model – the quality that makes it pretty difficult to define (DOLAN-HENDERSON 1996, 217). However, postmodernism has been conceived as a reaction, and perhaps a protest against the naïve and earnest trust and confidence in progress, and against the modern celebration and confidence in objective or scientific truth and advancement. Specifically in philosophy, postmodernism “implies a mistrust of the *grand récits* of modernity” (DOLAN-HENDERSON 1996, 217).

From the above, the postmodernism project is in its very essence, involves the scrutinization and a somewhat rejection of the claim of modernity embedded more or less in the justification of Western society and confidence in progress encapsulated in the thoughts and writings of philosophical figures such as Kant, Hegel, Marx etc., all arising from utopians visions of perfection achieved through evolution, social progress, education and the deployment of science (DOLAN-HENDERSON 1996, 295) Postmodernism as a term first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of [The Postmodern Condition] by Jean-François Lyotard (GARY 2013, 1). One of the core points in Lyotard’s postmodern discourse is his rejection of totalising perspective on history and society, and what he referred to as historical grand narrative exemplified in Marxism with its attempt to explain the world in terms of patterned interrelationship (AGGER 1991, 116). In this regard, Agger opines that Lyotard’s postmodern discourse is a clear and express rejection of Marxist totalizing tendencies and of its political radicalism, maintaining that, it is not possible for one to narrate a large story about the world, but a small one from a heterogeneous point of view of a subject position (AGGER 1991, 116).

The insistence of Foucault that knowledge must not be taken to be a phenomenon that must necessarily be accorded a privilege of unanimity, but that, it must rather be traced to diverse and different practices and discourses within the framework of which such body of knowledge are formulated is in line with the view of Lyotard discussed above, and as well spelt out the goal of the postmodern scholastic tradition. What the view of Foucault here suggests as stated by Beatrice Skordili is that, there is no such thing as universal truth, thus, Foucault rejects the existence of universal truth altogether (SKORDILI 2001, 337). Moreover, Foucault’s postmodern discourse on phenomena such as

criminality, sexuality and medicine emphasizes the idea of de-subjectification in which sociologically speaking, the “death of the subject” will give room for a critical interpretation of theories by the reader, and will also enable the survey subject to become an active participant in the research (SKORDILI 2001, 337).

There are other categories of discourse that scholars usually encounter difficulty in finely distinguishing from postmodernism. In this regard, post-structuralism and deconstruction readily come to the fore. Be that as it may, Agger opines that, there is a serious overlap between post-structuralism and postmodernism. Consequently, under the influence of Derrida and some French Feminists such as Kristeva, Agger takes post-structuralism to be a theory of knowledge and language, while following the tradition of scholars such as Lyotard, Foucault, Barthes etc., he conceives postmodernism as a theory of society, culture and history (AGGER 1991, 112). Derrida, one of the chief exponents of post-structuralism, is said to be responsible for the coinage of the term "deconstruction" which in essence means a philosophical method of looking for weak points in modern thinking and established ways of perception (1991, 216). In sum, these three different categories of discourse, (postmodernism, post-structuralism and deconstruction) irrespective of whether scholars agreed on their differences or not, one thing that is without dispute is that, they are all critical response to modern scholarship.

Although, this essay is about religion and postmodern scholarship in Africa, it is expedient we take a look at the manifestation of the postmodern temperament in the academic study of religion in general. Friedrich Nietzsche was a scholar whose style of thinking and writing mostly expressed in his skepticism about the notions of truth and fact anticipated some of the central tenets of postmodernism, such as the aesthetic attitude towards the world that sees it as a ‘text’, the denial of facts and essences, the celebration of the plurality of interpretations and the fragmented self, the politicization of discourse and the downgrading of reason (BLACKBURN 1996, 262). Nietzschean skepticism reached its peak by his pronouncement that “God is dead”, a pronouncement that has attracted serious responses and attentions from various theologians. To some extent, such attentions and responses have constituted the bulk of postmodern discourse in the academic field of religion.

Thomas J. J. Altizer, a theologian, interpreted the Nietzschean pronouncement that “God is dead” as the fullest realisation of the original, but forgotten message of Jesus that the kingdom of God is present in the “here and now.” (CARLSON 2001, 11). In Altizer’s view as stated by Carlson, the postulation of God’s death is compatible with, and just as it reinforces the theist belief in the classical transcendent and eternal God who remains beyond this world and its history (CARLSON 2001, 11). It is through the death of God that he was able to fully and irreversibly enter into the human historical world,

thereby liberating mankind from his guilty consciousness. According to Carlson, Altizer's reading and understanding of Nietzsche is within the framework of "Hegelian conception of kenosis and incarnation: the negation of God's other worldly transcendence occurs in the self-emptying through which God becomes fully incarnated and thus immanent in this world and its history" (CARLSON 2001, 11).

Another prominent scholastic discourse of postmodernism within the academic discipline of religion is found in the area of feminism and ecofeminism. Susan Dolan-Henderson in this regard has identified the three moments of postmodernism. It is necessary that the first two moments should be discussed so that the understanding of how feminism is intricately entrenched in postmodernism can be brought to limelight. The first moment according to her is the postmodern critique of modernity which "consists in unmasking modernity's contradictory impulses and results" (DOLAN-HENDERSON 1996, 217). In relation to this, modernity was discovered to have failed to deliver its avowed goals and objectives. Instead of bringing to fulfillment its promises: freedom, equality and unlimited progress, what it produced were "genocide, ecological disaster, and multiple forms of oppression, particularly of indigenous populations and women" (DOLAN-HENDERSON 1996, 217). The second moment in postmodernism as identified by Dolan-Henderson is the attack of the autonomous self by the postmodernists in which the postmodernists seek the "disappearance of the subject"—the autonomous self of enlightenment which centered meaning in itself, with its belief in its unlimited power and freedom which has since remained elusive, thereby giving room for a shift from the subject to a communal forms of meaning (DOLAN-HENDERSON 1996, 217). This shift from subjectivity to a communal forms of meaning is significant for the feminists in some number of ways; first, it provides the basis for the questioning of feminine and masculine categories; second, a proper meaning for the term "woman" or "womanhood" becomes problematic and uncertain; and lastly, there is the possibility of an interrogation of the hitherto patriarchally produced sexual meanings (DOLAN-HENDERSON 1996, 217). Solan-Henderson moreover noted that, the fact that postmodernism called into question the "enlightenment project has enabled feminist theologians to interrogate the male bias of even the so-called liberal theologies" (1996, 217). All of the above attributes of postmodernism in relation to feminism remains fundamental issues that continue to give critical supports to contemporary feminists ideologies.

Religion and Postmodern Scholarship in Africa

The postmodern scholastic tradition has infiltrated itself into virtually all forms of academic disciplines, the field of Religious Studies inclusive. Postmodernism as an academic temperament may not be as much pronounced in other disciplines

as it is in the field of Philosophy. Nevertheless, there are variants of scholastic engagements in some of these disciplines reminiscent of the postmodernist questioning of *grand récits* of modernity and of the established body of knowledge across these disciplines.

One scholar that has demonstrated this scholastic disposition in the field of Religious Studies is Clifford Geertz. In his investigation of religion as a cultural system, Geertz opines that the anthropological work on religion accomplished since the Second World War, when placed side by side with the one accomplished just before and just after the first reveals two important shortcomings: First, the latter has made no theoretical advances over the former. Second, it has drawn what concepts it used from a narrowly defined intellectual tradition (1973, 87). Geertz's observation in this regard, even though could not be said to portray an explicit postmodern tendency, but still nevertheless remains significant in that it pointed out a sharp distinction between two specified scholastic epochs as far as academic study of religion is concerned. Geertz, moreover laments the stagnation besetting the anthropological study of religion in his day, blaming it on the production of minor variations on classical theoretical themes (1973, 88). According to Geertz, the scholastic disposition within the academic study of religion that favors what he refers to as "the solemn reduplication of the achievements of accepted masters" such as Durkheim, Weber, Freud, Malinowski etc. is the scholastic malady that has been parochializing the thought of contemporary religious scholars (1973, 88). A position of this nature is reminiscent of the postmodern scholarship that seeks to critique and transcend the limitation brought about by modernism and modernist scholars.

If there is any Continent that is in urgent need of scholastic enterprise with which to transcend the limitation brought about by modernism, that Continent undoubtedly would be the African Continent. This opinion is strongly connected with the widely held belief among the African academia that the contemporary problems facing the Continent are deeply entrenched in western and Eurocentric ideas of modernism and colonialism. In this regard, most contemporary scholars and thinkers of African descent are becoming the more conscious of the danger of modernity and the need to embark on an urgent decolonization of African scholarship and the deconstruction of certain western paradigms clothed in the gap of Universal consensus that seems to inevitably subjugate Africa perpetually under western control. In other, words, the view as shared and expressed by some of these scholars is that, African scholars and thinkers need to deconstruct certain western and Eurocentric configurations of certain aspect of humanity for her to break away from the shackles of underdevelopment. To some degree, this has become noticeable across the various disciplines of humanity in recent time just as some of these scholars have

being demonstrating varying degree of skepticism and a general critique of western institutions and knowledge.

For instance, Sam Aluko, in his attempt to chart a new direction towards the development of Africa's economy bemoans foreign economic theories imported from the West and the quest to implement them wholly without adapting to certain modifications that reflect the peculiarity of the African experience (2007, 85). Noting particularly that economic theories that enhanced and sustained economic development in Europe and America failed to do the same in Africa, Aluko remarks:

There are no universal economic dogmas applicable at all times, to all places, and to all economies irrespective of their respective stages of development. Therefore, the African economists, operating in an immature economy, must question the eternal and universal validity of the existing economic theories. (2007, 87)

In a style and manner reminiscence of postmodern frame of mind, notable African scholars have also embarked on the deconstruction and the decolonization of western epistemological and institutional paradigms in the area of culture and religion. In his essay entitled: "Rethinking Humanities Scholarship in Africa", Olatunji Oloruntimehin among other issues, bemoans the essence and implication of globalization on the Continent of Africa with its *uniformizing* socio-economic policies being imposed from outside by dominant powers in the process of global governance and the consequent distortion of the civic order and cultural values of developing countries (2007, 7). As expressed in the view of Oloruntimehin, there are certain phenomena that make globalization a dangerous phenomenon for the African Continent: First, there is a high level of ignorance on the side of African political leaders and elites that globalization is "in essence the apogee of the long process of the westernization of the world, and the implied control of resources by a few powers, which earlier manifested in various forms of imperialism" (2007, 6). Second, there is the place and role that have been ascribed to science and technology in the on-going globalization process. In support of these opinions, Oloruntimehin, citing Dennis Laurence Cuddy opines that "science and capitalism are the two forces of contemporary society; that science and technology has effectively taken control of the material world, while capitalism has effectively structured it" (2007, 6). If one considers the above two points, it would be discovered that both re-enforces one another to plunder Africa socio-economically. From all indications, Africa does not yet have the scientific and the technological wherewithal for heavy industrialization and the production of certain goods in a massive manner that would make her to become major player in the new global free-market economy. Thus, according to Martin Khor,

Africa has been experiencing an upsurge in inequalities of wealth and opportunities arising from globalization and her socio-cultural conditions have been made worse by the workings of the globalized free-market economy (2000, 1).

The way out of this menace as far as Africa is concerned calls for a rudimentary and fundamental approaches and changes. This will enable Africa to “cultivate knowledge of her cultural heritage, and on the basis of her understanding of her own identity project herself and her distinctive cultures upon other cultures of the world” (Oloruntimehin 2007, 13). To achieve this objective, academia in Africa needs to imbibe the postmodern scholastic frame of mind to do a rethinking and the decolonization of the existing body of knowledge that would bequeath real socio-cultural and politico-economic freedom to Africa.

The quest to reconfigure Africa’s intellectual enterprise in order to project and elevate her true identity free from the colonial project of the modern era to a postmodern African identity that can place her at par with her western counterpart is not restricted to only socio-economic and political issues alone. There has been awareness on the side of notable African Religious Studies scholars and Theologians of the need to decolonize and deconstruct the body of knowledge bequeathed to Africa through colonialism if the discipline of Religious Studies is to become the more relevant in addressing the peculiarity of the African religious space highly embellished with the believe in the activities of spirits and spiritual forces and other malevolent powers capable of inflicting pain or favor on human beings. To this end, there has been what has been termed the Theology of Decolonization. A. O. Nkwoka while quoting D. Wa Said defined the Theology of Decolonization as “the scientific enterprise of which the main purpose is the liberation of the wretched of the third world from spiritual-socio-politico-economic colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism” (2007,227).

The need to decolonize the discipline of Religious Studies in general and Biblical Studies in particular is summarily put together by Nkwoka thus: “the development of ‘a living theology’ is indicative of the fact that Western theology is not alive to the needs of the African theological enterprise” (2007, 229). The abnormality that characterized the Western style of the study of religion according to Nkwoka is that religion is approached, not as a faith, but as social phenomenon. Thus, for him, any religion that ceases to be faith has lost its essence as a religion, because it is the faith and spirituality of a religion that makes it an essential social phenomenon (2007, 228). This idea with which religion is viewed as a pure social phenomenon comes from Euro-American thinking resulting in what Nkwoka described as “a perspective of leaving the substance and chasing the shadow” which is a feature of post-Christian society in which the advancements in science and technology have made religion a societal nuisance (2007, 228).

It is on the basis of the above that some African Religious Studies Scholars and Theologians in post-colonial and postmodern era are advocating the restructuring of the curriculum of Religious Studies Departments in Nigerian universities and the restructuring of the curriculum of theological schools to provide for “Africanized” theology. The African world of spirit-forces has been opined to share some affinity with the Palestinian world of the Bible. Thus, Religious Studies in general and biblical scholarship in particular should lay more emphasis on the spiritual side of theology rather than the intellectual and the biblical sciences which disparage the Bible and makes it irrelevant to the religious worldview and the lived experiences of the Africans (NKWOKA 2007, 234).

Conclusion

So far, we have been able to discuss the phenomenon of postmodernism as an offshoot of philosophical temperament by which notable claims and achievements of modernity have been questioned and challenged. It has also been discussed that postmodernism as a scholastic endeavor has infiltrated itself into all aspects of human disciplines and intellectual enterprise. Here in the Continent of Africa, scholars in the disciplines of humanity poised with the postmodern frame of mind have been engaging in the deconstruction of existing texts and literatures and the decolonization of the existing body of knowledge bequeathed to Africa through the instrumentality of colonialisms with which Africa has been relegated to the level of an inferior race, in comparison to which her western counterpart has been deemed superior. Be this as it may, one could assert that the scholastic rivalry between modernist and postmodernist is totally uncalled for. The view and the criticism of Jurgen Habermas as discussed below will suffice to explain our point.

Habermas as discussed by Gary is regarded by most scholars as the most prominent voice in critiquing postmodernism (GARY 2013, 20). The criticisms of Habermas as stated by Gary against postmodernism are not directed towards the postmodernist argumentative attack against the subject or the autonomous self of the modern era. His critical attack against postmodernism is more towards society and societal communicative actions (GARY 2013, 20). For instance, Habermas, according to Gary, strategically put up, and defended argumentative reasons that center on inter-subjective communication against the experimental and *avant-garde* strategies of postmodernist scholars such as Nietzsche, Derrida and Foucault etc., (GARY 2013, 20). The core argument of Habermas against these scholars is entrenched in his claims that they all “commit a performative contradiction in their critiques of modernism by employing concepts and methods that only modern reason can provide” (GARY 2013, 20). Thus, as it has been noted already, the modernist and postmodernist scholastic

dichotomy is totally uncalled for. What is needed by the human race is progress, and it is without doubt that modernism has helped human community all over the world in this regard. However, as the postmodernists are apt to point out, modernism is replete with a lot of problems and contradictions. Nevertheless, the postmodernists must also be reminded that without modernism, there cannot be postmodernism. Postmodernism arose as scholastic quest to give a critical appraisal to the modern era. Just as pointed out by Habermas, postmodernists all along have been making use of the concepts and methods formulated by modern scholars (GARY 2013, 20).” This is a sufficient ground to create a truce between the two scholastic epochs and traditions. And this truce must first recognize the African condition.

Relevant Literature

1. AGGER, Ben. “Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance”, [Annual Review of Sociology], pp105-131, 1991. Vol. 17, Retrieved, July 2013. Web.
2. ALUKO, Sam. “New Directions on Scholarship in Economics in Africa,” [Rethinking the Humanities in Africa, SOLA Akinrinade et al Eds.], pp79-114, 2007. Obafemi Awolowo University Press: Ile-Ife. Paperback.
3. GARY, Aylesworth, "Postmodernism", [*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta Ed.], N. P. September 2005. Web.
4. BLACKBURN, Simon. [Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy], 1996. Oxford University Press: New York and Oxford. Paperback.
5. CARLSON, Tom. “Altizer, Thomas J. J.”, [Encyclopedia of Postmodernism, VICTOR E. Taylor and CHARLES E. Winquist Eds.], pp10-11, 2001. Routledge: London and New York. E-book.

6. DERRIDA, Jacques. “Deconstruction,” [A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, J. A. Cuddon Ed., 3rd edn.], Blackwell: London. Paperback.
7. DOLAN-HENDERSON, Susan. “Postmodernism,” [Dictionary of Feminist Theologies, LETTY M. Russell and SHANNON J. Clarkson Eds.], pp217-218, 1996. Westminster John Knox Press: Kentucky. Paperback.
8. GEERTZ, Clifford. [The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays], 1973. Basicbooks: New York. Paperback.
9. KHOR, Martin. [Globalization and the South: Some Critical Issues], 2000. Spectrum Books: Ibadan. Paperback.
10. MORLEY, James. “Defining Postmodernism” N. P June 2012. Retrieved June 2013. Web.
11. NKWOKA, A. O. “Decolonizing Christian Religious Studies and Biblical Scholarship,” [Rethinking the Humanities in Africa, SOLA Akinrinade et al Eds.], pp227-239, 2007. Obafemi Awolowo University Press: Ile-Ife. Paperback.
12. OLORUNTIMEHIN, B. Olatunji. “Rethinking Humanities Scholarship in Africa,” [Rethinking the Humanities in Africa, SOLA Akinrinade et al Eds.], pp3-24, 2007. Obafemi Awolowo University Press: Ile-Ife. Paperback.

13. KUNIN, D. Seth. "Introduction," [Theories of Religion: A Reader, KUNIN, D. Seth and JONATHAN, Miles- Watson Eds.], pp1-21, 2006. Rutgers University Press: New Jersey. Paperback.
14. SKORDILI, Beatrice. "Sociology," [Encyclopedia of Postmodernism, VICTOR E. Taylor and CHARLES E. Winquist Eds.], pp376-338, 2001. Routledge: London and New York. E-book.

THE QUESTION OF OBJECTIVITY, ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE ERA OF POSTMODERNISM: AFRICA IN PERSPECTIVE

Augustine Akwu ATABOR, PhD
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

This paper problematizes the question of objectivity as it pertains to the social sciences. The paper accentuates the difficulty with postmodernism which tries to deny the possibility of objective truth in the social sciences. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to evaluate the postmodernists' quest for relativity and subjectivity of truth and to expose whether objectivity is attainable in the social sciences in the same way it is attainable in the natural sciences. This paper upholds that objectivity in the social science is important in working out a holistic global ideology, and since this global ideology hopes to provide for and project justice and respect for persons and communities as well as provide a basis for the minimizing and resolving of conflicts locally and internationally, Africa can on this grounds dare to be part of this global project without fear of playing a "western script" called globalization.

Keywords: Modernism, postmodernism, Social Science, Hermeneutics, Objectivity

Introduction

The postmodern controversy of objectivity in the social sciences raises questions that pertain to the deepest dimensions of our being and humanity: how we know what we know, how we should think about individual endeavor and collective aspirations, whether progress is meaningful and how it should be sought. Post-modernism questions causality, determinism, egalitarianism, humanism, liberal democracy, necessity, objectivity, rationality, responsibility and truth. It takes on issues that are profoundly fundamental for the future of social science (ROSENAU 1992, 1). The emergence of post-modernism may simply reflect intellectual currents in the larger society, but in the social sciences it also reacts to uncritical confidence in modern science and smugness about objective knowledge.

Historically, science attacked the arbitrary authority of church and monarchy, both of which based their legitimacy on theology. Modern science established its reputation on objectivity, rigorous procedures of inquiry, the material rather than the metaphysical. Science, in turn, came to claim its own monopoly of truth. Its authority expanded and superseded that held by its more "irrational and arbitrary" antecedents (ROSENAU 1996, 9). Post-modernists call

to question the rational base of this monopoly of truth ascribed to the sciences and are uneasy with their more conventional colleague's uncritical acceptance of philosophical foundationalism, the Enlightenment heritage, and the methodological suppositions of modern science.

Postmodernism haunts social science today in a number of respects, some plausible and some preposterous, post-modern approaches dispute the underlying assumptions of mainstream social science and its research product over the last three decades. The challenges post-modernism poses seem endless. It rejects epistemological assumptions, refutes methodological conventions, resists knowledge claims, obscures all versions of truth, and dismisses policy recommendations (ROSENAU 1996, 3). Post-modernism represents the coming together of elements from a number of different, often conflicting orientations. It appropriates, transforms, and transcends French structuralism, romanticism, phenomenology, nihilism, populism, existentialism, hermeneutics, Western Marxism, Critical Theory, and anarchism. Although post-modernism shares elements with each, it has important quarrels with every approach (ROSENAU 1996, 13).

It is against this background that this paper is out to argue that the social sciences have a right claim to objectivity and that they have much to offer in the endless struggle to enhance the human condition. Thus, it is important to explore the postmodern perspective of the social sciences and to critically evaluate their claims as this would build a fertile ground upon which Africa can be part of the global ideology for justice, peace and fairness. However, let us first clarify some important terms to make the objectives of this paper more explicit.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism according to Eva Brann can be deconstructed in a tripartite fashion; Post-modern-ism. Its first syllable, "post", does not mean simply "after" in time, as period prefixes often do. The "post" in this term, says Lyotard, one of the leading definers of the movement, intends the Greek preposition "*ana*," which as a prefix can mean "back again," as in anamnesis, - re-collection. Recollection is not mere recall, but effective re-appropriation of memory (1992, 5). Lyotard goes further to say; "The postmodern would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (post) anterior (modo)" (BRANN 1992, 5). He means that in a postmodern work, the future comes "after" the "just now" in the sense that; such a work is not composed in accordance with any previous universal rules, or, as he calls it, any "metanarrative." It has no antecedently present conditions. He views postmodernism as incredulity toward metanarratives. This definition is made with reference to the term "modern" which designates "any science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta-discourse, such as, the dialectics of spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning," or, I

might add, the shared rationality of minds. Thus, the "post" makes reference both to the readmission of history by anamnesis and to the definitive exclusion of metaphysics and its derivatives. The sawing through of the perch we sit on, the undermining of the structures we rely on, is to be taken in the most total sense; "Nothing is to support anything" (BRANN 1992, 6).

The second element, "modern," is a coinage of the sixth century (AD). It comes from the Latin word *modo*, meaning "just now" or "this moment." It is a word needed, now as then, when an epoch is felt to have been superseded by the present, the up-to-date. It betokens a sense of having left something behind and of being on the cutting edge of time. It is a term of temporal self-location. There have been many modernisms: theological, national, aesthetic, literary, architectural. In fact, one might say that modernity is the propensity to modernisms; I mean the urge of elites not only to be continually displacing the late by the latest, but to induce "movements" that is, a tendentious drift, in followers (BRANN 1992, 4).

The final element is the "ism" or the personal form "ist." It is a Greek and Latin ending, connoting the adoption, often perverse or specious, of the habits of a group. For example, barbarism is a behavior like that of those who babble inarticulately, and a sophist is one who looks like a wise man, a *sophas*, without having or loving wisdom, in opposition to a *philosophos*. Whether for good or ill, "ism" connotes running in droves, and an 'ist' is an intellectual assimilationist (BRANN 1992, 4).

Having done this tripartite deconstruction, what then is postmodernism? According to Terry Eagleton, postmodernism is "a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation" (1996, vii.). Thus, from this definition, it could be sustained that; postmodernism is a drive towards some form of relativism or subjectivism. A movement that is out to question every convention and tradition and most importantly for this paper, it is a movement that questions the grounds of the social sciences' claim for objectivity. As a reaction on modernism, postmodernism emerged in academic studies in the mid-80's of last century. It can be seen as a worldview that emphasizes the existence of different worldviews and concepts of reality, rather than one 'correct' or 'true' one. Whereas modernism emphasized a trust in the empirical scientific method, and a distrust and lack of faith in ideologies and religious beliefs that could not be tested using scientific methods, postmodernism emphasizes that a particular reality is a social construction by a specific group, community or class of persons.

The Social Sciences

Social science is a group of academic discipline that examines society and how people interact and develop as a culture. Social science as a field of study is separate from the natural sciences, which covers topics such as physics and chemistry. Social science as an academic field of study, developed out of the age of enlightenment as individuals began to take a more disciplined approach to quantifying their observations of society. Over time, similar aspects of the society, such as communication, were separated into unique fields of study.

Objectivity

Diana Mertz views objectivity as a method of acquiring knowledge by reasoning solely based on the facts of reality and in accordance with the laws of logic (2013, Web. N. P.). Objectivity is a central philosophical concept related to reality and truth which has been variously defined by sources. Generally, objectivity means the state or quality of being true even outside of a subject's individual feelings, imaginings or interpretations. A proposition is generally considered to be objectively true (to have objective truth) when its truth condition are met and are "mind-independent" – that is, existing freely or independently from a mind (from the thoughts, feelings, ideas etc. of a sentient subject). In a simpler meaning of the term, objectivity refers to the ability to judge fairly without bias or external influence that occurs in a phenomenological way (Web, N. P.).

Historical Origins of Postmodernism

The post-modern turn is not native to North America; rather, it is an adopted child of continental Europe, predominantly of French and German descent. As one important French intellectual smugly points out, post-modernism and post-structuralism sell as well in the North American intellectual market as "Beaujolais Nouveau." The irony is that, although the French get most of the credit for developing post-modernism, German philosophers, mainly Nietzsche and Heidegger, inspired it. Despite this intellectual debt, contemporary German philosophers, especially Jürgen Habermas, are among post-modernism's most severe critics. But post-modernism is not always received so sympathetically in France either. Important French post-modernists, particularly Jacques Derrida, have of late lost credibility in their own country. Nevertheless the appeal of post-modernism continues to grow outside France (ROSENAU 1992, 12).

Postmodernism emerged from the existentialist and phenomenologist philosophies of, amongst others, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Husserl. It is unsurprising, then, that it has many features in common with social phenomenology and ethnomethodology, which share some of the same philosophical precursors. While these approaches were more methodologically

inclined than postmodernism, they similarly rejected the Enlightenment attempt to create universal knowledge, preferring to emphasize subjective meaning and to problematize everyday occurrences (AGGER 2013, 117).

Affirmative and Skeptical postmodernism

The divergent, even contradictory expositions of post-modernism underline the need to distinguish among its various orientations, if we are ever to be able to talk about it at all. There are probably as many forms of post-modernisms as there are post-modernists (FEATHERSTONE 1998, 207). If it were not so clumsy, we could speak of post-modernisms. But, within this diversity of post-modern pronouncements, as far as the social sciences are concerned, two broad, general orientations, the skeptical post-modernists and the affirmative post-modernists, can be delineated (ROSENAU 1992, 15).

Inspired by Continental European philosophies, especially Heidegger and Nietzsche, skeptical postmodernism is the dark side of postmodernism, the postmodernism of despair, the postmodernism that speaks of the immediacy of death, the demise of the subject, the end of the author, the impossibility of truth, and the abrogation of the Order of Representation. Post-modernists of this orientation, adopt a blasé attitude, as if "they have seen it all" and concluded that; nothing really new is possible (GITLIN 1989, 103). The skeptical post-modernism (or merely skeptics), offering a pessimistic, negative, gloomy assessment, argue that; the post-modern age is one of fragmentation, disintegration, malaise, meaninglessness, vagueness or even absence of moral parameters and societal chaos (SCHERPE 1986, 101).

According to Rosenau, the affirmative postmodernism which is more indigenous to Anglo-North American culture than to Europe, has a more general optimistic view of the post-modern age. The generally optimistic affirmatives are oriented toward process. They are either open to positive political action (struggle and resistance) or content with the recognition of visionary, celebratory personal non-dogmatic projects that range from New Age religion to new wave life-styles and include a whole spectrum of post-modern social movements. Most affirmatives seek a philosophical and ontological intellectual practice that is non-dogmatic, tentative, and non-ideological (ROSENAU 1992, 15).

The Social Studies as a Science and the Question of Objectivity

To be scientific would entail a level of systematic and disciplined method of enquiring knowledge and that knowledge must be a verifiable knowledge. This brings to fore the question; whether the society, its institutions and relationships are susceptible to scientific study? Allusions to the fact that the terms "social" and "scientific" may not sit comfortably together, was illustrated by the decision of the British Government in the early nineteen eighties to change the name of

the Social Science Research Council (which included mass communication research in its remit) to the Economic and Social Research Council. The message seemed to be: if it is social, it can't be scientific" (HALLORAN 1998). However, this position remains a point of debate as other persons are ready to classify both the natural and social sciences in terms of methodology under the unity of scientific method.

The achievements of the natural sciences in the wake of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth Century have been most impressive. Their investigation of nature has produced elegant and powerful theories that have not only greatly enhanced understanding of the natural world, but also increased human power and control over it. Modern physics for instance, has shed light on such mysteries as the origin of the universe and the source of the sun's energy, and it has also spawned technology that has led to supercomputers, nuclear energy (and bombs), and space exploration. Natural science is manifestly progressive, insofar as, over time its theories tend to increase in- depth, range and predictive power. It is also consensual, that is, there is a general agreement among Natural Scientists regarding what the aims of science are and how to conduct it, including how to evaluate theories. At least, in the long run, Natural Science tends to produce consent regarding which theories are valid. Given this evident success, many philosophers and social theorists have been eager to import the methods of Natural Science to the study of the social world. If social science were to achieve the explanatory and predictive power of Natural Science, it could help solve vexing social problems, such as violence and poverty, improve the performance of institutions and generally foster human well-being. Those who believe that adapting the aims and methods of Natural Science to social inquiry is both possible and desirable, support the *unity of scientific method*. Such advocacy in this context is also referred to as *naturalism*. Of course, the effort to unify social and natural science requires reaching some agreement on what the aims and methods of science are (or should be). A school of thought, broadly known as positivism, has been particularly important here. Despite the collapse of positivism as a philosophical movement, it continues to exercise influence on contemporary advocates of the unity of scientific method. (GORTON 2013, Web N. P.).

However, it must be known that postmodernism has a lot of issues with positivism and the postmodernists' criticisms of positivism has its implications for the social sciences, at least on the question of objectivity. This is so because if the social sciences were only to be objective when the methods of the natural sciences are imported into its modes of inquiry, then the attack of postmodernism on positivism is an attack aimed at the possible claims of objectivity by the social science.

It is a fact that many social scientists are driven to often rely implicitly upon the positivists' tenets that experience is the basis of knowledge and it is possible to reflect the world objectively, without relying upon philosophical and theoretical assumptions. The use of 'positivistic attitude' here refers to approaches that involve any of these suppositions: that the methods of the natural sciences may be directly adapted for the social sciences; that the role of the political analyst is that of an impartial observer of social reality; that the goal of political analysis is to formulate law-like generalizations; that knowledge and language are purely instrumental.

Postmodernism has done much to challenge this positivistic attitude in the social sciences. Michel Foucault, a key postmodern thinker (although he rejected the label), is noted for his appraisal of the social sciences. He dismissed social scientists' claims to objectivity and neutrality by showing how they conflated moral and legal norms into scientific truth. For example, Foucault asserted that crime was judged against a scientific 'knowledge' of what was normal, and that punishment had come to be legitimated as much by social science as by the legal system. Deviations from the law came to be seen as offences against 'objectively' known human nature (AMERY 2008, 6).

According to Amery, Foucault specifically expanded Nietzschean historic philosophy in order to question beliefs and aspects of everyday life – such as madness or sexuality – thought to be timeless. Through this technique of 'genealogy' he was able to trace the development of present-day institutions and ideas and to show that they were grounded in history rather than the ahistorical notions of Reason and Truth. For example, Foucault argues that the modern experience of madness, rather than being grounded in unchanging scientific fact, has its roots in the 'Great Confinement' of the seventeenth century, when 'unreasonable' members of the society were placed in asylums (2008, 6).

Jacques Derrida, although he differed from Foucault in important ways, advanced an equally significant critique of positivism. To Derrida, all discourses, including supposedly scientific reports, rely on concealed assumptions and cannot be understood without them. (AGGER 2013, 112). As with Foucault, these texts also present a certain view of the world as objective truth. Thus, traditional status-attainment research which defined social mobility in terms of the occupational status of one's father was far from neutral: it presented a view of the social world where only men worked or should work, and in fact misrepresented reality by ignoring women who worked. (AGGER 2013, 113) Derrida pioneered the technique of 'deconstruction' in order to expose the hidden assumptions of texts.

Postmodernism, the Social Science and the Politics of Globalization

The term Globalization could mean different thing to different people. For some, globalization entails the Westernization of the world, while for others it involves a cover for the ascendancy of capitalism. Some see globalization as generating increasing homogeneity, while others see it producing diversity and heterogeneity through increased hybridization. For business, globalization is a strategy for increasing corporate profits and power, for government it is often deployed to promote an increase in state power, while non-government social organizations see globalization as a lever to produce positive social goods like environmental action, democratization, or humanization. Many theorists equate globalization with modernity, while others claim that the "global age" follows and is distinctly different from the "modern age." Indeed, for some theorists, we live in a global age or epoch, in which globalization is the defining concept, while others find claims for the novelty and centrality of globalization exaggerated.

Though, one cannot claim ignorance of the politicization of globalization, however, the need for the world to have a global ideology that would provide for and project justice and respect for persons and communities as well as provide a basis for the minimizing and resolving of conflicts locally and internationally has become increasingly clear. While it is believed that the social sciences will provide the framework and grounds to achieve this objective, the postmodernists' attack on the plausibility of the claims of objectivity by the social sciences, remains a big challenge.

Postmodernists have highlighted how much political theory and research ignores or relegates certain social groups to the sidelines, furthering their disempowerment. All theories, they argue, come from a particular standpoint, and in the Western world, the dominant standpoint has often been that of a white, heterosexual man. As demonstrated above, these theories have the power to present their views of the world as scientific truth, and thus legitimate a social and political order where certain groups are marginalized or oppressed (AMERY 2008, 7). According to Foucault, the state works hand in hand with other institutions of the modern world – prisons, schools, medical clinics and the military – to monitor and control people. It accomplishes this, however, neither principally through brute force nor via a regiment of rewards and punishments. Rather, the state works in concert with social science to construct the very categories through which individuals understand themselves. In doing so, it establishes the criteria by which normal and abnormal behavior is understood, and thereby regulates behavior, most importantly, by getting people to regulate themselves. In this way, social science has in effect become a handmaid to the forces of domination rather than a potential source of emancipation. Significantly, Foucault never claimed that this new type of control is intentional.

It is merely an unwelcomed artifact of social science. (GORTON 2013, Web. N. P.).

Thus, while Modernism was Universalist in outlook, much of its universalism was the universalization and the projection of the values/ideology of a particular class, ethnic group or culture and this constitutes one of the major critique of modernism by postmodernists; who pointed out that the creation of ideas, truth and knowledge are context-based and confined to contexts. It is in this regard that we bring in the perspective of Africa in this paper. How much of African life-world is represented in the so-called global matrix of modernity? The evident absence of the African perspective in the modern dynamics readily makes the postmodern ideology an attraction for the African intelligentsia. Postmodernism is deeply relativist; it undermines universalism; and, is itself unable to provide a common frame of reference that will help in solving the world's problems such as violence and conflicts, the integration of peripheral economics into the global economy but it at least, demolishes modernity which seeks to impose the culture of a determined race on the rest of humanity which includes Africa.

Africa and Globalization

It is not for no reason that the African man is suspicious of the idea of globalization which is one of the features of the postmodern era. According to Ike Obiora, Africa has experienced globalization in four phases; the first stage which has to do with slavery, robbed the continent of some of its citizens, at the second stage, colonialism came with its exploitative and divisive alien patterns, at the third stage is the experience of neo-colonial political pressures and economic forces that set trade patterns, investment policies, debt arrangement and others, the fourth stage is what is rather branded today as globalization (2014, 23). All this, have contributed in painting the idea of globalization wrongly, hence the painful African memory. It is a fact that with the rate of technological advancement in the world, the world has rather become a global family. The reality of this development has made it important that there be global ideologies that govern human rights and actions. However, as important as this may sound, Africa has come to believe that there is always a western agenda that is being preached in the name of globalization, though this is not without some element of truth, this paper has tried to show that with findings garnered from the social science regarding those basic and common concerns of humanity, a global ideology could be arrived at. This version of globalization, it is hoped would be inclusive rather than exclusive of some cultures as the modern global matrix had done. It may therefore be assumed that the difficulty of arriving at objectivity and a truly universal truth was due to the lopsided nature of the modern global matrix. In a postmodern era, where relative conception of truth is imperative and

a culture-based objectivity clearly inevitable, it remains not just a possibility but a practical expectation that cross-cultural reasoning would pave the way and create interlinking corridors across cultures. These shall be the areas of common grounds pertaining to the universal agreement of human reason. Thus, even in the relativity and culture-based objectivity of postmodernism, there may be room even in the social sciences for a form universal objectivity and truth.

Conclusion

It is my contention that though all-round objectivity in the social science is difficult, aiming at it, or attaining as much of it as reasonably possible, is a necessary condition for the conduct of all scientific inquiry. Why should we consider complete objectivity so important that we should pursue it even when admitting it to be somehow inaccessible? In my opinion, viewing inquiry as subjective, or as an entirely individual matter, would be the exclusion of all criticism; and this would be the exclusion of rational debate; and the exclusion of some cultures like Africa; and this would also be the denial of the thesis of the intellectual or rational unity of mankind. It thus opens the door to irrationalism and elitism, whether social or racial.

It is ordinarily expected that no matter the diversities in terms of race, nationality, ethnicity, culture and language among men, there will remain to be some common grounds of our shared humanity. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly clear that it is necessary for the world to have a global ideology that would provide for and project justice and respect for persons and communities as well as provide a basis for the minimizing and resolving of conflicts locally and internationally. It is hoped that within the quest for this objective, Africa will not be marginalized either directly or indirectly.

Relevant Literatures

1. AGGER, Ben. “Critical Theory, Post Structuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance,” [Annual Review of Sociology], Pp.105-31, 1991. Retrieved. 2013. No 17. Web.
2. AMERY, Frann. “Allowing the Other to Speak: The Relevance of Postmodernism to Political analysis”, [Reinvention: An International Journal of Undergraduate Research], Web, N. P., 2008. Vol. 1, Issue 2. Retrieved, August, 2014. Web.

3. BRANN, Eva. "What is Postmodernism?," [Harvard Review of Philosophy]. Pp.1-10, spring, 1992. Retrieved, July, 2014. Web.
4. EAGLETON, Terry. [The Illusions of Postmodernism], 1996. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford. E-book.
5. FEATHERSTONE, Mike. "In Pursuit of the Postmodern: An Introduction," [Theory, Culture and Society]. Pp.195-207, June,1998. Vol. 5. No. 2. Retrieved July 2014.Web.
6. GORTON, William. "Philosophy of the Social Sciences", [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy], Web, N. P, N. D. Retrieved 26th July, 2013. Web.
7. GITLIN, Todd. "Postmodernism: Roots and Politics", [Dissent], Pp.100-108, winter, Jul/Aug 1989. Retrieved July, 2014. Web.
8. HALLORAN, J. D, "Social Sciences, Communication Research and the Third World," [Media Development], 1998. Vol. 2, WACC. Retrieved July, 2014. Web.
9. HSIEH, Diana. "What is Objectivity?," [Find Enlightenment], June 1999. Retrieved July 26th, 2013. Web.
10. OBIORA, Ike and EDOZIEN, Ndidi Nnoli. "Africa in the Age of Globalization: The Challenges of Culture Identity in an interdependent World," [Globalization and African Self-Determination: What is the Future? OBIORA, Ike Ed]. Pp.21-28, 2014. Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace printing and Publishing House: Uwani, Enugu. Paperback.

11. ROSENAU, Pauline. [Postmodernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads and Intrusions], 1992. Princeton University Press: Princeton. E-book.
12. SCHERPE, Klaus. “Dramatization and De-dramatization of the End: The Apocalyptic Consciousness of Modernity and Postmodernity”, [Cultural Critique], Pp.95-129, winter 1986-87. No.5. Retrieved July 2014. Web.

THE CULTURE-ORIENTED BIAS OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

David A. OYEDOLA, MA
Department of Philosophy
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Abstract

African philosophers with Levy Bruhlian disposition like Appiah, Masolo, and Wiredu posit that African philosophy is culture-biased. Some other African philosophers like Nkrumah, Janz, Hountondji, and Makinde assert that Africa's precolonial indigenous culture is ahistorical and the dependence of contemporary African philosophy on culture cannot be de-emphasized. However, these views, though opposing, undermine two things; the way African philosophy has chosen to divulge itself and the objectivity that is peculiar to African philosophy. Nevertheless, this study concedes that if by implication, what these views are saying is that African philosophy will have to sink because it is culture-biased; then, this study insists that any other philosophy (e.g., European philosophy) would have to sink. Precisely, there is no difference between any of the philosophies with respect to the fact that the interests of the European philosopher determine what he selects for investigation, just like what an African philosopher chooses to investigate and it is safe to speculate that these interests whether in the West or in Africa are culture-colored.

Keywords: African philosophy, European philosophy, Culture, Bias, Inquiry

Introduction

This study represents a departure from the Levy Bruhlian disposition where anthropology (the new science that replaced the old science of subject-object dichotomy, i.e., epistemology) became the tool for questioning the ratiocination of the "Other" (e.g., Africans). Furthermore, this study attempts to depart from another disposition which relegates African cultural inquiry or nullifies the identity of the Africans. The philosophers under the latter disposition include the likes of Kwame Appiah (*Illusions of Race*, 1992; *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*, 1996; *The Ethics of Identity*, 2005; and *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in the World of Strangers*, 2006) and Dismas A. Masolo (*African Philosophy and the Post-colonial: The Misleading Abstractions about Identity*, 1997). The Levy Bruhlian disposition posits that Africans, south of Sahara, lack the property of ratiocination, it further helps in dictating the mind and writings of many traditional, contemporary and academic Africans in Africa, the diaspora and some other African philosophers. However, Levy

Bruhl's view, for Kwasi Wiredu, Odera Oruka, Olusegun Oladipo, Moses Makinde, Didier Kaphagawani, Barry Hallen, Peter Bodunrin, Paulin Hountondji, Placid Tempels, Moses Oke, Barry Hallen, Frantz Fanon, Robin Horton, Amilcar Cabral, and host of others, has dire implications on the post-colonial identity of Africa, Africans and African philosophy. Appiah and Masolo are of African origin but they have used their analytic training to nullify racial and identity concerns in their discourses. This nullification by Appiah and Masolo confirms the position that racial-identity, for Africans, is impossible. Their reason is because there is just one race; the human race. Thus, the post-colonial quest of Africa, Africans and African philosophy to have an independent racial identity has been put to rest because this quest has no greater importance than the global 'human race' (APPIAH 1992, 1996, 2005, 2006 and MASOLO 1997). For African philosophy to reclaim its stand, the ability to have something to profess in order to convince others needs urgency. Similarly, the postcolonial perception or impression that Africa (coupled with African philosophy) is not inferior needs to be proven. Thus, the post Levy-Bruhlian perception which persistently receives its support from some post-colonial professional or European trained Africans sees African philosophy as a field that confronts a certain difficulty; this difficulty is that it is culture-bias or tradition-oriented. In resolving this problem, some African philosophers like Olusegun Oladipo (2002, 233), Moses Oke (2006, 337), Kwame Nkrumah (1974, 20), Odera Oruka (1991, 177), Peter Kanyandago (2003, 31-33), etc., have emphasized the need for historical retrospection in re-making a new Africa; while, some others like Bruce Janz (2003, 32), Kwasi Wiredu (1998, 195), Messay Kebede (2004, 129), Richard Bell (2002, 198), etc., maintain that contemporary African philosophy has come of age (no longer culture dependent); while some others like Moses Makinde (2010, 28-29), Didier Kaphagawani (1998, 86-87), Tsenay Serequeberhan (1998, 12), Niyi Osundare (1998, 29), etc., have postulated that Africa's precolonial indigenous culture cannot help in reigniting Africa's development, and that the training of professional African philosophers would aid a new modality of doing African philosophy.

Given that African philosophy needs to be re-assessed or rescued, the fundamental problem that it is culture-biased cannot be ignored. Since the culture-bias has become a plate upon which African philosophy is viewed, this study concedes that there cannot be a sufficient explication or defence that European philosophy, or any other philosophy, is not culture-bias too.

Culture-Bias and Culture-Neutrality: The Nature of African and European Cultural Investigations

It is pertinent we turn, finally, to the difficulty that can be said to be confronting African philosophy because the culture to which we can say that the philosophers in African philosophy are committed not only colors the contents of their findings but also controls the assessment of the evidence on which they base their conclusion. Since African philosophers generally differ in their culture orientations, the “culture neutrality” that appears to be so pervasive in the European philosophy is therefore often held to be impossible in African philosophy. In the judgment of many European anthropologists, or some Western-trained professional African philosophers, it is accordingly absurd to expect African philosophy to exhibit the unanimity so common among philosophers in European philosophical history concerning what ought to constitute the problematic issues to be discussed in philosophy, the analytic methodology to be used, and the satisfactory explanations that are least expected of them. Let us examine some of the grounds that have been put forward for this contention. It will be easy to distinguish four groups of such reasons, so that our discussion will deal in turn with the asserted role of cultures in (a) the selection of difficulties, (b) the ascertainment of the profundity of their outcomes, (c) the approval of cultural facts, and (d) the appraisal of evidence.

The Selection of Difficulties

The reason, perhaps most frequently cited, is the fact that the things an African philosopher selects for investigation are determined by his own conception of what are culturally important values. According to one influential view, for instance, African philosopher deals with materials to which he attributes “cultural importance, consequence, or meaning,” so that a “cultural-orientation” is inherent in his choice of material for investigation. John Ezeugwu’s point 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” (2014, 41), could not have been made in passing without a specific aim to resolve certain problems, whether those problems are derivative of some Africans or European anthropologists. Though, Ezeugwu could not have meant that African cultural inquirers have been prejudiced because they are cultural beings, yet he provided a classic statement which is calm, judicious and prescient. In his work, *A Short History of African Philosophy*, Barry Hallen, though, is a vigorous proponent of the view that “philosophy in any cultural context is not likely to be the easiest subject in the world,” (2002, 1), however,

its presentation can make it seem excessively technical and obscure in nature, and can frustrate understanding unnecessarily. This suggests that both philosophies (African and European philosophies) are situated in the culture which colours the contents of any of the findings on which their adherents base the conclusions of their different works.

The implication of John Ezeugwu and Barry Hallen's views can be said to be based on the cultural or contextual view of how philosophy in Africa has come to be distinct, and the way that it can be understood which may make the meaning of the terms used and the analysis to be technically obscure. African philosophy can sometimes be understood in the way some influential Anglo-trained African professional philosophers like Kwasi Wiredu (*How Not to Compare African Thought with Western Thought*, 1998), Barry Hallen (*A Short History of African Philosophy*, 2002), Lucius Outlaw (*African, African American, Africana Philosophy*, 1998), Tsenay Serequeberhan (*The Critique of Eurocentrism and the Practice of African Philosophy*, 1997), Chukwudi Eze (*Modern Western Philosophy and African Colonialism*, 1998), Aime Cesaire (*Discourse On Colonialism*, 1997), Frantz Fanon (*Racism and Culture*, 1997, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1997), Stephen Biko (*The Definition of Black Consciousness*, 1998) etc., have opined that African culture-laden discourse differs from its Western counterpart. Their view is that African philosophy should transcend the culture-laden discourse to develop the analytic and critical tendencies so as to compete meaningfully in the global philosophical discourse. However, he (Barry Hallen) have painted the notion that philosophy does not necessarily have to be analytic, rigorous and critical – he nevertheless argued that “the explanation I (Barry Hallen) can offer is that African philosophy should pay particular attention to a limited number of themes in Africa, so that they are deliberately isolated, and that they are extracted from their broader contexts, in order to facilitate relevant comparisons” (2002, 1). The perception of the meaningfulness of culture to us is the presupposition of its becoming an object of investigation for an African philosopher or investigator.

It is well-nigh self-evident to say that African philosophers, like philosophers in Europe or America, do not investigate everything, but direct their attention to certain selected portions of the inexhaustible content of concrete African reality. In addressing an aspect of this reality, Fanos Mangena's perception is that “for many years African philosophy has not been taken seriously by both Africans and Western philosophers alike. 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 the cultures of this world” (2014, 96). If we are to take Fanos Mangena very serious, his objective that “African philosophers should develop a system that is coherent and that can be applied world over, i.e., a logic on which

African philosophy should sit instead of running away from their burning house only to refuge next door” (2014, 96), would mean one thing: the African ethno-philosophical approach to the body philosophy would become the black or African extraction which the Africans can be proud of. However, the problem that he (Mangena) may need to address is whether logic is divisible, where African logic, American logic, Asian logic, Arab logic, European continental logic, European analytic logic, etc., become possible. From the rules of modus ponens (MP), modus tolens (MT), repetition (R), double negation (DN), etc., it is perceivable that logic is logic, just as mathematics is mathematics, and that logic is not divisible into different cultures and continents. Its rules and methods are not culture-dependent. Given this problem, how can Fanos Mangena be rescued? The usage of the word ‘logic’ may not mean logic as a discourse of reasoning that follow rules but like a cultural way of life that people or outsiders can call the African way or rules of reference or inference. With this, Mangena’s view that there is the need for a logic on which African philosophy should sit is admissible and relevant.

Moreover, let us accept the thesis, if only for the sake of the argument, that an African philosopher addresses himself exclusively to matters which he believes are important because of their relevance to his cultural-based values. It is not clear, in a way, why the fact that an investigator selects the materials he studies in the light of problems which interest him, and which seem to him to bear on matters he regards as important, is of greater moment for the logic of African inquiry than it is for the other branch of inquiry outside Africa. The things that an African philosopher selects for study with a view to determining the conditions or consequences of their existence may indeed be dependent on the indisputable fact that he is a cultural being.

In short, there is no difference between any of the philosophical dispositions (be it African or European) with respect to the fact that the interests of an African philosopher determine what he selects for investigation. But this fact represents no obstacle to the successful pursuit of objectively controlled inquiry in any branch of study or within each branch of study. For example, an African social and political philosopher may be interested in the nature of election rigging, or an African philosopher may be interested in the spiritual bond between twins and the effects it has on the immediate family and environment, while an American philosopher may be interested in the reason why the food that teenagers eat causes obesity. This does not presuppose any means of relative culturality, but it presupposes the view that there exists in each disposition an iota of objectivity which may not need to overlap or be found synonymous.

The Ascertainment of the Profundity of their Outcomes

A more substantial reason commonly given for the culture-oriented character of African philosophy is that, since an African philosopher is himself affected by considerations of right and wrong in the particular African culture or in the African subject that he is investigating, his own notion of what constitutes a satisfactory African order and his own standard of personal and African form of philosophical disposition enter, in point of fact, into the analyses of African phenomena. In this respect, the veracity of the truth of African philosophy must be judged by admittedly “relative standards, i.e., in terms of the ends sought or the standards employed by the African society or philosopher concerned, rather than in terms of the European or American philosopher’s own criteria. Ernest Nagel’s description that, “yet, the history of human thought has led not to one philosophy but to several” (1968, 100), implies that the cultural attitudes implicit in the African ways of thinking will differ from that of its European counterpart, and sometimes conflict. The reason why there may be conflict between African and European dispositions of what should constitute a philosophical objectivity rests on, (i) the presupposition that there exist differences in what they portend and potentate. An implication can be derived here; what the African philosopher selects for investigation will remain relative to his culture. The same is applicable for European or American philosopher; and, (ii) they (African and European philosophers) sought to achieve the ‘end’ by the means possible or through different criteria. Thus, there are basic judgments which we cannot do without in African philosophy, and which clearly do not express a purely personal philosophy of the enquirer or African values arbitrarily assumed. Rather, what African philosophers select for investigation grow out of the history of thought in Africa, from which the anthropologist of European descent can seclude himself as little as can anyone else.

It has often been noted that the study of African phenomena receives much of its impetus from a strong moral and cultural zeal, so that many ostensibly “objective” analysis in African philosophy are in fact disguised recommendations of African first-order system. Moses Oke’s explication may have to be considered here. For him, “it is common for cultures to fade away and be replaced by new or old ones, and for cultures to vary from society to society and from age to age” (OKE 2006, 332). But as I would like to moderately express the point, a support for Moses Oke’s view would not be misplaced; an African philosopher, I believe, cannot wholly detach the unifying cultural structure that, as an analytic, methodologist or culturalist, guides his detailed investigations of African problems, from the unifying structure which, as an African’s ideal, he thinks ought to prevail in African affairs and hopes may sometimes be more fully realized. His African theory in philosophy is thus

essentially a program of action along two lines which are kept in some measure of harmony with each other by that African problem—problem in assimilating African facts for purposes of systematic understanding, and problem in aiming at progressively molding the distinct African pattern, so far as he (the African philosopher) can influence it, into what he thinks it ought to be.

It is surely beyond serious dispute that African philosophers do in fact often import their own culture into their analyses of African phenomena. Moses Oke's reason for this is that "the indigenous social culture was superimposed upon Africa and Africans by alien colonialist cultures leading to a confused cultural amalgam in which Western conceptions of the good have been imposed upon African thought and conduct" (2006, 332). The conscious design of separate cultures and cultural understanding, as implied using Oke's analysis, will become a device to express the tendency of maturity in each culture or part of nature. (It is also undoubtedly true that even thinkers who believe human condition can be studied with the culture neutrality characterizing every inquiry into objective activities, and who often pride themselves on the absence of culture orientation from their own analyses in African philosophy, do in fact sometimes makes judgments from their own analyses of African condition. Even if culture predications are assumed to be inherently capable of proof or disproof by European philosophical tradition, at least some of the differences between African philosophers involving culture-orientation are not in fact resolved by the procedures of controlled inquiry.

It does not appear so easy in African philosophy to prevent, in any event, aversions, hopes and fears from coloring the conclusions that philosophers will arrive at. It has taken countless years of efforts to develop habits and techniques of investigation which help safeguard philosophical dispositions and inquiries in European philosophical traditions against the intrusion of irrelevant personal factors; and even in this case, the protection received has not created an infallible or conclusive framework. Thus, the difficulties it creates for achieving objective analyticity in African philosophy must be admitted.

Admittedly, steps must be taken to identify a culture bias when it occurs at the maximum, and to minimize if not to eliminate completely its perturbing effects. What the second reason is analyzing is that it would be no less absurd to conclude that reliable knowledge of human affairs is unattainable merely because inquiry in African philosophy is frequently culture-oriented. What this means is that relative standards by different investigators are used (ends sought, standards employed), whereas there are no absolute standards (we only have evaluation of the end result only in different continents where different investigators carry out their study).

The Approval of Cultural Facts

There is a more sophisticated argument for the view that African philosophy cannot be culture-free. It maintains that the distinction between fact and culture assumed in the preceding discussion is untenable when purposive African culture is being analyzed, since in this context culture enter inextricably into what appear to be purely factual statements. Accordingly, those who subscribe to this thesis claim that a culture-neutral African philosophy is in principle impossible, and not simply that it is difficult to attain. For if value and culture are indeed so fused that they cannot even be distinguished, cultural judgments cannot be eliminated from African philosophy, unless all predications are also eliminated from them, and therefore, unless other philosophies that are not of Africa completely disappear. In this regard, Messay Kebede's belief in the African form of cultural modernity cannot be ignored. He is of the view that, "the involvement of African philosophical, cultural or traditional discourse provides the proof that values and spiritual pursuits are most active in making of African modernity" (2004, 12-13). His view describes one thing; the African reaction to appearance of objectivity raises questions of the kind compelling us to upgrade our understanding of development and modernity instead of relying on conventional answers (KEBEDE 2004, 34). A conventional answer, to a great extent, is the belief that African philosophy is not culture-free. As African philosophy is not culture free, it does not mean that it is inferior and it does not mean that it has to be subdued or become a second-string form of philosophical or cultural discourse.

For example, it has been argued by Richard H. Bell (1997, 2002), Peter Bodunrin (1984), and Robin W.G. Horton (1997), that the African philosopher must distinguish between traditional and undesirable forms of African system, on failing in his plain duty to present African condition truthfully and faithfully, the prohibition against culture-judgments in African philosophy would lead to the consequence that we are permitted to give a strictly factual description of philosophical issues that can be seen in European philosophy, while Odera Oruka (1998, 177), Niyi Osundare (1998, 229-230), Bruce Janz (2003, 34-6), and Kwasi Wiredu (1998, 194-5) assert that we would not be permitted to speak of the cruelty that has once happened to Africa during colonialism and the neocolonial effects of Western friendship with Africa on the psyche of Africans. A political scientist is allowed to see things from his perspective, while a philosopher historian is permitted to see things from the perspective of analyticity and do a critique of how imagination can be used to take a look at historical event. What may be claimed to be a straightforward view in European philosophy may be different in African philosophy.

Moreover, the assumption implicit in the recommendation discussed above for achieving culture-neutrality in European philosophy is often rejected

as hopelessly naïve, it will be recalled, that relations of means to ends can be established without commitments to these ends, so that the conclusions of African philosophical inquiry concerning culture are objective views of life which make conditional rather than categorical assertions about culture. This is because, the choice men make between alternative means of obtaining a given end depends on the cultural view they ascribe to those alternatives.

If there is any proposition made that African philosophy is culture-laden, it does not entail the conclusion, that, in a manner unique to the study of African philosophy, value and culture are fused beyond the possibility of distinguishing between them. It is worthy to note that, the claim that there is such a fusion and that a culture-free African philosophy is therefore inherently absurd, confounds two quite different senses of the term “culture judgment”: the sense in which a culture judgment expresses approval or disapproval either of some religious, moral or social ideal, or of some cultural view, or of some cultural action (or cultural institution) because of a commitment to such an ideal; and the sense in which a culture judgment expresses an estimate of the degree to which some commonly recognized (and more or less clearly defined) type of cultural action, object, or institution is embodied in a given stance (See, WIREDU 1998, 307-8; WIREDU 1998, 193-4).

Furthermore, to make any decision, an investigator, whether an African or Euro-American, must judge whether the evidence warrants the conclusion set to be made whether in African philosophy or European philosophical tradition. Nonetheless, when an investigator reaches a conclusion within the cultural framework where he is doing his investigation, he can therefore be said to be making a specific “cultural value-judgment”, in the sense that he has in mind some standardized type of cultural condition designated, and what he knows and calls the object in view and that he assesses what he knows about the specimen with the measure provided by this assumed standard.

On the other hand, the African philosopher may also make a quite different sort of cultural judgment, which asserts that, since a cultural object under consideration has diminished powers of remaining under continuous examination, it is an undesirable condition. An African philosopher with specific interest in Yoruba thought may be interested in how some events are tagged cultural and metaphysical at the same time. Take for instance, a person’s *iwa* (character) which makes an individual meaningful or meaningless in the human society, is what makes people to have good memory of the individual after his demise. Thus, how has the concept of *iwa* as character become existential? The response may lie in the notion that the concept of *iwa* has two attributes (GBADEGESIN 1998, 303-5): the character aspect where it makes an individual to relate with other individuals in the moral community and the existential aspect which creates a good or bad memory and which allows

judgment to be passed on the person. Like the African philosopher: (Yoruba example), a Euro-American philosopher may be interested in characterizing certain objects in his field of research as philosophical, psychological or natural; but, also like the African philosopher, he is in addition expressing his cultural approval or disapproval of the characteristics he is ascribing to his research. The difficulties that African philosophers with the European counterparts raise provide no compelling reasons for the claim that a culturally neutral African philosophy is inherently impossible.

The Approval of Evidence

There remains for consideration the claim that a culture-free European philosophy is impossible, because culture commitments enter into the very assessment of evidence by European philosophers, and not simply into the contents of the conclusions they advance. This is typical of Moses Makinde's *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*. Similarly, some African thinkers tend to believe in this form of framework. Precisely, Kwame Nkrumah's *Consciencism* (1998), Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism* (1971), Obafemi Awolowo's *Democratic Socialism* (2010, 170-205), Nelson Mandela's *Interventionism in Apartheid* (2013), and so forth, are proponents thereof. Moses Makinde, in his work, *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*, asserts that the analytic school's view of philosophy is just one of many views and their conception of the nature and subject matter of philosophy is *personal* to members of that school (2010, 23). He says, "African thought hold positions quite similar to many ancient and recent European philosophers" (MAKINDE 2010, 28-9). This assertion helps to understand the notion that culture commitments enter into the very assessment of evidence by European and African philosophers, and not simply into the contents of the conclusions they advance. If culture commitments do not enter into the contents of the conclusions that European philosophers advance, then, the conceptions of the culture held by an African philosopher of what constitute cogent evidence or sound intellectual workmanship are the products of his cultural education and his place in the society, and are affected by the social cultural values transmitted by his training and associated with his cultural position; accordingly, the cultural values to which an African philosopher is thereby committed determine which statements he accepts as well-grounded conclusions about African cultural affairs. Thus, the differences between African philosophers in respect to what they accept as credible can sometimes be attributed to the influence of cultural, religious, and other kinds of bias.

No matter how investigations are conducted in the African and European ways, the culture-oriented bias of each continent would help where the evidence will be taken and in situating where the outcome would be placed. Each culture

helps in giving reliable instances or knowledge about the world. The problem is just that these different cultural environments would help research in a lot of ways; the world will be seen from different angles just like an elephant will be viewed from different angles. Inquiries are not meant to be conducted in the same way using the same methodology. African cultural life differs from the European lifestyle, in the sense that, if childless marriages are to be examined using the European condition and the African condition, different results will be arrived at because their societies and belief-system strictly differs. A relational form of objectivity between African perception of a childless marriage and the Euro-American perception of a childless marriage, which is called relationism, to a great extent, cannot be achieved (see, JANZ 2003, 36-7). In any way that we may want to analyze the issue at hand, it suffices to say that the cultural conclusion that an African philosopher would reach is marked by ‘objectivity’ because of the peculiarity of his cultural environment, where the same is applicable to the European investigator under the European cultural condition.

In brief, the various reasons we have been examining for the endemic impossibility of securing objectivity where each culture has its own standard of objectifying issues do not establish what many European philosophers purport to establish, even though in some instances, an European philosopher or trained professional African philosophers direct attention to undoubtedly important practical difficulties frequently encountered in the African cultural discourse. However, Peter Kanyandago differs from this conclusion. The trend of westernization of Africa, he says, “has become very pervasive,” because inculturation implies a re-appropriation of cultures (KANYANDAGO 2003, 32-33). Because of the western dominated African life or re-appropriation of African culture, he rejected the African form of humanity. This, to a great extent, cast doubt on any form of objectivity which could have been reached by the African cultural inquirers and environment. However, there is a response from William Emmanuel Abraham to Kanyandago’s doubt. In trying to show that each culture has different understanding concerning the nature of man coupled with his ability to conduct cultural inquiry, he (William Abraham) pointed out that “if possession of reason is part of our nature (or, if reasoning is part of the description of how people conduct their affairs or cultural investigation in different cultures), then, we cannot be enslaved by reason” (ABRAHAM 1966, 80-1), hence, reason is unworthy to create cultural inferiority. What William Abraham purport to establish is that; reason is possible in different cultures, because man cannot be enslaved to reason so as to be led to casting doubt on what are the end-products of what ‘others’ carry out. William Abraham’s view, to a great extent, reflects the claim of this study.

The Grounds for the Objective-Status of African Philosophy

For as much as this study has examined some of the grounds that have been put forward for the contention that African philosophy is culture-prejudiced, it was quite easy to distinguish the four groups of such reasons, such that the discussion, thus far, has helped in dealing in turn with the asserted role of culture in the choice of problems, the determination of the contents of conclusions, the acceptance of cultural facts, and the appraisal of evidence between what the African and European investigators do.

Emevwo Biakolo in the *Categories of Cross-cultural Cognition and the African Condition*, asserts that, it is in consonance with the pattern of growth and development of the new science of anthropology which replaced the old science of subject-object relations that the determining factor becomes the issue of race (1998, 1). Race is used based on the particularity of Africa as distinct from Europe. Thus, the issue of objectivity, as Biakolo has helped us to discover, paves the way for the factors that makes African investigator to be easily distinguished from the European counterpart when it comes to whatever is chosen to be investigated. If we assert that there is no cultural difference, or that races do not exist (as Kwame Appiah asserts in his works of 1992, 1996, 2005 and 2006), then, we need to heed Emevwo Biakolo's warning that "an ingenuity will be revealed which will help us to further confirm that there is a political project behind the western construction of the cultural paradigms of the "Other" (1998, 1). If Biakolo's paradigm (which Bruce Janz (2003, 34-38) further reiterates) stands, it will be consistent with the notion that African culture, African philosophy or black race has no objective standing in the universe. But if Biakolo's ingenuity (which is a rejection of Appiah's assertion) is followed, it will presuppose the notion that there is no fundamental difference between what African investigators investigate and what European investigators try to investigate.

We may want to consider it not quite necessary to follow the line of the argument that has been put forward. The nature of this unnecessariness may arise from a critic's view as predicated upon Kwame Appiah's assertion that *there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us* (1992, 45). Be it as it may, the implication that his claim creates is that there is no need of classifying people into few races because classifying books in the library would not help us in reflecting or knowing the deep facts about books (APPIAH 1992, 38). For as much as this claim may help in advancing the idea of globality, it can be used in boxing Appiah to a corner. He fails to acknowledge the mental ascription of culture; where people are so biased about who they are, where they come from, the values they represent, what they need to say or withhold, and how they must communicate. There is still a whole lot to

say about different but not opposing cultures and about what makes Africa distinct as Africa and not what makes Africa become a collegiate with Europe.

In his work, *Old Gods, New Worlds*, Kwame Appiah claims that *for the African intellectual, of course, the problem is whether – and, if so, how – our (African) cultures are to become modern*. He concludes by saying that, *neither of us (Africa and Europe) will understand what modernity is until we understand each other* (1992, 107). It is somewhat obvious that despite his (Appiah's) initial claim that there are no races, he asserts in another work that Africa and Europe needs to understand each other. What will be the nature and scope of this understanding? Entering into Appiah's mind using his earlier work, *The Illusions of Race* would presuppose a confusing analogy. There are no races, he (Appiah) said, and now, Africa and Europe need to understand each other, is a presupposition of (i) confusion, and (ii) that races exist. In conclusion, it means an African investigator differs from his/her European counterpart, that Africa differs from Europe, and that any European anthropologist cannot conclusively understand why Africans choose to carry out a particular thing in their culture. For example, a European investigator or anthropologist cannot understand why Africans (e.g., some parts of the Yoruba people) choose to erect two effigies to represent twins (èrè ìbejì) and decide to give the cultural or lineage panegyrics of these effigies. To arrive at a conclusion that such practice is pre-logical is to be preposterous. Janheinz Jahn observes in *Muntu: African Culture and the Western World* that "all activities of men, and the movements in nature, rest on the word, on the productive power of the word, which is water and heat and seed and Nommo, that is, life force itself The force, responsibility, and commitment of the word, and the awareness that the word alone alters the world In traditional African culture, a new born child is a mere thing until his father gives and speak his name" (1961, 128). It is now commonly known that to speak of other cultural understanding about a particular thing as preposterous because of pre-logicality, is to be mistaken. Janheinz Jahn's opinion, in this respect, is that "the African tradition as it appears in the light of neo-colonial culture may be a legend – but it is the legend in which African intelligence believes" (1961, 19). This presupposes one thing that this study affirms; the African cultural understanding and analysis of a specific thing is neither preposterous, religious, savagery, archaic, inferior, brute nor pre-logical. The idea that the African cultural understanding or analysis of a thing or situation should be found or done within the limit of the cosmopolitan or global world view is an attempt to encourage *reductio ad absurdum*. But, this is Pecksniffian in nature. Janheinz Jahn's assertion is that the position of the West, which sees African culture as being doomed to destruction or homogenization, is mistaken. African culture, as Janheinz Jahn posit, is evolving into a rich and independent civilization that is capable of incorporating

those elements of the West that do not threaten its basic values. Though Julius Nyerere's in *Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism* (1971, 91-95) lend support to Jahn Janheinz's position by asserting that it is the attitude of the mind to help one another in the communal African society and to help develop the African socio-cultural values that best describe the African condition, however, the problem with Nyerere's *Ujamaa* is that it is a caricature of Scientific Socialism (Marxism), which proposes that socialism must come through proletarian revolution within an already developed capitalist state.

In this regard, the distinctiveness of the culture and cultural understanding of the African condition as exhibited and explicated by Kwame Anthony Appiah in *Old Gods, New Worlds* (1998, 245-74), B. Du Bois in *The Conservation of Races* (1998, 269-74), Richard H. Bell's *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues* (2002, 197-220), Robin William G. Horton's *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (1997), etc., help in asserting the objective status of what African investigators do with cultural facts as different from what European investigators do with the tools of philosophical analysis.

In *African, African American, Africana Philosophy*, Lucius Outlaw opines that "philosophizing is inherently grounded in socially shared practices, not in transcendental rules. When we view philosophical practices historically, sociologically, and comparatively, we are led inescapably to conclude that philosophical practice is inherently pluralistic, and all philosophical ideals are *local* to communities of thinkers. Since African peoples are ethnically – hence culturally – diverse and geographically dispersed, very important aspects of these ethnic and geographical diversities were fueled, in significant part, by the incursions of Europeans and others into Africa" (1998, 29). If Lucius Outlaw's framework is encouraged, then, the ground for separate investigations between African investigators and their European or American counterparts would not be seen as prejudices but distinct fields of inquiry.

There may be other ways of analyzing Appiah's view that there are no races and DuBois' counter-claim that individual races are to be conserved because they have distinct messages to deliver to the world. However, Emevwo Biakolo's view that it is the Western political project that actually distinguishes the world of the "Other", and Leopold Senghor's claim that "Negroid civilization had flourished in the Upper Palaeolithic Age, where the Neolithic Revolution could not be explained without them" (1998, 439), are clear representations of distinct viewpoints which we must recognize as not conflicting. These views, Leopold Senghor maintains that, they "set us on the way to racialism" (1998, 439). Similarly, Tsenay Serequeberhan's view that "the closing years of the twentieth century are bound to be for Africa and

Africans for a time of prolonged, deep reflection and self-examination” (1998, 9), Kwame Nkrumah’s suggestion of a cultural revivalist solution that will revive the African cultural values of the past into the present (1974, 79), and Henry Olela’s position that “the authentic theoretical foundation of African diaspora’s experience is African” (1998, 43), serve as, (i) counter-objection to Kwame Appiah’s claim in the *Illusions of Race* (1992), and as explicated in his recent work, *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* (1996), where he defended the view that the concept of race is a mistaken American idea (APPIAH and GUTMAN 1996, 32); *The Ethics of Identity* (2005), where he defended the term ‘collective identity’ (APPIAH 2005, 21-22); *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), and (ii) a major boost to aid the notions that there is distinctive Africanness in the way African philosophy has chosen to divulge itself, and that, there is the objectivity that is peculiar to African philosophical inquiry or investigation.

Conclusion

This study does not represent an attempt to split philosophical or cultural investigation among different cultures, as it does not also aim to conclude that cultural investigation is universal in nature and scope. What it aims to produce is a sort of relativism which would not damage the essentialist discourse of putting universal attributes behind human acts, behaviours and plans. Diogenes Laertius’s claim as espoused by Appiah that “he (Diogenes) is a citizen of the world” has long been laid to rest. The shortcomings that World War I could not address gave birth to World War II; Al Qaeda dominates the East of the globe based on what the perpetrators deem as religious and political marginalization; colonialism took place in Africa and the socio-political and economic effects are still on-going in the lives of the Africans and in the activities of the African countries, and so on, as we can count. The conclusion of this study that there is distinctive Africanness in the way African philosophy has chosen to divulge itself, and that, there is the objectivity that is peculiar to African philosophical inquiry cannot walk hand-in-hand with Appiah’s fear, which is that relativism gave birth to the separation between values and facts and this could spell doom for cosmopolitanism and its core values. However, it is important we note that no matter what Kwame Appiah may concede in his works, what an African investigator chooses to investigate, will always be consistent with his cultural world-view. This is because each specific human race or continents have their beliefs which have guided their relationship with ‘others’. However, this study concedes that what a European investigator chooses to investigate will be consistent with his understanding of the world around him just like an African investigator who inquires about the culture or world around him.

Relevant Literature

1. ABRAHAM, William. [The Mind of Africa], 1966. University of Chicago Press: Illinois, Chicago. Paperback.
2. APPIAH, Kwame. [Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers], 2006. W.W. Norton & Company: New York. Paperback.
3. ———. “Old Gods, New Worlds,” [In My Father’s House: African Philosophy in the Philosophy of Culture], pp107-136, 1992. Oxford University Press: Oxford. Paperback.
4. ———. [The Ethics of Identity], 2005. Princeton University Press: Princeton. Paperback.
5. ———. “The Illusions of Race,” [In My Father’s House: African Philosophy in the Philosophy of Culture], pp28-46, 1992. Oxford University Press: Oxford. Paperback.
6. ———GUTMAN, A. [Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race], 1996. Princeton University Press: Princeton. Paperback.
7. BELL, Richard. [Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues], 2002. Routledge: London. Paperback.
8. BIAKOLO, Emevw. “Categories of Cross-Cultural Cognition and the African Condition,” [The African Philosophy Reader, PIETER, Coetzee and ABRAHAM, Roux Eds.], pp1-14, 1998. Routledge: London. Paperback.
9. BODUNRIN, Peter. “The Question of African Philosophy,” [African Philosophy: An Introduction, Richard, WRIGHT Ed., 3rd edn.), pp1-24, 1984. University Press of America: Lanham. Paperback.
10. DU BOIS, William Edward. “The Conservation of Races,” [African Philosophy: An Anthology, Chukwudi, EZE Ed.), pp269-274, 1998. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford. Paperback.
11. EZEUGWU, John. “Ethnocentric Bias in African Philosophy vis-à-vis Asouzu’s Ibuanyidanda Ontology,” [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp41-49, Jan-Jun, 2014. Vol 3. No 1. Paperback.

12. GBADEGESIN, Segun. "Individuality, Community, and the Moral Order," [The African Philosophy Reader, PIETER, Coetzee and ABRAHAM, Roux, Eds.], pp292-305, 1998. Routledge: London. Paperback.
13. HALLEN, Barry. [A Short History of African Philosophy], 2002. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN. Paperback.
14. HORTON, Robin. [Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science], 1997. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, MA. Paperback.
15. JAHN, Janheinz. [Muntu: African Culture and the Western World], 1961. The Groove Press: Chicago. Paperback.
16. JANZ, Bruce. "Between the Particular and the Universal: Cultural Inquiry as the Encounter between Anthropology and Philosophy," [Polylog: Forum for Intercultural Philosophy], pp30-37, 2003. Vol 4. Web.
17. KANYANDAGO, Peter. "Rejection of the African Humanity: Search for Cultural Re-Appropriation," [African Spirit and Black Nationalism: A Discourse in African American Studies, ZENEBU, Falaiye Ed.], pp30-50, 2003. Foresight Press: Lagos. Paperback.
18. KAPHAGAWANI, Didier. "What is African Philosophy?", [The African Philosophy Reader, PIETER, Coetzee and ABRAHAM, Roux, Eds.], pp86-98, 1998. Routledge: London. Paperback.
19. KEBEDE, Messay. "The Future as Forward Movement into the Past: The Constructedness of Identity," [Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization], pp12-18, 2004. Vol 42. No 5. Rodopi: New York. Paperback.
20. MAKINDE, Moses. [African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy], 2010. Obafemi Awolowo University Press: Ile-Ife. Paperback.
21. MANGENA, Fainos. "In Defence of Ethnophilosophy: A Brief Response to Kanu's Eclecticism," [Filosofica Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp96-107, Jan-Jun, 2014. Vol 3. No 1. Paperback.
22. MASOLO, Dismas. "African Philosophy and the Postcolonial: Some Misleading Abstractions about Identity," [Postcolonial

African Philosophy: A Critical Reader, Chukwudi, EZE Ed.), pp283-300, 1997. Blackwell Publisher Inc: Cambridge, MA. Paperback.

23. NAGEL, Ernest. "The Value-Oriented Bias of Social Inquiry," [Readings in the Philosophy of Social Sciences, Martin, BRODBECK Ed.), pp98-113, 1968. Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc: New York. Paperback.
24. NKRUMAH, Kwame. [Consciencism], 1974. Panaf: London. Paperback.
25. NYERERE, Julius. [Ujamaa – The Basis of Socialism], 1971. Oxford University Press: Oxford. Paperback.
26. OKE, Moses. "Cultural Nostalgia: A Philosophical Critique of Appeals to the Past in Theories of Re-Making Africa," [Nordic Journal of African Studies], pp332-343, 2006. Vol 15. No 3. Paperback.
27. OLELA, Henry. "The African Foundations of Greek Philosophy," [African Philosophy: An Anthology, Chukwudi, EZE Ed.], pp43-49, 1998. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, CA. Paperback.
28. ORUKA, Odera. "Sagacity in African Philosophy," [Readings in African Philosophy, Sophie, OLUWOLE Ed.], 1991. Mass-tech Publishers: Lagos. Paperback.
29. OSUNDARE, Niyi. "Squaring Up to Africa's Future: A Writer's Reflection on the Predicament of a Continent," [Remaking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty-First Century, Olusegun, OLADIPO Ed.], 1998. Hope Publications: Ibadan. Paperback.
30. OUTLAW, Lucius. "African, African American, Africana Philosophy," [African Philosophy: An Anthology, Chukwudi, EZE Ed.], pp23-42, 1998. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford. Paperback.
31. SENGHOR, Leopold. "Negritude and African Socialism," [The African Philosophy Reader, PIETER,Coetzee and ABRAHAM, Roux Eds.], pp438-448, 1998. Routledge: London. Paperback.
32. SEREQUEBERHAN, Tsenay. "Philosophy and the Post-Colonial Africa," [African Philosophy: An Anthology, Chukwudi, EZE Ed.], pp9-22, 1998. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford. Paperback.

33. WIREDU, Kwasi. "How Not to Compare African Thought with Western Thought," [African Philosophy: An Anthology, Chukwudi, EZE Ed.), pp193-199, 1998. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford. Paperback.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS AND POSTMODERN CULTURE: THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Isaiah NEGEDU, PhD
Department of Philosophy,
Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State

Abstract

Scientific discourse grew out of various philosophical puzzles raised by human beings from the period of antiquity; and each age always comes with a renewed vigor for development over previous schools of thought with their attendant theories. With the speed of scientific progress and scientific awareness, there is no doubt that scholars from various disciplines fashion out theories to meet with the demands of the scientific spirit. It is this very presence of the scientific society that leads to contest for relevance among various theories/schools of thought. The African situation has been quite unique as the development of science is greeted with the idea that scientific developments have moral boundaries. Critically looking at development in science and how it has tailored our outlook in contemporary times, we opine that scientific investigations into phenomena make philosophical debates more relevant in our modern world.

Keywords: Science, Scientific Progress, Post Modernity, Dialectic, Culture, African Experience.

Introduction

The main characteristic that preoccupies every debate both in the realm of scholarship and informal discourse has been the place of man in the universe and how to solve the problems of the human person. Thus, humanism has been a prevalent theme associated with the second half of the 20th century down through the 21st century. The tone of the criticism leveled against scholarship during the classical times gives an insight into the escapist attitude of philosophers from the social strife of man, which was preoccupied by a journey into changeless reality. Though the existence of science dates back almost immediately to the classical age, there was less freedom of thought that enables man to explore various possibilities. The reason for this attitude was either because it would change the course of history physically, or the fear that people will be induced to change their mental orientation into various belief systems. Science did not exist to serve as a threat to various schools of thought but to search for meeting points of disciplines that gives more worth to the human person.

Classical philosophy largely favors the African system with its emphasis on the preservation of tradition; hence the slow pace of radical scientific movements. But even post-modern thinking is quite impressive in the sense that

it was not built in isolation, at least, there was a foundation and such foundations made it necessary to see the errors inherent in classical thought. Why should discourse on the freedom of thought be necessary, but for the fact that there was an intention to subsume the freedom of man into a system. It is with this same spirit of appreciation of post-modern thought through the lens of classical thinking, that scientific progress in Africa should be seen through the lens of African tradition.

Evolution of Scientific Progress

The etymological meaning of science suggests that it is a peculiar form of knowledge with wide applications. One of the characteristics of science therefore is its ability to embrace other disciplines other than the experimental sciences. As a form of knowledge, its application in classical antiquity was primarily within the domain of philosophy. Thus, scientific development without recourse to its root would amount to sterile scholarship. It is in this regard that every form of scientific discipline, particularly of the experimental sciences employs the critical-analytic method to arrive at solutions to problems. However, the distinctive mark between the former applications of science from the post modern age was the limiting of science when there is perceived threat to the meta-empirical world. The reason science is considered as a reactionary discipline is not necessarily because it denies the existence of the supernatural realm, but its insistence on the negligence of that realm and total focus on the natural world if man is going to encounter progress from one generation to another. This appears to be an extreme borne out of the hate of metaphysics. The implications of this view is even more for the experimental sciences than for any other discipline because the tentativeness of solutions in scientific advancement is more pronounced that it has become a feature of science.

This has rightly influenced the history of science to be the replacement of false theories by theories that are considered to be true. Scientific revolutions at the dawn of the modern period were fundamental to the extent that scholarship before the 15th century was seen to be pre-scientific. By and large, the various revolutions in science has shown that progress in science could be gradual and incremental or radically discontinuous. The various theories of evolution of scientific theories fall within these two categories. Those who uphold the notion of scientific advancement as radically discontinuous opine that past theories that are not workable for the current age should be absolutely detached from current scientific notions of progress that produce tentative results. Scientific progress, advancement, development or whatever its appellation may be, is only possible because there is always an existing structure on ground that is unfavorable for scholarship. As a result of the self-critical attitude of science therefore, theories are replaced with old ones. According to Larry Laudan:

...it is vividly clear that the views of the scientific community about how to test theories and about what counts as evidence have changed dramatically through history... The fact that the evaluative strategies of scientists of earlier eras are different from our strategies makes it quixotic to suppose that we can access the rationality of their science by ignoring completely their views about how theories should be evaluated. (1996, 80)

An insistence on the history of scientific progress without reference to flawed theories that gave birth to current theories is a contradiction in terms because gradual progressiveness necessarily implies the presence of existing structures. That is why John Losee opines that “a progressive sequence is constituted by stages each of which is superior to its predecessor” (2004, 7). Thus, scientific advancement cannot be associated only with descriptive progress. Descriptiveness alone does not produce the self critical attitude needed in science; hence the relevance of theoretical progress. That is why theories must be fashioned to determine how man could better live in the world.

It is this very notion of uncertainty that makes scientific investigations unending. Karl Popper succinctly noted it when he said: “The game of science is, in principle, without end. He who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further test and that they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game” (1992, 32). Pyotr Fedoseyev aptly stated that our age is primarily concerned with the importance of philosophy of science towards analyzing the role of scientific and technical progress in the life of man and society in general. Knowledge in general has always returned to man, so that on the final analysis, even the science of metaphysics which has undergone several negative criticisms is studied in order to teach man how to live in the world (1989, 3). Natural scientists have always considered the solutions of the problems of man to be the primary aim of science. Thus, scientific progressiveness is more often characterized by its ability to set goals and to a large extent make those goals achievable. The result of science has a more radically immanent application “... the aim of science is to secure theories with a high problem-solving effectiveness” (LAUDAN 1996, 77). The dividends of this goal of science are worth-noting; it takes into account scientific progress as it was in the past in line with its futuristic value. It also assures goals that have immanent bearing thereby bringing it closer to epistemic access (LAUDAN 1996, 78).

The Logic of Science

Science has its own progressive tool of reasoning. Historical developments in scholarship show that it uses a method of analysis and synthesis to arrive at its results. The validation of scientific inquiry lies primarily within its logic. That is

why the scientist is that scholar who is always guided by the accepted rules of logical reasoning. To be competent as a scientist therefore, one should be competent in logical reasoning; it is a methodical reasoning that the scientific method should employ. When viewed holistically, the logic of science takes the Hegelian dialectical pattern of a thesis-antithesis-synthesis. It is a continuous process, though not routinely applied because of its accommodation of alternative possibilities. What guarantees alternative possibilities is the very fact of the theory of probability that sustains science.

Probability as a theory does not guarantee outright certainty, but its nearness to precision and or truth is highly probable than doubt. But the method of science is not completely inferential in its probable form; no matter how plausible our reasoning process may be, in the midst of various analogies, we creatively employ deductive reasoning. Whether plausible reasoning is limited to laboratory experimentation is another issue for determination. However, even the untrained mind through creative reasoning uses logic in commonsensical experiences. Scientific knowledge combines both the principles of experimental and theoretical reasoning to arrive at a method that takes all disciplines into cognizance. The scientific society cannot therefore be devoid of method. Methodology in this regard deals with the principles of the organization of knowledge and each science has special demands on organization.

Post Modernity

Post modernity is generally associated with an economic, cultural or scientific condition of society which comes almost immediately after modernity. From the philosophical perspective, post modernity marks the end of modernity. When viewed from the angle of any discipline, it represents a gradual movement that comes to play through some form of creative dialectic and it is marked by continuity. It emerged as a response to some perceived problems posed by modernity.

Philosophers from the period of antiquity viewed nature from a unitary perspective that was supernal in its own right. The human person and all meta-empirical forces were regarded as part of nature thereby setting the rules of conduct for man. Its implication for the society at such moment was that reason was determined or curtailed by nature; the human person and all suprasensible beings were made for nature and not the other way round. Man in this sense was not free to explicate nature wholly for its exploitation. The Judeo-Christian conception of God gradually eroded the concept of logos as proffered by the classical scholars. It would not have been possible for the creator of the world to be fully involved with nature in human terms. This pantheistic view of God was replaced with the monotheistic concept. By embracing God, humans could attain universal truth. This Thomistic view of world order was a defining moment for

science as it raised relevant questions and objections. These objections were due in part to the fact that empirical investigations into the natural world order had some results that were contrary to certain divine revelations. The most prominent was the Copernican revolution by Nicholas Copernicus: "...which held that the earth moved around the sun in contradiction to several passages in the scriptures that referred to the earth as unmoving" (PARFITT 2002, 14). Prior to Copernicus' scientific investigations, Ockham had earlier denied that human beings could have access to God's universal truths through scientific experimentation: "...since God was all-powerful he was not limited by human rationality or by nature, which were merely particular creations among the infinity of creativity of which God was capable" (PARFITT 2002, 14). This therefore puts the foundation of human knowledge into question. The emergence of modern science paved way for the molding of nature in accord with human needs. Decrease in proximity of divine cause or element meant a conscious awareness and nearness of people in the ability of science to improve the wellbeing of man.

Another important element in the emergence of modernity was the change in the perception that man was entirely part of nature; it gave way for the concept of the autonomy of the free individual. The human person was not engulfed in nature in a communal state to the extent of losing his individuality. However, modernity still had some deficiencies that slowed its growth toward science; it was replete with the legitimizing of science in the direction of conformed dialectic that bothered itself with a meta-discourse. Thus, post-modernity is largely: "...a reaction against these central elements of modernity, particularly metatheory, foundationalism and subject-object relations...wherein the subject is allocated an all-powerful position in relation to the object" (PARFITT 2002, 21).

Evolutionary biology with Darwin as its major proponent greatly influenced this shift from modern to post modern outlook of the world. The influence of biology changed the whole concept of life. It postulates that wherever there is life, there is also activity, there is action. For life to persist, these activities and behavior that are part of life should be constantly adjusted to suit the environment. There ceases to be blind conformity to existential realities. There is room for debates and dialogue that keeps life moving progressively. Darwin therefore formulated a version of evolution that undergoes modification through variation and natural selection. It laid the foundation which a naturalistic approach to the theory of knowledge should take. The insistence on naturalistic approach to things was not an express denial of any supernatural influence on the world, but a reaction against speculated questions without attempt to relate such issues to observational evidence (LEWENS 2007, 191). In line with this theory, scientific progress was viewed from the evolutionary perspective "...within

which natural selection operates on a set of conceptual variants such that the fittest variants survive” (LOSEE 2004, 141).

Lyotard who is credited with the emergence of the idea of post-modernism opines that knowledge does not legitimize itself without room for academic debates that justify its proof (BENHABIB 1984, 119). He sees the concept of post-modernity as very critical in the development of the world and scientific progress. Thus accordingly, Jean-Francois Lyotard opined: “post modernism refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert’s homology, but the inventor’s paralogy” (1984, xxv). By this, post modernism encourages a knowledge-based approach that is radically discontinuous from classical knowledge that has its foundation on meta-narratives. But meta-narratives are not altogether unscientific, since classical thought is not entirely devoid of the inventor’s paralogy, though to some extent, it was detached from practical human condition.

Toward a Synthetic Analysis

The dialectics of post modern culture always moves in the direction of scientific development. Most times, we tend to think that science precedes post modernity in terms of technological progress. While the notion of scientific development is incontestable, attitude of various disciplines towards such movement is an entirely unique issue. The gradual unfolding of post modern thought necessarily entails that its primary aim is to ensure that it goes in line with the scientific spirit. It means that in all facets of development notwithstanding the discourse involved, there should not be a dialectical reversal into traditionalism. Historical development has shown that to some extent, science has enjoyed an unguarded freedom, which has led to placement of less value on the moral worth of scientific research. This brings into question the supposed intention of science to take the human person into consideration in its development. If reactions to classical and modern thoughts by post modernity were because scholarship in former times took an escapist route from the existential conditions of man, then scholarship in current times should be primarily concerned with the enhancement of the dignity of man. But history has shown that their development proceeds in quite a contradictory way; quite often, they have not discovered the truth so much as distorted and concealed it “...the achievements of the natural sciences were to a great extent used against humanity, particularly in the destructive wars of the 20th century” (FEDOSEYEV 1989, 4). It is this very problem of the moral worth of scientific progress that takes the ontological dimension that bothers on philosophy. What makes various disciplines including science scientific is not because of the provision of experimental data for observation in the laboratory, but because of that critical analytic attitude that philosophy provides. Some of the

problems inherent in science is because of the refusal of science to take some of its issues to the philosophical level. The interaction of philosophy as a world outlook and as a method of scientific knowledge can only progress when the dogmatism inherent in each discipline is loosened. "...the manifestations of dogmatism and authoritarianism are still felt to this day. This is why the philosophical comprehension of the changes taking place in modern natural science should become a school for a new, dialectical creative thinking" (FEDOSEYEV 1989, 9).

For science to meet the needs of man in the society it has to be used as a force of socio-cultural engineering otherwise scientism which sees science as the beginning and end of all that exists in the universe is deified. Though scientific knowledge strictly speaking is capable of solving most of human problems, the deification of science has been antithetical to human progress. Uncontrolled scientific progress has more implications even for science than for any other discipline. This is because the very chain of thought which scientism intends to discard carries with it some of the logical foundations of scientific knowledge. On the other hand, antiscientism which is an outright rejection of science also tends towards negation of human progress. We cannot trust the future of the world into some supernal principles without regard for naturalism. There is a meeting point between scientism and antiscientism, and it is to the effect that both schools of thought negate scientific knowledge for the benefit of man. Any attempt to enthrone either naturalism or supernaturalism is injurious as it places little value on human existence. While scientism has been responsible for the destruction of lives and properties through the invention of atomic bombs which have been used in various world wars and civil unrest in different societies, antiscientism has been used in different historical periods by various religious sects to enthrone the suprasensible world through a God-centered religion that sees the world as a divine arrangement thereby destroying all forces that are perceived to oppose such arrangement. Ironically, both schools of thought are one-directional in their thinking leaving no room for alternative possibilities. Any appeal to enchantment or disenchantment in its negative form that leads to antiscientism or scientism as the case may be, is a total disconnect from the goal and end of science. Such ideologies are nothing but a complete replication of Popper's closed society and it defies human freedom.

We must aptly note that some parts of Africa are very slow in keying into the vision of scientific progress. In Nigeria for instance, there has been decrease in government investment in scientific research over the years, which gradually demeans the communal status of inquiry and scientific research. Its implication for the society is that research is largely an affair of the individual. Scientific research by its nature must be social, lest it ceases to be scientific. You cannot insist indirectly that education (research) is a private business and expect a social

or communal outcome. Notwithstanding the errors that may be inherent in post-modernity, its relevance is seen in its forward movement into the future, the fact that we can only think of progress that is made possible through a critical dialectic of change.

Conclusion

It is clear from our analysis that we cannot speak of the separation of scientific society and postmodern culture. These two concepts move in a progressive direction through systematic dialectic; hence they become mutually inclusive. Culture is inherently dynamic and this brings to question the static nature of African tradition, since to have a culture is to embrace change. Postmodernism on its own is a culture since it insists on critical reflections on previous schools of thought. It would be a reversal to demand that post-modern culture should catch up with the static nature of African tradition. A primary element that is needed to increase the credibility of our thought system is to embrace the element of self-criticism that steps up the debate from a primitive level to an objective state. In this sense, even values could be subject to debate so as to arrive to a more holistic approach to life situations and not merely subjecting it to the relativity of ethics, where every society has its own definition of concepts without a point of compromise.

Relevant Literature

1. BENHABIB, Seyla. "Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder", [New German Critique], pp103-126., 1984. No 33. Accessed November 29, 2014. Web.
2. ETIEYIBO, Edwin. "Post-Modern Thinking and African Philosophy", [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp67-82. Vol 3. No 1. 2014. Paperback.
3. FEDOSEYEV, Pyotr. "Philosophy, Science and Man", [Studies in Logic and the Foundations of Mathematics, Barwise, J. et al, Eds.], pp3-25, 1989. Vol 126. Elsevier Science Publishers: Amsterdam, 3- Paperback.

4. LAUDAN, Larry. [Beyond Positivism and Relativism], 1996. Westview Press Inc: Colorado. Paperback.
5. LEWENS, Tim. [Darwin], 2007. Routledge: London. Paperback.
6. LOSEE, John. [Theories of Scientific Progress. An Introduction], 2004. Routledge: London. Paperback.
7. LYOTARD, J. F. [The Postmodern Condition], 1984. University of Minnesota: Minneapolis. Paperback.
8. PARFITT, Trevor. [The End of Development? Modernity, Post-Modernity and Development], 2002. Pluto Press: London. Paperback.
9. POPPER, Karl. [The Logic of Scientific Discovery], 1992. Routledge: London. Paperback.

UDUDO REASONING IN AFRICAN THOUGHT: A POSTMODERN FORMALIST METHOD FOR LOGIC

Jonathan O. CHIMAKONAM PhD
Department of Philosophy
University of Calabar

Abstract

The dominance of methods of mathematical reasoning such as the axiomatic method in modern logic has taken a toll on the independent development of logic as a separate discipline. However, the emergence of other non-standard systems of logic which could be described as postmodernist shows how a radical break might be necessary in salvaging logic from the grip of mathematics. Our goal in this essay would be to propose and articulate a post modern formalist method called Ududo Reasoning for logic.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Logic, Ududo, Reasoning, Method, Formalist

Introduction

When every individual thinks in a different way or groups and individuals fail to understand the thinking of other groups or individuals, then there is a big problem. Logic is the algorithm of thought and post modernism is a bold and recalcitrant demonstration that every group if not every individual has his own model. Underlying the relationships between men or groups is the principle of intelligibility that makes for understanding of one another's words, communications, gesticulations, mannerisms, signals, etc. This principle of intelligibility is nothing but logic. That individuals or groups understand themselves is because they belong to the same logic community or that each side fairly understands the logic of the other side. Where this is not the case, there are bound to be disagreement, misunderstanding, misreading, misinterpretation, rancor, crises, trouble, enmity and bitterness. Let us not preclude the regular possibility of individuals or groups pretending not to understand a logic they actually understand and thereby causing some of these dangerous situations listed above just for some selfish reasons. In such cases, it is always easy to know that there are no genuine cases for misunderstanding or not understanding at all the logic of communication. And to such individuals or groups, we always reprimand for their treachery and mischief.

Postmodernism seeks to radicalized everything (OZUMBA & CHIMAKONAM 2012, 94) with reductions that cut across group-based relativism to extreme cases of individual relativism. Cases can be made for individual-based reductions as we see in post modern attitudes to moral

standards, but in logic, for once, the limitation of postmodernism is made bare. We simply cannot talk of individual logics or thought models not because we disapprove of such but because it is not possible. If it is possible at all, it cannot be known therefore, it is not possible! To account for the existence of a principle of intelligibility there must be at least a relationship or communication between two parties, with recourse to one entity alone, anything trumped up cannot be said to be logical. So, it is simply impossible to have individual thought models. At the extreme, it is only group-based logics or thought models that are possible. In this constitutes the wedge of limitation which postmodernism cannot cross.

In this essay, we want to look at what logic and postmodernism are in their own right as disciplines. Then, we shall take a brief look at logic and postmodern thinking identifying some postmodern logical systems. We shall attempt to propose a formalist method that could be described as postmodern in a bid to develop and promote a non-axiomatic method for logic. This represents a radical break from the popular tradition in which modern logic, also known as mathematical logic has effectively become a branch of mathematics. An attempt to establish the independence of logic from mathematics could not be any less postmodern. It may interest the reader to know that the backbone of postmodernism is broken only by logic because postmodernism itself is a type of logic.

Logic and Postmodernism: Conceptual Clarification

Logic read simply, constitutes principles of intelligibility. It enables us to distinguish correct reasoning from an incorrect one. The bases of this correctness are the laws of thought and other logical principles and rules that derive their force from them. A reasoning/proof is therefore correct if it abides by the provisions of these laws and it is incorrect if it breaks any of them. Correctness and incorrectness as we employ them here could be treated as synonyms for intelligibility and unintelligibility. Here, a correct reasoning could be described as intelligible whereas an incorrect one could be described as unintelligible. Between two interlocutors, A and B, there are four possible intelligibility positions that must hold namely:

- (i) A and B understand themselves in the form of anti-symmetry relation i.e. $R_{xy} \wedge R_{yx} \supset x = y$. Here, that the conversations from A and B to each other are intelligible to each is due to the fact that they employ the same logic which they both understand its rules.
- That one of A and B pretends that the conversations from the other is not intelligible to him, whereas in actuality it is, i.e. they both employ the same logic and do understand its rules. This relation is asymmetric i.e.

$Rxy \supset \sim Ryx$. This relation is forced because one party pretends not to understand the other. This sort of thing happens every day in situations where one person wants to score undue advantage over another.

(iii) That one of A and B genuinely does not understand the rules of the logic employed by another. This relation is non-symmetric i.e. $(\sim Rxy \supset Ryx) \vee \sim Rxy$. This occurs any time people from two different cultures work together.

(iv) That A and B understand themselves in the form of symmetric relation i.e. $Rxy \supset Ryx$. Here, one is able to understand the other though they each employ different logics but each is versed in the principles and rules of the other's logic. This usually occurs between two people from different cultures but who are versed in each other's culture. For example, a Chinese who spent years doing his university studies in America and an American who spent years doing cultural research in China. Although, they may each employ logical nuances from their traditions in their conversations, it is possible for each to understand the other. What I have done in the preceding is simply to show that logic is the principle of intelligibility. The motor through which individuals in a given culture understand themselves and members from different cultures understand themselves. Language¹ is properly a motor or medium of communication of thoughts that occurs before understanding. However, implicit in all means of communication in any culture is logic which makes such intelligible. Just as the Indian and the Igbo may speak English which has its logic as their common bond of intelligibility; they each have their separate indigenous languages with their background logics.

While postmodernism can be defined as an anti theoretic theory which objects to the existence of an absolute standard yet, it is in itself an absolute standard. Thus it is a thorough-going self referential theory, whose rejection of every theory is a rejection of itself.

Postmodernism is an *en fanterrible* that emerged in the late 20th century. For the most part, it is a thorn in the flesh of modern theorists. All metadiscourses are dismissed as false testimonies and a difficult position is advocated. In one word, postmodernism has radicalized thought, offered license

¹. I am not unaware that spoken language is not the only medium of communication but communication through whichever medium precedes understanding.

of tenability to every opinion and thus ostracized standard. Paul Crowther notes that “every age has its special verity. In the case of ‘post modernity’ this takes the form of an emphatic relativism (in all spheres of knowledge and value) which posits itself as a radical break with the foundationalist and utopian traditions of the modern intellectual world” (1). What this means is that postmodernism simply radicalized relativism and individualism and then applied them to all spheres of knowledge – even science. In a post-modern world, truth and reality are individually shaped by personal history, social class, gender, culture and religion. These factors, according to postmodern thinking, combine to shape the narratives and meanings of our lives as culturally embedded, localized social constructions without any universal application.

As a term, Gary Aylesworth writes that ‘post modernism’ first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of the [Postmodern Condition ...] by Jean-François Lyotard. In this book, Lyotard defines postmodernism thus: simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimating corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functions, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal (xxiv).

What Lyotard means here is that postmodernism emerged as an opposition to the absolutist standards of modernism, the implication of which is the erosion of vital tools of development among intellectual and non-intellectual cultures. There is a delicate note here which Lyotard pronounced later. It is the position that the postmodern also presuppose the modern. Lyotard (79) declares that the postmodern is undoubtedly a part of the modern. “A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant” (79).

On the whole, following from the conception of postmodernism above, we may regard the Ududo formalist method we propose in this essay as a postmodern reactionary to the orthodox axiomatic method. Also, the Ezumezu logical system just like the other non-standard logics we shall discuss are forms of postmodern thinking focusing on alternatives and disestablishing any absolute standard for thought.

3 Post Modern Logics

Logic describes correct reasoning as well as sensible propositions. What is meant here is that logic not only distinguishes correct reasoning from incorrect reasoning, it also distinguishes sensible proposition from nonsensical ones. In this wise we talk of the form of logic and its subject matter. The formalization of

logic since the 19th century, as laudable as it is, has also impoverished its philosophical content (MACFARLANE 2002). Logicians now work with strings of symbols aimed principally to achieving mathematical precision. But to the extent, they have advanced hopes in this direction; logic has to the same extent suffered in terms of content. Even when symbols are created for the semantic content, they are almost, always employed without recourse to any propositions they purportedly evaluate. Thus, the race to increase the so-called expressive power of logic has led to a post-modern radicalization of the instrument of logic. First, it has become too mathematical and less philosophical; second, many and different types of logics like fuzzy, paraconsistent, dialectic, many and multi-valued logics, etc, have emerged to distemper and disquiet logic as a consistent instrument of research.

These variant logics could be post-modernist where post modern logic itself could be formless and with infinite value range. So we can talk of some types of logics like the ones mentioned above as post modernist in structure and we can also talk of another type that we can call post modern logic. This latter type is formless and infinite in values. It is what undergirds the postmodern mantra of radical relativization which Paul Feyerabend eulogized with the phrase “Anything goes” (28). When deployed in any area it quickly radicalizes it by upsetting the inherent standard, norms and laws and heralds the introduction of anarchy. For want of a better expression, the business of science, its methods and direction when brought under the influence of this post modern logic have been described as epistemologically anarchistic (FEYERABEND 23 – 28). As Feyerabend notes:

The idea that science can, and should, be run according to fixed and universal rules, is both unrealistic and pernicious. It is unrealistic, for it takes too simple a view of the talents of man and of the circumstances which encourage, or cause, their development. And it is pernicious, for the attempt to enforce the rules is bound to increase our professional qualifications at the expense of our humanity. (295)

What Feyerabend and other anarchists of the postmodern orientation promote is a world that runs on a postmodern logic of free, dynamic, relative and unrestricted modes of thought. It is these sorts of thought models that we here describe as postmodern logics.

Paraconsistent logic: This is a type of non-standard logic where the contradiction of a variable does not result in express affirmation of any other opposing variable. In that case, the process is not trivialized by a form of necessity that warrants the assertion of any variable. For this, the negation

elimination or the absurdity rule popularly called *ex falso quodlibet* in Latin does not hold in paraconsistent logic. This is the rule of such form:

$$\begin{array}{l} P \\ \sim P \\ \hline q \end{array}$$

From the apparent contradiction of P and $\sim P$, the affirmation of any other variable seems necessary or inevitable. Paraconsistent logic makes this triviality to fail by its internal dynamics which permits contradictions to be true or contradictory variables of the form $A \wedge \sim A$ to be both true. This is a postmodern form of reasoning in that it neglects the laws of thought. For that also, it is called a non-standard logic with reference to the laws of thought. One of the chief proponents of this logic is Graham Priest.

Relevance logic: This is also called relevant logic and it is a product of the Australia tradition where A. R. Anderson and N. Belnap (1975) S. Read (1988) etc., contributed much to its development. It simply insists that much more is required for validity of arguments of the form $p \supset q$ where P is the antecedent of the conclusion q , p necessarily has to be relevant to q or that the negation of q be inconsistent with p (MAUTNER 480-81). The inspiration behind the workers of this logic is the need to guard against the paradoxes of material implication. Relevance logic is therefore a non-standard logic since it insists that the form of argument must imply its subject matter.

Many-valued logic: This is also called multi-valued. It is the more comprehensive of the non-standard logics because it comprises all logics of the form of truth-value gap i.e. neither true nor false and truth-value glut i.e. both true and false. This means that all the logics with the value range of three to the infinitely numerable fall into this bracket. This also implies the degree theoretic semantic systems i.e. systems whose value range start from T complete truth to F complete false.

Ezumezu logic: This is another form of non-standard logic developed in the African tradition chiefly by J. O. Chimakonam. Its value range is three where propositions receive three designate values one complete and two incomplete values namely $\frac{1}{2}$ representing (incomplete) truth $\frac{0}{2}$ representing (incomplete) falsity and then in-between them $\frac{2}{2}$ representing both true and false which is complete. This form of reasoning arises in African ontology where being is conceived to have two components, concrete and non-concrete, the absence of any component renders it incomplete. This logic also prevents *ex falso quodlibet* from holding.

Fuzzy logic: This is a non-standard logic that is sometimes referred to as Degree theoretic semantic because of its perchance for fragmenting value range in degrees. In it, propositions of a system are assigned values in real numbers like in Boolean Algebra. The two basic assignments are 1 and 0. Whereas 1 represents complete truth, 0 represents complete falsity. The next values assigned in fuzzy logic besides these two are in degrees which are not necessarily complete. These degree values are strictly greater than 0 and strictly less than 1 and are adjudged partially true. Some traditions sometimes interpret them as partially false. For example between 1 and 0, we can have $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, $\frac{1}{6}$, etc., and since it is not mathematically sensible to replicate subdivisions of 0 in this way, the value range are regarded as various degrees of truth hence partially true and not partially false.

Postmodern logic: It may surprise the reader that the systems discussed above are referred to as postmodern logics; why is there yet another called postmodern logic? What is the difference? They all have the same orientation in that they are non-standard logics with variants of truth range but the properly postmodern has an infinite value range above all else. So, one may also call it infinite-valued logic, or I-valued logic or I-logic as the case may be with the letter I representing infinity.

I shall like to credit this logic to Paul Feyerabend who brought out the extreme radicalization of postmodern thinking. In his popular against method he advocates epistemological anarchism or anarchistic science (21). In his words, “All methodologies have their limitations and the only rule that survives is anything goes” (296). This implies infinity of values in any language fragmented in degrees of truth whose converse i.e. degrees of falsity is also admissible. In other words, in adopting the real numbers θ and N we shall have θ representing degrees of falsity and N representing degrees of infinite truth range. In this logic, there is no such thing as completely false or completely true. Every statement is partially true and of course, partially false. The difference however lies in the degrees of truth and falsity. The postmodern logic is described by contexts such that value range changes from point to point in simple infinity.

One other thing about postmodern logic is that for every range of infinite values represented by the real numbers, there is no cardinality property attached. Put differently, no real number of partially false has a one-to-one correspondence with any real number of the range of partially true, hence simple infinity. For the great insight from Paul Feyerabend I shall like to christen the postmodern logic, Feyerabend logic. There are many other variants that could be described as postmodern logics besides the ones described above which for want of space, we could not discuss here. Some of such include dialethic logic, partial logic, four-valued logic, etc.

Why a Formalist Method for Logic?

The Igbo term Ududo simply means spider. Ududo reasoning as the name goes refers to the spider's web or web-like reasoning procedure. This becomes the type of reasoning mechanism we wish to project in this essay. It is postmodernist because it represents a break from modern logic in its designation of alternative proof apparatus. To reason may not be exactly the same thing as to prove as some logicians notably Gilbert Harman (107) insists, but proofs no matter how elementary involves a certain form of reasoning. One need to be able to move from premise to premise in the process of conducting a proof and in this is found reasoning of some type. Ududo reasoning as used here is additionally a kind of proof. Thus, it offers us a formalist proof apparatus to show whether a given argument is valid and sound or not without any axiomatic process—this also reflects the property of postmodern thinking. Logic therefore can be unaxiomatized. The one implication of modern development of western logic is that logic became lured into matrimony with mathematics such that whether mathematics can be given foundation in logic (Frege's logicism) or logic adopts the formal structure and axiomatic method of mathematics (Hilbert's formalism) remain permanently potential and tentatively actual in respective order. For this, modern western logic therefore becomes properly speaking, mathematical logic. A delusion is thus setting in because at the purest development of logic, there is a growing impossibility to talk of logic without mathematics or to simply say logic without the adjective mathematical. The basic reason for this delusion is the adoption of higher mathematical methods like axiomatization beginning in the 17th century with writers like George Boole, Charles Pierce, Gucippe Peano, Gottrifried Leibniz and then reaching perfection in Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and Alfred-North Whitehead.

What we are out to achieve with Ududo reasoning is partly to return logic to logicians. In offering a non-axiomatized proof of arguments, even at the quantification level, Ududo reasoning procedure shows that there can be an unpolluted formalist method for logic in diagrammatic expressions of our reasoning. Note of course, that formalist method refers to a method of proof that is non-axiomatic i.e. structurally derived with nothing more than rules of thumb which serves as mere guide or explanatory tool to proof, whereas formal structure refers to the symbolic language in proof construction; the latter is a framework for both axiomatic and formalist methods of proof. We may therefore study mathematical logic as a branch of logic rather than the next inescapable stage in the development of our discipline.

It is imperative to clearly subsume mathematical logic to a bigger shadow of logic without mathematical method. Terms for example are defined functionally and function is characterized by method. In this way, modern logic which adopts mathematical method becomes subsumed under mathematics and is

hardly a discipline in its own right or at least a properdeutic or instrument to philosophy. Tongues have even begun to wag; Richard Kaye wrote a text book on logic recently and chose to title it *The Mathematics of Logic* (2007). According to him, mathematical logic has been in existence as a recognized branch of mathematics for over a hundred years. Its methods and theorems have shown their applicability not just to philosophical studies in the foundations of mathematics which is *perhaps their original raison d'être* but also to mainstream mathematics itself (vii). The stressed phrase signifies the original status of logic as a tool of philosophy but which has been transformed to mathematical logic as a branch of mathematics. Our point is that the adoption of mathematical method (axiomatic) in the business of logic for close to one hundred years now portrays it as a branch of mathematics.

The generally accepted theory is that the basic characteristic of logic is that logic should be about reasoning or deduction, and should attempt to provide rules for valid inferences. These rules which should be sufficiently and precisely defined become rules for manipulating strings of symbols. These strings of symbols should also have attached meanings since they are according to Leibniz in his *Calculus philosophicus or Ratiocinator, a Lingua Characterica* or what Frege in his [Begriffsschrift] calls a formula language for pure thought. In it, every well formed formula represents at least a sentence and every sentence Frege notes in his “The Thought: a Logical Inquiry” has a sense or meaning. The challenge here is that through the meanings of symbols, a logician should try to present a logical justification for the inference rules which ought to be demonstrations that express the hidden or intuitive structures of our reasoning. But contrary-wise, with the metamorphosis to mathematical logic, what the logician attempts to do in proofs of arguments is present a mathematical justification of the rules of logic given the axiomatic method of mathematics i.e. some pre-established axioms are appealed to whose semantic contents are merely formal other than material in generating a proof such that we therefore say that a sentence is formally true without wishing to say it is actually true.

The application of mathematics to logic (mathematical logic) led to the emergence of two interpretive theorems namely soundness and completeness theorems. The soundness theorem states that no incorrect deductions can be made from the inference rules if we take “correct” to mean the meanings of our sentences. The completeness theorem on the other hand states that every correct deduction that can be expressed in the system can actually be made using a combination of the inference rules provided. The first theorem calls for the proof of consistency and non-compatibility of the individual rules of inference (assuming them to be axiomatic), while the second calls for the proof of completeness of the system (again, assuming such system to be axiomatic).

These two therefore become mathematical theorems because to prove them, there

is a need for an algorithm. So we see how logic grows from being a discipline or tool of philosophy to a branch of mathematics simply by adopting the method of mathematics.

Much as an eclectic optimist may claim that the journey of modern logic into mathematics has been fruitful, the fact remains to be disputed that every future development of logic would inevitably be a footnote to a development in mathematics. This is a muffling of a discipline into a theory in another discipline and a stifling of its independent progress. David Hilbert writes that “as long as a branch of science offers an abundance of problems, so long is it alive; a lack of problems foreshadows extinction or the cessation of independent development” (407). The subsumation of logic under mathematics foreshadows extinction to its independent development. This is because its concerns and its problems would ultimately be those of mathematics without any independent focus.

Our call here for a return to deduction and induction and maybe their advanced development as logical methods rather than the blind embrace and adoption of mathematical method is worth a second thought by any logician. The impression this creates is that logic is losing ground to mathematics. It is not out of place to adopt a mathematical method in a satellite development of our discipline but it would be out of place to make it the central and sole method of logic. A nery implication to this is that the future development of logic would be determined by the developments in mathematics. We have seen the Cantor’s continuum, the Diophantine equation, the Fermat’s problem, the Hilbert’s compatibility of mathematical axioms to mention a few becoming the occupation of logicians after the mathematicians had laid them to rest or at least given them the full measure of their strength. Therefore, to do as little as discover or advance own methods for modern logic would not only restore the disciplinary status of logic but would open it up to measures of parallel development with other disciplines. Under this influence, logicians would be able to plot an open, broad view and independent development of their subject and get to a stage at which they would find an economically viable career in it.

Ududo Reasoning as a Postmodern Formalist Method for Logic

Disorganization that leads to organization is the way of a spider. Sometimes, we reason from seemingly disorganized premise but in the end arrive at an organized conclusion. Let us first define reasoning following Gilbert Harman (107) as a logical procedure for revising our beliefs, changing our views and which determines which new beliefs we acquire and which old ones we set aside (where the procedure referred to above simply means a set of axiomatic rules or formalist rules). This therefore, does not exclude non-axiomatic procedures like formalist structures which employ simple non-axiomatic rules in putting thoughts

into logical perspectives; insights into the latter are actually the main thrust of this essay.

The relationship between reasoning and logic in African thought is cordial in that reasoning functions as a tool of logic while logic remains a framework for reasoning hence reasoning is considered rigorous if it is logical. Being logical roughly speaking simply means adherence to laid down axioms, formalist rules and other logical laws in the arrangement of thought.

In their thought system, Africans of different tribal backgrounds believe and hold the view that reality exists in a network of interconnection. This is why their ontology makes most of the collectivity rather than the particular; and group identity rather than individual identity. One exists only in a group; to be ostracized is to cease to exist. Let us remember also that in African thought variables are concrete realities and not abstract signs, so they too are in a network of interconnection with the operators bringing them in contact. This means that variables that are not connected through one operator could be connected through another.

Ideally, the Ududo or Cobweb is one framework of logical reasoning which captures the African idea of interconnection of realities in a non-axiomatic way. Thus using it as a framework for reasoning, Ududo shows how our beliefs and views are related, how we acquire new ones, how we set aside old ones and how we place them in proper logical perspectives. The ones we set aside we may reacquire and the ones we acquire we may set aside later as contexts and circumstances demand. Below is an example of Ududo reasoning:

Unquantified argument structure

$$D \quad \vdash \rightarrow \quad Q$$

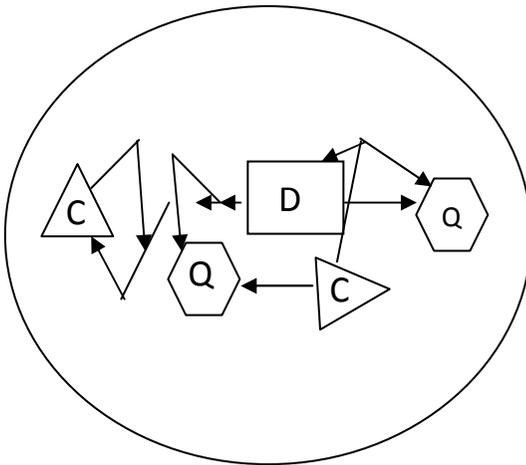
$$Q \quad \leftarrow \vdash \quad C$$

$$C \wedge Q \quad \vdash \rightarrow \quad D$$

$$\therefore (D \wedge Q) \vee (C \wedge Q)$$

Here we start reasoning with the first term placed at the centre of a circle within a square box thereafter other terms could be placed in any type of box other than a square and the uniformity of each box maintained throughout. This is to give direction to the reasoning. In Ududo reasoning every operator is represented with a unique type of arrow for example: $\vdash \rightarrow$ becomes \rightarrow , \Leftarrow , \lrcorner turns to \leftarrow ; \wedge becomes \swarrow or \nwarrow ; \vee becomes \searrow or \swarrow ; \sim turns to \curvearrowright or \curvearrowleft , \Leftrightarrow becomes \leftrightarrow ; while \downarrow signifies a drop down of a unary variable. Additional rule of the thumb is that inferences of wedged-implication are ideally done towards the right while those of wedged-reduction are done towards the left to ensure clarity. Also \Rightarrow or \Leftarrow or \Uparrow or \Downarrow signify therefore or conclusion.

Fig. 1: Diagram of ududo reasoning



Valid and sound:

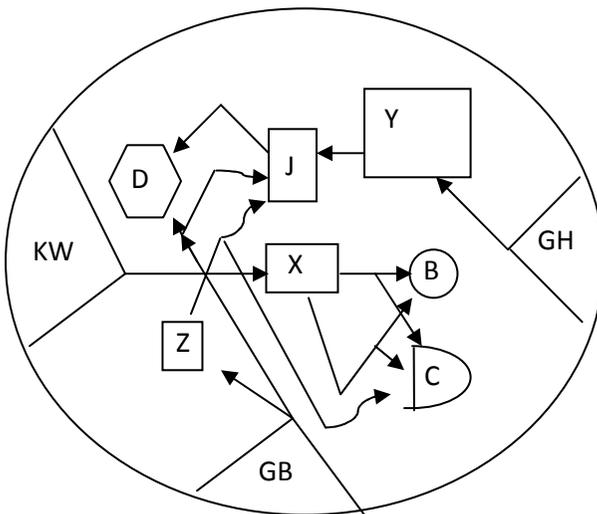
Page 101 We see that this argument is sound because the premises are relevant to the conclusion. The premise C wedge-reduces to Q has an arrow connection to the first premise D wedge-implies Q. But the fact that the first premise does not

connect directly to the second in that order also shows that the argument is inconsistent therefore valid. Relevance primarily determines soundness. Ududo reasoning thus is a viable apparatus for determining the soundness of arguments from a formalist perspective. For an argument to be sound the arrows must connect the premises and the conclusion and for it to be valid, the connection of the arrows must not be properly ordered. This reasoning format therefore succinctly exposes and clarifies the muddy case of validity without soundness.

Quantified argument structure:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &GHy Jy \wedge Dy \\
 &KWx Bx \vdash \rightarrow Cx \\
 &GBz \sim Jz \vee \sim Cz \\
 \therefore &GHy (Dy \wedge \sim Jy) \vee (Bx \wedge \sim Cz)
 \end{aligned}$$

Fig. 2: Diagram of quantified argument structure



Page 102 Valid & Sound:

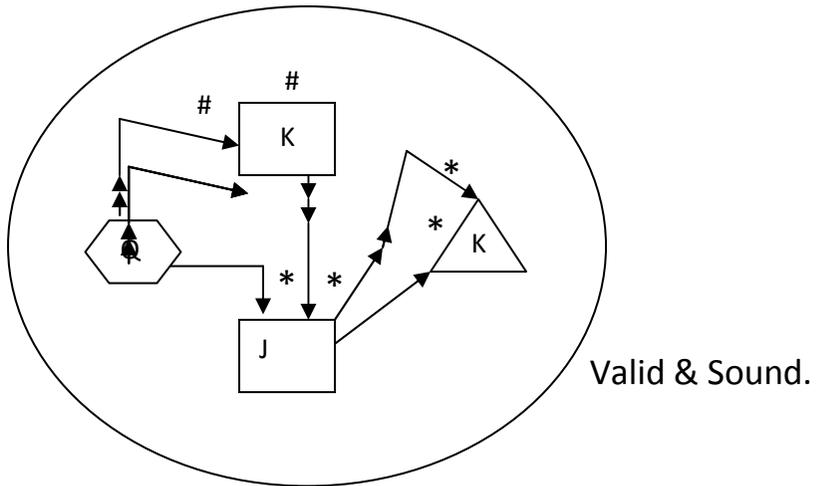
Here we begin by placing the quantifiers in triangles at the left, right and then the bottom sides of the Ududo. Note also that in line with the reasoning pattern of

Ezumezu logic, the group comes first before the individual hence the KW, GH and GB take placement in this order.

Evaluated argument structure (improper)

1. $T(J \mapsto K)$
2. $T(Q \wedge J)$
3. $F(K) \therefore (Q \wedge K) \mapsto (J \wedge K)$

Fig. 3: Diagram of evaluated argument structure



Our variables are J, K*, Q, K#

In the above, we use * to designate true prepositions and # to designate false ones while “C” would designate the complemented proposition. The argument is sound in that there are arrow connections which show the relevance of the premises to the conclusion and it is valid in that line two shows inconsistency in the ordering of the arrow connections. To be well-ordered line one would have to connect line two and not the other way round. The major operator in the conclusion \mapsto is true because where the agbọ-ochie is false and the agbọ-ohụ

true, Ezumezu logic shows that the wedged-implication is true due to the principle of existential possibility. In the conclusion lines indicated by \uparrow , the agbọ-ochie $Q \wedge K$ is false because one of the ejima $K^\#$ is already shown to be false, and the agbọ-ọhụ $J \wedge K$ is true because an established premise $J \vdash k$ already shows the variables to be true. Note however that this is not a full-blooded argument in Ezumezu logic because it is not properly evaluated. A properly evaluated argument in Ezumezu logic must have three values because Ezumezu-African logic is strictly three-valued.

Conclusion

This Ududo proof apparatus is therefore formalist in method since it is devoid of axioms. It is also postmodernist in structure since it portends a non-standard logical system in the mold of Ezumezu logic. Generally, it retains symbolism but takes it to a new level with the introduction of graphics. The graphics then by their involvement draws logic closer to subject matter while not tearing it apart from form. It is in exercises like this that the subject of modern logic would be redefined as a discipline rather than as a branch of mathematics. Hence, Ududo reasoning can be described as a formalist method with a postmodernist flare. The goal of this essay therefore was to propose a formalist method for logic that is at the same time postmodernist in keeping with the postmodern ideal of creating alternative frameworks and breaching the walls of static hegemonies in thought.

Relevant Literature

1. AYLESWORTH, Gary. "Postmodernism", [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Edward Zalta, Ed.], Published Fri. Sep. 30, 2005. Retrieved Mon. 12 Sept. 2011 8:07 pm. Web.
2. CROWTHER, Paul. [Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge], 1975. New Left Books: London. Paperback.
3. FEYERABEND, Paul K. [Against Method], 1975. Verso Press: New York. Paperback.

4. --- . “Against Method”, [The Canon and its Critics: A Multi-perspective Introduction to Philosophy Furman, Todd and Mitchell Avila Ed.], pp346-354, 2000. Mayfield: California.
5. HARMAN, Gilbert. “Logic and Reasoning”, [Synthese], pp107-127, 60 1984. Paperback.
6. Hilbert, David. “Mathematical Problems”. [Bulletin (New Series) of the American Mathematical Society], 37. 407 – 436. Reprinted from Bull. Amer. Math. Soc. 8 (1902): 437-470. Paperback.
7. Kaye, Richard. [The Mathematics of Logic. A Guide to Completeness Theorem and Their Applications], 2007. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. Paperback.
8. LYOTARD, Jean-Francois. [The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Trans. Geoff Benningon and Brian Massumi], 1983. Theory and History of Literature Vol. 10 Manchester University Press: Manchester. Paperback.
9. MACFARLANE, John. “Frege, Kant, and the Logic in Logicism”. [The Philosophical Review], pp25-61, Vol 111. No 1. Jan., 2002. Paperback.
10. MAUTNER, Thomas. [The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy], 2002. Penguin: London. Paperback.
11. OZUMBA Godfrey and CHIMAKONAM Jonathan. “Postmodernism and the Development of Political Science”, [Political Science: An Introductory Reader, BASSEY Celestine. O and OZUMBA G. O. Ed.], pp86-108, 2012. Concept Publications: Lagos. Paperback.

THE PREFIX “AFRICAN” AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR PHILOSOPHY IN AFRICA

Samuel T. SEGUN, MA
Department of Philosophy
University of Calabar, Calabar.

Abstract

Philosophy today is often regionalized unlike science and other disciplines. Thus we talk of Western, Eastern, American and African Philosophy. To speak or write philosophy within the ambit of the prefix “African” would elicit two major responses. First is the affirmative response which believes that indeed there exists some form of philosophy in Africa although distinct from Western philosophy in approach, procedure and methods but not in kind. The second is the denialist response which rejects vehemently the position of the former; in that they deny the existence of African philosophy independent of Western colouration. In other words, they do not believe that there exists any form of philosophy distinct from the Western idea of philosophy be it in approach or method. Within this frame certain problems arise such as the problem of interpretation or definition, the myth of unanimity and the problem of ethnophilosophy. The aim of this work thus is to understand the implications of the prefix “African” for philosophy in Africa. In this attempt, we uncover the subject of African Philosophy, its many possibilities, nature and interpretations. In understanding the implications of the prefix “African” for philosophy in Africa, the work avers that the affirmative response in modern times is an advocacy for what Chimakonam refers to as systematic African philosophy; and the denialist response to the subject is an outright rejection of the universal character of philosophy. For the laws of logic, the burden of axiology, the questions of metaphysics, the problems of socio-political philosophy and the concerns of epistemology all transcend geographical boundaries.

Keywords: Affirmative, Denialist, Philosophy, African, African Philosophy, Ethnophilosophy, Systematic African Philosophy, Complementarity, Unanimity.

Introduction

No scholarly write up I believe, can sufficiently exhaust the subject of philosophy in Africa. The prefix “African” when discussed alongside philosophy in Africa appropriately, presupposes the subject of African Philosophy. It designates the presence of philosophy within the continent of Africa. We must note that philosophy in Africa “means more than African Philosophy... [it refers to] the activities of doing, writing and teaching philosophy in Africa” (MAKINDE 2000, 103). As direct as this may sound it has with it attendant

implications. The first of such implications which we shall discuss extensively in this work is the myth of unanimity. Second is the problem of equating the prefix African to a race or to the colour black or more appropriately Negro Africa. This was the challenge Leopold Senghor had to contend with in his later days when his concept of negritude was misconstrued to mean the Negro (black) race. Third is a conflict when we discuss philosophy in the context of geographical enclaves. The aim here is to question, what makes a philosophy Western, Eastern, American or African? Does philosophy change in its nature and content within cultural frames? What are the roles of geographical categorization and the content of philosophy? Fourth, there is the question of the relevance of ethnophilosophy and if it is an integral and indispensable part of African Philosophy and indeed philosophy in Africa.

As we look through different societies the content of their investigations with regards to philosophy may greatly differ in context but not in content. Much like when we refer to Philosophy in Britain, we are probing into the how philosophy is done in Britain. Likewise discussing the nature of philosophy in Africa is to question the study, teaching, writing and doing of philosophy in Africa. African philosophy as an academic study is relatively new and is often studied alongside African Studies as a mere subset. But this is not sufficient to appraise the quality of philosophy in Africa. Unfortunately but thankfully attempts are being made to ensure that academic or professional African Philosophy is studied and taught in African Universities. Prior to this attempt, philosophy students in Africa have been literally taught Western Philosophy from undergraduate to postgraduate levels. It was a hectic and tiring journey through debates, conferences and publications for African Philosophy to earn a place in the league of global philosophies. Thus, “African Philosophy as a component of academic global philosophy has become very respectable in its contributions to shaping the history and experiences of the African people and that work on African Philosophy must be persistent and sustained” (MESEMBE 2013, 122). Let us proceed to unravel the subject matter of this article accordingly; (i) Understanding the Prefix “African” (ii) Philosophy in Africa and African Philosophy (iii) Implications of the Prefix “African” for Philosophy in Africa and (iv) Understanding African Philosophy through a unified explanation.

Understanding the Prefix “African”

The prefix African refers to one with an African origin. It also refers to anything relating to Africa or Africans. It is expedient to note that in current times there has been a misconception that Africa is a country rather than a continent of many people. This has sparked tremendous reactions from Africans. Although the purpose of this may not be really known in that it could purely be an honest mistake or a calculated attempt to disposes a people of a place in global

advancement. Whatever the reasons are, they are of little consequence to our discourse. More so, Western anthropology has made it somewhat difficult to see the African people as distinct people, a culmination of varying tribes and cultures. The etymology of the word Africa may lend us some help as we proceed:

In antiquity the Greeks are said to have called the continent Libya and the Romans to have called it Africa, perhaps from the Latin *aprica* (“sunny”) or the Greek *aphrike* (“without cold”). The name Africa, however, was chiefly applied to the northern coast of the continent, which was, in effect, regarded as a southern extension of Europe. The Romans, who for a time ruled the North African coast, are also said to have called the area south of their settlements Afriga, or the Land of the Afrigs—the name of a Berber community south of Carthage. (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011, Web., NP).

From its etymology we must note that Africa is a continent of people beyond Negro Africans. In fact the etymology of the word in no way referred to Negroes. The prefix “African” therefore refers to a person from the continent of Africa.

During the scramble for Africa, it is said that “Europe’s new colonial territories enclosed hundreds of diverse and independent groups, with no common history, culture, language or religion” (MEREDITH 2005, 1-2). There after the division of these territories led to the formation of many failed and failing states, historic genocides, ethnic clashes and cleansing, toggle for power and ethnic superiority etc. Thus the failure to see Africa or understand the prefix “African” from that perspective of independent groups could be counter-productive to fulfilling the aim of this work. Uduma notes strongly the words of Gene Blocker, the “word African means in the style of but they can also mean “within the geographical area of”. 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...” (2014, 128). From all the above definitions, readers can glean that the prefix African refers to a person from the continent, an appurtenance of Africa, and the style of. It is within this frame of possible definition that our navigation in exploring this essay can be actualized.

Philosophy in Africa and African Philosophy

To discuss philosophy in Africa is one thing and African Philosophy another. Philosophy in Africa refers to Africa’s participation in the universal enterprise of philosophy while African Philosophy presupposes a distinct way of doing philosophy. It differs from Western, Eastern or American philosophy not in kind but in approach. What do we then mean when we say we are doing philosophy?

What is philosophy? The process of rational and critical reflection is the process of doing philosophy. And philosophy is the system that makes this reflection possible. In other words philosophy is a reflective investigation into the nature of things. As Ezeani puts it:

To philosophize is to think, and to think is to question. To philosophize is to ask questions and question the answer to the question and continue the process until one arrives at the ultimate answer- the truth... through the process of critical questioning and reflection the philosopher attempts to confront his or her existence, assumptions and also contribute to the development of thoughts. (EZEANI 2005, 11 and 7)

To deny the African this right and by this I mean the right to think is not only to question his rationality but to question his humanity and existence. Having established what qualifies as philosophy it becomes absurd when the question is there a philosophy in Africa is asked. For when we refer to philosophy in Europe or Asia, we are simply probing into how philosophy is done in Europe or Asia. Likewise discussing the nature of philosophy in Africa is to question the study, teaching, writing and practice of philosophy in Africa. The question itself appears to be self-contradictory for it appears that asking if there is a philosophy in Africa presupposes the following; first that there exists an African philosophy at least mentally- for a thing is insofar as it can be imagined, “second, (to question its) meaning, third, (its) content/nature and finally, (its) relevance” (ASIRA 2004, 197). In discussing philosophy in Africa we must necessarily discuss African Philosophy. Thankfully, “the debate or controversy on whether or not there is an African philosophy is dead and buried. At best it is a matter of mere historical interest” (UDUIGWOMEN 2009, 2). African Philosophy suggests to us a “contextualized critical thinking of or a philosophical product by an African... it is (or part of it is) an articulation by an African philosopher of his or her ideas or thoughts in a coded format meant to provide an answer to a mind-boggling question or a solution to a contextualized social or political problem” (EZEANI 2005, 9). In the recent past African Philosophy has had her share of debates all tailored towards deconstructing her growing trends, ideas and influence; the problem of method, logic, *criticality*, etc., all featured prominently in deconstructivists arguments. But we must encourage African philosophy practitioners “...to do [philosophy] in the way they think it should be done including of course, the writing and teaching of it” (MAKINDE 2000, 125). By African Philosophy we suggest a philosophy done by Africans through reflecting on their existential ambience. Bodunrin summarizes African philosophy as “the philosophy done by African philosophers whether it be in the area of logic, ethics or history of philosophy” (SOGOLO 1993, 2). As put forward by Sodipo, “when you say African philosophy you are drawing attention to that aspect of

philosophy which arises from a special problem and the unique experience of African people” (UDUIGWOMEN 2009, 6). An exegesis of the above definition suggests to us that African philosophy is utilizing the tools of philosophy to explain reality from the African perspective. Asukwo defines African philosophy as “a subjective world-view packaged and anchored with the mind-frame in order to ask and answer questions that can solve the immediate problem at hand within a given socio-economic and political environment” (2009, 30).

As is the main function of philosophy being the search for truth in its entirety (NZE 1990, 44), African philosophers must maintain this disposition if we must grow the influence of African philosophy. In fact, it is worthy to revamp the notion that African philosophy does not differ in kind or degree (in terms of hierarchy) or quality from Western or any other philosophy. They only differ in their approaches and investigation of truth. It is often argued as did Ozumba and Chimakonam that whereas Western thought is exclusive and dichotomized in nature, African thought is complementary, integrative and inclusive (2014, 80-85). The above corroborates our argument that Western and African philosophies differ in approach but not in kind. Chimakonam in his work “Why can’t there be an African Logic?” explains further:

...among the characteristics of African logic is the uniqueness of its approach. Western logician for instance, takes the middle position between A and B and only asserts one when he has fully drawn out his proof. The African logician however, asserts one A and B before drawing out his proof to justify this position. This is principally why, by the standard of western logic any such reasoning pattern is said to be guilty of bias and prejudice and is accused of lacking in objectivity. It is by this standard that African thought pattern is said to be illogical. (2011, 143)

What this means is that African philosophy or in the above case African logic arrives at its philosophical depth and identity through a rather different route, distinct from that applied in Western philosophy. The tenets of African philosophy “may legitimately be found in the types of literature mentioned earlier, and that its fundamental conceptual framework and content may be profitable compared with “Western philosophy” on some grounds, at least” (WRIGHT 1984, 53). In corroboration of the above, Oyeshile notes “Hence, we submit that what African philosophy is, involves the application of ... conceptual analysis, logic, criticism and synthesis to the reflections on issues that are of paramount importance to the African needs and ways of life” (2008, 62). To further buttress the position of this work, the above arguments insist not just on the necessity of African philosophy but on its uniqueness.

Implications of the Prefix “African” for Philosophy in Africa

When we mention philosophy in Africa, two distinct responses are most likely to be heard. These two responses form what this work refers to as the denialist and affirmative opinions. The denialists argue that there is no philosophy in Africa. The African, they presume, is incapable of philosophizing. On the other hand the affirmatives agree that there is not only philosophy in Africa, there is also a thing known as African philosophy in the sense that we speak of Western philosophy. When philosophy is used alongside the prefix “African” what must come to mind is the universality of the subject matter of philosophy which cuts across independent groups, with no common history, culture, language or religion within the continent of Africa. The unfortunate conditioning of Western minds by anthropological literature and those of Africans by colonial indoctrination have led to a loss of individuality with regards to philosophy in Africa. We shall address certain problems this may engineer such as the myth of unanimity, ethnophilosophy and the categorization of Africa as a race or color.

The Myth of Unanimity

The Myth of Unanimity is founded on a misguided anthropological finding and belief. For there appears to be a sort of unified way of thinking, cultural response, sense of right and wrong and in this case philosophy when Western anthropologists, and many African writers express their opinions. We often hear things such as, “we Africans, the Africans” as though a uniformed way of thinking was common place in Africa. This does not exist in itself. It is rather a misconception of a people assumed to be one in thought and culture. To aptly capture this, Temples’ work on the Bantus was an attempt to impose the findings of his expedition amongst the Bantus to the rest of Africa. He avers, “Anyone who claims that primitive peoples possess no system of thought, excludes them thereby from the category of men (1959, 14)”. Although somewhat derogatory, by primitive people he meant Negro Africans. He simply worked on the assumption that the Bantus being from the Negro race ultimately had things in common with other tribes or peoples of such race. To corroborate this further, early anthropologist and ethnographers within Africa worked with similar assumptions. The belief was that:

The central feature of the types to which African cultures belong is that there is a certain world-view to which can be related to all other central concepts, including those of religion and theology, morality and social organization. (ABRAHAM 1962, 45)

By implication, it is meant that this world-view makes African peoples similar in thoughts patterns—a thoroughly misconstrued belief. For if it were so, African

traditional communities would have had no need for communal clashes because they would have been a homogeneous people simply living in different areas but similar in mind, thought and culture. The myth of unanimity arises when a search 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...(thus) the 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. (UDUMA 2014, 139)

Why this myth is dangerous to the progress of African philosophy is best explained thus:

Behind this usage, then, there is a myth at work, the myth of primitive unanimity, with its suggestion that in 'primitive' societies—that is to say, non-Western societies—everybody agrees with everybody else. It follows that in such societies there can never be individual beliefs or philosophies but only collective systems of belief. (HOUNTONDI 1983, 60)

As noted above, the damage of this claim is preposterous and an impediment to the development of African philosophy. In sincerity we must insist, as is the case that although certain characteristics flow across African communities, (which ultimately form their approach to philosophy and not content) it still doesn't make them one people. The myth of unanimity simply is a misconstrued notion that all Africans are alike in thought and beliefs. Thus when the prefix "African" with regards to a philosophy is used it often would be used to refer to a people with a common disposition to philosophy. On this myth Asouzu^a opines that:

...the impression is created that African philosophy is a unified body of ideas congenial to all African societies. In this case, these worldviews do not represent the ideas of concrete historical individuals; neither can they be ascribed to distinct philosophical trends in the past. (2004, 111)

Since this is not the case, African philosophers are encouraged to disabuse their minds from writing their thoughts as if it were a thought borrowed from the community. This is thus a call for individualistic philosophy and interpretation of reality. It is a passionate call enjoining a pursuit to hear the individual's voice clearly and distinctly and different from that of the community. Critics might claim that a denial of the myth will be the denial of African philosophy. This is not the case, for to insist that there is an African philosophy different in this mode of operation but not in its content or kind from Western philosophy is not

the same as what the myth tells us. African philosophy like the other world philosophies is confronted with matters of state, governance, beauty, art, being, knowledge and its source, morality and moral judgements, the sequence and validity of arguments etc. This will imply that it also concerns itself with branches of philosophy such as logic, epistemology, metaphysics, socio-political philosophy, ethics and aesthetics.

Ethnophilosophy and Systematic African Philosophy

When the call for evidence was made to those who argue for the existence of pre-colonial philosophy in Africa, the only way for justification was to produce the thoughts of sages and folklores. Literature were produce by both indigenous Africans and expatriate philosophers as means of justification. This include the works of Temples [Bantu Philosophy], Kwasi Wiredu's "The concept of Truth in Akan Language", John Mbiti and many others after them. It remains as this paper argues that these literature were products of desperation of a people deprived of an identity and a shared humanity.

Without a doubt, certain elements of philosophical importance can be found in traditional African society. Their philosophical relevance are worthy of mention. The argument against them is that they fall short of the required *criticality*, structure, analysis and methods of philosophy. Ethnophilosophy is a term used "derogatorily to refer to the works of those anthropologists, sociologists, ethnographers and philosophers who present the collective worldviews of the African people, their myth and folklores as philosophy" (EGBEKE 1999, 92). Hountondji believes that ethnophilosophy is a mere cultural philosophy. It is a poor attempt to systematize a worldview. Thus it falls short of the necessary reflection, critique and character of philosophy. "Ethnophilosophy is pre-philosophy mistaking itself for a metaphilosophy, a philosophy which instead of presenting its own rational justification, shelters lazily behind the authority of a tradition and projects its own theses and beliefs on to that tradition" (1983, 63). The challenge of ethnophilosophy is that it reemphasizes the myth of unanimity and does not appropriate philosophy to philosophers themselves but rather to a people. In the realms of ethnophilosophy, philosophy becomes a communal possession therefore losing its rigor. It is simply a debased philosophy unworthy of the name philosophy. To buttress this point further, Barry Hallen notes the challenges of ethnophilosophy which is best quoted unaltered:

- (1) It presents itself as a philosophy of *peoples* rather than of *individuals*. In Africa one is therefore given the impression that there can be no equivalents to a Socrates or a Kant. Ethnophilosophy speaks only of Bantu philosophy, Dogon philosophy, Akan philosophy; as such its scope

is collective (or ‘tribal’), of the world-view variety; (2) Its *sources* are in the past, in what is described as authentic, *traditional* African culture of the *pre-colonial* variety, of the Africa prior to ‘modernity’. These can be found in cultural by-products that were primarily oral: parables, proverbs, poetry, songs, and myths - oral literature generally. Obviously, since such sources do not present their ‘philosophies’ in any conventionally discursive or technical format, it is the academic scholars, rather than African peoples, who interpret or analyse them, and thus come up with what they present as the systematized ‘philosophy’ of an entire African culture; (3) From a *methodological* point of view, ethnophilosophy therefore tends to present the beliefs that constitute this ‘philosophy’ as things that do not change, that are somehow timeless. African *traditional* systems of thought are therefore portrayed as placing minimal emphasis upon rigorous argumentation and criticism in a search for truth that provides for discarding the old and creating the new. Tradition somehow becomes antithetical to innovation. Disputes between academic ethnophilosophers thus arise primarily over how to arrive at a correct *interpretation* of a static body of oral literature and oral traditions. (2010, 75-76)

Even with these challenges noted above, some African philosophers insist that, “...ethnophilosophy is the only philosophy that an African of black extraction can be proud of as it is rooted in African tradition and cultures” (MANGENA 2014, 96). With that said, we must ask at this point, what makes a discourse philosophy? How do we measure to what degree a discourse qualifies as philosophy? How is ethnophilosophy different from philosophy as we know it? G. Bell notes that:

Hountondji’s fear was that ethnophilosophies dealt with African societies “as a voiceless face under private observation, an object to be defined and not the subject of a possible discourse,” i.e., not the subject of a two-way conversation. In either form of ethnophilosophy (universalistic or pluralistic) was there a large amount of actual African philosophical literature generated, that is, philosophy written by Africans—Alexis Kagame’s work being one notable exception. (2002, 23-24)

Regardless of these challenges, Bodunrin appears to warn us not to jettison ethnophilosophy because of the ready potentials it would offer in the coming days. He notes:

The African Philosopher cannot deliberately ignore the study of the traditional belief system of his people. Philosophical problems arise out of real life situations. In Africa, more than in many other parts of the modern world, traditional culture and beliefs still exercise a great

influence on the thinking and actions of men. At a time when many people in the West believe that philosophy has become impoverished and needs redirection, a philosophical study of traditional society may be the answer. (1984, 13)

It was with an understanding of this caution and in the light of criticisms that ethnophilosophy metamorphosed into systematic ethnophilosophy. D. A Masolo was the first to use the expression, “Systematic Ethnophilosophy” to capture Marcel Griaule’s essay on the Dogon people and his interview with Ogotemmeli and all such attempts (1994, 68-83). In this work we use the expression systematic ethnophilosophy rather differently. It refers to an individualistic, critical, reflection articulated out intelligibly by an African who takes his inspiration from cultural extracts or principles. It also differs from philosophic sagacity in that it is not a search for sages and their interpretation of reality. The individual African philosopher takes this principle, clause or idea from a descriptive sense to a prescriptive level. The call for systematic ethnophilosophy is a call for a critical, reflective and rational outlook on some cultural excavations from African societies. It encourages the individuality of thoughts and the writing of these thoughts. It is a rejection of a worldview driven ethnophilosophy to an individual centred reflection of the philosophical essences of certain realities using already existing cultural ideas that best express these thoughts.

It was the works and philosophies of those Odera Oruka refers to as members of the ideological school that gave systematic ethnophilosophy a bearing. It was a proportionate and passionate attempt to gather the remains of Africa’s shattered persona by piecing together valuable cultural extracts. Evidently, these were all reflected in the political thoughts of Nnamdi Azikwe, Leopold Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, and Obafemi Awolowo. If we insist that systematic African philosophy does not involve in any way commentaries of cultural depth like those of Temples, Kagame and all such, then critics may insist that we deny that there existed a philosophy in traditional Africa. Since this is not so, systematic ethnophilosophy refers to certain cultural excavations that serve as hypotheses for critical reflections by African scholars. These extracts could be underling principles, clauses of contemporary social relevance. In all, it suffices as non-cultural communally based commentary since it is an individualistic, thought-driven and critical pursuit to interpret reality and make intelligible input to the body of existing ideas.

Ethnophilosophy cannot be said to be systematic if it still discusses subjects like Yoruba concept of Time, Akan concept of morality, Bantu concept of being or force, Igbo concept of evil etc. Its concern must transcend cultural world views or commentaries. This is in no way rejecting the idea of and necessity of literature on such subjects. They are important subjects in the realms

of sociology, history, ethnography and perhaps anthropology but not philosophy. On the other hand, (like what systematic ethnophilosophy advocates) a cultural principle like say, “njikoka”, “ibuanyidanda” etc., which refers to the principles of Ozumba’s integrativity and Asouzu’s complementarity respectively, can form theoretical basis for a more critical pursuit to solving societal challenges or addressing conceptual haziness. These principles could be likened to such principles like utilitarianism, social justice, proportionate equality etc. With these cultural extracts an African philosopher can find a suitable conceptual issue to address on the impetus derived from this permutation.

“African” as a Color or Race

The failure to see Africa as a continent made up of many nations with distinct cultural backgrounds, ideas and race but as the color “black” or as “Negros” is not an uncommon phenomenon. The source of this, one may think is etymological, but it is not so. Certain stereotypes over the years have categorized all dark skinned people as Africans. The same challenge although slightly different colored the conception of negritude and black consciousness. “The assertion of black pride by members of the Negritude movement was attended by a cry against assimilation. They felt that although it was theoretically based on a belief in universal equality, it still assumed the superiority of European culture and civilization over that of Africa” (Encyclopedia Britannica 2011, N. P). Thus when the prefix African is mentioned reference is often made to the black or Negro race. Maintaining this disposition is hurtful to the advancement of African philosophy. Thus we must insist that African philosophy does not refer strictly to pre-colonial philosophy done by people of “black extraction”(MANGENA 2014, 96) but philosophy done on the Continent of Africa, a reflection of African existential realities and philosophy done by Africans. In this, we mean, a philosophy that is philosophy in its content and authorship. More instructive for us is the fact that:

... philosophy is not African on racial or linguistic lines but what makes a philosophy African is the tradition of the philosophy: African cultural experiences, history and tradition, with a grounding in an holistic ontology, which is more of co-existence with nature, rather that conquest, more of collectivism, rather that individualism, more of holism rather that atomism or monism, more of synthesis rather than analysis. Authentic African philosophy is that philosophy that is applied to the conceptual problems of African life. (AZENABOR 2000, 326)

In this respect, it is of greater value to us to view the prefix African more as an a object with several tentacles than to marginalise possible definitions. Therefore, seeing the prefix “African” as a race excludes all northern African philosophers from the matrix of African philosophy.

In Pursuit of a Unified Explanation for the Prefix “African” and Philosophy in Africa

Philosophy is not the exclusive of any race and it is not a worldview. The affirmative response in modern times is an advocacy for what Chimakonam calls “systematic African philosophy” (2014, 12) and the denialist response to the subject is an outright rejection of the universality of philosophy. As might have been observed by attentive readers, the position of this work is that of the affirmative. But more to this, the attempt at uncovering the possible implications of the prefix “African” has been an eye opener.

Interpreting African philosophy through the lenses of the myth of unanimity, negro race or ethnophilosophy will only give us a lopsided opinion on what it means to have an African philosophy. It will be best appreciated in modern times that the pursuit of a distinct quality that makes African philosophy authentically African or what Sophie Oluwole refers to as the “Africanness” of a philosophy (1991, 214) may be rather inconsequential. History has shown time and time again that cultures evolve. Changes are often noted in cultures due to interactions with other cultures and so the cycle continues. Culture then becomes the sum total of mutually borrowed ideas and customs. It then will be utterly incredulous to claim that there is a Western, American, Oriental or African philosophy devoid of influence from the other. In the case of Africa, the unfortunate event of colonialism has made it impossible for us to say the continent or African philosophers are pure breed (uninfluenced) in the sense of having a special “Africanity” (KANU 2012, 53) or Africanness. There may however be certain elements that are still in their original form, they may be elements in the past; they are what Jewsiewicki, Bogumil calls the “usable past” (1989, 1).

A unified explanation of African philosophy will require that we first of all rid ourselves from every form of ethnocentric commitment. When we begin to lose touch of the general concern or subject matter of philosophy we begin to see African philosophy as simply the exclusive of the African. Apparently, in African universities we do Western philosophy. For us, what should qualify any study for example as Western philosophy is its approach to explanation as well as the works written by individual Western philosophers. Therefore, when I study Plato, Descartes, and Hobbes I am doing Western philosophy. The same goes for a European, if he reads the works of Asouzu on the ambivalence of human interest and not necessarily on any subject matter related to African philosophy

per se he or she is doing African philosophy. Philosophy is universal. The laws of logic, the burden of axiology, the questions of metaphysics, the problems of socio-political philosophy and the concerns of epistemology all transcend geographical boundaries. As Ezeani notes:

Philosophy is a transcendental human phenomenon. It is not restricted to geography. European or African philosophy (localized philosophy) is a reference to the products or thoughts of some individual critical thinkers (philosophers) of that locality (e.g. Europe or Africa). Plato, for example, is regarded as a philosopher and his dualism an element of Western philosophy. But is the concept dualism (e.g. negative/positive, male/female, body/spirit, black/white) not a universal philosophical phenomenon? (2005, 18)

The diversion from traditional African thought must not be seen as an ill omen or a gradual loss of identity. The unfortunate historical events of slavery and colonialism have ensured that the African must necessarily contend with his new personality. “There is an urgent need in Africa today for the kind of analysis that would identify and separate the backward aspects of our culture from those aspects that are worth keeping” (WIREDU 1984, 151). This is a call for what we referred to as systematic ethnophilosophy where critical reflection is made on cultural excavations such as Ibunyidanda philosophy of Asouzu, Njikoka philosophy of Ozumba and later Chimakonam, Uwa Ontology of Iroegbu etc. An appropriate disposition must be maintained if we must be successful in our task. Asouzu^b captures this when he states:

Progress and stagnation of African philosophy depends largely on the attitude of Africans themselves who have the primary duty to patronize and promote it. In our institution of higher learning, a conducive atmosphere has to be created for the promotion and patronage of ideas, systems and methods of African philosophers in view of promoting African philosophy. That is to say, the thoughts of regional philosophers should be studied and made available to students and should be brought to compete with each other. (2007, 300)

Thus from a unified explanation, philosophy in Africa must not be seen as regionalized philosophy but rather a contribution to the subject matter and quest of philosophy—the search for truth.

Conclusion

In conclusion we have succinctly addressed the following; (i) The prefix African (ii) Philosophy in Africa and African Philosophy (iii) Implications of the Prefix “African” for Philosophy in Africa to include the myth of unanimity, Africa as a

color and ethnophilosophy (iv) Understanding the Prefix “African” and Philosophy in Africa from a unified explanation; insisting that we must not separate philosophy into geographical enclaves, for just as the subject matters of the physical sciences are distinct and clear and transcend geographical boundaries, philosophy possesses certain qualities that enable easy identification regardless of the shades it comes in (music, literature, folklores, stories etc.). Thus Asouzu^c notes:

In the case of philosophy, it is in view of this unity, guaranteed by a unified subject matter, that philosophy, as a discipline is sustained. In the absence of a unified subject matter, as this is a general practice in the other sciences, and which serves as a credible guide in matters of validation of our claims about the world, it becomes difficult, even today, for philosophers to speak with harmonized mind, as scientists in a way that transcends geographical and ideological boundaries. (2007, 100)

In sum, our emphasis is to speak of African philosophy in the sense we speak of Western or other world philosophies. This identification and interpretation we believe will help the growth and progress of philosophy in Africa.

Relevant Literature

1. "Africa". [Encyclopædia Britannica Deluxe Edition], NP, 2011. Encyclopædia Britannica: Chicago. E-book.
2. ASIRA, Asira. “What is African Philosophy?”, [Philosophy and Logic Today, INNOCENT Asouzu Ed.], pp196-207, 2004. University of Calabar Press: Calabar. Paperback.
3. ASOUZU, Innocent^a. [The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and Beyond African Philosophy], 2004. University of Calabar Press: Calabar. Paperback.
4. _____^b. [Ibuaru, The Heavy Burden of Philosophy beyond African Philosophy], 2007. Lit Verlag: Zurich. Paperback.
5. _____^c. [Ibuanidanda New Complementary Ontology], 2007. Lit Verlag: Zurich. Paperback.

6. ASUKWO, Offiong. “The Problem of Language in African Philosophy”, [Footmarks to Landmarks on African philosophy UDUIGWOMEN A.F Ed.], pp30-35, 2009. Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers: Lagos. Paperback.
7. AZENABOR, Godwin. “The Idea of African Philosophy in African Language” [Indian Philosophical Quarterly], pp321-328, July, 2000. Vol XXVII. No 3. E-book.
8. BODUNRIN, Peter. “The question of African Philosophy”, [African Philosophy an Introduction, WRIGHT, Richard Ed.], pp1-23, 1984. University Press of America: Lanham. Paperback.
9. CHIMAKONAM, Jonathan^a. “Why can’t there be an African Logic?”, [Integrative Humanism Journal], pp141-152, September, 2011. Vol 1. No 2. Paperback.
10. _____^b. “Dating and Periodization Question in African Philosophy”, [Atuolu Omalu: Some Unanswered Questions in Contemporary African Philosophy, CHIMAKONAM, Jonathan Ed.), pp9-34, 2014. University Press of America: New York. Paperback.
11. EGBEKE, Aja. “African Philosophy: Conceptions and Problem”, [Nsukka Journal of the Humanities], pp92-102, 1999. No 10. Ebook.
12. EZEANI, Emefiena. [Philosophy as Intelligent and Pragmatic Questioning], 2005. Veritas Lumen Publishers: London. Paperback.
13. HALLEN, Barry. “Ethnophilosophy Redefined?”, [Thought and Practice: A Journal of the Philosophical Association of Kenya New Series], June 2010. Vol 2. No 1. Paperback.
14. HOUNTONDI, Paulin. [African Philosophy Myth and Reality], 1983. Indiana University Press: Bloomington. Paperback.

15. JEWSIEWICKI, Bogumil. “African Historical Studies: Academic Knowledge as ‘Usable Past’ and Radical Scholarship”. [The African Studies Review], pp1-76, 1989. Vol 32. No 3. Web.
16. KANU, I. Anthony. “The Africinity and Philosophicality of African Philosophy”, [Internet Afrrev: An International Online Multi-disciplinary Journal], pp52-54, 2012. Vol 1. No 2. Ebook.
17. MAKINDE, Akin. “Philosophy in Africa”, [The Substance of African Philosophy, MOMOH, C. S. Ed.], 2000. African Philosophy Projects’ Publications: Auch. Paperback.
18. MANGENA, Fainos. “In Defence of Ethno-philosophy: A Brief Response to Kanu’s Eclecticism”, [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion], pp96-107, January-June 2014. Vol 3. No 1. Paperback.
19. MASOLO, D.A. [African Philosophy in Search of Identity], 1994. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, Indiana. Paperback.
20. MEREDITH, Martin. [The State of Africa, A History of Fifty Years of Independence], 2005. Free Press: London. Paperback.
21. MESEMBE, Edet. “Metaphysics, Contemporary African Philosophy and Ethnocentric Commitment”, [Interactions in the History of Philosophy. PHILHIST’13 Conference Proceedings, EFE Duyan, AYSE Güngör Ed.], No 778, 2013. Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University: Turkey. Paperback.
22. "Negritude." [Encyclopædia Britannica Deluxe Edition], N. P, 2011. Encyclopædia Britannica: Chicago. E-book.
23. NZE, C. “African Philosophy: Okolo’s Interpretation”, [Okolo on African Philosophy and African Theology], 1990. Cecta Nigeria Ltd: Enugu. Paperback.

24. OYESHILE, Olatunji, “On Defining African Philosophy: History, Challenges and Perspectives,” [Humanity & Social Sciences Journal], pp57-64, 2008. Vol 3. No 1. Ebook.
25. OZUMBA, Godfrey and CHIMAKONAM Jonathan. [Njikoka Amaka Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism], 2014. Series Vol 2. Third Logic Option: Calabar. Paperback.
26. RICHARD, Bell. [Understanding African Philosophy A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues], 2002. Routledge: New York. Paperback.
27. SOGOLO, Godwin. [Foundations of African philosophy], 1993. Ibadan University Press: Ibadan. Paperback.
28. TEMPELS, Placide. [Bantu Philosophy], 1959. Présence Africaine: Paris. Ebook.
29. UDUIGWOMEN, Andrew. “Philosophy and the Place of African Philosophy”, [Footmarks to Landmarks on African philosophy UDUIGWOMEN A.F Ed.], pp30-35, 2009. Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers: Lagos. Paperback.
30. UDUMA, Uduma. “The Question of the “African” in African Philosophy: In Search of a Criterion for the Africanness of a Philosophy”, [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp127-146, January-June 2014. Vol 3. No 1. Paperback.
31. WIREDU, Kwasi^a. “The Concept of Truth in the Akan Language”, [Philosophy in Africa, Trends and Perspectives BODUNRIN, Peter Ed.], pp43-67, 1985. University of Ile-Ife Press: Ile-Ife. Paperback.
32. _____^b. “How not to compare African Thought with Western Thought”, [African Philosophy an Introduction, WRIGHT,

Richard Ed.], pp149-162, 1984. University Press of America: Lanham. Paperback.

33. WRIGHT, Richard. “Investigating African Philosophy”, [African Philosophy an Introduction, Richard Wright Ed.], pp41-55, 1984. University Press of America: Lanham, New York. Paperback.

CAN AFRICANA WOMEN TRULY EMBRACE ECOLOGICAL FEMINISM?

Fainos MANGENA, PhD

Prof. of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe

Abstract

My starting point in this essay is that, if it can be ascertained that there is something called Black African feminism (which represents the interests of some Black African women) as claimed by feminists and other like-minded African women, then the existence of Black African ecological feminism should be a matter of deduction. In this essay, I interrogate this position using Karen Warren's version of ecological feminism which holds that there are important historical and conceptual connections between the domination of women in society and the domination of nature. This interrogation also prompts me to trace the history of traditional feminism with a view to showing that while, in the West, there could be important connections – historical, symbolic and theoretical – between the oppression of women and the cruel treatment of nature, the same cannot be said of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa where nature is owned or guarded by the spirit world. Using the Africana womanist perspective and the deductive method in philosophy, I argue that traditional feminism together with Warren's ecological feminism completely ignore the experiences and aspirations of Black African women, thereby ruling out the possibility of the existence – in the truest sense – of both Black African feminism and Black African ecological feminism.

Keywords: Ecological feminism, Feminism, Oppression, Patriarchal Conceptual Framework, Deductive Logic, Validity, Africana Womanism

Introduction

There are different forms of ecological feminism with all of them agreeing that there are important connections between the oppression of women and the ill-treatment of non-human animals by humans. My task in this essay is to reflect on Warren's defense of ecological feminism as contained in her classic essay entitled: "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism" with a view to establishing whether this theory is transferrable to sub-Saharan Africa. In this essay, Warren begins by making the observation that there are important connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature. Warren links this connection with what she calls the *Oppressive Patriarchal*

Conceptual Framework which, according to her, looks down upon women the same way it looks down upon non-human creatures. Using the African Womanist theory conceptualized by Clenora Hudson-Weems and the method of deduction in philosophy, I argue that while the discourse on feminism has received world wide acclaim and while feminists have raised genuine concerns about how they are oppressed by their male counterparts, I find it difficult to apply or transpose the idea of feminism, let alone ecological feminism to Africa since the history of feminism, and by extension ecological feminism precludes the values and experiences of women of African descent. As a result of this charge and given the spiritual character of African environments, I argue that there is no correlation between the oppression of women and the ill-treatment of nature in Africa. In the final analysis, this reasoning automatically allows me to draw the conclusion that: “No Black African women are ecological feminists.” Below, I outline and explain the deductive method in philosophy which I use partly to dismiss both African feminism and the idea of African ecological feminism.

The Deductive Method in Philosophy

The deductive method in Philosophy stipulates that the conclusion of an argument must necessarily follow from its premises (COPI 1994, 54). Thus, when the reasoning in a deductive argument is correct, that argument becomes *valid*; when the reasoning in a deductive argument is incorrect, that argument becomes *invalid* (1994, 56). In every deductive argument, either the premises succeed in providing conclusive grounds for the truth of the conclusion, or they do not succeed. If they do, the argument becomes valid and sound. If they don't, the argument may remain valid but unsound. So, *validity* has to do with the formal or syntactic relational aspect of the premises and conclusion in an argument, while *soundness* has to do with the semantic aspect of the premises and conclusion in an argument. But in all cases, validity is a pre-condition for soundness, that is to say, an argument cannot be sound without being valid.

The three examples below show how valid and sound arguments are structured, with argument **A** representing a valid argument and argument **B** and **C** representing sound arguments:

A

1. All Black African feminists are unmarried Women
 2. All unmarried women are Ecological feminists
- Therefore, all Ecological feminists are Black African feminists

B

1. All Feminists are White supremacists

2. No White supremacists are Black African women
Therefore, No Black African women are feminists

Note that if we take the conclusion of argument **B** above to be the premise of argument **C**, below, we can draw the conclusion: “No Black African women are Ecological feminists” as illustrated by argument **C** below:

C

1. No Black African women are feminists
Therefore, No Black African women are Ecological feminists

Notice that the conclusion of argument **A**, “All ecological feminists are Black African women,” follows from premises 1 and 2. This makes the argument valid. But in deductive inferences, validity does not always translate to soundness or truthfulness. Thus, while argument **A** is valid, it is not sound because it is not true that “All Black African feminists are unmarried women,” or that “All unmarried women are ecological feminists.” The conclusion drawn from these two premises is also not true, that is, “All ecological feminists are Black African women.” Having said this, it is important to note that argument **B** is valid and sound in the following ways: In my view and judging from the nature and character of feminism which I shall outline later in this essay, it is true that “All feminists are White supremacists.” It is also true that “No Black African women are White supremacists.” The conclusion – “No Black African women are feminists” – which is drawn from two premises above is also true in my view.

I also take argument **C**, which is a development of argument **B** to be an example of a valid and sound argument. In my view, if the premise “No Black African women are feminists” is based on a truism, then the conclusion “No Black African women are ecological feminists” should immediately follow. Note that arguments **A** and **B** are mediate inferences as the conclusion is drawn from two premises but argument **C** is an immediate inference as the conclusion is drawn from one premise. In the rest of the essay, I outline and explain the premises that lead to the conclusion that “No Black African women are feminists” and “No Black African women are ecological feminists” as represented by arguments **B** and **C**. To kick start this important debate, I now present Warren’s ecological feminism.

Warren’s presentation of Ecological Feminism

According to Warren, *ecological feminism* is the position that there are important connections—historical, symbolic and theoretical—between the domination of women and the domination of nature (WARREN 1990, 342). Warren argues that because the conceptual connections between the dual dominations of women and nature are located in an *Oppressive Patriarchal Conceptual Framework*

characterized by the logic of domination, (1) traditional feminism must expand feminism to include ecological feminism (2) ecological feminism must provide a framework for developing a distinctively feminist environmental ethic (1990, 342).

But how are these *Oppressive Patriarchal Conceptual Frameworks* to be explained by ecological feminists? Warren begins by defining and explaining Conceptual frameworks in general before defining and explaining *Oppressive Patriarchal Conceptual Frameworks*. For Warren, a *Conceptual Framework* is a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions which shape and reflect how one views oneself and one's own world (1990, 342). It is a socially constructed lens through which we perceive ourselves and others. It is affected by such factors as gender, race, class, age, nationality and religious background (1990, 342). Lynn White observes that:

What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny – that is, by religion. (WHITE 1967, Web. N. P.)

The above position by White, sets us right into the philosophical discourse of *Oppressive Conceptual Frameworks* which Warren defines as frameworks that explain, justify and maintain relationships of domination and subordination (WARREN 1990, 342). When an *Oppressive Conceptual Framework* is patriarchal, it explains, justifies and maintains the subordination of women by men (1990, 342).

For Warren, there are three significant features of *Oppressive Patriarchal Conceptual Frameworks*, namely: 1. Value-hierarchical thinking, which is a kind of thinking that places higher value, status or prestige on what is “up” rather than on what is “down.” 2. Value dualisms, that is, disjunctive pairs in which the disjuncts are seen as oppositional (rather than as complementary) and exclusive (rather than as inclusive) and which place higher value or status to that which has historically been identified as “mind,” “reason” and “male” than to that which has historically been identified as “body,” “emotion” and “female.” 3. The logic of domination, that is, a structure of argumentation which leads to a justification of subordination (1990, 342).

For Warren, this third feature of *Oppressive Patriarchal Conceptual Frameworks* is the most significant. The logic of domination is not just a logical structure. It also involves a substantive value system, since an ethical premise is needed to permit or sanction the “just” subordination of that which is subordinate (1990, 342). This justification typically is given on grounds of some alleged characteristic (for example, rationality) which the dominant (for

example, men) have and the subordinate (for example, women) lack (1990, 342). Warren argues that contrary to what many feminists and eco-feminists have said or suggested, there may be nothing inherently problematic about “hierarchal thinking” or even “value-hierarchical thinking” in contexts other than contexts of oppression (1990, 342).

Warren argues that hierarchal thinking is important in daily living for classifying data, comparing information and organizing material (1990, 342). Even “value-hierarchical thinking” can be quite acceptable in certain contexts. For Warren, the problem is not simply that value-hierarchal thinking and value dualisms are used, but the way in which each has been used in *Oppressive Conceptual Frameworks* to establish inferiority and justify subordination (1990, 342). It is the logic of domination coupled with value hierarchal thinking and value dualisms, which justify subordination (1990, 342).

For Warren, what is explanatorily basic, then, about the nature of *Oppressive Conceptual Frameworks* is the logic of domination and that the logic of domination is explanatorily basic is important for at least three reasons: First, without the logic of domination, a description of similarities and differences would be just that – a description of similarities and differences (1990, 342). Consider the claim, “Humans are different from rocks in that humans can radically and consciously re-shape the communities in which they live; humans are similar to plants and rocks in that they are both members of the ecological community” (1990, 342).

Even if humans are better than plants and rocks with respect to the conscious ability of humans to radically transform communities, one does not thereby get any morally relevant distinction between humans and non-humans, or an argument for the dominance of plants and rocks by humans (1990, 342). To get these conclusions, one need to add at least two powerful assumptions; namely, (A2) and (A4) in argument A below:

(A1) Humans do, and plants and rocks do not, have the capacity to consciously and radically change the community in which they live.

(A2) Whatever has the capacity to consciously and radically change the community in which it lives is morally superior to whatever lacks this capacity.

(A3) Thus, humans are morally superior to plants and rocks

(A4) For any X and Y, if X is morally superior to Y, then X is morally justified in subordinating Y.

(A5) Thus, humans are morally justified in subordinating plants and rocks (1990, 342).

Without the two assumptions that humans are morally superior to (at least some) non-humans, (A2), and that superiority justifies subordination, (A4), all one has is some difference between humans and some non-humans (1990, 342). This is true even if that difference is given in terms of superiority. Thus, it is the logic of domination, (A4), which is the bottom line in ecological feminist discussions of oppression (1990, 342).

Second, ecological feminists argue that, at least in Western societies, the *Oppressive Conceptual Framework* which sanctions the twin dominations of women and nature is patriarchal, one characterized by all three features of an *Oppressive Conceptual Framework* (1990, 342). Many ecological feminists claim that, historically, within at least the dominant Western culture, a patriarchal framework has sanctioned the following argument:

(B1) Women are identified with nature and the realm of the physical; men are identified with the “human” and the realm of the mental.

(B2) Whatever is identified with nature and the realm of the physical is inferior to (below) whatever is identified with the human and the realm of the mental; or, conversely, the latter is superior (above) to the former.

(B3) Thus, women are inferior to (below) men; or, conversely, men are superior to (above) women.

(B4) For any X and Y, if X is superior to Y, then X is justified in subordinating Y.

(B5) Thus, men are justified in subordinating women (1990, 342).

Having outlined and explained Warren’s ecological feminism, I now try to establish and explain the premises that will lead to the conclusions that “No Black African women are feminists” and “No Black African Women are Ecological feminists.” I do this in two ways: First, I trace the history of feminism with a view to establish whether or not Africana women are part of the project of feminism, and second, I then try to find out if the idea of ecological feminism is all encompassing, that is, is it cross-cultural to the effect that it can also address the concerns of Africana women?

A Brief History of Feminism

The true history of feminism, its origin and participants reveal its blatant racist background, thereby establishing its incompatibility with Africana women (that is, continental African women and those in the Diaspora) (WEEMS 1993, 18). Feminism, earlier called the Woman’s Suffrage Movement (WSM), started when

a group of liberal white women, whose concerns then were for the abolition of slavery and equal rights for all people regardless of race, class and sex, dominated the scene on the national level during the early to middle century (1993, 18). At the time of the civil war in America, such leaders as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton held the universalist philosophy on the natural rights of women (both white and black) to full citizenship, which included the right to vote.

However, in 1870, the fifteenth Amendment to the constitution of the United States of America ratified the voting rights of African men leaving women, White women, in particular and their desire for the same rights unaddressed (1993, 342). Middle class White women were naturally disappointed, for they had assumed that their efforts toward securing full citizenship for African people would ultimately benefit them, too, in their desire for full citizenship, as voting citizens (1993, 18). The result was a racist reaction to the amendment and to Africans in particular (1993, 18). In 1890, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was founded by northern White women...epitomizing the growing race chauvinism of the late nineteenth century (1993, 18).

The organization, which brought together the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) departed from Susan B Anthony's original women suffrage posture (1993, 18). They asserted that the vote for women should be utilized chiefly by middle class White women, who could aid their husbands in preserving the virtues of the Republic from the threat of unqualified and biological inferiors (African men) who with the power of the vote, could gain a political foothold in the American system (1993, 18). This is how feminism was born.

Note of course, that African women were not even part of the equation and never became part of the equation in the minds of these White women. This raises a lot of eye brows for those African women who, today, claim to be feminists. They face hard questions such as: On what basis do they justify feminism? How can they claim to own an idea that is foreign to them? Aren't they championing the White women's interests? These hard questions and many others only help to complicate the puzzle for African women who claim to be feminists when in actual fact feminism excluded them right from the onset.

Critical Remarks

Having looked at this brief history of feminism, it is important to answer two critical questions: What is feminism? Who is a feminist? To begin with, *feminism*, a term conceptualized and adopted by White women involves an agenda that was designed to meet the needs and demands of that particular group (1993, 19). For this reason, it is quite plausible for white women to identify with

feminism and the feminist movement (1993, 18). Although this definition of feminism automatically excludes Black African women or Africana women, later on feminism expanded to include White men who were also interested in seeing women being treated equally.

In fact, elsewhere I argue that the emphasis on feminists as male or female is important because it is wrong to assume that only white women can be feminists since being a feminist or a non-feminist is not a biological construct but a way in which one look at life (MANGENA 2011, 118). The emergency of homosexual practices in the West also meant that those men who assumed the role of “wives” also had to identify with feminism and to fight for the liberation of women from the yoke of patriarchy. So, in proper terminology, a *feminist* is someone [male or female] who believes that men and women are inherently equal in all respects relevant to how they should be treated (BARCALOW 1994, 95).

Judging from the way the history of feminism is presented above, it is probably clear that in her definition of feminism, Barcalow fell short of saying that a feminist was someone [white male or female] who believes that White men and women were inherently equal in all respects relevant to how they should be treated. If feminism is a Western concept as demonstrated above, then why are there designations such as *Black feminism* or *African feminism*? Don't they point or attest to the fact that feminism can be cross-cultural?

In my response to the questions above, I argue that those women who have adopted feminism and named it either *Black feminism* or *African feminism* either do not know the history of feminism or ignore this history to deliberately mislead other Africana women for selfish reasons. This is so because the objectives of, for instance, Black Feminism are not any different from those of traditional feminism. In fact, Black feminism is simply an imitation of traditional feminism. Weems (1993, 35) captures this point succinctly when she says:

Black feminism is some Africana women's futile attempt to fit into the constructs of an established White female paradigm. At best, Black feminism may relate to sexual discrimination outside of the Africana community, but cannot claim to resolve the critical problems within it which are influenced by racism and classism.

Despite variations in the source of their daily struggles (That is, Black/African or White Women), they both blame patriarchy for their inferior positions in society. For instance, while feminists in the West have focused on issues of reproduction and sexuality; the so-called African feminists have attached importance to heterosexuality, issues of motherhood as well as bread and butter issues, culture and power (1993, 38). However, both feminists in the West and the so-called

African feminists blame patriarchy for marginalizing them. But what is more worrying is that African feminists do not have a thorough-bred African theory to justify their claims. Instead, they use Western feminism as their template as well and they justify this use by arguing that feminism can be re-defined to suit the needs of Africana women.

My challenge with this thinking is that, it gives the impression that Africana people cannot invent and defend anything of their own but they can only discover and modify other people's ideas or theories. This is fortunately not true as Africana people are capable of inventing and defending their own ideas or theories. For instance, Africanas have successfully invented and defended the theory of *hunhu*, *ubuntu* or *botho* (as is the case with Southern Africa), *omundu* (as is the case with some countries in East Africa), *Umunna* and *Okra* (as is the case with some countries in West Africa, for instance, Nigeria and Ghana respectively) and *Ma'at* (as is the case with some countries in North Africa, for example, Egypt). These are theories that define Africa's ethical, metaphysical and epistemological thought. The theories attach importance to the value of group belonging and collective responsibility sub-summed under communalism. The theory proceeds by noting that the importance or value of any person can only be expressed through that person's contribution to the betterment of the group. A *hunhu* or *ubuntu* theory says, *munhu munhu muvanhu* or *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other persons). A *hunhu* or *ubuntu* theory does not create gender binaries as is the case with feminism which divides people based on biology and sexuality. It prefers to focus on roles and responsibilities of men and women which roles point to the fact that men and women work together for the betterment of their communities. Thus, *hunhu* or *ubuntu* is a world view...and a way of life for the African (MANGENA 2012, 11).

It is from such African moral theories as *hunhu* or *ubuntu* that Africana women like Weems have successfully invented and defended *Africana womanism* in the face of stiff resistance from the so-called Black feminists or African feminists whose main agenda is Western. By definition, *Africana womanism* is an ideology created and designed for all women of Africana descent and it is grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of African women (WEEMS 1993, 22). As Weems maintains, *Africana womanism* sits well with the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa because of its emphasis on the centrality of self-definition, self-naming and the place of the family or community (1993: 22). Weems remarks, thus:

Africana womanism emerged from the acknowledgement of a long standing authentic agenda for that group of women of African descent

who needed only to be properly named and officially defined according to their own unique historical and cultural matrix, one that would reflect the co-existence of a man and a woman in a concerted struggle for the survival of their entire family/community. (WEEMS 2007, 289)

The above paragraph shows that Africana womanism puts the interests of men and women, their families or communities ahead of the interests of individual men and individual women as is the case with feminism, including ecological feminism. Thus, any Africana woman who embraces feminism is most likely to be isolated by her peers at one end and vilified by those people whose ideas or theories she wants to embrace at the other end.

So, the problem with discovering and modifying theories and concepts like feminism to suit particular cultures like those of Africa are that an African (man or woman) cannot wholly own such theories and concepts making it difficult for him or her to fully identify with the theory. In most cases, the one who discovers the theory or idea cannot claim to belong to the inner circle of those who invented it— he or she remains cast as *the other*. It is like somebody who gatecrashes a wedding party and suddenly wants to control the wedding proceedings or wants to sit at the high table with the newly-weds.

The point I am putting across is that as a result of colonialism, some Africana women adopted the feminist discourse by white colonialists while others did not. Those who adopted feminism are the ones who today call themselves Black or African feminists and those who declined to associate themselves with feminism are today called Africana womanists. The latter decided to define their experiences and challenges in the context of their experiences, traditions and cultures. In other words, they did not look elsewhere for answers to their challenges. To this end, Weems (1993, 34) notes, thus:

Too many Blacks have taken the theoretical framework of “feminism” and have tried to make it fit their particular circumstances. Rather than create their own paradigm and name and define themselves, some Africana women, scholars in particular, have been persuaded by white feminists to adopt or adapt to the White concept and terminology of feminism. The real benefit of the amalgamation of Black feminism and White feminism goes to White feminists who can increase their power base by expanding their scope with the convenient consensus that sexism is their commonality and primary concern.

Patricia Hill Collins (1996, 11) highlights what she considers to be drawbacks to buying into a feminist ideology that is outside of one’s culture (1996, 11). First, she points out that gender works with racism to maintain oppression (1996, 11). Second, she argues that an acceptance of feminism by Africana women translates

into the rejection of Africana men, given the theoretical underpinnings of the movement (1996, 12). Remember at its formative stages, feminism was meant to challenge the American constitution which had given Africana men voting rights ahead of White women.

Any attempt by women of Africana descent to accept feminism leaving men alone to fight against racism and classicism will leave men vulnerable. Third, feminism is based on individualism rather than communalism and yet Africans are communal by orientation. Besides, communalism is a life style and value more akin to African Americans and continental Africans and their ancestry than individualism (1996, 12). As I mentioned earlier, this lifestyle and value is sub-summed under *hunhu* or *ubuntu* or *botho* (in Southern Africa), *omundu* (in some parts of East Africa), *ma'at* (in Egypt) and *Okra* (in Ghana) among others.

Those Africana women who have embraced feminism have done so for two reasons, (1) feminism's theoretical and methodological legitimacy in the academy and their desire to remain a legitimate part of the academic community, and (2) the absence of a suitable framework for their individual needs as Africana women (WEEMS 1993, 16). Collins (1996, 16) thinks that feminism cannot be a viable methodology for Black women. In particular, she challenges the acceptance of the concept of feminism *ipso facto* by Black women arguing that some of the characteristics of feminism are in conflict with the moral ethos of an oppressed people whose past is marred by the collective actions of the oppressor group (COLLINS 1996, 16).

In her full scale attack on feminism and by extension, African feminism; Filomina Chioma Steady argues that the designation *African feminism* is problematic as it naturally suggests an alignment with feminism, a concept that has been alien to the plight of Africana women from its inception (STEADY cited in WEEMS 1993, 17). This is particularly the case in reference to racism and classicism which are prevailing obstacles in the lives of Africana people. Steady puts it thus:

Regardless of one's position, the implications of the feminist movement for the black woman are complex... Several factors set the black woman apart as having a different order of priorities. She is oppressed not simply because of her sex but ostensibly because of her race, and for the majority, essentially because of their class. Women belong to different socio-economic groups and do not represent a universal category. Because the majority of black women are poor, there is likely to be some alienation from the middle class aspect of the women's movement which perceives feminism as an attack on men rather than on a system which thrives on inequality. (1993, 17)

What I can discern from the above paragraph by Steady is that by virtue of having a different order of priorities compared to those of White women, black women cannot be feminists. For instance, Black women are still fighting poverty, race and class and this is different from White women who overcame these evils a long time ago. Hence, feminism and more specifically, Black feminism or African feminism is extremely problematic as labels for the true Africana woman (WEEMS 1993, 16).

Is Ecological Feminism applicable in Africa, and among Africana women in the Diaspora?

To begin with, the history of feminism as presented above seems to show no connections between the oppression of women of Africana descent and the ill-treatment of nature. This is so because this history does not recognize the existence and contribution of Africana women in the feminist discourse in the first place. As noted above, feminism as a political movement that was meant to address the concerns of White women whose rights to vote were not respected. Later on, it spread to other spheres of life but its main thrust was to advance the interests of the White women. Thus, it was and still remains a project by and for White women even today. If this history is anything to go by, then it follows that ecological feminism is also a White women's project, for the simple reason that it is a type of feminism that seeks to link the oppression of women with the ill-treatment of nature.

While many academics uncritically adopt feminism, most Africana women, in general do not identify with the concept in its entirety and thus cannot see themselves as feminists (1993, 15). This also means that the conceptual connections between the dual dominations of women and nature as put by Warren are only cultural and not cross-cultural. That is, they only apply to Warren's context and not the context of Africa. For instance, traditional feminism cannot expand to include ecological feminism in sub-Saharan Africa since feminism by its nature is only a White women's project restricted to Western cultures. On the basis of this critique, a conclusion can be drawn from this premise that *–No Black African women are Ecological feminists.*

It is also not possible for ecological feminism to develop a distinctively feminist environmental ethic that can be applied across cultures given that most Africans do not identify with the concept of feminism because of its history and scope. In fact, most Africana women identify with Womanism and not Feminism. By extension, this also means that Africana women cannot identify with ecological feminism. It was easier for White women like Warren to coin the phrase *Ecological feminism* but this cannot be applied to sub-Saharan Africa in the sense that the genesis of the word "womanism" shows that there is no correlation between women's oppression at the hands of men and the ill-

treatment of nature. In her definition of womanism, Weems (1993, 21) observes that:

The term “woman,” and by extension “womanism,” is far more appropriate than female (“feminism”) because of one major distinction—only a female of the human race can be a woman. “Female,” on the other hand, can refer to a member of the animal or plant kingdom as well as to a member of the human race.

As the above paragraph shows, it is easier for feminists to talk of ecological feminism, than it is for African womanists to talk about the same without distorting African social and environmental realities and experiences given—as shown above—that the word “feminist” comes from the word “female” which applies to both human beings and animals or plants and yet as Weems put it above, womanism refers only to a female of the human race. Thinkers like White also believe that although the idea of conceptual frameworks cannot be ruled out in Western Europe, the only link or connection that exists is that between men and nature.

For White, this relationship is brought to bear by the advent of Science and Technology. Science and Technology—hitherto quite separate activities, joined to give mankind powers which, to judge by many of the ecologic effects, are out of control (WHITE 1967, Web. N. P.). This led men to conclude that they were superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it to their slightest whim (WHITE 1967, Web. N. P.). No attempt is made to look at the connection between men and women. This also means that Warren’s idea of *Oppressive Conceptual Frameworks* when pitched against this position is found wanting. Warren’s *Oppressive Conceptual Frameworks* are also found wanting in that they are out of sync with African social and environmental realities.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the environment is owned by the ancestral spirits. In Shona culture, in particular, these ancestral spirits are referred to as *varidzi ve masango* (custodians of the environment and its content). This means that human beings (men and women) have no control over the behavior of the environment to warrant a comparison between the oppression of women and the ill-treatment of the environment. It is also critical to note that in sub-Saharan Africa, men and women are victims of racism and classicism which means that there is no such thing as value-hierarchical thinking as men do not look at themselves as being of higher status or prestige than women. They consider women to be their equal partners in their fight against racism and classicism. Against this background, Joyce Ladner (cited in WEEMS 1993, 21) notes that “Black women do not perceive their enemy to be black men, but

rather the enemy is considered to be oppressive forces in the larger society which subjugate black men, women and children”.

The above arguments do not only eliminate value hierarchal thinking but the other two features of *Oppressive Conceptual Frameworks* as well, that is, value dualisms and the logic of domination which divides people based on both socially constructed characteristics and biological characteristics such as “reason and emotion” as well as “male and female” respectively. I argue that in sub-Saharan Africa such binaries do not exist as the emphasis is not on whether men are more rational than women or women are more emotional than men as is the case with Warren’s value dualisms and the logic of domination.

The emphasis is on how intellectual assets like “reason” and “emotion” can be used for the betterment of the community. These assets appeal at the community level than at individual level. Hence, we talk of communal/group rationality rather than individual rationality (MANGENA 2012, 10). In this kind of set up no one [male or female] can dominate the other. In fact, a man (the male category) can play the role of a mother to his sister’s children in the event that the biological mother is dead or absent and all mothers are women (the female category).

Conversely, a woman (the female category) can play the role of a father to her brother’s children in the event that the biological father has passed on and fathers are men (the male category) (MANGENA and MUHWATI 2013) What does this mean logically speaking? It probably means that if the argument I am presenting is pointing to the fact that feminism is out of sync with African realities/experiences, it follows necessarily that ecological feminism which is best explained by the three features of *Oppressive Conceptual Frameworks* discussed above is also out of sync with African realities/ experiences. Thus, the conclusion—*No Black African women are ecological feminists*—would follow with necessity.

Conclusion

This essay was an attempt to establish whether or not a conclusion can be drawn to the effect that there is something called African ecological feminism. The essay progressed through the use of Africana womanism as a theory and the deductive method in philosophy to draw its warranted conclusions. The argument was put thus, if it can be ascertained that there is something called Black or African feminism, then that there is African ecological feminism should be a matter of deduction. The essay began by presenting Warren’s ecological feminism before looking at the history of feminism and showing that this history precludes the values, experiences and aspirations of Africana women. By deduction, this automatically meant that the designations Black or African feminism were not conceivable as the suffix ‘feminism’ was and still is a foreign

concept. On the basis of this understanding, it was, therefore, easier to draw the conclusion: “No Black African women are ecological feminists.”

Relevant Literature

1. BARCALOW, E. [Moral Philosophy: Theory and Issues], 1994. Wardsworth Publishing Company: Belmont. Paperback.
2. COLLINS, P. H. “What is in a Name? Womanism, Black Feminism and Beyond,” [The Black Scholar], pp9-17, Winter/Spring 1996. Vol 1. No 26. Paperback.
3. COPI, I.M. [Introduction to Logic], 1994. Prentice Hall: Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Paperback.
4. LADNER, J. “Tomorrow’s tomorrow: The Black Woman.” [Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves, C.H Weems, Ed.], 1993. Bedford Publishers: Michigan. Paperback.
5. MANGENA, F and MUHWATI, I. “Kelland on Rape and Objectification: An Africana Feminist Response,” 2013. Unpublished article.
6. _____. “Towards a *Hunhu/Ubuntu* Dialogical Moral Theory,” [Journal of the South African Society for Greek Philosophy and the Humanities], pp1-17, December 2012. Vol 13. No 2. Paperback.
7. _____. “Teaching African Feminist Ethics in the Era of HIV and AIDS: A University of Zimbabwe Study,” [BOLESWA: Journal of Theology, Religion and Philosophy], pp117-133, December 2011. Vol 3. No 3. Paperback.
8. MAPPE, T.A and ZEMBATY, J. S. [Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy], 1997. McGraw-Hill: New York. Paperback.
9. STEADY, F.C. “The Black Woman Cross-Culturally,” [Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves, C.H Weems, Ed.], 1993. Bedford Publishers: Michigan. Paperback.

10. WARREN, K. “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism,” [Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues, B Mackinnon, Ed.], 1998. Wadsworth Publishing Company: Belmont. Paperback.
11. WEEMS, C.H. “Nomo/Self-Naming, Self-Definition and the History of Africana Womanism,” [Contemporary Africana: Theory, Thought and Action, C.H Weems, Ed.], 2007. Africa World Press: Trenton. Paperback.
12. _____. [Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves], 1993. Bedford Publishers: Michigan. Paperback.
13. WHITE, L. “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis,” N.P., March 1967. Retrieved 10 July 2013. Web.

BOOK REVIEW

AN AMAZING PIECE OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY¹

Sophie Bosede Oluwole: *Socrates and Orunmila. Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy.*

Lagos: Ark Publishers 2014, 224 p.

Reviewer: Prof. Heinz KIMMERLE
Erasmus University Rotterdam
Netherlands, Emeritus

With this book, the debate about African philosophy and the understanding of what African philosophy is about are raised to a new level. S.B. Oluwole has worked already for a long time to make clear what is specifically African in African philosophy. From a great number of publications I just mention her book: [Witchcraft, Reincarnation and the God-Head: Issues in African Philosophy], 1991. Excel Publications: Ikeja. In this connection she has drawn special attention to the problem of [Philosophy and Oral Tradition], 1999. Ark Publishers: Lagos. She uses frequently and is very familiar with the *Ifa Literary Corpus*, an extensive text of Yoruba oral tradition, of which big parts have been published in print and also translated into English by Wande Abimbola. The main chapters of this text can be found in the volume, edited by Abimbola: [Sixteen Great Poems of Ifa], 1975. UNESCO: Paris.

In order to understand what is groundbreaking and new in the comparison of Socrates and Orunmila, one has to realize that Orunmila and the other figures of the *Ifa Literary Corpus* are not gods in the Western meaning of the word. They are not just mythological figures, as are the gods on Mount Olympus in the Greek tradition. More specifically it is wrong to speak of Orunmila as the “God of wisdom.” Oluwole teaches us: These figures are called *Orisa*; they are historical human beings who have been “revered only after death” and “deified” because of their special contribution to philosophy, political science, knowledge of agrarian production, building of cities, warfare, etc. (see page xiii). Oluwole’s extensive research into Socrates and Orunmila shows that there are amazing similarities in their life and work. Both lived around 500 BCE

¹ This review first appeared in the journal [Confluence: Online Journal of World Philosophies], pp221-223, 2014. Vol 1. Web. It is reprinted here by the kind permission of the reviewer, publisher and the management board of *Confluence*, Germany. The original publisher of this review is hereby acknowledged.

as the sons of stone masons. Their faces look alike to a great extent. They had about ten or sixteen disciples to whom they preached virtue as the ideal of the good life. They heavily criticized those who claimed to possess absolute knowledge. They lived in centers of intellectual and social life, Athens in ancient Greece and Ile-Ife in Yoruba-land respectively. Both left behind no written work (22-24).

It is true for Socrates and Orunmila that we know about them from secondary sources. There is not an objective report about who they were and what they taught. Of course, we rely heavily on Plato in trying to find out who Socrates was. But Plato wrote his famous *Dialogues* about thirty years after the death of Socrates. And we have quite different information from Xenophon, Aristophanes, and Diogenes Laertius about the person and the teachings of Socrates. From these sources we come to a certain general picture. In this sense also Gernot Böhme speaks of *Der Typ Sokrates* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1988). With regard to the person and teachings of Orunmila there are also quite different sources, which in part have a legendary character. Thus it remains unclear “who really was Socrates” as well as “Orunmila” (pp8-12 and 19-21).

Oluwole confronts “The Fictitious Socrates,” “The Corporate Socrates,” and “The Historical Socrates” with “The Mythical Orunmila,” “The Corporate Orunmila,” and “The Historical Orunmila.” Because there is also a fictitious picture of Socrates, especially in the work of Aristophanes, corresponding to the mythical picture of Orunmila in the Ifa corpus, both are comparable. A detailed comparison of the theoretical “views and ideas” of Socrates and Orunmila about “The Nature of Reality,” “The Nature of Truth and Wisdom,” “The Limits of Knowledge and Wisdom,” “The Good and the Bad,” “Political Rights,” “The Rights of Women” and other topics makes clear that here two philosophies of equal standard are under discussion. And it is obvious that both argue critically and reasonably. Their argumentation meets rigorous standards. They deny that absolute knowledge is possible. “For them, such wisdom belongs to God” (57).

What is said about Orunmila and what Orunmila “is said to have said” proves that he developed a philosophy within traditional African thought, which is in no way less critical or rigorous than that of Socrates. Even the most advanced principles of “Particle Physics which contains algebra and mathematics” are already applied in the “scientific and mathematical system” of the structure of the *Ifa corpus* (79).

From this point of view, Oluwole can not only reject European-Western positions, which deny the existence of critical and scientific philosophy in traditional Africa, but also the ideas of many African scholars, who do not give the full rank of rationality and scientific spirit to traditional African thinkers. She refers to Kwasi Wiredu, Kwame Gyekye, Gerald Joseph Wanjohi, Peter O. Bodunrin, and others. Most characteristically wrong is the view articulated by

Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Negritude movement. When the latter contrast the superior position of the West in the field of rational thought with a superior position of Africa in the field of emotion, they imply that Africans are less rational (75). J.A.I. Bewaji, who has been teaching at different Nigerian universities, has delivered a “Critical Analysis of the Philosophical Status of Yoruba Ifa Corpus.” This results, however, in complete “confusion.” Oluwole summarizes: Bewaji admits that this text-corpus “is not lacking in a high degree of ‘abstract reasoning,’” but at the same time he insists, “that it does not deal with ‘abstract entities,’ ‘concepts,’ and ‘terms,’ all of which are abstract reasoning” (90).

In a final conclusion Oluwole clarifies how Socrates, the “Patron Saint” of classical Western philosophy, makes binary distinctions in the sense of “binary oppositions.” The binary distinctions of Orunmila, the “Patron Saint” of classical African philosophy, on the other hand, are “binary complementarity.”² The way of thought which is expressed in the idea of complementarity is identified as the specific contribution of African philosophy to world philosophy. That “the other” is the necessary condition for my own existence as a human being leads to the idea of universal brotherhood. The same conception can also be found in the term “*ubuntu*” as a ground-word of African philosophy. Mogobe Ramose from the University of South Africa has developed [African Philosophy Through Ubuntu], 2002. Mond Books: Harare. Oluwole appropriates the “Bantu-sayings” to which Ramose refers as expressing the core of *ubuntu* and of binary complementarity. I quote here only Ramose’s interpretation of the first of these sayings: “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*. To be a human being is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity of others, and on that basis, establish humane relationship with them” (157). It is necessary to reread Oluwole’s and Ramose’s books to understand better what is African in African philosophy.

² The term “Patron Saint” instead of “Baba Ifa” for Orunmila and “Father of Greek Wisdom” for Socrates is chosen in accordance with the practice in the “early Christian Church” by which “prominent philosophers [...] were later canonized as saints,” and more particularly with the suggestion of Erasmus to include “*Santa Socrates, Ora pro nobis* [...] in the liturgy of the Catholic Church” (xiv).