

A Critique of “African Philosophy of Religion from a Global Perspective: Deities, Ancestors, Relationality and the Problem of Evil”

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Emeka C. EKEKE

Department of Religious and Cultural Studies
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria.

Research Fellow, Department of the Study of Religions,
University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran.

Email: emekacekeke@unical.edu.ng; emekacekeke@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8995-5676>

Abstract

This critique thoroughly examines the scholarly article "African Philosophy of Religion from a Global Perspective: Deities, Ancestors, Relationality, and the Problem of Evil" written by Luís Cordeiro-Rodrigues and Jonathan Chimakonam. The main aims of this critique are to examine the article's impact on African Philosophy of Religion and evaluate its merits and limitations. Employing a qualitative research methodology, this critique examines the complex dynamics that exist between deities, ancestors, relationality, and the issue of evil within the African religious framework. In assessing the article's impact on the discipline, the critique analyses the novelty of the authors' perspectives and their capacity to propel philosophical discussions on African religious ideology. Furthermore, the paper evaluates its strengths and weaknesses, emphasizing its thorough examination of important subjects while acknowledging potential shortcomings in the portrayal of many African religious traditions. The primary objective of this critique is to present a comprehensive and well-informed evaluation of the scholarly influence of the paper in the wider context of African Philosophy of Religion. It seeks to provide valuable insights for future research and academic involvement on this particular topic.

Keywords: African philosophy of Religion, Deities, Ancestors, Problem of evil, Relationality.

Introduction

The scholarly paper titled "African Philosophy of Religion from a Global Perspective: Deities, Ancestors, Relationality and the Problem of Evil" offers an examination of the intricate dimensions of African philosophy of religion, taking into account its global implications. The authors (CORDEIRO-RODRIGUES and CHIMAKONAM, 2022) skilfully explored the complex relationship between deities, ancestors, and the issue of evil, providing insights into the African continent's diverse cultural traditions. The essay demonstrates its robustness through its thorough treatment of fundamental issues. But the article's potential impact on the Philosophy of Religion in Africa may be restricted due to the

generalization of varied religious beliefs and the lack of extensive contact with contemporary studies. The paper also provides a good foundation for scholars and researchers who wish to investigate the convergence of African Philosophy of Religion and global religious studies. This work's main contribution is its focus on relationality and its broader implications for fostering cross-cultural interaction. This adds to the current discourse surrounding the diversity and complexity of religious thought on a global scale.

In this critique, two primary objectives are identified, namely. First, to assess the article's contribution to the field of African Philosophy of Religion, determining its significance and impact. This task entails thoroughly examining the authors' viewpoints, arguments, and methodology, while also assessing the article's contribution to our comprehension of the complex dynamics between deities, ancestors, relationality, and the issue of evil within the African religious framework. Thus, this essay strives to assess the article's originality in terms of its insights and its ability to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field. Second, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. This necessitates a thorough consideration of the logical consistency and validity of the arguments put forth by the author, together with an assessment of the efficacy of the approach utilized. The primary objective of this analysis is to concurrently assess the presence of any potential shortcomings within the author's examination of numerous African religious traditions, including but not limited to oversimplifications and generalizations. Through a comprehensive analysis that encompasses an examination of both the positive aspects and limitations, the purpose of this critique is to offer an impartial and well-informed evaluation of the article's scholarly significance and its influence within the wider domain of African Philosophy of Religion.

This critique steers to its objectives through the following subheads: methodology, the overview of the paper, the strengths and weaknesses of the article and conclusion.

Methodology

The qualitative research method is the most appropriate methodology for critiquing the essay. The selection is mostly influenced by the inherent characteristics of the topic matter and the objectives of the critique. Qualitative research has a notable proficiency in capturing the intricate subtleties and complexities that are inherent in cultural and philosophical analysis. These aspects are of utmost importance in the discourse around African Philosophy of Religion. There are several compelling justifications for the suitability of qualitative research.

A comprehensive comprehension: Qualitative research facilitates a thorough examination of the complex concepts and themes expounded upon throughout the text, including deities, ancestors, relationality, and the problem of evil. This approach facilitates a comprehensive analysis of the cultural milieu, historical foundations, and philosophical principles, yielding a profound and intricate comprehension of the topic.

The application of qualitative research also facilitates interpretive analysis in the exploration of multiple views and interpretations within African Philosophy of Religion. This methodology enhances the comprehension of the diverse perspectives articulated in the article and promotes a holistic understanding of the manifold levels of significance embedded within the text. Further, qualitative research is suitable for studying cultural ideas. For example, the ideas discussed in the essay can be better understood by examining the cultural settings, societal influences, and historical trends that shape them.

Finally, the qualitative method recognizes the inherent subjectivity of human experiences and beliefs, which play a crucial role in the examination of philosophical and theological ideas. This methodology enables the researcher to explore the intricacies of individual and collective perceptions, providing a broad analysis that considers the diverse range of opinions and perspectives within the discipline.

Overview of the Paper

In their paper, Cordeiro-Rodrigues and Chimakonam (2022) examine and provide an analysis of relevant concepts in the African philosophy of religion. The paper does this from two distinct perspectives: a mono-disciplinary approach and a comparative framework. This article seeks to establish a forum for continuous discourse and advancement within the discipline, with a particular focus on fundamental notions, including deities, ancestral lineage, interconnectedness, and the philosophical quandary of malevolence. It also addresses the need for a more inclusive and diverse approach to the study of Philosophy of Religion, particularly in the context of Africa and its global significance.

The paper emphasizes the significance of this discipline within the broader context of African metaphysics, and highlights the increasing inclination of present-day African philosophers to actively participate in the advancement of their discipline, underscoring the significance of their contributions within the current intellectual milieu. The emergent state of African Philosophy of Religion, contrasting it with other well-established aspects of African metaphysics was presented.

They also emphasize the importance of adopting a global outlook when examining the field of Philosophy of Religion, especially considering the diminishing influence of Western epistemological frameworks. The authors propose to endorse the exploration of African philosophical viewpoints in conjunction with those of other civilizations, such as China, with the aim of promoting intercultural interchange and fostering mutual understanding. They stressed the importance of recognizing and respecting diverse epistemic standpoints which they argue is a means to promote healthy intercultural relations.

On the methodology adopted, the authors identify a range of comparative methods that investigate the connections and disagreements between philosophical ideas from Africa and China, providing interdisciplinary insights. The paper offered examples from many scholars demonstrating comparative exercises' advantages. These examples offer insights into the interrelatedness of cultural ideas and values. These examples include Wei Hua (2022) in his "Augustine, Ancestors, and the Problem of Evil," highlighting a noteworthy correlation between Augustine's widely accepted Western conception of evil and the underlying concepts in African traditional religions. Another example includes Naomi Thurston (2022) who draws a comparison between the concepts of communal bonds through the practice of ancestor commemoration in the Akan in Ghana and East Asian cultures. The examination of shared characteristics across these civilizations reveals the significance of cooperative and complementary coexistence, not just for individuals but also for varied cultural groups. They further argue that in the contemporary times, individuals hailing from many nationalities relocate to different cultural regions.

Furthermore, important topics are treated, including the problem of evil, the essence of divinity, acts of selflessness, ancestral reverence, and communal bonds, within the framework of African Philosophy of Religion. The paper examines how these issues are explored by different authors in the special issue, providing valuable insight on the varied viewpoints and analyses given within the article. The paper underscores the significance of these exchanges in advancing the boundaries of knowledge within the discipline.

In conclusion, the essay underscores the importance of comparative studies in the field of African Philosophy of Religion and highlights its potential to enrich the development of novel philosophical conceptions. The paper accentuates the significance of multidisciplinary perspectives and worldwide involvement in cultivating a more comprehensive understanding of the religious ideology, specifically within the African milieu. The article, published in a special issue, is acknowledged as a crucial advancement in addressing epistemic inequities and fostering an inclusive discourse within the field of Philosophy of Religion in Africa.

The Strengths of the Paper

In the article Cordeiro-Rodrigues and Chimakonam (2022) offers a number of notable strengths that make a substantial contribution to the ongoing discussion surrounding African Philosophy of Religion and its position within the broader global philosophical context. The article exhibits some noteworthy strengths, which are as follows:

1. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** The paper employs an interdisciplinary methodology, incorporating perspectives from several academic disciplines such as philosophy, religious studies, and cultural anthropology. This methodology enhances the investigation of African Philosophy of Religion and facilitates a thorough comprehension of its fundamental principles (see CORDEIRO-RODRIGUES & CHIMAKONAM, 2022: 3).
2. The study adeptly situates African Philosophy of Religion within a broader global perspective. By actively exploring philosophical concepts

originating from other cultural contexts, the authors facilitate the development of a sophisticated understanding of the shared characteristics and distinctions between African religious traditions and those of other cultures. Consequently, this process cultivates an environment conducive to cross-cultural discussion and promoting mutual understanding.

3. The work places significant importance on comparing African and Chinese philosophies, thereby enhancing the discourse on a range of ideas including deities, ancestors, sacrifice, and the problem of evil. The application of a comparative approach in this context offers a more expansive viewpoint and underscores the interrelatedness of philosophical concepts within diverse cultural frameworks (CORDEIRO-RODRIGUES and CHIMAKONAM, 2022).
4. The article skilfully articulates prominent subjects including the essence of divinity, the problem of evil, and the significance of forebears (Ancestors) in African religious ideology. This investigation enhances the comprehension of the intricacies and subtleties intrinsic to African Philosophy of Religion, hence illuminating the various viewpoints within the discipline (CORDEIRO-RODRIGUES and CHIMAKONAM, 2022).
5. The paper makes a valuable contribution to the advancement of epistemic justice by recognizing and emphasizing the significance of multiple philosophical traditions. The concept in question poses a challenge to the prevailing hegemony of Western philosophical discourse, while also revealing the importance of fostering mutual respect and acknowledging the legitimacy of many cultural viewpoints (CORDEIRO-RODRIGUES and CHIMAKONAM, 2022).
6. It catalyses debate and collaboration between diverse philosophical traditions by emphasizing the importance of building intercultural communication and understanding. This highlights the importance of cultural variety and stresses the common values that can foster positive intercultural relationships (CORDEIRO-RODRIGUES and CHIMAKONAM, 2022).

A careful examination of the paper shows that the article's inclusive methodology, international contextualization, and focus on comparative study provide a substantial contribution to the progression of African Philosophy of Religion within a wider philosophical dialogue. This phenomenon presents opportunities for additional scholarly investigation and discourse, ultimately enhancing the comprehension of religious ideology within a worldwide framework.

Weaknesses of the Paper

The present analysis aims to provide a critique which will be based solely on the information supplied in the text.

1. **Insufficient Depth of Analysis:** Despite the article's assertion of offering a comprehensive perspective on the African Philosophy of Religion, it falls short in thoroughly examining distinct African religious practices and their multifaceted philosophical foundations. The paper primarily

- emphasizes the theoretical framework rather than extensively exploring individual cultural intricacies and difficulties in African culture.
2. **Lack of Theoretical Engagement:** The paper has a deficiency in its engagement with established theoretical frameworks within the field of African Philosophy of Religion. The provided work lacks sufficient consideration of key philosophical discourses and fails to actively participate in contemporary discussions within the area. The article's limited connection with prior scholarship may constrain its overall impact and breadth of contributions to the subject.
 3. **Excessive Focus on Comparative Analysis:** The article's primary objective is to stimulate comparative dialogues pertaining to the subject matter. However, it appears that there is an overemphasis on the comparison of African philosophical notions with those originating from other cultural traditions, namely Chinese and Western philosophies. The aforementioned emphasis can potentially eclipse the inherent worth and distinctive contributions of African Philosophy of Religion, possibly diminishing the prominence of the African perspective.
 4. **Insufficient Empirical Support:** The article exhibits a dearth of empirical evidence to substantiate its assertions and arguments, particularly in the examination of distinct African religious practices and their associated ramifications. The inclusion of empirical facts, case studies, or examples from a range of African religious contexts might have enhanced the article's overall arguments and bolstered its authenticity.
 5. **Concluding Remarks and Implications:** The article's conclusion is succinct and does not extensively underscore the ramifications of the offered research for subsequent investigations or the advancement of the African Philosophy of Religion. A more comprehensive and insightful conclusion would have strengthened the research's importance and offered a distinct path for future scholarly pursuits in the respective topic.

In a nutshell, the essay endeavours to provide insight into the African Philosophy of Religion within a global framework. However, it would have been advantageous for the article to further explore particular cultural settings, improve its theoretical rigour, and adopt a more nuanced approach to comparative comparison. The article's effect and contribution to the field of African Philosophy of Religion may have been enhanced by incorporating empirical support and presenting a more comprehensive conclusion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this critique of "African Philosophy of Religion from a Global Perspective: Deities, Ancestors, Relationality, and the Problem of Evil" highlights the importance of the article's scholarly contribution to the discipline of African Philosophy of Religion. The qualitative analysis conducted in this critique has brought attention to the complex interrelationship among different philosophical notions in the African religious setting. This analysis has provided insights into the extensive cultural history and varied views that are encompassed within this field of study.

While acknowledging the article's benefits in terms of its broad investigation of significant concepts and analytical insights, the assessment nevertheless notes certain flaws. These encompass the possibility of oversimplifying intricate religious beliefs and the necessity for a more comprehensive exploration of distinct African cultural traditions and present scholarly work.

In the future, it is crucial for academics and researchers to expand upon the fundamental principles established in this essay, employing its valuable perspectives as a catalyst for additional multidisciplinary investigations and intercultural discourse. The critique highlights the significance of promoting a more sophisticated and inclusive comprehension of African Philosophy of Religion. It advocates for an all-encompassing approach that recognizes the varied and intricate nature of religious beliefs throughout the African continent.

The critique ultimately catalyses scholars to persist in their exploration and advancement of knowledge in the field. By utilizing the insights and challenges presented in the article, scholars are encouraged to foster a more comprehensive and robust comprehension of African Philosophy of Religion within the global framework. Through the adoption of a nuanced and culturally sensitive methodology, scholars have the potential to make valuable contributions to the continuing scholarly dialogue surrounding the intricate and numerous aspects of religious cognition. This approach can facilitate the cultivation of mutual respect and comprehension among individuals representing diverse philosophical traditions.

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Relevant Literature

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