

**AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF  
EDUCATION: A CRITICAL COMPLEMENTARITY**

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**Abstract**

*Before now, some uninformed and disgruntled Western Philosophers taught and professed that Africa has no History having denied them their Philosophy. African Philosophy, as love of African wisdom, is an offshoot from African philosophical tradition as well as part and parcel of world philosophical heritage. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher not only discovers that continental Africa has a chequered history qua tale, African Philosophy in her different branches and applications as African Philosophy of History and African Philosophy of Education are applied philosophical forms and complementary courses even as African Philosophy of Education appreciates and delimits African Philosophy of History.*

**Keywords:** African, philosophy, history, education, African philosophy of history and African philosophy of education

**Introduction**

Our particular interest is in African Philosophy of History than History of African Philosophy. Many African scholars have not dwelt so much in this area. Some scholars are still negotiating with African Philosophy of History as a course of its own even when African Philosophy as a discipline of its own has come to stay amidst its branches and methodological approaches. Summarily, in the chequered history of humanity especially with regard to scholarship, Philosophy, presumably western philosophy, which dates to Socrates and his Ionian scholars of whom, unmitigated ancient history of philosophy as well as contemporary history of philosophy proved that all Greek Philosophy often referred to as Ancient Philosophy had an Oriental source.

Obenga, T. (1990:1) reiterated this age-long hidden but necessary facts when he writes that the Ancient Greek philosophers “having studied in Africa of Pharaonic period went back to Athens to philosophize”. We must note that Ancient Egypt, of Black Pharaonic era, has known to be the mother and cradle of civilization through an old inscription that read thus: thirty centuries before Greeks presented an orderly conception of life, in language suggestive of a tradition already several centuries old. With regard to Africa, one notes that we are dealing with philosophy that was dated alongside the oldest ancient civilization of Egypt.

African Philosophy, therefore, existed ages before Western Philosophy. However, what happens along the line is the thrust of this paper within the History of African philosophy or Philosophy as the straight case may be and of course, the African philosophy of History. This is only possible and currently attainable through a functional African Philosophy of Education. Critically this paper looks at different concepts in the theme while appreciating the complementarity between African Philosophy of History and African Philosophy of Education.

### **Continental Africa,**

The original ancient name of Africa was *Alkebulan* meaning mother of mankind (*australopithecus afarensis*) while others sources translated it as *garden of Eden*. An unprecedented DNA Studies have suggested that San people of Southern Africa (the bush men) and aboriginal Australians (migrants from Africa) are the world oldest human races that populated all other parts of the world.

However, historians have tried to connect name Africa to the continent's climate. Some historians traced the word Africa to Greek word “*aphrikē*”, that is translated: “the land that is free from cold and horror”. Equally some historians prefer the Roman word “*aprica*”, meaning sunny, or the Phoenician word “*afar*”, meaning dust. Whichever connection that stands, Africa is nicknamed mother continent linking one to *alkebulan*.

Geographically, African continent as the second-largest continent in the world with an area of 30.37mkm<sup>2</sup> with five geographic regions as: North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and South Africa and has other unique geographic features with regard to the Nile River (the longest river in the world), Mount Kilimanjaro, Victoria Falls, Lake Victoria (the largest tropical lake in the

world) and the Sahara desert. Africa often referred by explorers as dark continent is made up of 54 countries with more than 75 languages amidst many cultures and ethnic traditions. History, especially biblical history, attests to Africa's role in salvation history as Jacobs and sons were in Egypt for centuries till the Exodus. Jesus Christ's refuge in Egypt with his parents during the massacre of Herod was very significant. The exploration of Africa gave room to slavery and later colonialism as well as the eventual partitioning of Africa and conquest of Africa by the dawn of 1900 as countries like Britain, France , Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy had the good turns establishing colonial states. However, African countries after years of colonialism and independence formed a union known as Organization of African Unity (OAU) and now African Union (AU).

The African Union (AU) is a continental organ with 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. On 9.9.1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999) issued the Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of an African Union. It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The OAU, now AU, was the manifestation of the pan-African vision for an Africa that was united, free and in control of its own destiny in response to the aspirations of Africans for brother-hood and solidarity. The guiding philosophy was that of Pan-Africanism which centred on African socialism and promoted by African unity, the communal characteristic and practices of African communities, and a drive to embrace Africa's culture and common heritage. This guiding philosophy ought to affect the needed education that is just African. However, one of the main objectives of the AU was to rid the African continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and apartheid of 350 years then in South Africa. OAU then with this formation tries to organize and cooperate for holistic development of Africa by jointly move towards eradication of all forms of colonialism from Africa.

## **Philosophy**

Philosophy has come to stay as a discipline since ages. The history of Philosophy, therefore, is replete with possibilities dating from the Ancient Time (7th Century Before Christ: BC) Etymologically: Philosophy, etymologically from the Greek Lexicons, is *philos* (love) and *sophia* (Wisdom) transliterated love of wisdom. To

this point philosophy remains a human science that seeks wisdom and a personal enterprise with an unaided reason. It is a human enterprise.

Maritain, J., (2005, 72) maintains that Philosophy is the highest of the human sciences, that is, of the sciences which know things by the natural light of reason. But there is a science above it. For if there be a science which is a participation by man of the knowledge proper to God himself, obviously that science will be superior to the highest human science. Such a science, however, exists; it is theology. The word theology means the science of God. Traditionally, Philosophy is *cognitio rerum per altissimas causas, solar rationis* (science that studies all things in their ultimate and universal principle). It is *scientia rerum per ultima causas*, that is, knowledge of things through their ultimate causes.

It's worthy of note that neither discipline nor culture, science or arts and every form of humanities and society is devoid of philosophical influence. Taking cognizance of its main branches and other applied areas, Philosophy cuts across every learning and teaching to be known as *mater scientia*, mother of sciences or knowing. Obenga, T., (1992, 5), in his philosophical discourse writes, "Philosophy has nourished science. It preceded the sciences. Science (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Political Science, Aesthetics, Logic, Biology, Sociology, etc.), was born of Philosophy". No wonder the Medieval philosophers influenced by the religious innuendoes of their time, based on the chronological coincidence of Medieval philosophical tradition and relationship with the figure of Jesus Christ and the dominating power and influence of his teachings, regarded philosophy as *ancilla theologae*, handmaid of theology.

It is worthy of note that Philosophy is as old as the *homo cogitans*, the thinking man. Philosophy according to Maritain, J., (2005, 74) is the "highest human sciences, that is, of the sciences which know things by the natural light of reason". In the chequered history of humanity especially with regard to scholarship, Philosophy, presumably western philosophy, dates to Socrates and his Ionian scholars of whom, ancient history as well as contemporary history, proved that all Greek Philosophy often referred to as Ancient Philosophy had an Oriental source. Obenga, T. (1990,1) reiterated this age-long hidden but necessary facts when he writes that the Ancient Greek philosophers "having studied in Africa of Pharaonic period went back to Athens to philosophize". We must note that Ancient Egypt, of Black Pharaonic era, has known to be the mother and cradle of civilization through an old inscription that read thus: thirty centuries

before Greeks presented an orderly conception of life, in language suggestive of a tradition already several centuries old. With regard to Africa, one notes that we are dealing with philosophy that was dated alongside the oldest ancient civilization of Egypt. Onyewuenyi, I. (1993, 21), supported this age long view of Egypt's philosophy pre-dating the Greeks in his book: *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism* and other African Philosophers in their authorships had the same view with these titles: George, G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy*. Philosophy has come to stay as a human enterprise and a discipline since ages.

## **Education**

Education derived from two Latin words thus: *educere* as the process of leading one out of ignorance and *educare* as the consequent act of cultivating or leading one into knowledge. Education literally means the ability to lead one out of ignorance and train or lead one into knowledge which is power. Education, formal or informal, therefore has a normative implication of dealing with ignorance with all the instruments of knowledge. And the product is always discipline that is value oriented. Education in this regard is a human enterprise that trains and tames the animality in human beings with rationality. Education, therefore, is an all round project as it positively affects the holistic and societal development of the human person for himself and for the society.

This why John Dewey asserts that education is not preparation for life; education is life itself. It is a popular saying that *once a book is picked, gun is dropped*. This is why Hugo Victor says that *he who opens a school door, closes a prison*. Education is the bed rock of every successful country. As one of the oldest industries in human history, education is the main instrument employed by the society to preserve, maintain and grapple with its social balance; hence a society's future depends largely on the quality of her citizens' education. Education, therefore, is an instrument of change and value orientation. However, Nelson Mandela was credited the saying that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

## **African Traditional Education as Against Westernised Colonial Education**

Europeans' invasion and exploration of African boomed with slavery, colonization and later capital flight. Africa was and has existed with vagaries of human enterprise like indigenous or traditional education and all forms of

enterprising merchandise before the advent of Whiteman and his cohorts started to partition and plunder Africa. African Traditional Education was a means of transmitting one's culture from one generation to another. It remains an indigenous system of education is the training that our forefathers gave that was particularly native to every society. It is a process of bringing about a relatively permanent change in human attitude within a human society. Education is a very important aspect of every society and a major determinant of how far the society can rise in progress. This is because no nation can rise above the quality of her educational system. Mara, J., (2006, 2) asserts that African Traditional Education is aimed at inducting the members of the society into activities and mode of thought that align to the norms and values of the society. Mara, J., (2006, 2) further maintains that African societies were noted for her rich cultural heritage which was preserved and transmitted from generation to generation through a system of traditional education.

In line with the above assertion of J. Mara the process of education in African traditional society was intimately ingrained in the social, cultural, artistic, religious and recreational life of the community. Notably, the ideas of schooling and education were integrated in the traditional system. The traditional system of education incorporated the ideas of learning skill, social and cultural values as well as the norms into its purpose and method. Hence, in African traditional society, the education of her progenies started at birth and continued to adulthood. African traditional system of education has been described as education that prepared one for one's responsibilities as an adult in his home, village or tribe.

Notably, this form of uncelebrated and even unknown African philosophy of traditional education that was played underground was quite pragmatic and aimed at providing a gateway to the life of the community. It was based on the philosophy of productivity and functionalism, practicality and workability. It was utility based and in African traditional education, there is an end in view such that anyone who has undergone this level of education was expected to have acquired the competence and shows it in the course of his performance. African Traditional Education is a practical means of inculcating knowledge, skills and gaining the expected empowerment. Therefore Mara, J., (1998, 72) further avers that though there were few theoretical abstractions, but the main objective of African traditional education was to inculcate a sense of social responsibility of the community to the individual members, who

were becoming contributing members of the society. Hence, one of the major features of traditional education was apprenticeship model of learning, whereby people learned under masters like the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) now understudy in Harvard University.

An Online studies refers to this practise as very peculiar of African Traditional system of education. The Igbo apprentice system (IAS)-adopted for decades by the people of southeast Nigeria, also known as the Igbo trade apprentice system and commonly referred to as *Igba-Odibo (Igba-Boi, Imu-Ahia, Imu-Oru)* has been finally Approved by Harvard Business Review (HBR) via the global attention given to it by Prof. Ndubuisi Ekekwe. IAS as an economic model has been a kind of vocational training (in trade, enterprise or vocation) of young people in adopting one form of trade or the other and as well spur economic growth within the Igbo entrepreneurial spirit of the *Ogas*. The African traditional system of education, therefore, a process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitude in its cultural setting and heritage to foster continually the well-being of mankind.

The foremost focus on African vocational education was the preparation of African child for his or her responsibilities in the community. Traditional African Education is 'the bush school' the trains the young ones in preparation for different walks of life via their age grade or during initiation ceremony into different phases of life or the other. African Traditional Education informally exposed and initiates one into African culture, tradition, values, norms, and skills on how to be lively and practicable. Sadly, we are losing the warmness of Africa and the curriculum have not helped in restoring this warmness.

Traditional educational system was later replaced by the Colonized Western Philosophy of Education. Colonialism would have been the best for African Nation States, if it has been a form of tutoring or mentoring so as to bring out the best in Africans for Africa, who then would be complaining? The effects of colonialism seem to be double-age-sword. There is positive side of the coin with regard to introduction of formalized system of education, advent of Christianity and economic perspectives. Negatively, colonial education rubs African her being thereby trying to recreate an African person into an European maroon. Ezeani, E (2013, 22) quoted a Briton, Lord Macaulay's *Minutes on Education* on the aim of their colonial education in the colonies of Africa thus: "to train at least a

class of persons Indian (or Africans) in blood but English in opinion, in morals and intellect". Such was behind whatever informed the colonizers and their education for Africans even with regard to French Policy of Assimilation. In this process, every Africa and her black nature became fake and original and must be *westernized* or *europianized*. Such education in the end estranged African man from his environment and his very person. As Ezeani, E., (2013, 23) lamented: "for a good number of Africans, adoption of anything foreign is a mark of *onye ma ife* (educatedness or civilized person) as this is interpreted to be a symbol of education...education became associated with memorization of western knowledge and culture". By this we become inferior to them losing our sense of worth. But this was not what education ought to be. It ought to be integrally holistic and sums up every facet of the societal life. Ezeani, E. (2013, 25) continuing laments thus: "one of the most serious negative impacts of colonial education on Africa is de-Africanization of Africa-a process which dispossessed the people of their culture, values, languages and human dignity." What then remains of an African person?

Unfortunately Africa is yet to recover from the White-man's plundering of and the consequent *capital flight* from Africa in the name of colonization after years of slavery. African still suffers the stolen legacies and the inherent indoctrinization that everything black is evil alongside the confusion in our founding fathers that were trained in European mentality and clothed with colonial garb to witch-hunt their brother-Africans. Why Colonial Education instead of African Education? As far back as 1933 Carter G. Woodson has published *The Miseducation of the Negro*. Is the Nigeria Amalgamation of 1914 not a hoax but an unholy alliance between the Jihadist of Othman Dan Fodio and the colonial master on how to share Nigeria peacefully without war? Till now, 2022AD, many African countries are still paying uncompromised allegiance with financial obeisance and socioeconomic cum political dependence to the countries that colonized and gave them the much lauded independence especially with regard to country like France where most critical issues of her colonized countries are still being decided by them. What of Nigeria where the British influence is still depended on? Most of the political quagmires in this country are orchestrated in Britain.

The pessimistic effects of the colonial system of Education in African are closely associated with the aims of the colonizers as stated in the refereed Lord Macaulay's (a Briton) Minutes on Education. For them therefore, their education for us was "to train at least a class of persons Indian (or African) in blood but

English in opinion, morals and intellect.” It was a theoretical than practical oriented, that is, a form of entrepreneurship. French colonies applied same inhuman methodology in view of recreating persons who are Africans in blood, but French in opinion, morals and intellect. Such were Britain’s and French policies of assimilation explicitly intended to be accomplished. Their pattern of colonization of African required that Africans should discard their own world-view and adopt that of their almighty colonial masters be it of English, Portuguese, French, Spanish or the Arab world. Hence, the instrument of their teaching or education was for them the most efficient for their plan to be accomplished.

Its disheartening that some African countries like Nigeria is still bedeviled with western philosophy of education than African or even Nigerian Philosophy of Education. Eberechukwu BOC, (2018, 128-145) enunciated that the colonial masters gave us 1882 Education ordinance which was later replaced with 1887 Education ordinance, 1916 Education Ordinance, 1920-1922 Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education in Africa(which first commission to consider Africa in their decisions), 1925 Memorandum on Education in British Colonial Territories and the consequent 1926 Education Act and ERJ Hussey’s 1930 Education Reorganisation with official opening of Yaba Higher College in 1934. Th Elliot Commission of 1943(June) and Asquith Commission of 1943 (August) promoted higher learning in colonial regions especially in Nigeria with University College Ibadan. Still with regard to Education in Nigeria and Africa in general, Uba,, R. I. (2018, 194-205) explains that the development of education system started with 8-6-2-3 system of education unto 6-5-2-3 system of education through 6-3-3-4 system of education and presently 9-3-4 system of education. The whole scenario shows a dependent education based on western philosophy.

However, the Directorate of Education, an organ of AU in her mission statement agrees to a responsibility of contributing towards responsive educational systems for Africa thus: “to contribute towards revitalized, quality, relevant, and harmonized education systems responsive to the needs of Africa... systems that produce Africans with appropriate attitudes, values, knowledge and skills to facilitate attainment of the AU vision; systems that generate applied and new knowledge.... placing Africa firmly within the core of the global knowledge economy”. Hence, there are other steering committees like Continental Educational Strategy for Africa CESA 16-25 with their “ten year continental education strategy (CESA) presented to the Ministers for adoption is a response

to the AU Agenda 2063. It is in line with the Global Education 2030 Programme and contributes to the achievement of objective 4 of the SDGs. CESA 16-25 calls for a paradigm shift towards transformative education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, research, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development". Equally, Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (IPED), is a specialized institution of the African Union, tasked with the responsibility to function as Africa's Education Observatory ensuring quality, responsive and inclusive education development in Africa. Likewise, there is Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). EMIS is very crucial and most decisive area of focus in education development in Africa. These are efforts by Africans via AU to give Africa an African Education with an attendant and proper and fitting philosophy. It's time to realise that Africa is a beautifully attractive continent with great many human and natural resources. Of course, Africa has been very attractive to the West world and that has given chance to exploration. Expanding this idea, an eloquent Kenyan lawyer, erudite orator Prof. Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba (2019), has this to say about the ever attractiveness of Africa in one of his intriguing speeches, what an interesting long quote thus: "Africa has always remained attractive. All through the ages, she has always been attractive. It was attractive to the Portuguese and even to the Spanish... It is so attractive that every two years the Japanese call our leaders to Japan. That is how attractive she is. It is so attractive that the Germans also invited our leaders to Berlin. Her attraction also caught the eyes of the Arabs as they invited them to Doha".

However, PLO Lumumba was very articulate to question their continued invitation to Africans. Why haven't they invited Latin American countries or Arab countries? It is only Africans who have been always invited severally. Is it a bad thing? But, why African countries only? It is a truism that they always use us to their advantage. Complimenting the beauty of Africa, moreover he says: "When I look at Africa and see how attractive she is, one word comes to mind *globalisation*. When they talk about globalization, they talk about it as if it were new. Africans were once globalized as a commodity in the slave market, we were sold everywhere in the world, that was globalization. Then we were globalized again through colonization. Then, again, through neo-colonization. Now we are being globalized again in the context of opening our markets... So we are being told to open our markets and when we did you know what happens? Out textile industries died. The dye textile industry we knew about in Kaduna, Nigeria,

died. Our Cotton industries died. Our sugar industries died. The answer to why Africa is so attractive is simple: Economic gains”

Nevertheless, we must know that no nation develops beyond her quality of her educational system. Historically, if Africa must still develop beyond the contemporary obstructive shackles and glaring chains of the Western World as well as the existing momentous vicious circle of underdevelopment, she needs her own Philosophy of Education that is pertinent to her culture, circumscriptive of her worldview and very typical of her age-long academic quagmire as well as her educational problematiques. African development simply rests more on well defined mapped-out Africanized curriculums and a functional African Philosophy of Education that is African

### **Appreciation of History**

The history (from Greek *historia*) meaning learning by inquiry. It is knowledge acquired by inquiry or enquiry and investigation or research. History, therefore, is the study of any documented past. History as a term that comprises of past events as expressed through memory and discovery through collection, organization, presentation, and interpretation of those aggregates of facts or past events. History as academic discipline thrives on the knowledge of past using historical sources with proper investigative analysis. History differs from mere stories, cultural heritages, myths as its content can be reached as something happened in the past as such. This is why history as history can be taught or written down. History is, therefore, primarily a record of past events and times, as it concerns human enterprise. History studies man and his actions, decisions and behaviours. History generally as Osuagwu, I. M., (1999, 19) opines “evokes the statics of time(date),and space (places), of events, ideas, doctrines, contexts and their authors”.

Man by nature is a historical being and of course, remains at the centre of history, that is, often independent of him. Man's historicity or a historical being means man's ongoing work to conquer the world for the good of humanity as such. By this fact, man remains a product of history. This means that men often make their own history. This is why history repeats itself. History like a fashion is the repetition of antiquity. History, therefore, is a handmaid of life and living. If you must live well in the present you must be conscious of the past which will give credence to the future. According to Iroegbu, P., (1994, 33) “to be historicized is to take into account constructively and reconstructively, the

lessons of the past, on it to build the present and from the present to galvanize a good future. It is to realize that the particular makes the global relevant, and that the global makes the particular fully meaningful". The concept of history, therefore, plays a fundamental role in human thoughts and activities. However, Osuagwu, I M.,(1999, 19) maintains that "in studying philosophy, history is an important problem and project, an inevitable or categorical imperative. This claim is formally evident in philosophy, in its history of philosophy or its philosophy of history". For him, therefore, no discussion in African philosophy is relevant and meaningful without historical approach.

### **African Philosophy**

African Philosophy traditionally is knowledge of African realities and African realisms in their englobing universal principles. In Contemporary times, African Philosophy is primarily a discipline and secondarily a movement. It is more of a movement as it tries to reclaim its position as a discipline within the world philosophical heritage. It is, therefore, fundamentally a disciplinary movement as it tries to rediscover itself within the world philosophical heritage and equally establish itself as such. *In lato sensu*, African Philosophy is that branch of knowledge that grew from African Philosophical Tradition as a philosophy done within and without continental African for humanity as a human enterprise with regard to authorship, scholarship and literature. Moreover, the adjective African qualifies the noun Philosophy and beyond delimiting it, it expands such critical enquiry on the far side of just African. *In stricto sensu*, it is that course that is African and Philosophical within the limits of Africanity and philosophicality or Africanness and Philosophicalness.

Moreover, as a discipline, it is the love of African wisdom, that is, *philos Africana sophia*. Iroegbu, P. was very premier in giving this succinct definition. In this definition one can read a kind of defence as regards African philosophy. This is why for Iroegbu, P., African philosophy is a *philo-sophia*, a quest for African wisdom. African Philosophy, therefore, is *scientia rerum per ultima causas* within African realities. It is the search for the unaided authentic human knowledge that is philosophical and African. It is the habit of every wise and reasonable African man.

Consequently, African Philosophy as a movement is a clarion invitation by Bob Marley's redemptive insinuation to "emancipate yourselves from mental slavery...non but ourselves can free our mind". His redemption song demands a

total breakaway from the stereotype innuendoes that philosophy is the prerogative of the west therefore questioning directly our human nature as *homo sapiens* and *homo cogitans* as well as *animal rationalis*. As a movement, African Philosophy, rooted in and springing from African philosophical tradition, is a cursory look into the problematiqués and prospects of Africa as part of the world philosophical heritage. As a movement, African philosophy is an effort at recovering all lost status as result of the stolen legacies with regard to philosophy and its origin. As a movement, African Philosophy searches for the authentic knowledge that is Philosophy and African within and or outside the African cultural world-view. Therefore, a definitive-thoughtful interpretation and critical analysis of the symbols of African cultures would be African philosophy *qua tale*. More so, a reflection with profound application of criticality, analyticity and originality on African thoughts and cultures will give credence to Philosophy and rightly put, African Philosophy. However, rather than Western philosophy of Western philosophical tradition and her philosophy which started with wonder, African philosophy according to Jonathan Chimakonam opted that African philosophy started with *onuma*, that is, having been frustrated by the colonialism and racialism and other bumps of African predicaments orchestrated by many years of doubt its historical existence, greatly shrouded in controversies and submerged in conspiracies of lies, Africans lately woke up to rediscover the truth about philosophy and the western connection. Therefore, as a movement, African philosophy started out of frustration by many lies against Africans literary disposition.

However, such profundity in the critical appreciation of African cultural worldviews make veritable moments for African philosophy. With the methodological moment and proper hermeneutics, one can dependably and realistically infer that African Philosophy is Philosophy with African source and is nourished from African culture as its cultural reservoir and primary critical nourishment. Okere, T., (1983, 58-79) was the *primus inter pares* in asserting authoritatively that culture is the foundation of Philosophy by hermeneutically engaging Paul Ricoeur extensively on the existing relationship between culture and philosophy thus, "It is by interpreting the symbols of a culture that one can arrive at reflexion, philosophy." Okere, T. opines that Ricoeur defines reflexion as the connection between the comprehension of signs or symbols and self-comprehension. In a methodical process from culture to philosophy, the movement from symbols to reflective thought, Ricoeur proposes three stages, or levels of interpretation: the phenomenological stage, the hermeneutical stage and

the reflexive stage. Thus for Ricoeur, one can philosophise from culture, or at least from those elements of culture that can be called symbols.

African Philosophy is Philosophy as it is done in and for Africa and others. It is a by-product of human enterprise on people's culture. It is a philosophical tradition that is African within the mainstream of Philosophy as a systematic study. African Philosophy is the critical and universalizing interpretation of the culture and the worldview of African people by philosophers within and outside African continent. It is philosophy done within African philosophical tradition designating the corpus of African philosophical writings. However, African Philosophy, like other philosophical traditions, has an historical development along the path of human consciousness, critically encountering their realities.

This is against some philosophers' views and philosophical currents trying to demean and oppose the existence of African Philosophy. African Philosophy, therefore, is a systematic study within the limits of the Africanity of Philosophy and philosophicality of African realities and heritage. Osuagwu, I. M., (1999, 28) in his criteria for the scientific philosophicality and scientific Africanity of African Philosophy was apt to note thus: "African philosophy is at the same time African and philosophical. In and by these terms, we are searching, on the one hand, for the genuine philosophicality, i.e., formal scientific philosophy, of the said African enterprise, and on the other hand, for the authentic scientific Africanity of that scientific philosophy. These two basic scientific criteria make African philosophy to bear the characteristics marks of its particularity and universality". Amidst all sorts of bizarre and false ideas on the capability of African man to philosophize, questioning the depth of their philosophy, one can boast of African philosophical scholarship as well as African authorship. However, Iroegbu, P., (1994, 116) an optimistic contemporary philosopher was very apt in defining African philosophy as: "the reflective inquiry into the marvels and problematics that confront one in African world, in view of producing systematic explanation and sustained responses to them. It is an inquiry with two aspects: philosophical and African".

In the above definition one can read a kind defence of African philosophy against being labelled mere folk, cultural or ethno-philosophy. The background at the time of this definition has to do with questioning and giving the possibility of African philosophy with regard to historicity and methodology. This is why for Iroegbu, P., African philosophy is a *philo-sophia*, a quest for African wisdom.

However, Iroegbu was academically astute enough to reiterate that “African philosophy is philosophy done in an African context...the different aspects and complexities of existence that challenge him as an African person. In this respect, every philosophy is contextual philosophy”. By this very act, I strongly add that every philosophy to worth the salt is ethno-philosophical, relatively cultural and appropriately traditional to the philosopher. Alluding to this Iroegbu, P., (1994, 122) was vehemently bent on this general understanding of philosophy as: the global participation of all realities and entities in the general fact and understanding of being as being whether in African, Asian or Western Philosophy. Summarily, Iroegbu, P. (1994, 122) gave ten areas of any contextual or ethno-philosophical basic foundation for genuine philosophical enterprise thus: Geo-environmental, Socio-cultural, Episteme, Mythico-religious, political-moral, Historic, Ethnic-linguistic, Existential, Phenomenologico-pragmatical and ontological. For Iroegbu, P, therefore, these philosophical concepts alone “are what we generally call the African philosophical philosophemena: raw materials for philosophical reflection, questioning, responses, analysis and eventual synthesis”.

### **History of African Philosophy**

Osuagwu, I.M. (1999, 19) maintains that “there are many European and even African scholars for whom no true Black African science and history of philosophy exist.” History of philosophy is so much important that Osuagwu, I.M. (1999, 19) reiterates: in studying philosophy, history is an important problem and project, an inevitable or categorical imperative. This claim is formally evident in philosophy, in its history of philosophy and its philosophy of history. From this perspective, every regional philosophy must be appreciated, evaluated from its history. African philosophy is no exception to this basic rule. Being hotly controverted, misrepresented and misunderstood, African philosophy can hardly be properly taught besides its history. The best way to begin teaching or studying African philosophy is thus to take the historical approach. History takes our minds down the memory lane, in retrospection as in re-presentation and prospection of the main issues.

African Philosophy an offshoot of African philosophical tradition as part of the world philosophical heritage has an interesting history which has been thwarted or hidden or overlooked over the years probably in response to Hegel’s overstatement that Africa ha no history. From Hegel’s perspectives, Africa is said

to be unhistorical with undeveloped spirit, hence he identified only four historical worlds as: Oriental, Greek, Roman and German. Based on this audacious uninformed claimed Hegel simply justified Europe's enslavement and colonization of Africa. Even though Hegel's Philosophy of History may be the most fully developed philosophical theory of history in a dialectical intelligible process, attempting to discover directional meaning in history as movement in time as well as the realization of human freedom, the place of African at that point in time was unquestionable. Oblivious of this atrocious presentation of Africa as savage barbaric by Hegel, Osuagwu, I.M. (1999, 22) submits thus:

African philosophy and its history must be given strict disciplinary or scholarly consideration being both a scientific and cultural activity, African philosophy has its own authentic history down ages. African history of philosophy is an existential, call it an ontological, memorial [anamnesis] of the ways our scholarly ancestors thought and lived life through, the way they attempted to understand and master themselves and their world. In this perspective.

Africa has a history. Philosophy equally has a history not far from African history as the mother of mankind and cradle of civilization. Time has come for us Africans (with our black skin that has given room to world structural inequalities) to question few things with regard to who we are and what is happening around us. In spite of the rare privilege of Africa being the cradle and mother of civilization of all civilizations and the much lauded independence, Africa still, in this 21st century, struggles to survive independently, socio-political and economic wise. The contemporary and continued scramble for Africa leaves every good thinking human being with lot of questions with regard to African coming of age to be (amidst the inherent racism and once-in-awhile resurgence of white supremacy).

As Africans, who are still battling with unfathomable crisis of development and poor educational policies, we need a form of education that is well informed by African Philosophy of Education that is valued oriented and morally based, to be formally taught in our schools. Hence, African environment emphasizes greatly the quest for change in the African educational system. She needs a functional education that is *ad rem* to the the existing situation. There is a clarion call for re-Africanisation of Africa for effective development, liberation and empowerment of educational aspiration thereby limiting the possibility of having cultural freaks

or social misfits as educational products. This is very pertinent, especially in our time, when there seems to be general clear gross loss of common sense, crass reign of poverty of thought, glaring show of transvaluation of values and abysmal collapse of morals. If our educational system is well articulated on the proper and healthy ideology of African Philosophy of Education, it will definitely ensure a return to a sound education with great premium on discipline, character and value orientation and formation.

Continental Africa is unfortunate with regard to socioeconomic development *cum* political leadership. The western world, that is, the global North interference in African continues socio-politically *cum* economically. They interfered in our cultural orientations as well as traditional institutions all in the name of colonization and continue with capital flight and payment for the colonization amidst debt management which many African countries have been lured into. However, from another angle, if you wish to destroy a people, try and destroy their language and then their culture. That's what the colonisers perfectly did to Africans. How can we have African science and the corresponding African technology outside African language with proper and basic African Philosophy and African Philosophy of Education? How can Africa develop without her culture and her language? Since we have been decultured, is there any hope that our philosophy that guarantees our education will thrive amidst other philosophical traditions? Technological advancements and scientific prowess adopt and hear any language for functional development.

World inequality today, that is, world division between Global South and Global North exists because during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries some nations were able to take advantage of the industrial revolution and the technologies and methods of organization that it brought while others were unable to do so. Technological change is only one of the engines or features of development, but perhaps, it is the most critical one. The countries or states that did not take or have the advantage of new technologies did not benefit from other engines or features of development. Again, the question or idea of development in the global south has been characterized by the Western notion or pattern of development. Claude Ake observes that; the type of development which the bulk of African countries are seeking is in essence one that makes the industrialized western countries the model of development, so that the African country engaged in the quest for development is really trying to fashion itself after the image of the West. Therefore, the thrust of the work is on development in the

global south and to find out what are the challenges they experience now. The work will primarily look at the origin of the concept global south, development, imperialism, developmental theories and call for New International Economic Order (NIEO) among others.

The history of African Philosophy must necessarily take us back to its remotest starting point in ancient times, years before the known Greek philosophy especially to the Pharaonic period of Egypt and that of North Africa. Through the methodological moments of deconstruction, reduction, reconstruction and construction we are to rediscover philosophy that is of world heritage but branded otherwise. In this view, the *onuma* or frustration of Chiamakonam may have chanced the African philosophy of later periods notably medieval era down to contemporary period but not the ancient history of the existence of philosophy in Africa.

It's no more disputable that African Philosophy of the ancient preceded ancient Greek Philosophy. Historians especially of Greek scholarship like Herodotus (484-425BC), Diogenes Laertius (3AD) and Proclus (410-485AD) attest to the existence of African intellectual culture before the birth of Greek intellectual hegemony. St. Augustine (354-430AD) a great medieval African philosopher according to Osuagwu, M.I. (1999:83) amply testifies to the great antiquity, historicity, philosophical scientificity and Africanity of ancient Egyptian wisdom in City of God (chapters 38-42) that Egyptian Philosophy antedated and inspired Greek Philosophy. One, therefore, wonders the level of intellectual dishonesty on why many European authors like (Hegel and Hume) forgot or neglected these important testimonies.

### **African Philosophy of History**

Philosophy of History is a practical than speculative philosophy. African Philosophy of History is an applied practical philosophy. It is an application of philosophical principles on history. Those who use the term African philosophy of history typically use it to refer to work within the field of general philosophy. African Philosophy of History is a reasoned inquiry into the nature of history. In this regard, African philosophy of history by this singular definition follows a kind of dictates of reason and in Hegelian philosophical terminology, it is natural progress of history due to the the outworking of absolute spirit. Hegel begins by distinguishing three methods or modes of doing history: *Original History* (Herodotus and Thucydides mere historical records), *Reflective History* (Critical

reflection on temporal issues) and *Philosophical History* (the true way defining and characterizing the manifestation of Geist or the absolute spirit). Iroegbu, P., (1995, 196) maintains that for Hegel, the coordination of the progress and vagaries of beings, even historical beings, rationally and entirely is located in the concept of *geist* translated as spirit, mind, *muo*...which is synonymous with being, reality, *dasein*, truth.

Continuing Iroegbu, P., (1995, 196) maintains that this *geist* "is being this being is, so to stay, ontologically incarnated in the *geist*. The totality of reality for Hegel is self-realizing conscious *geist*. The *geist* is involved in a formidable dialectical movement out of, and back to, itself". This dialectical movement is in three moments of *thesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*. This accounts for all the dialectical construction of all the aspects of reality as a manifestation of *geist* or reality. The *geist* is, therefore, akin to the culture of people, and is constantly reworking itself to keep up with the changes of society, while at the same time working to produce those changes. Hegel tries to consider the events of history in terms of universal reason manifesting reality at different levels of existence. However, the history of philosophy is a demonstration of this climax-point of absolute knowing. The present philosophies are an embodiment and apex of past philosophies.

African philosophy of history is an expected effort by African philosophers to sometimes have in turn their attention to efforts in examining history itself and the nature of historical knowledge. Such reflections as these bordering on the nexus of human experience while paying attention can be regarded African philosophy of history towards the realization of authentic human freedom through hermeneutics of events past. The African philosophy of history with methodological moments must pay attention to the network Harvard Business of experience, memory, and history. This idea of African philosophy of history tallies with contextualizing human nature which is a mere historical product. To this extent, African philosophy of history contextualizes history with a form of directionality borrowing from dialectical movement finding meaning in life as an entity sustained and occasioned in history as a movement of events from the present to past through the future. Just like African Philosophy, African Philosophy of History needs to readjust to methodological moments of African historical deconstruction, African historical construction and African historical reconstruction so as to worth the salt. Its quite shocking that many scholars like Hegel and other uninformed scholars like him denied Africans and African

philosophy on the ground of historicity. But Martin Heidegger maintained that basically *dasein* is characterized by being a historical being. For Martin Heidegger this historical-being, man, branches according to him into historicity, temporality, destiny, dread, being-towards-death, conscience and care. The historicity of man is proved in that man's existence in the world is an existence in time. There is, therefore, a relatedness between man and his environment. Hence, he is a being-in-the-world which is the actual definition of his person as a being-in-history, that is, a historical being. In this line of thought, therefore, man goes on to conquer and transform the world leading to all levels of civilization. History is as such history because of man's relatedness and consciousness to the world with all his activities.

Heidegger, M., remains of the opinion that man can only find his existence through history in a more meaningful way. That is to say that "a more primordial datum to be considered before man can be understood as a historical being is that man is himself a historicity." According to Iroegbu, P., (1995, 228) human beings are dotted with certain historico-existential conditions. So, for Iroegbu, P., (1995, 228) then "while *historie* means the normal scientific study of history. Historicity for Heidegger, M. (Being and Time, Nos. 20-30, 130-175, 180-280, 373-387) is the essential quality of a being as historical; a history that incarnatedly happens. History, therefore, gives *dasien* its character in the sense of constituting it in its past, for the present, in view of the future". The word *historie* refers to attempts or efforts of historians to account only for those facts or events that have meaning to us. So, the understanding of man as a historical being should be juxtaposed with an understanding of man as a temporal being. Man's historicity, therefore, means man's ongoing work to unveil the world so that the world can become more habitable to him and the whole human race.

### **African Philosophy of Education**

Education is a very important aspect of every society and a major determinant of how far the society can rise in developmental progress and otherwise. This is because no nation can rise above the quality of her educational system. Quite dauntingly, educational system in Nigeria lacks consistency and implementable philosophy. It is so disheartening that today, amidst the lingering system that has been in place over the years, there are unchecked imported educational systems that are foreign to African world-view starting with Montessori and Chinese Educational system. Education in this regard is people oriented and

therefore culture bound as it affects the way of life of the people. As African people, we need African education and proper philosophy backing it.

Philosophy of Education is an applied philosophy. It is an application of philosophical principles and a kind of intelligent questioning on teaching methodologies and learning principles as depicted in every field of education *per se*. It is within the proper limits of Philosophy of Education, therefore, to define the appropriate boundaries of the curriculum and its content development with regard to teaching and learning. It is an indubitable fact of reality that no nation rises above the quality of her educational system. The quality of any educational system is within the bounds of curriculum. It is, therefore, with the limits of Philosophy of Education to delineate the content of curriculum with which the teacher teaches and what the pupils or students learn. Ezeani, E. (2013) summarizes it thus: "in philosophy of Education, philosophy is a tool with which to examine education, its nature, its aims and its relevance in a given society. It also helps in the formulation of educational content or curriculum".

It is now pertinently clear that we need a system of education that is African for Africans. In line with this, Willis, D. in the book: *A Philosophy of Education For African Nations* writes: "As independent nations with self governance for over 50years in many cases, African government must be held accountable for the content and the philosophy of education with which their young people, who are future leaders, are provided. The buck stops with the African Governments". It is so sad to note that most philosophy of education in African is adopted from and still dated to the yore-days of the colonial masters. Their educational system disfavor our entire societal life and indigenous languages and they never took cognizance of our mother tongue thereby gave us a monolingual educational system which Ezeani, E. (2013) would have recommended thus: "for there is no doubt that a bilingual African Child is linguistically richer and sociometrically and psychologically healthier than his or her monolingual counterpart. Many African countries are in these shackles of ignorance in their educational system".

Africa as a continent is very peculiar. Her peculiarity has to do with the blessings of her natural and human resources alongside her privileged opportunity of being the mother and cradle of civilization. African education a must be acknowledged as part of world educational heritage as such, hence the need for a functional philosophy. African Philosophy of Education is most *ad rem* for the nations in developmental crisis after these years of slavery, colonization, and

continued capital flow. Such an African Philosophy of Education will definitely address and attend to African problems from African point of view. This is why African Philosophy of Education, as an applied discipline, is the application of African critical wisdom and other African philosophical issues on African education as a process of leading one out of ignorance and consequently leading same person into knowledge. African Philosophy of Education is for credible African education. In this line of thought Mbakela and Luthuli in Ezeani, E., (2013: 15) opines that "African Philosophy of Education...has to do with reflecting upon, analyzing and criticizing the current African situation and education system". As a developing nation state and continent of global south, Africa needs a kind of education that will confront their realities amidst other nations of the world. This is why African Philosophy Education should be dynamically progressive and enthusiastically historical, developmental in scope and apologetic in style as it exposes Africans to their past glory and assures them of a prospective future in view of exploring the world. African Philosophy of Education must borrow heavily from African Philosophy as reiterated above. For Iroegbu, P., (1994), however, African Philosophy is a *philo-sophia*, a quest for African wisdom. African Philosophy of Education is a minor *philosophia*, an African quest for African wisdom. It is an African critical thinking on education as a process of teaching and learning formally and informally. African Philosophy of Education is a discipline done in an African context with different aspects and complexities of teaching and learning amidst challenges as an African person. In this respect, African Philosophy of Education is a contextual education.

## **Conclusion**

African Philosophy as a discipline has greatly occasioned African Philosophy of History alongside African Philosophy of Education. The critical complementarity is envisaged as long as African Philosophy of Education delineates African Philosophy of History trying to straighten African History beyond a-historical continent through a continent with history of mere predicaments unto a continent in progressive history. African Philosophy of Education, nevertheless, is aimed at enhancing the African world-view which should evidently be seen in the development of curriculum, implementation of those African which will in turn build the authentic personality of the African person. Development is the level of man's consciousness to his environment. African philosophy of education in recent time pictures the three Cs that the Europeans came with

which are, Colonization, Christianization and Commercialization. In the same vein, curriculum introduced to African school was such that reflected these major aims. African Philosophy of Education should now be for Africans for the world.

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