

Inter-Cultural Ideas and Pattern of Exclusivity in History of Philosophy

Ahana Chukwuebuka. PhD

Department of Philosophy, Ebonyi State University.

ahanaebuka@gmail.com

08037298324

Abstract

The history of philosophy revealed that the corpus of works referred to as philosophy was the collection of literature by European authors, with also the understanding that philosophy emerged from Europe, with particular reference to Greece. This has formed an unsatisfied and unclear expression of philosophical history. Nevertheless, this work has provided a clear understanding that philosophy began in Africa, particularly in Egypt (Kemet) as it evidenced that most of the ancient Greek scholars studied in Africa and taped African knowledge before envisaging into European philosophical thought. So, the African philosophical thought is a shrine of knowledge which is primordially existed and have trained the best European philosophical brains that propagate the claim that knowledge began in Europe. This work has emphatically cleared any bourgeois argument that presented Africans as second class citizens of thought and knowledge.

Keywords: Cultural, Exclusivity, History, Ideas, Philosophy

Introduction

I feel ashamed, disdained and disgraceful growing up as a young African man, reading what could be regarded as a philosophical work of Africans from Euro-centric view. A work that is full of Eurocentric ideology, disregarding the wisdom of an African man and subjecting Africans as a tribe without rationality. But, a cursory glance into the historical development of philosophy, especially during the modern and contemporary epochs, as we have read from different historical works and other stories reveal that changes, from the historiographical point of view, have begun to emerge in the conception of what is to be considered philosophy. Before now, the corpus of works referred to as philosophy was the collection of literature by European authors, with also the understanding that philosophy emerged from Europe, with particular reference to Greece. This is evident in the works of Hegel who considers philosophy as that which exists only in Europe, that is, in the European tradition, and other philosophy outside of this he considers non-philosophy.

This Eurocentric perspective originated between 1750 and 1830 during the European Enlightenment and continues to persist in certain circles. Notable proponents of this perspective include John Locke and David Hume in England, A. R. T. Turgot and Voltaire in France, and Immanuel Kant and Gotthold Lessing in Germany. This perspective posits that European philosophy serves as the standard against which all other perspectives are measured. Hegel, in particular, dismisses Indian thought as mere precursors to philosophy, characterized by fanciful and arbitrary notions, abstract oppositions, and superficial representations. Such comparisons were often made from a position of ignorance of other cultures' worldviews or structures of reality, as there was little to no contact or mutual awareness among world cultures at that time.

However, in contemporary times, there is now a greater appreciation and understanding of the wisdom of other cultures, in contrast to the armchair analyses of the past, which were rooted in assumptions rather than a genuine expression of reality. This newfound awareness is the result of increased global contact and cultural exchange, as noted by Wimmer¹ and Mall et al².

However, the advent of Arthur Schopenhauer and Paul Deussen marked a new chapter in the history of philosophy, as they expanded the scope of philosophical discourse by including non-European traditions such as Indian, Chinese, and Japanese philosophies. This development opened up contemporary philosophy to non-European traditions and allowed for comparative and intercultural methods to be applied to the field of philosophy. It was within this context that African philosophy later emerged.

Thus, the underlying question is: what exactly is intercultural philosophy? Is it a theoretical abstraction without a concrete expression, or is it a synthesis of incompatible elements within the philosophical enterprise? Is it a response to the domination of the European perspective, or is it a compensatory measure for non-European cultural perspectives? The subsequent section of this paper will address these questions and more.

The Inter-cultural Ideas in Philosophy

The concept of intercultural philosophy can be traced to have started with Ram Adhar Mall, a Professor at the University of Munich. He argues that interculturality arises from the convergence of cultures that do not exist independently, and from an attitude that precedes philosophical

¹ Wimmer, Franz Martin. *Interkulturelle Philosophie*. Vienna: UTB. 2004.

² Mall, Ram Adhar et al. *Die drei Geburtsorte der Philosophie*. China, Indien, Europa. Bonn: Bouvier, 1989.

thinking. In his words, "interculturality means the encounter of various cultures in the mutual recognition of their differences and similarities"³, he further opined:

Intercultural philosophy stands for a process of emancipation from all types of centrisms, whether European or non-European, "a philosophical attitude, a philosophical conviction that no one philosophy is the philosophy for the whole of humankind"⁴.

Mall continued in another chapters to write thus:

It is the task of intercultural philosophy to mediate between "two ends, i.e., the specific philosophies as they are found in different cultures and the universal philosophy which is not culturally bound itself "Methodically intercultural philosophy" is based on comparative studies, and in particular on the comparison of cultures and their philosophical traditions"⁵.

More so, Franz Martin Wimmer laments that even though philosophy claims to be universal, it is always embedded in the Eurocentric culture, which is only a certain means of expression and questioning. Thus, Wimmer defines intercultural philosophy as:

The endeavour to give expression to the many and often marginalised voices of philosophy in their respective cultural contexts and thereby to generate a shared, fruitful discussion granting equal rights to all, "to facilitate and develop a new and

³ Mall, Ram Adhar, 'The Concept of an Intercultural Philosophy', tr. Michael Kimmel, in *polylog: Forum for Intercultural Philosophy*, 1, 2000. Online: <http://them.polylog.org/1/fmr-en.ht>

⁴ Mall, Ram Adhar, *Intercultural Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 2000, p. xii.

⁵ Ibid

timely culture of a plurality of philosophical dialogues between thinkers from around the world⁶.

It is in this regard that Raúl Fornet-Betancourt proposes intercultural philosophy as an approach in philosophy for overcoming eurocentrism, a kind of decolonization of philosophy; Kimmerle Heinz understands intercultural philosophy as a method of thinking differently from colonial thinking to open the door for dialogue with African philosophy based on complete equality. Despite variations in thought among scholars of interculturality, they all agree on the relevance of this practical approach to philosophy.

As a new approach in philosophy, Intercultural philosophy emphasizes the need for the integration of influences from different cultures and traditions in the doing of philosophy. It is in this regard that it is simply defined as philosophy being intercultural, therefore, allowing the spirit of philosophy to be realized in different cultures and traditions. While for some philosophers it means relating to, involving, or representing different cultures; for some thinkers, it implies contact or social intercourse taking place between cultures as in intercultural communication; and for some others, it denotes contact among cultures which exemplifies, or leads to, comprehensive mutuality, reciprocity, and equality.

In the contention of Sweet:

Genuine interculturality“ designates contact among cultures which exemplifies or leads to comprehensive mutuality, reciprocity and equality, arguably it is this sense

⁶ Wimmer, Franz Martin, *Essays on Intercultural Philosophy [Satya Nilayam Endowment Lectures]* (Chennai-Madras: Satya Nilayam), 2002. <http://ev.polylog.org>.

of interculturality that many of those who see themselves as engaged in intercultural philosophy aspires“.is it to be a field or subject area of philosophy? or is it more of an attitude, method, or approach or plurality of approaches to doing philosophy? Does it provide a positive direction or agenda, or does it focus more on avoiding certain problems in (traditional) philosophy? ⁷

Interculturality as a basic function of philosophy, implies that there cannot be philosophy without interculturality. If we understand the function of philosophy as cultural work, the aim of which is to attend to the problematic aspects of a culture or cultures and introduce and implement alternate ways of negotiating reality, then philosophy's primary activity would be to search for worldviews and values that promise or have been shown to be efficacious in responding to the problems that a culture is experiencing.

This integration of traditions and cultures will, therefore, serve as a meeting ground for philosophies such as Oriental, Western, African, Latin America, Islamic, etc., for the construction of a philosophical system that will give birth to a thought system borne from the fullness of global traditions of thought. The purpose of such an approach is to expand and extend one's pattern of thinking, demonstration and description to include that of others. For thinkers like Panikkar, this expansion of thought should include religious perspectives as well as other key elements of other cultures like dance, music, architecture, rituals, art, literature, myths, proverbs, folk tales, etc. He writes about introducing the concepts of love, healing and knowing into the intercultural philosophical enterprise:

⁷ Sweet, William, ed. *What is Intercultural Philosophy?* Washington, DC, Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, 2014, p. 2.

“...it is the talk of philosophy to know, to love and to heal all in one. It knows as much as it loves and heals. It loves, only if it truly knows and heals. It heals if it loves and knows“...it is not foreign to the nature of philosophy to act with wisdom, to love with discernment and to perceive with detachment⁸.

Even though comparative and intercultural philosophy have similarities, there is a difference between the two. This is because while comparative philosophy creates a round table for dialogue among various sources of thought across cultural, linguistic and philosophical streams, in the case of intercultural philosophy, the round table leads to the generation of a thought system that is global in character⁹.

According to Kaltenbache:

Intercultural philosophy should not be confused with comparative philosophy; the starting points are different. Comparative philosophy does not have, as its main object, the cultural context of philosophising. Still, intercultural philosophy depends on the comparison of different philosophical traditions¹⁰.

This notwithstanding, there is always an element of comparative philosophy in intercultural philosophy given that one must understand the various traditions of philosophies before making comparison. It is in this sense that it can be said that while intercultural philosophy involves an

⁸ Panikkar, Raimon (2000). Religion, Philosophie und Kultur. In Polylog 1 1998, p.237.

⁹ Sweet William. What is intercultural philosophy? Ed. Sweet William. The project of Intercultural philosophy,. USA: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2014. p. 1-19

¹⁰ Kaltenbache Wolfgang. Intercultural philosophy in historical context. Ed. Sweet William. The project of intercultural philosophy. USA: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2014 pp. 39-50

element of comparative philosophy, comparative philosophy is only an aspect of intercultural philosophy.

What nourishes the project of an intercultural philosophy is the fact of the existence or what I have called elsewhere, the “migration” of ideas, texts, and the like, that have moved from one culture into another. We can think of the presence of Buddhist philosophy in China, Korea, and Japan – and more recently in North America and Europe. Thus, from an ‘original’ Buddhism in India, there has been a ‘migration’ – the development of ‘schools’ of Buddhism in different cultures: Mahayana, predominantly in north and north east Asia; Theravada in south east Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma), and a number of further developments (within Mahayana) in Tibet, in Japan and China (including Pure Land and Chan/ Zen), and in Korea (Seon). Many philosophies originating in the West seem similarly to have ‘migrated’ east and south; they have been introduced and, it would seem, have often been integrated and appropriated, into non-western cultures and traditions (e.g., in Africa, in the Indian sub-continent, and in China and Japan). As examples here we can think of the introduction of British philosophy (e.g., empiricism, utilitarianism, but also idealism) into India in the 19th and 20th centuries and the exchanges that resulted, and the introduction of hermeneutics and postmodern thought into Asia. Today, a number of Asian scholars adopt phenomenology and hermeneutics in their work on Asian thought, and there is a steady market for the translation of texts by H.-G. Gadamer and others – e.g., J. Derrida, G. Deleuze, and M. Foucault – into various Asian languages, particularly Chinese. One can readily think of other examples of the ‘migration’ and exchange of other philosophical ideas in cultures far from those of their origin.

This phenomenon of ‘migrating texts and traditions’ may seem not only straightforward, but rather prosaic. And it seems to reflect a point that many philosophers take for granted when they read and teach the classical or mediaeval or even the modern philosophers today:

..., philosophical texts and traditions are not restricted to their cultures of origin and may be seen as ‘cross-’ or even intercultural. While such contact may not be sufficient for the kinds of intercultural philosophy described above, the preceding examples give some reason to think that the prospect of different philosophical traditions engaging one another, with some measure of mutuality and reciprocity, is not an altogether unreasonable one¹¹.

One challenge to the project of intercultural philosophy derives its force from a claim about philosophy and its relation to culture. A number of philosophers today argue that philosophies and philosophical traditions are deeply marked by the cultures in which they arise, and that this precludes not only any direct engagement, but even attempts at mutual understanding. Philosophy is embedded in culture. It is not just that it has its source in its culture of origin, but it can never break free of that source.

The reasons for this claim are fairly easy to surmise. Our language and values are rooted in our cultures, and it is within that context that we find the specific sorts of problems and questions that philosophers pursue. Indeed, it is from one’s culture that one learns what counts as philosophy (as distinct from literature, science, history, or religion), and how to distinguish philosophy from the religious, the scientific, and the literary. One’s culture influences in what ‘language’ philosophical

¹¹ Ibid

questions are expressed and answered – and even what counts as a satisfactory answer. It is because of this that, for a long time in the West, the work of figures such as Laozi, Confucius, or Sankara, or the traditions of thought in Asia or Africa or of American aboriginal tribes, were regarded by many as not being philosophy, but at best religions or ‘worldviews.’

A second challenge to the project of intercultural philosophy derives its force from a claim about the nature of philosophy itself. R.G. Collingwood writes of philosophy as involving a method of “question and answer”, of “asking questions and answering them”¹². Thus, in order to understand what exactly a philosopher said or meant, we need to know the question that she or he sought to answer. If this is so, then how to engage philosophies and philosophers from different cultures – and how a claim or a text from another context can be understood in one’s own – are, at the very least, rather complicated matters. Prior to engaging a philosophy from another culture in the hope that it will provide some assistance with one’s own concerns, one must, presumably, engage in a ‘mini history of philosophy’ in order to discern the questions that gave rise to that philosophical view or system in the first place. If we do not or cannot know the questions that gave rise to the philosophical view concerned, then there can be no real engagement with it at all.

Third, the project of intercultural philosophy is challenged by the position that, in many cases in the past where concepts from one philosophical tradition were introduced into another, they failed to be genuinely understood or assimilated – how much less likely is there to be understanding and exchange of ideas when the philosophical concepts come from different cultures. This is suggested in the work of a number of recent authors, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, concerning the nature and

¹² Collingwood, R.G. *An Essay on Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 23.

meaning of concepts in relation to traditions¹³. He further notes, for example, that in our contemporary philosophical and, particularly, ethical vocabulary, we have terms and concepts coming from a range of texts and traditions, but that there is no particular coherence or consistency among them. Now, when people share a language, or live together, they may believe that they share a broader overall culture and tradition – and so they may think that they can understand one another quite well, and that there is no problem in communicating with each other and working together on philosophical problems. But, MacIntyre writes, this flies in the face of experience; for example, “...nothing is more striking in the contemporary university than the extent of the apparently ineliminable continuing divisions and conflicts within all humanistic enquiry”¹⁴. For MacIntyre, moral beliefs and practices are constituted or formed by the traditions in which they are found. Each tradition has “its own standards of rational justification... its set of authoritative texts”¹⁵. With different traditions and the corresponding beliefs and epistemic and moral practices we will have different standards of reasonableness, justification, and proof. And so, when discussion “between fundamentally opposed standpoints does occur...it is inevitably inconclusive. Each warring position characteristically appears irrefutable to its own adherents; indeed in its own terms and by its own standards of argument it is in practice irrefutable”¹⁶. Efforts at dialogue, on this model, will not get us very far.

¹³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 6

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 345.

¹⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, p. 7.

This is not to say that there cannot be any communication across traditions but MacIntyre would insist that it is much more challenging than many realize. Fruitful contact and exchange are far from automatic and, when they do occur. The Project of Intercultural Philosophy is likely the result of a good deal of discernment by a person of ‘practical wisdom.’ In many if not most cases, then, this MacIntyrean argument suggests that efforts at intercultural philosophy are problematic. The preceding objections and concerns are clearly forceful. Nevertheless, it is also clear that something is taking place in the cases of putative ‘migration’ of ideas and of philosophical encounters and exchange.

The Historicity of Philosophy

The philosophic wisdom has drawn its attention to the fact that philosophy began in Africa. A discovered research has it that the Greeks traveled to Egypt (Kemet) as students to learn from the Africans. Many of the ancient thinkers spent significant time in Egypt to learn their knowledge and culture. For instance, Plato studied in Egypt for 13 years, while Pythagoras studied philosophy, geometry and medicine in Egypt for 23 years. Thales, the most recognized and revealed first Greek philosopher studied in Egypt for 7 years, Hippocrates, known today as the father of medicine got his wisdom in Africa and also regarded an African man, Imhotep as the true father of medicine. The theorem referred today as the Pythagoras theorem did not originate with Pythagoras as it was used to construct the Pyramid of Egypt over 1000 years before the birth of Pythagoras. What happened to the African was the visit of the Greeks and the kindness of our fathers who welcomed them with open arms.

What is referred as the history of philosophy is what I briefed above about the genealogical development of philosophy. The history of philosophy is the story of the development of reasoned

human thought from its earliest beginnings down to the present time; not a mere chronological enumeration and exposition of philosophical theories, but a study of these in their relations to one another, the times in which they were produced, and the thinkers by whom they were offered. The history of philosophy must endeavor to insert each world-view in its proper setting, to connect it with the intellectual, political, moral, social, and religious factors of its present, past, and future. It must also attempt to trace the line of progress in the history of human speculation, to show how the mental attitude called philosophy arises, how the different problems and the solutions that are offered provoke new questions and answers, and to determine what advance has been made, at each stage.

Philosophical systems are not the products of purely intellectual activity occurring in a personal, historical and cultural vacuum ; they are instead the achievements of individual philosophical geniuses which reflect not only the temperaments and personalities of their authors but likewise the cultural, historical, and philosophical milieu' in which they lived. Every system is the point of convergence of innumerable influences which determine both the doctrinal import and the structural organization of that system. Some of these influences are purely intellectual and philosophical, as is the case when a philosopher consciously or unconsciously incorporates into his philosophy conceptions and doctrines transmitted to him by his philosophical predecessors and modifies them for the sake of logical consistency or to conform to prevailing Scientific theories or to satisfy the demands of moral, religious and aesthetic exponents.

Philosophy is said to have originated from the Greeks. They not only laid the foundations upon which all subsequent systems of Western thought have been reared, but formulated nearly all the problems and suggested nearly all the answers with which European civilization occupied itself

for two thousand years before the recognition of other thoughts. Their philosophy is one of the best examples that any people has furnished of the evolution of human thinking from simple mythological beginnings to complex and comprehensive systems. The spirit of independence and the love of truth which animated their thinkers have never been surpassed and rarely equaled.

The people whose philosophy we are discussing inhabited the mountain peninsula of Greece, a territory whose natural characteristics were favorable to the development of a strong and active race, and whose many harbors, while encouraging navigation and commerce, furnished an outlet for emigration over the islands to the lands beyond. Greek colonies were established in an unbroken chain from the mainland to the coasts of Asia Minor and, eventually, to Egypt, Sicily, southern Italy, and the Pillars of Hercules; without losing touch with the mother country, these colonies enjoyed the benefits which active contact with peoples of different customs, traditions, and institutions is apt to bring.

The Philosophy in African Thought

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 thoughts¹⁷.

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”¹⁸. In discussing philosophy in Africa we must necessarily discuss African Philosophy. Thankfully, “the debate or

¹⁷ Ezeani, Emefiana. *Philosophy as Intelligent and Pragmatic Questioning*, Veritas Lumen Publishers: London. Paperback, 2005. p.11-7

¹⁸ Asira, Asira. “What is African Philosophy?” *Philosophy and Logic Today*, Innocent Asouzu Ed., University of Calabar Press: Calabar. Paperback. 2004, p.196.

Uduigwomen, Andrew. “Philosophy and the Place of African Philosophy”, *Footmarks to Landmarks on African philosophy* Uduigwomen A.F Ed., Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers: Lagos. Paperback, p30-35, 2009

controversy on whether or not there is an African philosophy is dead and buried. At best it is a matter of mere historical interest”¹⁹ .

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 mindboggling question or a solution to a contextualized social or political problem”²⁰ . 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”²¹ . By African Philosophy we suggest a philosophy done by Africans through reflecting on their existential ambience.

Thus, Bodunrin summarizes African philosophy as “the philosophy done by African philosophers whether it be in the area of logic, ethics or history of philosophy”²² . 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”²³ . An exegesis of the above definition suggests to us that African philosophy is utilizing the tools of philosophy to

¹⁹ Uduigwomen, Andrew. “Philosophy and the Place of African Philosophy”, Footmarks to Landmarks on African philosophy Uduigwomen A.F Ed., Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers: Lagos. Paperback, p30-35, 2009

²⁰ Ezeani Emefiena; Opcit. p.9

²¹ . Makinde, Akin. “Philosophy in Africa”, The Substance of African Philosophy, Momoh, C. S. Ed. African Philosophy Projects’ Publications: Auch. Paperback, 2000, p.125.

²² SOGOLO, Godwin. [Foundations of African philosophy], Ibadan University Press: Ibadan. Paperback, 1993, p.2. Uduigwomen , Andrew. Opcit. p.6

²³ Uduigwomen , Andrew. Opcit. p.6

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”²⁴.

As is the main function of philosophy being the search for truth in its entirety²⁵. 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 inclusive²⁶. 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

²⁴ Asukwo, Offiong. “The Problem of Language in African Philosophy”, *Footmarks to Landmarks on African philosophy* Uduigwomen A.F Ed. Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers: Lagos. Paperback, p30-35, 2009.

²⁵ Nze, C. “African Philosophy: Okolo’s Interpretation”, *Okolo on African Philosophy and African Theology*, Cecta Nigeria Ltd: Enugu. Paperback, 1990, p.49.

²⁶ Ozumba, Godfrey and Chimakonam Jonathan. *Njikoka Amaka Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism. Series Vol 2. Third Logic Option: Calabar. Paperback, 2014, p.80- 85*

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 illogical²⁷.

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”²⁸.

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”. To further buttress the position of this work, the above arguments insist not just on the necessity of African philosophy but on its uniqueness.

The Exclusivity in the History of Philosophy

The history of philosophy as seen above was stated to have emanated from Greeks. It moves from Greek to European who then domesticated the knowledge and claimed that no other culture or society is philosophical. In the works of prominent philosophers such as Hegel, Kant, and Hume, a tendency to devalue cultures and traditions associated with people outside of Europe is evident. The African people, in particular, have been subject to the perception that their thoughts are

²⁷Chimakonam, Jonathana. “Why can’t there be an African Logic?” [Integrative Humanism Journal], September, Vol 1. No 2. Paperback, 2011, p.143

²⁸Wright, Richard. “Investigating African Philosophy”, African Philosophy an Introduction, Richard Wright Ed. University Press of America: Lanham, New York. Paperback., 1984, p.53

thoughtless, and their natural capacities are incapable of sound thinking and, as a result, philosophy. This view, however, deprives philosophy of the richness and diversity that it warrants. Differences in thought should not be regarded as differences in the capacity to think and philosophize, but rather as differences in underlying logic that shapes a pattern of thought. When one questions the philosophical content of the ideas of others merely because they differ from what one is accustomed to, the problem lies not with the ideas themselves but with the adequacy of the judgment of the person who thinks in this way. The consequence of such thinking is that other people and their ideas are unfairly judged, stereotyped, underestimated, and disparaged. This erroneous assertion of the Europeans is what stirred this research. I understand that several researches have been carried out to disprove this Euro-centric claim but I see those as a complement of my thought.

Thus, I must register it here that 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”²⁹ and the denialist response to the subject is an outright rejection of the universality of philosophy. Be it as it may, we can out rightly say that philosophy began in Africa, Egypt. Tracing the boundary of Greece and her origin, we observed that the Egyptians were the fundamental tribe that practiced philosophy. Notwithstanding, through our research it was discovered that the wise men came from Egypt and the name philosophy is gotten through the

²⁹ Chimakonam, Jonathan “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

lives and characters of the wise people. Egyptian civilization far exceeded all other groups who settled elsewhere.

According to Bob Brier the earliest Egyptian habitation was Circa 700,000 BC³⁰. These people perhaps migrated from the south along Nile Valley. The first human inhabitants used language, gathered food, used hand axe and perhaps controlled fire. Bier further opines that between 30,000-10,000 BC, the Nile Valley was declining, people lived in swamps³¹. Their settlements had clay hearths on which they cooked, grindstones for grinding. The development of bow and arrow made hunting easier. Between 10,000-5,000 BC, farming and cooking were used in both Northern and southern Egypt with the use of clay pots. Settlements grew along the Nile and the first sign of kingship appeared in both north and south Egypt.

This was the beginning of Egyptian civilization. The population of the people was about 2,000 peoples. The dead were buried with possessions, in sand pit. Carved palettes, some adorned with decorative arts came up along the line. According to Bier “Egypt is the most advanced civilization in history. Its accomplishments include monumental architecture (the pyramids), medical science, monotheism, and mummification”³². Egypt remains one of the most mysterious civilizations in history. Brier further holds that Egyptian arts maintain great continuity for 3,000 years, subscribing to eternal values rather than creativity and innovation. And these civilizations are revealed through arts and literature. Tomb painting tells us about their belief in afterlife. More so, tombs were provisioned with an amazing variety of everyday objects. He also held that temple walls were

³⁰ Bier, B. The History of Ancient Egypt. Virginia: The Teaching company, 1999, p.6

³¹ Ibid, p.7

³² Ibid, p.4

decorated with histories such as records of battles; lists of kings, book of the dead reveal the Egyptians' thought on the next life.

So, from all indications, it can be said that philosophy began from Africa as against the Eurocentric perspective that stated that philosophy began with Greeks and move through Thales and other Ionian philosophers.

References

- Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 6
- Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 345.
- Asira, Asira. "What is African Philosophy?" *Philosophy and Logic Today*, Innocent Asouzu Ed., University of Calabar Press: Calabar. Paperback. 2004, p.196.
- Asukwo, Offiong. "The Problem of Language in African Philosophy", *Footmarks to Landmarks on African philosophy* Uduigwomen A.F Ed. Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers: Lagos. Paperback, p30-35, 2009.
- Bier, B. *The History of Ancient Egypt*. Virginia: The Teaching company, 1999, p.6
- Chimakonam, Jonathan "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
- Chimakonam, Jonathana. "Why can't there be an African Logic?" [Integrative Humanism Journal], September, Vol 1. No 2. Paperback, 2011, p.143
- Collingwood, R.G. *An Essay on Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 23.
- Ezeani, Emefiena. *Philosophy as Intelligent and Pragmatic Questioning*, Veritas Lumen Publishers: London. Paperback, 2005. p.11-7
- Kaltenbache Wolfgang. *Intercultural philosophy in historical context*. Ed. Sweet William. The project of intercultural philosophy. USA: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2014 pp. 39-50
- Makinde, Akin. "Philosophy in Africa", *The Substance of African Philosophy*, Momoh, C. S. Ed. African Philosophy Projects' Publications: Auchu. Paperback, 2000, p.125.
- Mall, Ram Adhar et al. *Die drei Geburtsorte der Philosophie*. China, Indien, Europa. Bonn: Bouvier, 1989.
- Mall, Ram Adhar, , *The Concept of an Intercultural Philosophy*, ' tr. Michael Kimmel, in *polylog: Forum for Intercultural Philosophy*, 1, 2000. Online: <http://them.polylog.org/1/fmr-en.ht>
- Mall, Ram Adhar, *Intercultural Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 2000, p. xii.
- Nze, C. "African Philosophy: Okolo's Interpretation", *Okolo on African Philosophy and African Theology*, Cepta Nigeria Ltd: Enugu. Paperback, 1990, p.49.
- Ozumba, Godfrey and Chimakonam Jonathan. *Njikoka Amaka Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism*. Series Vol 2. Third Logic Option: Calabar. Paperback, 2014, p.80- 85
- Panikkar, Raimon. *Religion, Philosophie und Kultur*. In *Polylog* 1, 2000, p.237.
- Sogolo, Godwin. *Foundations of African philosophy*. Ibadan University Press: Ibadan. Paperback, 1993, p.2.

Sweet, William, ed. What is Intercultural Philosophy? Washington, DC, Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, 2014, p. 2.

Uduigwomen, Andrew. "Philosophy and the Place of African Philosophy", Footmarks to Landmarks on African philosophy Uduigwomen A.F Ed., Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers: Lagos. Paperback, 2009, p30-35.

Wimmer, Franz Martin, Essays on Intercultural Philosophy [Satya Nilayam Endowment Lectures] (Chennai Madras: Satya Nilayam), 2002. <http://ev.polylog.org>.

Wimmer, Franz Martin. Interkulturelle Philosophie. Vienna: UTB. 2004.

Wright, Richard. "Investigating African Philosophy", African Philosophy an Introduction, Richard Wright Ed. University Press of America: Lanham, New York. Paperback, 1984, p.53