

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE CONCEPT OF BEING IN PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

Jude I. Onebunne & Benjamin Chimezie Okoye*

Abstract

This paper is an attempt in the conscious articulation of the being-concept in philosophical traditions. It borders on the formation or the development of the concept of being in many traditions within the chequered history of critical thoughts. Philosophy, as a human enterprise enhances this consciousness with which one looks anew and deeper into the realities of life as they evolve. The concept of being remains as old as Philosophy as it questions on the *urstoff* of reality. All the premier philosophers, in different philosophical traditions, engaged in this critical search and appreciation of what it means *to be*. Using the philosophical instrument of historicity and hermeneutics, the researcher finds out that the concept of being started with the articulation of philosophy, crystallizing in contemporary times with different conceptual appreciation in many and different philosophical traditions.

Keywords: Being, belongingness, philosophical traditions.

Introduction

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 is 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 reasoning. It is a human enterprise. Pragmatically, and as a love of wisdom, philosophy is an intelligent appreciation and apt understanding of reality as such. In this way, therefore, philosophy critically questions and sprucely analyses reality with an unaided reasoning.

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 or Classically, 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*-knowledge of things through their ultimate causes.

Understanding Philosophy

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. (1990, 51), 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 and the dominating power and influence of His teaching, regarded philosophy as *ancilla theologae*, handmaid of theology. Aristotle, the master of all who know maintains that Philosophy is *regina scientiarum*, the queen of the sciences. It is neither by chance nor fate rather by designed implication that every school of learning is crowned finally with PhD, that is, Doctor of Philosophy. Hence, the nature and place of philosophy in learning and living, societal influence and general directives, is unquestionable. As an applied philosophy, however, philosophy of Development as an academic exercise is simply an exposition of development.

It is worthy of note that Philosophy is as old as the *homo ccgitans*, the thinking man. Philosophy according to Maritain, J. (2005, 12), 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* 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 Pharaonic era, has known to be the cradle of civilization through the inscription that read thus: *thirty centuries before Greeks presented an orderly conception of life, in language suggestive of a tradition already several centuries old*. We are dealing with Philosophy that was dated with the oldest ancient civilization of Egypt. Onyenwenyi, I. (1993), supported this age long view of Egypt’s philosophy predating the Greeks in his book: *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism* and other African Philosophers in their authorship had the same view with these titles: George, G. M. James (1992). *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy*.

Maritain, J. (2005, 22) strongly was of the opinion that traditionally, philosophy is divided into three principal sections: *logic, speculative philosophy and practical philosophy*. However, considering the subdivisions of these three sections, we still have seven main sections: *minor logic, major logic; philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of nature, metaphysics, philosophy of arts and ethics*. The diagram below represents this order.

Traditions of Philosophy

Tradition is used to indicate the quality of a piece of information being discussed. Whether they are documented fact or not does not decrease their value as cultural history and literature. Traditions are a subject of study in several academic fields. The concept of tradition, as the notion of holding on to a previous time, is also found in

science-technological enterprise and more in philosophical discourses. The idea of tradition is very pertinent in philosophy. Contemporary philosophy is often divided between an 'analytic' tradition, dominant in Anglophone and Scandinavian countries, and a 'continental' tradition, dominant in German and Romance speaking Europe. Increasingly, central to continental philosophy is the project of de-constructing what its proponents, following Martin Heidegger, call 'the tradition', which began with Plato and Aristotle. In contrast, some continental philosophers - most notably, Hans-Georg Gadamer, have attempted to rehabilitate the tradition of Aristotelianism. African philosophy known with Deconstructionism-Reconstructionism is nevertheless is dominant in continental African and sub-sahara regions of Africa.

Traditions of Philosophy is also known as *philosophical traditions*. It is the study of traditions or institutions of philosophy within the history of Philosophy as a human enterprise. In philosophical traditions, philosophical works, authors and ideas are divided into time and space, to understand how they came about, that is, the evolution or development of such philosophical enterprise. Philosophical traditions has to do with an understanding of philosophy as regards the regional and or historical aspects of its development. Granted that philosophers do not and ought to not necessarily agree but their opinions and views are important in the cause of history. Perennial problem of philosophy alludes to this that philosophy may not agree but their thoughts endure. Hence, there is a philosophical equipoise among philosophers and their views. However, there are many philosophical traditions as the world view of philosophers and philosophies abound. In general, there are four philosophical traditions as: Eastern/Oriental Philosophical Traditions (EOPT), Abrahamic (Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (AbPT), Western Philosophical Traditions (WPT) and African Philosophical Traditions (APT).

Understanding the Concept of Being in Philosophical Traditions

Eastern-Oriental Philosophical Tradition (EOPT): It has to do with the philosophical discussions of China and India that has blended up philosophical ideas with religion and took on a very different character than Western Philosophy. Some of the ideas of Eastern philosophical traditions are often integrated into religious innuendoes. EOPT has four divisions as: Mesopotamia Philosophy, Chinese Philosophy, Hindu Philosophy and Buddhist Philosophy. The term Eastern Philosophy is a catch-all term for a philosophical tradition that is Eastern or Asian which includes the various philosophies that originated in East and South Asia, including Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy (including Hindu philosophy, Jain philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and Sikh philosophy), Japanese philosophy, Korean philosophy, and Vietnamese philosophy-all of these are dominant in East, South, and South-east Asia brandishing the *Hindu synthesis* merging orthodox *Brahmanical* and unorthodox elements from Buddhism and Jainism. An on-line source maintains that these religio-philosophical traditions were later grouped under the label Hinduism. It started with a period characterized by significant intellectual and cultural developments and saw the rise of the major Chinese philosophical schools (Confucianism, Legalism and Daoism) as well as numerous less influential schools (Mohism, School of Names, School of

Yin Yang). These philosophical traditions developed metaphysical, political, and ethical theories which, along with Chinese Buddhism, had a direct influence on the rest of the East Asian Cultural sphere. In the modern era, there have been many attempts to integrate Western and Eastern philosophical traditions. *Wikipedia* tresses this fact that, Eastern philosophical tradition is very Fundamental with cosmic principle of ultimate reality called *brahman* and its identity with the individual soul, or *atman*. All creatures go through a cycle of rebirth, or *samsara*, which can be broken only by spiritual self-realization, after which liberation, or *moksha*, is attained.

Abrahamic(Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (AbPT): Abrahamic Philosophical Tradition is also Known as Western Religious Philosophical Tradition (WRPT). Western Philosophy started by trying to understand and interpret reality and world around them through mythological stories of the gods. in trying to explain the operations of the world. Ancient Near East Traditions (ANET) has tried to explain reality as such. WRPT began with a separation of philosophical ideas and thoughts from religious ones. Philosophers of Western Philosophical Tradition nevertheless have been influenced by religious idiosyncrasies thereby attempts answering certain philosophical questions. Hence, Abrahamic religions in the West and Middle-East have their own philosophical traditions. It has 3 divisions: Philosophy, Christian Philosophy and Islamic Philosophy.

Abrahamic (Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (AbPT) pre-dated Christ and continues till date. Abrahamic Philosophical Tradition covers the influence of Jewish and Islamic philosophy. It is a combination of Jewish Philosophers and Islamic thinkers. The Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have bequeathed to the world a rich religious and cultural heritage. It is also profoundly present in the development of their diverse intellectual traditions with philosophical insights and analyses seeking to understand and explain all realities.

A. Judaism

Judaism, as a total way of life for the Jewish people, is reckoned as the oldest monotheistic religion dating back nearly 4000years ago. As a nation originating from Israel and Judah they understood that God is the absolute one and creator hence the highest instance of the ultimate reality since in His being we have our being. As a nation they have a religion alongside their Jewish Philosophy well articulated in Jewish literature. The Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have bequeathed to the world a rich religious and cultural heritage which has been enormously influential through the centuries up to the present. While this is easily evident in the modern practices of these monotheisms, it is also profoundly present in the development of their diverse intellectual traditions of philosophical insights and analyses seeking to understand and explain the nature of the presence of the divine to human beings. When Emperor Justinian closed the schools in Athens in A.D529, many of the teachers moved east to Syria, taking their books with them. There, the work of Aristotle and many of the Neoplatonists were translated into Syriac and, later, into Arabic. These works were to return to Western Europe centuries later in the hands of Islamic and Jewish Philosophers.

Jewish philosophy is of various kinds of reflective thought engaged in by those identified as being Jews. Major figures of Jewish philosophy include: Maimondes (1138-1204), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), Martin Buber (1878-1965), Philo, Josephus, Karl Marx (1818-1883), Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), Abraham Joshua (1907-1972), Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) Albert Einstein, Noam Chomsky, etc. Albert Einstein was born to a middle-class German Jewish family and his theory of relativity answers the age-long question of trying to understand why while you are travelling at the speed of light, what a light looks like would be beyond the known mirage.

Baruch (Latin-Benedictus, Bento- Hebrew: All meaning blessed) Spinoza is one of the most significant philosophers—and certainly the most radical—of the modern era. His thought combines a commitment to a number of Cartesian metaphysical and epistemological principles with elements from ancient Stoicism, Thomas Hobbes, and Medieval Jewish rationalism into a nonetheless highly original system. His extremely naturalistic views on God, the world, the human being and knowledge serve to ground a moral philosophy centred on the control of the passions leading to virtue and happiness. Of all the philosophers of the seventeenth century, Spinoza is among the most relevant today.

Spinoza presents the basic elements of his picture of God. God is the infinite, necessarily existing (that is, self-caused), unique substance of the universe. There is only one substance in the universe; it is God; and everything else that is, is in God. Spinoza insists, two sides of Nature. First, there is the active, productive aspect of the universe—God and his attributes, from which all else follows. This is what Spinoza, employing the same terms he used in the Short Treatise, calls *natura naturans*, naturing nature. Strictly speaking, this is identical with God. The other aspect of the universe is that which is produced and sustained by the active aspect, *natura naturata*, natured nature. Spinoza's fundamental insight is that nature is an indivisible, eternal or self-caused, substantial whole—in fact, it is the only substantial whole. Outside of Nature, there is nothing, and everything that exists is a part of Nature and is brought into being by Nature with a deterministic necessity. This unified, unique, productive, necessary being just is what is meant by 'God'.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a philosopher, author, social theorist, and economist. He is famous for his theories about capitalism and communism. Karl Marx is one of the most important and influential figures in modern history and one of the most controversial, even enigmatic. His feelings toward Jews and Judaism in particular remain the subject of debate. The son of Jewish parents, Marx was baptized at the age of six. While he had no Jewish education and embraced atheism, he continues to be identified as a Jew, and his Jewish ancestry influenced his thinking. Marx's writings about Jews and Judaism, identified Judaism with capitalism. An on-line source, *Investopedia*, has it that Marx's critical theories about society, economics, and politics, collectively understood as Marxism, hold that human societies develop through class conflict. In the capitalist mode of production, this manifests itself in the conflict

between the ruling class (known as the bourgeoisie) that control the means of production and then working class (known as the proletariat) that enable these means by selling their labour-power in return for wages. Employing a critical approach known as historical materialism was of the opinion that only matter matters.

B. Christianity

Birth of Christ and his death was very fundamental in the reshaping of Christian Philosophy. In spite of the persecution in Rome, the edict of *religio licita* by Emperor Constantine, made Christianity to become a state religion and that gave them room for the successive thinkers that will follow Jesus Christ as St Paul, Church Fathers: Justin the Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Philo of Alexandria, Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, Augustine , Early Medieval Philosophers: Boethius, Justin Scotus Eriugena, Anselm (and Guanilo), Peter Abelard, Bonaventure, Aquinas, John Don Scotus, and William of Ockham etc. Baird E. et al (eds) (2003, xi) remarked thus of this era “the Middle Ages have been as a time intellectual sterility obsessed with trivial and tiresome questions: as a valley between two great mountain ranges-Greek philosophy on one side, which medievalism distorted, and Modern philosophy on the other, which happily rejected medieval precedents entirely”.

Western Medieval European philosophy, part of Abrahamic Philosophical tradition, was shaped by three movements: the rise of the mendicant (or begging) orders, the development of the university, and, most important, the rediscovery of the complete works of Aristotle. Christianity, however, continued to hold common views with Judaism. Early Church Fathers like Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen employed part of Greek Philosophy in resolving doctrinal issue of *homoousios*. St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were greatly influenced by the philosophies and philosophers before them in their philosophical excursus. At a point in history, the Franciscan and Dominican orders sought to reverse this secularizing trend . Founded by St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), the Franciscan fostered spiritual renewal and often served as dedicated teachers and missionaries.

The Dominicans, founded by St. Dominic (1170-1221), sought doctrinal purity and became leading University professors throughout the West. In general, the Dominicans, led by St. Thomas Aquinas, were enthusiastic about Aristotelian thought, whereas the Franciscans, led by St. Bonaventure, preferred Augustinian Platonism. But the conflict was in fact much more complicated than such a generalization might indicate. There were numerous variations on Aristotle’s thought. Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, used Aristotelian categories when they suited their purpose; but they were actually more Neoplatonic than Aristotelian. Even opponents of Aristotle, such as Bonaventure, used Aristotelian categories in their criticisms of Aristotle. But whether defended or attacked, the spirit of Aristotle ruled Western philosophy in the Thirteenth century.

C. Islam

The religion of Islam began with Muhammad (A.D.571-632), an Arab from the town of Mecca in what is now Saudi Arabia. Repelled by the polytheism of his day and

believing himself to be called as a prophet, Muhammad taught that there is no God but Allah. Throughout her expansion, Islam was relatively tolerant of Christianity and Judaism, holding that the adherent of these monotheistic religion were also “people of the book.” The Islamic culture of this period was quite sophisticated and cosmopolitan especially when compared to that of Western Europe. When Western Europe was largely illiterate, the Muslims (adherent of Islam) were making advances in astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. There were also a group of Muslim thinkers known as *falyasufs* (“philosophers”) who studied and applied the manuscript of Aristotle and Neo-platonists that had come through Syria. As Islamic thinkers worked with these texts, they encountered the problem their colleagues in the west knew well: how to reconcile philosophy with sacred texts: how to combine reason and faith. The *falyasufs* were centred in two different religions and times. An early group around Baghdad, included *al-kindi* (ca.800-870), *al-Farabi* (870-950), *Ibn-Sina*, or Avicenna, his Latin name (980-1037) and al-Ghazali (1053-1111). A later group in Spain included *Ibn Bajjah* (d. 1138), *Ibn Tufayl* (ca. 1100-1185), and *Ibn Rushd* or Averroes (1126-1198).

During the early years of Islam, Jewish philosophy coexisted and interacted freely with Islamic thought. Jewish thinkers such as Saadia ben Joseph al-Fayyumi (882-942) and Isaac Israeli (ca. 855-955) in the East, and later Solomon Ibn-Gabirol (ca. 1021-1070) and Judah Halevi (ca. 1075-1141) in Spain, worked with the same categories and use many of the same texts as their Islamic neighbours. Jews mixed socially with Muslims, often even serving as advisor to Muslim rulers. Moses Maimonides of Spain (1135-1204), the greatest of the medieval Jewish thinkers, even served the powerful Sultan Saladin. It was through Islamic and Jewish philosophers that Aristotle was reintroduced to the Western Europe, an event that radically changed the course of medieval philosophy. Using Aristotelian categories, Avicenna held that the study of Being is the proper study of Metaphysics, and that this study applies in its fullest sense only to Allah. Only God has existence as a part of His nature. Using Neo-Platonism categories, Avicenna explained that God did not create the world directly but through a series of intermediate Intelligence.

Being in the Western Philosophical Tradition (WPT): This tradition can be appreciated in four periods: Ancient, Medieval, Modern and Contemporary. *Ancient Philosophy* (Pre-Socratic: Before Socrates) 2500BC ago, Great cultures of the Mediterranean had used mythological stories of the gods to explain the operations of the world and of the self. ANETS has the same presentations. Later Greeks started using Reason, Contemplation and Sensory Observation to make sense of reality probably trying to find the one common element in the diversity of Nature as well as the process of how one form changes into another, all looking for the basic stuff that takes on a particular form. These lovers of wisdom or philosophers came to very different conclusions, some took it as one while others took it as many. All these are human attempt without unaided reasoning at resolving this age long problem of trying to understand reality. This singular act differentiated these philosophers from other great minds before them like: *Zoroaster*, *Lao Tzu*, *Ezekiel*, *Buddah*, *Confucius*, *Sophocles*, *Herodotus*, *Euripides*, *Hippocrates*, *Aristophanes*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*,

Alexander the Great, Euclid, Julius Caesar, Philo of Alexandria, Jesus, Paul, Justin the Martyr, Ptolemy, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen (From Philosophic Classics, Vol. 1., p. 1ff). It has 4 main periods: Ancient Period, Medieval Period, Modern Period and Contemporary Period.

Appreciation of Ontology

What is being? This is the most **fundamental** question of Philosophy, the **central** question of Metaphysics and the Particular referential area of ontology. Ontology is a central branch of Metaphysics. Ontology is the study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, or reality, as well as the basic categories and how they relate to each other. In simpler terms, ontology *investigates what there is*. Ontology is the science of being, the science of the *Ontos*. Ontology is a word that was coined about the middle of 17th Century alongside philosophy of being, *id est, philosophia entis* as synonymous. Some authors refer to Ontology as *Pure* or *General* Metaphysics. Ontology is the first part of Metaphysics

Ontology the philosophical study of being in general, or of what applies neutrally to everything that is real. It was called “first philosophy” by Aristotle in Book IV of his *Metaphysics*. The Latin term *ontologia* (“science of being”) was felicitously invented by the German philosopher Jacob Lorhard (Lorhardus) and first appeared in his work *Ogdoas Scholastica* (1st ed.) in 1606. It entered general circulation after being popularized by the German rationalist philosopher Christian Wolf in his Latin writings, especially *Philosophia Prima sive Ontologia* (1730; “First Philosophy or Ontology”). Ontology is the study or science of *being* or *what it means to be*. It does not refer to the study of the being of man or the being of any entity whatsoever. It is the study of *being precisely as being* or rightly put *being qua Being, being as Being*. It is the study of *pure being*. It is not the study of what it means to be this or that but *what it means to be at all*, that is, in line with the question: *why are there things rather than nothing*. Through different philosophical traditions and epochs, the proper concept of being was misunderstood and misapplied. The fundamental problems of ontology or metaphysics like remains outside the reconciliation of Change and Permanence, Unity and Plurality (Diversity), Essence and Existence, Empirical and Meta-empirical, Act and Potency, Mind-Problem Interaction, Freedom and Determinism, Matter and Form (*Hylemorphism*).

In all these one appreciates the fact that the relative searches the absolute and the immanent, the transcendent. The contingent seeks the necessary whereas the finite tends towards the infinite. Similarly, the caused looks for its cause and the phenomenal yearns for its *noumenal* completion. The potential must go for the actual and the *ontic*, for the ontological. The changing seeks the unchanging as the determined goes for the most free. The accidental leans on the substantial as the disappearing longs for the permanent. Just as the material is completed only in the spiritual and the human complemented in the divine, physics must look for metaphysics for its wholeness, while metaphysics must return to physics for its roots. The empirical and the meta-empirical are the two side of one coin of reality! The twin areas of reality and appearance, unity and plurality, essence and existence as well as

the sensible and supra-sensible, constitute the *investigational* schema of metaphysics or ontology or the philosophy of being.

Concept of Being Western Philosophical Tradition

The etymological notion of being in its Greek principal noun is *To on* and its Latin derivative is *ens*. This is distinguished between *ens* or being and *esse* or to be. Being is that which *is* or *exists*. According to Madu, R., (1992,53) the word *being* as a noun designates some substance. The word *to be* or *esse* is a verb because it designates an act. Being therefore is a noun and a verb representing the essence and existence. To understand this according to Madu, R. is to reach beyond the level of essence and the deeper level of existence. Iroegbu, P., (1994, 60) gave a full description (rather than a definition) of being thus: Being is whatever is, whatever exists, whatever has reality, entity, existence. The reality could be concrete, notional, empirical or meta-empirical. It can be relative or absolute existence. It may be visible or invisible, potential or actual. It is being in so far as it shares or can share in existence, directly or indirectly, fully or partially, independently or dependently .

Being is indefinable because to define a being is to ascribe a specific difference, a quality that distinguishes the defined from the other realities. But outside being there is no reality. Being is the first, the most simple, universal and immediate of all notions. It is the *primum notum* (the first to be known) and the *per se notum* (the most self-evident) reality of the human intellect. All experience is also experience of some being. The significance of the concept of being is that it is what makes whatever is *to be*. It is the cause being in all things. It delivers a thing from nothingness to being. It is the highest abstraction as all are within its connotation. Being connotes and denotes all reality. In Heideggerian parlance, being is the soil from which all reality, including scientific, metaphysical and ethical beings have their origin. Therefore the search for the most primordial in all beings, being itself, makes the philosophy of Being a fundamental scientific inquiry, the ground for all other inquiries. Even the knowledge of knowledge is the knowledge of the being (of knowledge). It is an epistemological reality.

Being is an epistemological concept as well as a philosophical concept. Ethically or Morally to value anything is to value being. Anthropologically, being is the object of studies of a particular reality. Aesthetically the beauty in anything is the beauty of a being. Logically being is subject and object of rational thinking. Epistemologically to know anything is to know being. If anything is to be known, valued, reasoned, admired, it is nothing but being. It is known or valued or reasoned unto or admired because it has being; it is a being gnoseologically, logically, aesthetically, ontologically. All knowledge or value *et ceteram* is knowledge or value of being. All study or learning is study or learning of being.

Western philosophical tradition is often referred to as European philosophical traditions. This epoch saw great philosophical attempts and improvements. With regard to Metaphysical formulations, Western metaphysics was object-oriented. WPT is divided into four as Ancient Period (Pre-Socratics, Socratics and Post-Socratics

Philosophy and Philosophers), Medieval Period, Modern Period and Contemporary Period. According to Baird F, E, & Kaufmann W. eds. (2003, 1-3), before the rise of Greece Philosophers of the Greece colonies of the Aegean Sea of the WPT, the great Cultures of the Mediterranean had used the mythological stories of the gods to explain the operations of the world and of the self and realities around us, some of the Greeks began to discover new ways of explaining things and interpreting realities as such. Hence they began to use reason, contemplation and sensory observation to make sense of reality. It was a human attempt at understanding the world using human reasoning. The philosophers of the ancient Greece of Western Philosophical Tradition have fascinated the thinking persons for ages. Their writings have been one key influence on the development of western civilization with fragmentary materialistic statements of Pre-Socratics save Anaximander who opined that of being as *apeiron* (unlimited, boundless, infinite, indefinite and Protogoras that talked of numbers), across the all-embracing systems of Plato, Aristotle and Post-Socratics.

The Pre-Socratics are the Philosophers that came before Socrates who by their unaided reasoning started discovering ways of explaining things. However, Socrates was regarded father of Western and Ancient Philosophy hence a bench mark for references. Through this form of an appeal to reason, each thinker makes it possible for the successors to exercise criticism, to amend, to develop alternatives, to move beyond. Parmenides ca. 485 B.C. Permanent (Whatever is- i.e. being- is and cannot not-be), Philosopher of Changeless being: non-being. And that of Heraclitus *omnia flux*. Socratic era and post-Socratics were very tangible in the concept of being through idealism and Aristotle realism. Medieval otherwise known as Middle Ages depicted as a time of Intellectual sterility obsessed with trivial and tiresome questions. This non-academic attitude lasted for almost 2000years of human thought, a long medieval night or Dark ages: from Hellenistic Philosophers to Francis Bacon or Rene Descartes with a little influence on St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Medieval philosophy was often theological with method that was faith-based and faith oriented. Modern era saw growing metaphysical giants like Rene Descartes (1596-1650) with his Methodic Doubt, *Cogito ergo sum*, I think therefore I am. Next, was Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1640-1716) was known for his metaphysical idealism; his theory that reality is composed of spiritual, non-interacting “monads,” and his oft-ridiculed thesis that we live in the best of all possible worlds. David Hume (1711-1776) joined this race of the formation of the concept of being through his radical empiricism and anti-metaphysical campaign for the burning of all metaphysical knowledge and books. His style of Metaphysics and study of being is *Metaphysical Nihilism*.

Then came Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), a central figure in Modern Philosophy. He synthesized early modern rationalism and empiricism, set the terms for much of nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, and continues to exercise a significant influence today in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics, and other fields. His *categorical Imperative* makes him more of a philosopher in all aspects save a meta-physician. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831), remains one of the most important figures in German idealism. He developed a dialectical schema that emphasized the progress of history and of ideas from thesis to antithesis and

thence to a synthesis. Hegel was partly Cartesian (making consciousness his starting point) and Kantian (with critique of philosophy for a firm foundation of metaphysics). His plurality of reality is summed up in his *Geist*. Hegel's philosophical approach is dialectics-which has to do with the unfolding of the totality of reality, knowledge, being and history in three moments as dialectical schema thus : *Thesis*: a given reality, *Antithesis*: is a con-joining counter-reality to the thesis. *Synthesis*: is the unification of the thesis and antithesis. Dialectics is an inevitable fact of reality. Every reality deals with internal dialectics by nature which he called *Geist*. Placide Tempels calls it *force-vitale* which ancient philosophers of western tradition refer to it as *urstoff*. Edmund Husserl (1859-1939) developed the method of *epoché* or *bracketing*, veiling out, shifting aside of whatever initial knowledge one has as this may adversely affect the unprejudiced arrival at the truth of being. This is his *Philosophical* or *Phenomenological epoché*. Husserl often refers to it as *Eidetic Reduction*.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a key German philosopher of the 20th Century. He is best known for contributions to *phenomenology*, *hermeneutics*, and *existentialism*-(existentialism thrives on basic issues like: individuality, consciousness, freedom, choice, and responsibility). In the introduction of his fundamental work, *Being and Time* (1927) Heidegger proposed to establish, by using phenomenological method, a *fundamental ontology*. The whole tradition of Western philosophy have been an effort to understand the Being of the things that are, and effort which has both revealed and dissimulated Being, and on the way proved that nothing is more difficult to understand (what is nearest is farthest away, as Heidegger has well put it). Yet, we cannot pretend to understand *things* profoundly without understanding their foundation—what it means for them *to be*: how they are constituted in a world of meaning and what it is to be a thing within a transcendental horizon of meaning. Heidegger's *sein und zeit* explores the existent's opening of the transcendental horizon that lets the light of Being shine on things so that they come to be meaningfully, historical, in time.

Heidegger's main interest was ontology or the study of being. In his fundamental treatise, *Being and Time*, he attempted to access being (*Sein*) by means of phenomenological analysis of human existence (*Dasein*) in respect to its temporal and historical character. Martin Heidegger was of the opinion that across the philosophical traditions before him especially WPT, the being-question has been forgotten. Hence he calls for the re-formulation of the being-question and his *point-de-part* is via Fundamental Ontology. It is the investigation of the human being otherwise called the *Dasein* (*Dasien* being is *Care-sorge*) who actually posits the question of being, and who is the only *locus* in which the being-question can be investigated.

Ancient through Medieval unto Modern saw denial of African possibility of Critical thoughts through the gradual rise of African Philosophers in a movement that will not only reclaim Philosophy for African, sharing in this one and only world philosophical heritage to an ardent participation and great contribution to issues in philosophy with regard to the question and proper understanding of *whatever* is expressed as Being in WPT and *Uwa-Belongingness* in APT. Contemporary Philosophy saw the emergencies.

Concept of African Philosophical Tradition (APT)

Philosophy like African Philosophy has been rooted in the culture and world-view of the people. These socio-cultural data and world-views of people's realities remain *the given* for critical appraisal in the quest or search for knowledge or wisdom which is philosophy. This is philosophizing *per se*. Okere, T. (1983, 15) opined strongly for the possibility of African philosophy based on this opinion thus: "It is only within the context of hermeneutics that African culture can give birth to African philosophy". Why then do some philosophers refuse to accept and acknowledge that African culture has been reflected on and interpreted as such over the century amidst great scholarship and authorship even as its methodological moments and scientific historicity are readily available? To this extent, any reference to African philosophy as mere derogatory ethno-philosophy than its foundation or fundamental root is a mark of great lack of scholarly ingenuity and serious disfavour to knowledge. Instead, one is inclined to accept that African philosophy, being part of world philosophical heritage, has an ethno-philosophical foundation. Bodunrin, P.O. (1985, 1) in furtherance of this interpretation asserts that:

Philosophy is essentially a reflective activity. To Philosophize is to reflect on human experience in search of answers to some fundamental questions. As man takes a reflective at himself or the world around him, he is filled with wonder and some fundamental questions arise in his mind.

Hence, when Ethno-philosophy is made reference to, one is simply philosophizing and reflecting on the realities around him. As philosophy of the *Ethnos*, that is the culture or the people, philosophy is wondering on the reality and the world-view of the people in question Omoregbe, J. I (1985, 20) asserts that "human experience is the source of the reflective activity known as philosophy". It is by this singular human exercise of interpreting realities and reflecting on the peoples' world-view and symbolic cultures that one attains the level of wondering for the love of wisdom which is *philosophia*. Hence Paul Riceouer (in Okere: 1983, 18) asserts: "One can philosophize from culture, or at least from those elements of culture that can be called symbols". Okere (1983: 18) buttressing further remarks: "symbols are pregnant with meaning ...philosophical discourse is, therefore, a hermeneutical development of the symbols, these enigmas which precede and nourish it". Therefore, having *Ethnos* as the basics or the foundation of philosophical excursus is very proper. Summarily Okere (1983, 120) writes:

We assert, however, that in black Africa there exists a reservoir of cultural *philosophemes* from which any future philosopher can inspire himself or borrow his share of philosophical raw material. In such a culture a philosopher can plant his roots and from inside it, and as forming part of it, develop a philosophy with his culture as non-philosophical background.

Onebunne, J. (2019a, 23) rightly affirms that many African literatures gave credence to Theophilus Okere's work on African Philosophy as an *avant guard* in the application of hermeneutics of culture as philosophizing per excellence. Okere, T. (1983, i) asserts greatly of the possibility African philosophy and its ultimate source thus:

The ongoing artistic and intellectual renaissance in Black Africa includes the search for an African Philosophy. But designating what is African Philosophy needs some criteria. Philosophy is a unique cultural form and, despite affinities, is not to be confused with other forms such as myth, *Weltanschauung* and religion. But it grows out of a cultural background and depends on it.

Pantolon Iroegbu's philosophy especially his *Uwa* Ontology is a product of critical cultural symbolism; that is a kind of reflection on the symbols of his culture, *amidst implications it embodies*. Philosophy *ipso facto*, as a human enterprise is a reflection on symbols which are pregnant with sense and meaning. However, the unique relationship of culture to philosophy is explained in the natural constitution of man as *animal culturalis* and *homo cogitans*. African cultures being symbolically structured are laden with vital and significant meaning. Hence, a critical reflection on these symbols trying to make the inherent and underlying meanings open and explicit would give credence to what constitutes African philosophy.

Therefore, a definitive thoughtful interpretation and critical analysis of the symbols of African cultures would be African philosophy *qua tale*. That is to say, Igbo philosophy would nevertheless consist in the interpretation at a certain level of the various symbols and institutions or traditions of Igbo culture. The concept of *Uwa* for instance, stands both for everything that is as well *being* in Igbo philosophy, all those institutions and symbols in Igbo world that is ever pregnant with sense and meaning. Therefore, a reflection with profound application of criticality, analyticity and originality on African thoughts and culture give credence to philosophy and rightly put, African Philosophy. Such profundity in the critical appreciation of African or Igbo world-view make of them, veritable moments for African or Igbo philosophy based on categories native to Igbo culture and proper to its *symbolismic* universe. With the methodological moment of proper hermeneutics, one can dependably and realistically infer that an African philosophy is a philosophy with African source and nourished from African culture as its cultural reservoir and primary critical nourishment. Okere, T. (1983, 17) 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. Ricoeur defines reflexion as the connection between the comprehension of signs or symbols and self-comprehension. Reflexion is the appropriation of our effort

to exist and of our desire to be across the works which bear witness to this effort and this desire. It is the incorporating of our new understanding of our culture into our own self-understanding. After these preliminary definitions, here is how the author conceives his strategy. 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. *Le symbole donne à penser* the author loves to say. Symbols are pregnant with meaning. It is not entirely the thinker who gives all the meaning as a spider might spin out its webs from its own bowels. The symbol provides the basis of meaning. Thought has only to elaborate what is already given. *In the symbol all has already been said in enigma, but nevertheless, one has to develop it on the level of reflexion.* Every symbol is an objectivation of life and thus already an expression of meaning. This meaning has to be elaborated by reason. The richness of meaning is already there, pre-existing the clear philosophical elaboration. Philosophical discourse is, therefore, a hermeneutical development of the symbols, these enigmas which precede and nourish it. There is no symbol which cannot become reflexion or comprehension through an interpretation.

Jonathan O. Chimakonam through an on-line source tried to summarise the works of historians on the categorization or periodization with his Pre-systematic Era and the Systematic era. According to him the former refers to Africa's philosophical culture, thoughts of the anonymous African thinkers and may include the problems of Egyptian legacy. The latter refers to the periods marking the return of Africa's first eleven, Western-tutored philosophers from the 1920's to date. This latter category could further be delineated into four periods. This is why Jonathan O. Chimakonam gave his own periodization thus; Early period 1920s – 1960s, Middle period 1960s – 1980s, Later period 1980s – 1990s and New (Contemporary) Era since 1990s. However, African Philosophical Traditions (APT) has actually followed the existing periodization of Philosophy as a human enterprise and we can juxtapose it accordingly thus: Ancient African Philosophy (Early period 1920s – 1960s), Medieval African Philosophy (Middle period 1960s – 1980s), Modern African Philosophy (Later period 1980s –1990s) and Contemporary African Philosophy (New (Contemporary) Era since 1990s).

The division of philosophy into *speculative* and *practical* depends, not on the specific character of the various philosophic sciences or disciplines, but on the end which they pursue. *If that end is knowledge alone*, the philosophy is speculative; *if it is for the general good of man*, then it is practical. Taking cognizance of the sections, it is divided into *main and minor branches*. Since we have a reasonable alternative, that is,

the existing European system of classifying branches of Philosophy, we have no need manufacturing one than follow their categorization. Iroegbu, P., (1994:138), however, gave 12 main branches (as against minor or applied areas of philosophy) of into which basic African philosophy would develop and be studied as : Logic (*Ezemezu* Logic for Jonathan Chimakonam, *Nka* for Kanu), Metaphysics (cum Theodicy), Epistemology, Ethics, Cosmology, Anthropology (Philosophical and Cultural), Socio-Political Philosophy, Axiology, Aesthetics, Hermeneutics/Linguistic Philosophy, Psychology and History of African Philosophy.

Equally, there are different philosophical positions or systems of thought as well as well-defined philosophical systems that are very peculiar to African Philosophy. Often times such schools of thought with their different views lead to different movements relating to African Philosophy and its influence on the society. Some of these schools of thought according to Jonathan Chimakonam are: Ethno-philosophy School, Nationalist School, Philosophic Sagacity, Hermeneutic School, Literary school, Professional school, Conversational School and *Igwebuike* School. These schools of thought often are like philosophical movements and more of socio-political movements for the emancipation of continental Africa like Africanism, Socialism, Leopold Sedar Senghor's Negritude, Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism, and Julius Kambarage Nyerere's *Ujamaa*. Equally Chimakolam Jonathan gave other African philosophical Movements thus: Excavationism, Afro-constructionism/Afro-deconstructionism, Critical Reconstructionism/Afro-Eclecticism and Conversationalism. However, these theories are movements as they represent a strand of thought amidst great assumptions.

Defining African Philosophy

African Philosophy traditionally is knowledge of Africa realities and African realisms in their en-globing 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, *Africana philosophia*. 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 ulima 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 to 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 problematiques 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 *without* 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 O. Chimakonam opted that African philosophy started with *onuma*, that is *frustrated* by the colonialism and racialism and other bumps of African predicaments orchestrated by many years of doubt its historical existence that is greatly *shrouded in controversies and submerged in conspiracies of lies* Therefore, as a movement *started* out of frustration by many lies against Africans Philosophy as a human enterprise and we can juxtapose it accordingly thus dating accordingly as: Ancient African Philosophy (Early period 1920s – 1960s), Medieval African Philosophy (Middle period 1960s – 1980s), Modern African Philosophy (Later period 1980s – 1990s) (Contemporary African Philosophy (New (Contemporary) Era since 1990s).like philosophical movements and more of socio-political movements for the emancipation of continental Africa like *Africanism*, *Socialism*, Leopold Sedar Senghor's *Negritude*, Kwame Nkrumah's *Consciencism*, and Julius Kambarage Nyerere's *Ujamaa*. Equally Chimakolam Jonathan gave other African philosophical Movements thus: Excavationism, Afro-constructionism/Afro-deconstructionism, Critical Reconstructionism/Afro-Eclecticism and Conversationalism. However, these theories are movements as they represent a strand of thought amidst great assumptions.

Resume Philosophical Traditions

The resume of these philosophical traditions: Western Philosophical Traditions (WPT); Eastern/Oriental Philosophical Traditions (EPT); Abrahamic (Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (APT) and African Philosophical Traditions (APT) will help us in appreciating the share of all these philosophies in the family of philosophy as philosophy. That is they all share in the world philosophical heritage as philosophy amidst different traditions, philosophical classification or periodization, pattern of

divisions of philosophy as critical human engagement. Some astute African Philosophers have been engaged in this being question and its formation as such.

Expressions of the Concept of Being by Some African Philosophers

African Philosophy has come to stay. As far back as 17th Century AD, there was also the 1800 Ghanaian Wilhelm Anton Amo (1702-1753) who via the obnoxious and infamous slave trade found himself in Europe was lucky to be educated as such in one of the best German University and did his doctoral dissertation On the Rights of Blacks in Europe in 1729, years before the UN Magna Charter on Fundamental Human rights. Later, as a Philosopher of great repute, Amo taught in universities in Germany at: Halle and Jena. Anthon William Amo in his effort then in spite of the Greek etymological definition of Philosophy, defined Philosophy as:

“The genius of the definition of philosophy is: the *habitus* of the intellect and the will. For philosophy does not concern itself with the intellect alone, but also with the will and its actions...Now, wisdom and virtue are synonymous, and the whole merit of virtue consists in action.....Now that part of philosophy which is concerned with justice and goodness in actions belong to the will, and to the effects of the will, not to the intellect”.

On this strength therefore we look at efforts at articulating being concept in African Philosophical tradition. Placide Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* as *ethno-philosopher*, is known as the father of modern and contemporary African philosophy. He gave his African appreciation of being as *vital force* and as well tries to outline basic philosophical understanding and assumptions that guide African life. According to him, “force is being and being is force,” that is, force is the essence of being. Another concept under consideration is the *Negritude* of Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal. Equally, Mogobe B. Ramose and the Concept of *Ubuntu* Ontology is part of this expression of being concept. With the philosophy of *Ubuntu* no one can exist in isolation of others. It speaks of our interconnectedness. It depicts belongingness. It is seen as the essence of being human since according to *Ubuntu* philosophy, “You can't be human all by yourself.” Therefore, you need others to be. Emmanuel P. Edeh's *Ife di* or *Idi* in his work, *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics*, tries to restore this true metaphysical idea of being. Edeh tried courageously to articulate a people's theory of being. He posits the Igbo notion of being from Igbo language and Igbo notion of human being. According to him, being from Igbo language may not have an exact equivalent linguistic concept. He, however, chooses the concepts of *Onye* and *Ife*. He thereafter analyses these contrasting questions and facts, consequently rejecting *Onye* as standing for the concept of being. *Ife*, which is the alternative literarily stands for thing. This can be material or immaterial. As a prefix on different Igbo concepts, it assumes a substantive independent meaning. Thus, *Ife-di* means what is, being, in existence. Theophilus Okere's *Uwa* is milestone assert, however, that in black Africa there exists a reservoir of cultural *philosophemes* from which any future philosopher can inspire himself or borrow his share of philosophical raw material. Okere, T. argues that philosophy, every philosophy, is essentially a hermeneutics of culture. Iroegbus *Uwa* Ontology made one of the greatest contemporary efforts in this pursuit.

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”. In this statement of fact, Iroegbu, P. continue to echo his teacher Okere Theophilus who had earlier conceived the idea of *philosophemes* as deposit of conceptual data or realities for philosophical enterprise. Iroegbu in his philosophical excursions posited his master’s view of *Uwa* now as *Uwa* ontology in his *Gini* and *Kpim* of things? They were his attempt at explaining being and its mode of operation. And to Iroegbu, *Uwa* has a more comprehensive meaning than the English translation. This deeper meaning of the concept of *Uwa* is summed-up in his connotations of *Uwa*. The term, *Uwa*, is not just a material but something much more than the physical world. Asouzu’s *Ibuanyidanda* Metaphysics is an African complementary ontology and perspective theory of being. According to Asouzu that "being is that on account of which anything that exists serves a missing link of reality" (Asouzu, I. 2011, 41). The idea *Ibuanyidanda* comes from the Igbo language. The idea of *Ibuanyidanda* connotes complementarity. This idea of complementarity has its equivalent as *njiko-ka* (togetherness is strength) and *igwe-bu-ike* (strength is togetherness). *Ibuanyidanda* is compound word as *Ibu* (load), *Anyi* (not impossible) and *Danda* (a workaholic Ant) hence *Ibuanyidanda* literally means no task is insurmountable for *danda*. This denotes an idea of mutual dependence and interdependence in complementarity. It shows a kind of mutual support for each other outside which there is no reality as an achievement. Anthony Kanu’s *Igwebuike* Metaphysics is a modal action of a being in African world-view and understanding. It is an Igbo word, which is a combination of three Igbo words: Kanu, A. (2017, 23) in explaining *Igwe-bu-ike* writes thus. ‘To be’ in Igbo ontology is *idi*. However, the modality of being is *Igwebuike*. It is an Igbo word, which is a combination of three words. Thus, it can be understood as a word and as a sentence: as a word, it is written thus, *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwe bu ike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. *Igwebuike* is the modality of being in Igbo Ontology. *Igwebuike* is an Igbo word, which is a combination of three words. Umeogu’s *Ohazurume* Metaphysics literally means collective will of the people, that is, communal will of the people. It is the labyrinth of communal existence and being. It is expressed within the popular phrases: *the people have spoken*, *the people have agreed together*. Its the network of peoples voice as one as power belongs to the people. *Ohazurume* nonetheless spells out the consensus action of the people. *Ohazurume*, notwithstanding, is the *microcosm* of any styled leadership within the *macrocosm* of any society that shares power with full awareness that leadership is based on consensus. Onebunne’s *One-bu-nne* Metaphysics asserts that a nameless thing may not exist if namelessness is not even a name itself. Therefore name is profoundly ontological to existence and living. Philosophy of a name is properly understood within the metaphysics of a name as a concept. The four cardinal and fundamental questions of philosophy as who, what, when and where point at and border much on a name as a nomenclature. Name as such resolves all interrogatives that question our being and more all existential realities. That is, name and naming answer every crucial question that borders much on existential realities. This is why any attempt to respond to existential realities defines reality ontically with a particular name as identity. Therefore, as a fundamental

concept of existential human operation, name is *ontosophical* as it provides the quidity and or way of the being of things, rediscovering and defining a *being-there*. This is why a name is not just a label for the sake of identity. This is thrust of analytic and linguistic philosophers as philosophers of language. *One-bu-nne* or *One-bunne* is a compound word that is synonymous with *Olewunne* as well as *Olebunne*. That is, the *ole* or *one* is a matter of linguistic-dialect depending who may be speaking. And it literally questions: *How many?* *Bu* or *wu* is translated *is*. It is the verb to be. Equally, *bu-nne* or *wu-nne* is as result of same linguistic-dialect differences that questions: *Is it true?* *Bu-nne* or *Wu-nne* questions directly the reality at how with much confidence and necessary doubt of course. *Nne* in the context of *Onebunne* connotes *truth*. Hence, one can question: *O nne!* that is, *Is it True!* In African Metaphysics, *One-bu-nne* questions reality as it searches fort truth in reality as reality.

Resume and Conclusion

The history of African Philosophy must necessarily takes 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 philosophical heritage but branded otherwise. In this view, the *onuma* of Jonathan O. 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 period preceded Ancient Greek Philosophy. Historians especially of Greek scholarship like Herodotus (484-425BC), Diogenes Laertius (3AD), Proclus (410-485AD) attests 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 City of God" (chapters 38-42). Hence, "Egyptian Philosophy antedated and inspired Greek Philosophy. One, therefore, wonders the level of intellectual dishonesty on why many European authors forget or neglect these important testimonies".

Summarily, in the chequered history of humanity especially with regard to scholarship, Philosophy, presumably western philosophical tradition, 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". Pharaonic period, as Obenga tags it is the period between 2780 – 330BC shows early engagement of African philosophy in all its Africanity and philosophicality dealing with basic principles of reality, and of course, existence or belonging, or rightly put, being itself. This can be read more from chapter one of African Philosophy: Pharaonic Period (2780-330BC) which dwells on the cosmos before the present universe and chapter two that exposes

the ontology and cosmogonies of that era. Going through the pyramid texts, Obenga, T. (1990, 6-31). Over 2500 years before our age, the thinkers of Pharaonic Egypt grappled with quintessential riddles of existence, reflecting upon issues as the question of origins, the problem of the cosmos and of any way it came into being.

However, in dealing with being, the being of things, in the Books of the Dead (2300 – 1700BC, chapter 7), Nwn was referred to as the father of gods. Nwn is the beginning of all beings as the primal, absolute mass of water, container of all seeds, and home to all creative potentials. It is the uncreated reality. Nwn is, therefore, “uncounted number, transcendence as reality, indeterminate being. With Nwn, thought attains the absolute.” Pharaonic period went far in dealing with the issue of being or reality in their deep ontology and cosmogenesis. Hence, the thinkers of that period battled with understanding of reality and as well dealt with the problem of how what is came into being. Aristotle reflecting on this issue, writes that, “...prime causes have this in common: they are the basis of being, of becoming, or of knowledge.” Making a commentary on one of the write-ups of Papyrus Bremner Rhind, Obenga, T. (1990, 60) writes:

From the moment, it exists. That Which is causes being to come into existence. It does this without meditation, in a sort of sudden epiphany of being in its very manifestation. For that Which is, to be, means to really exist. It is through its own power (*ba*), its own energy and movement, that that Which is comes into existence. That which exists engenders itself, from itself- Being is absolute; it is also love and will. Being is in addition, and above all, reason.

The above texts and other discussions clearly show that even in the Pharaonic period of philosophy, or African Philosophy, there were already concepts of being and its treatment. In these, we see the roots of some of the known philosophical ideas of the Urstoff of the ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary philosophers. We all acknowledge now that by the fourth century, before the Christian era, the Egyptians of Pharaonic antiquity had given felicitous attention and refined thought to the primordial, quintessentially philosophical question of what is? It is no more disputable whether African scholars or philosophers existed earlier or within the time of their Western counterparts. Most of their books contain and dwell on concepts that are related to and can be re-interpreted in a large sense to mean being in African studies and appreciation. Most of these texts and philosophical writings, while dealing with different African concepts relating to being or belongingness, reiterate that philosophical enterprise existed hundreds of years before the first known and popularly acknowledged Greek philosopher, Alexander Thales of 700 BC (There was a twist in the history of philosophy with regard to who is the first philosopher and where did formal philosophy first start. The texts in consideration solve the dilemma whether it was Thales or someone else, Obenga's work buttressed this fact). Of course, he might have been recognized as the first historical dignity of all Western philosophers” in their chronology but never can he be regarded as the first world

historic-philosophical figure. History attests to these facts. Going through philosophical and historical epochs, the question and engagements were different manifestations and relations of being. Whether such was obvious in the Greek or Western philosophers' enterprise and latent in the African philosophers remains a big question. But we must recall that the formal object of metaphysics is being. And this being question or ontology preoccupied most of those African philosophers.

***Jude I. Onebunne**

Department of Philosophy
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
juno.anyi@gmail.com
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-89956097

*** Benjamin Chimezie Okoye**

Don Bosco Institute of Philosophy
Ogunbade, Ibadan, Nigeria

References

- Asouzu, I.I. 2007. *Ibuanyidanda*, (Zurich: Lit. Verlag GmbH & Co., Wien)
- Baird F, E, & Kaufmann W. eds. 2003. *Ancient Philosophy*, 4th Edition. NJ: Prentice Hall
- Boduarin, P. O. (ed), 1985. *Philosophy in African: Trends a Perspectives*, (Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press).
- Books of the Dead (2300 – 1700BC, chapter 7),
- Chimakonam, J. O. <https://iep.utm.edu/history-of-african-philosophy/> Retrieved August 4, 2022
- Edeh, M. P. 1985. *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics*, (Chicago: Loyola University Press)
- Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), No.5.
- Iroegbu, P. “The Political Significance of Belongingness” in *Philosophy, Culture and Traditions, A Journal of World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies*, Vol.3, (2005).
- Iroegbu, P, “Being as Belongingness: An African Metaphysics To Be” in *Proceedings of the Metaphysics for the Third Millenium Conference*, (Rome: Assumption Institute, 2000), 1, pp.481-490.
- Iroegbu, P. 1996. *Kpim of Politics: Communalism*, (Owerri: International Press)
- Iroegbu, P. I., 2000. *Kpim of Personality: Treatise on Human Person*, (Owerri: EUSTEL Publications)
- Iroegbu, P. 1994. *Enwisdomization and African Philosophy*, (Owerri: International University Press).
- Iroegbu, P. 1995. *Metaphysics: Kpim of Philosophy*. Owerri: International University
- Madu, R. O. (1992). *African symbols, proverbs and myths: The hermeneutics of destiny*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Maritain, J. 2005. *An Introduction to Philosophy*. New York : Continuum.
- Nze, B.C . 1994. *Patriotism: A Cultural Emanation*. Onitsha: Veritas Publishing Company
- Obenga, T. 1990. *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period, 2780-330BC*, (Paris: L’Harmattan)

Ogdoas Scholastica (1st ed.) in 1606.

- Oguejifor, J.O & Onah, G.I. (eds). 2005. *African Philosophy and the Hermeneutics of Culture: Essays in Honour of Theophilus Okere*. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Onebunne, J.I. 2019a. *Being as Belongingness; Expanding the Hermeneutics of African Metaphysics of To Be*, Awka: Fab Anieh Nig. Ltd., 2019a
- Onebunne, J. I (2019D) *Method: A Definitive Demand in African Philosophy*.Awka: Fab Anieh Nig Ltd.
- Onebunne, J.I. ed et al. 2019. *Igwebuike Ontology : An African Philosophy of Humanity Towards the other : Papers in Honour of Professor Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony, O.S.A* (AuthorHouse UK, Milton Keynes)
- Oguejiofor, J.O.“Problems and Prospects of a History of African Philosophy”, *American Catholic Philosophical Association Quarterly*,77, (2003), p.477-498.
- Onyewuenyi, I. 2005.*The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*. Ibadan: University of Nigeria Press.
- Osugwu, I. M. 1999. *A Contemporary History of African Philosophy*, Amamihe Lecture Series, Vol. IV. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd.
- Okere, T. I. 1983. *African Philosophy: A Historico-Hermeneutical Investigation of the Conditions of its Possibility*, (Lanham: University of America Press).
- Tempels, P. 1995. *Bantu Philosophy*, (Paris: Presence African).
- Umeogu, B. “Ohazurume: A Philosophical Definition of Communalism as the Typology of Igbo Being” in I. Odimegwu (ed.), *Perspective in African Communalism*, p.107.
- [https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/it-is-time-for-the-analytic-philosophy-of-judaism-by-samuel-lebens/It is Time for the Analytic Philosophy of Judaism – By Samuel Lebens](https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/it-is-time-for-the-analytic-philosophy-of-judaism-by-samuel-lebens/It%20is%20Time%20for%20the%20Analytic%20Philosophy%20of%20Judaism%20%E2%80%93%20By%20Samuel%20Lebens). December 8, 2015
- https://philosophynow.org/issues/125/Heideggers_Ways_of_Being
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Heidegger

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sex-sexuality/> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
First published Thu Jul 5, 2018; substantive revision Fri Oct 19, 2018

investopedia.com/terms/k/karl-marx.asp#:~:text=He%20believed%20all%20countries%20should,control%20the%20means%20of%20production.

Laurence Goldstein (2010:84).
[https://www.google.com/search?q=Laurence+Goldstein+\(2010%3A84\)&oq=Laurence+Goldstein+\(2010%3A84\)&aqs=chrome..69i57.16120738j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=Laurence+Goldstein+(2010%3A84)&oq=Laurence+Goldstein+(2010%3A84)&aqs=chrome..69i57.16120738j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

-