

THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION

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Abstract

It is true that African philosophy exists and has gotten a wider recognition and acceptance. This can be attested to by the many universities within and outside Africa studying it as one of the branches of philosophy. However, African philosophy is still faced with the challenge of relevance in this globalised world. In this era, a philosophy or philosophical tradition has to move from its philosophical place to philosophical space for it to remain relevant. This is what philosophers such as Innocent I. Asouzu, Jonathan O. Chimakonam have done. They have taken African philosophy to the philosophical space where it competes favourably with other philosophies. In spite of this great move, African philosophy is still faced with some challenges. It is to address some of these challenges that this paper becomes germane. In this paper, we are of the position that African philosophy has a lot of prospects for philosophy at the philosophical space and globalisation. We will explore and discuss some African philosophical concepts and systems such as, Ibuanidanda, Njikoka Amaka, Ubuntu, Ujamaa, etc, with the view of showing how they can be relevant in comparative/intercultural (global) philosophy and the global society. The rationale is that, inherent in these unique concepts and systems of African philosophy is the tendency to foster mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence, which are lacking in the globalised world. The methods employed in this work are critical analysis, reflection, synthesis and reasoned prescription.

Keywords: African Philosophy, Comparative (Global) Philosophy, Globalisation

Introduction

Philosophy is generally an inquiry into the nature of reality. It is a discipline that seeks to interpret reality in such a way that it affects human reflection and action. Today, there exists a tradition of philosophy, which is concerned with the conceptualisation of reality as experienced by the African as a being within-the-African world.¹ This conception of reality from the African place is known as African philosophy. Some scholars see it as a relative enterprise that can only be relevant to Africa², while others see it as that which can have relevance outside Africa³. Here, we argue that African philosophy is relative in origin but can still be relevant outside Africa. Given that this third position is the case, African philosophy is faced with some challenges such as: what does African philosophy have to offer the world (the philosophical world)? What makes African philosophy original and unique? How can African philosophy be done such that it transcends its localised settings?

It is the questions above that stare African philosophers on the face today as Africans come face to face with the reality of globalisation. The world is today said to be a global village, and that people are interconnected, such that no particular people's existence is possible without their dependence on others' existence. With this interconnectedness and interdependence of people, cultures are now interconnected. This has brought into reality the fact that no culture is autochthonous since each has-been influenced in one way or the other by other cultures. At this point, every philosophy is expected to have an impact on other cultures outside its background culture. The failure of any philosophy to address issues in other cultures implies that it is irrelevant within the global sphere. Thus, the problem of relevance is one of the challenges facing African philosophy today. Olusegun Oladipo holds a related view as he asserts that the problem of African philosophy is that of relevance. According to him, 'it is that of finding ways in which African philosophers can make their works (philosophy) relevant to human

¹Chukwudum B. Okolo, "African Philosophy: A Process of Interpretation." *Africana Marburgensia*. xv. 2. (1983); Chukwudum B. Okolo, *African Philosophy: A Short Introduction*. (Revised Edition. Enugu: CECTA. 1993).

²K. C. Anyanwu, "Nature, Issues and Substance of African Philosophy." In Campbell S. Momohed. *The Substance of African Philosophy*, (Auchi: African Philosophy Project. 2000).

³Jonathan Chimakonam, "Conversationalism as an Emerging Method of Thinking in and Beyond African Philosophy." *Acta Academica*. 47. 2. (2017).

interests in their societies.’⁴ This paper will also look at other problems that are challenging African philosophy at the global level.

The paper will not stop at saying that African philosophy is faced with some challenges; it will also assert that African philosophy has what to offer to global philosophy in the form of unique concepts or ideas that can be very relevant to the world. We shall go about our task by looking at first, the challenges facing African philosophy in this age of globalisation. Thereafter, we shall concern ourselves with the prospects of African philosophy in this era of globalisation.

Challenges Confronting African Philosophy in the Age of Globalisation

The world is now a global village wherein people are so interconnected, such that what is affecting a particular people directly or indirectly affects others. Thus, no continent can be said to be in isolation. All continents and human race are within the web of globalisation. It is in this light that the problem of a particular continent is also the problem of other continents. Therefore, the art of philosophising is not just what should reflect a particular culture or be particularistic in its orientation; it should also have a universal orientation. Hence, one of the challenges of African philosophy in this global era is to fashion an authentic philosophy that its relevance is not only restricted to the existential problems of Africa/ns, but also problems that confront non-Africa/ns. This position differs from Oladipo’s position, which states that:

The problem surrounding the idea of African philosophy is not that of fashioning an authentic philosophy which will be true to African cultures and traditions. Nor is it a problem of a division between those who advocate a strong Western orientation in African philosophy and those who take a deviant route. It is not even simply a concept. Rather, the problem is that of the extent to which African philosophers have been able to put their intellects to the service of the aspirations and struggles of African peoples.⁵

It is germane to state that although Oladipo talks of the relevance of African philosophy to the African people, one can also say that the question facing African philosophers and African philosophy is the problem of relevance in a globalised culture. This is to say that African philosophy is also supposed to be oriented towards problem-solving in the global sphere, to address issues outside of Africa,

⁴Olusegun Oladipo, *The Idea of African Philosophy: A Critical Study of the Major Orientations in Contemporary African Philosophy*. (Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2000), 15

⁵Oladipo, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, 7

inasmuch as it can address issues within Africa. For instance, African philosophy should seek to address issues such as zika virus, tsunami, etc., that are occurring in, and challenging, other continents of the globe. This challenge, to borrow the words of Oladipo, is ‘a crisis of relevance.’⁶ This throws up the challenge of African philosophy becoming a particularistic philosophy with global or universal appeal.

African philosophy is also faced with the challenge of transcending African culture to the global culture. Philosophy is not culture-bound, as Anyanwu, Udo Etuk and other philosophers have posited. But from the look of things, some African philosophers are averring that African philosophy is culture-bound⁷. They argue that African philosophy is restricted solely to African culture. Their argument is that since African philosophy stems from African culture and worldview, it can only address African problems. By implication, African philosophy is not global in its orientation. This ought not to be the case. African philosophy might stem from African worldview and culture but can also be relevant outside Africa. What is implied here is that no philosophy is restricted to any particular culture, and all philosophies ought to be global in their orientation for them to be relevant. Jonathan Chimakonam substantiates this as he argues that African philosophy stems from African perspective of solving African problems, but that it can also be universal. According to him:

African philosophy must discuss issues (including universal) from African perspectives. In addressing and solving the African problems, African perspective addresses and solves problems for humanity and in such a light, it is universal. This is because what affects one end of the universe, affects another at the other and albeit sometimes different.⁸

The assertion above by Chimakonam implies that African philosophy should address the situation of others as it seeks to address its own problems.

African philosophy is also confronted with the question of whether it is a community enterprise or an individual enterprise. The most popular view is that African philosophy is more of a community enterprise than an individual enterprise.

⁶Oladipo, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, 15

⁷K. C. Anyanwu, Nature, Issues and Substance; Udo Etuk, “The Possibility of African Logic.” In Olusegun Oladipoed. *The Third Way in African Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Kwasi Wiredu* (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2002).

⁸Jonathan Chimakonam, “The Criteria Question in Africa Philosophy: Escape from the Horns of Jingoism and Afrocentrism.” In Jonathan O. Chimakonam ed. *Atuolu Omotiu: Some Unanswered Questions in Contemporary African Philosophy*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 2015), 123.

African philosophers do African philosophy by describing and interpreting the worldview and culture of their people. They are, by this, retelling what their people say or believe and this is tantamount to ethno philosophy, which is ethnic or tribal philosophy. Here, the individual philosopher gives a communal understanding of his/her tribe as what constitutes African philosophy. Ada Agada, on his part, argues that African philosophy ought not to be ethno philosophy, but that it should draw its inspiration from ethno philosophy.⁹ In other words, ethno philosophy should be the foundation of African philosophy and not African philosophy being the foundation. It should be the source from which African philosophers draw their philosophical inspirations. Thus, African philosophy may have the coloration of an ethnic group but not equal to the worldview of this ethnic group. It should transcend this ethno philosophical standpoint by reacting to it.

The above brings one to the view that African philosophy ought to move from ‘community thought’¹⁰ pattern to individualistic thought articulation. Thus, African philosophy should no longer be an individual speaking for his/her people but that the individual should speak for him/herself. African philosophy cannot and will never gain global recognition and relevance until it becomes an individual enterprise instead of a community business. At this stage, the individual who is an African philosopher thinks beyond his/her worldview; the individual becomes innovative and original. The claim of Agada is that African philosophers have not given a thought to the possibility of being original and innovative. He sees this as a major challenge to African philosophy in the present as well as the future. Hence, he calls it the ‘future question in African philosophy.’ In his words, ‘Few African philosophers have paused to seriously consider the most problematic aspect of the dilemma of African philosophy – the failure of the available methodological approaches to inspire original and innovative thinking that can earn African philosophy a universal acclaim.’¹¹

⁹ Ada Agada, “Is African Philosophy Progressing?” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*. 5. 1. (2013), 246; Ada Agada, *Existence and Consolation: Reinventing Ontology, Gnosis and Values in African Philosophy*, Jonathan O. Chimakonam ed. (Calabar: 3rd Logic Option. 2015), 42, 44; Ada Agada, “The Future Question in African Philosophy.” In Jonathan O. Chimakonam ed. *Atuolu Omalu: Some Unanswered Questions in African Philosophy*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 2015), 242-243, 246.

¹⁰ Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1980), 46-47.

¹¹ Agada, *The Future Question in African Philosophy*, 242.

Agada tends to echo the view of Chimakonam, which reads: “Africa has... produced... many philosophers who have neither invented any idea nor solved any problem.”¹² This kind of mindset is not taking African philosophy anywhere in the global philosophical map nor is it giving it a space there. African philosophy will only gain global or universal relevance if it produces innovative and original thinkers instead of copy-cat philosophers, who only tell of the worldview of their people or colour Western philosophy with their African worldview. There is, therefore, no need to Africanise Western philosophy; rather, there is the need for African philosophers to be original and innovative in their thinking and philosophising. In this case, they need to start philosophising from their worldview and move gradually away from it to establish their own way of thinking distinct from those of others. Thus, ethnophilosophy should be the springboard of their philosophy and not the other way round. When African philosophy comes to this level, African philosophers will then be free to philosophise as individuals independent of their community. This is substantiated by Agada thus: ‘it is beyond doubt that African philosophy will remain unattractive until individual thinkers cease to speak in the name of their tribes and start speaking for themselves.’¹³ African philosophers can also gain their inspiration outside of ethno philosophy; and this includes the existential problem that confronts Africa/ns and non-Africa/ns in the world today.

This takes one naturally to the methodological issue of African philosophy. African philosophy has not been able to have a global place because it still has no peculiar and authentic method. African philosophy today is faced with the problem of how it is to be conducted to gain a global acclaim. There have been three broad perspectives to this question; and they are expressed in the views enshrined in three schools of thought in African philosophy. They include: The Particularists (philosophical particularism [PP]), Universalists (philosophical universalism [PU]), and Eclecticism. The view of the particularists is that African philosophy should have its own distinct methods of philosophising. The challenge that this position faces is, what is the method that is peculiarly African? For some of them

¹²Jonathan Chimakonam, “Outline of African Logic for the Development of Thought, Science and Technology.” *A Paper Delivered at an International Conference of World Congress of Research and Development*, (University of Port-Harcourt, Nigeria, 2011).

¹³Agada, *The Future Question in African Philosophy*, 246.

(such as Placide Tempels; John Mbiti; T. Uzodinma Nwala¹⁴), this philosophy should be done using the descriptive method of philosophy. If this is taken to heart and applied, then African philosophy will be nothing but ‘descriptive story-telling’, which lacks criticality, as Attoe¹⁵ notes. On the part of the universalists, African philosophy should adopt the methods of Western philosophy since philosophy is a universal enterprise.¹⁶ This, too, leaves us wondering, what will make African philosophy distinct from Western philosophy if it proceeds with the methods of Western philosophy? The eclecticists seem to have taken into serious consideration the dilemma faced by the particularists and the universalists as they propose a middle point between particularism and universalism. For them, African philosophy should adopt a method of philosophising that is a combination of some of the elements of African philosophy and Western philosophy. The problem confronted by this school is, what are the elements of the particularist method and universalist method to be selected and combined? This remains an unresolved issue?

However, Ada Agada appears to have resolved the dilemma faced by the eclecticists. The advice of Agada is that African philosophy must adopt a method that is synthetic, and not solely analytic, for it to become a global philosophy. According to him, ‘Analysis should not exclude synthesis at this stage. Synthesis is that which African philosophy sorely needs.’¹⁷ In his view, there should be the method of synthesis in African philosophy that is distinct from Western philosophy. This method of synthesis has been extensively elaborated and exhibited by African

¹⁴Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*. (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959); John S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*. (London: Heinemann, 1969); T. U. Nwala, *Igbo Philosophy*. (Lantern: Lagos, 1985).

¹⁵Aribiah David Attoe, “An Essay Concerning the Foundational Myth of Ethnophilosophy.” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*. 5. 1. (2016).

¹⁶Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture*; Richard Wright, “Investing African Philosophy.” In Richard A. Wright ed. *African Philosophy: An Introduction*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984); Peter Bodunrin, “The Question of African Philosophy.” In Tsenay Serequeberhan ed. *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*. (New York: Paragon House, 1991).

¹⁷Agada, ‘The Future Question in African Philosophy, 246.

philosophers/scholars such as Innocent Asouzu,¹⁸ Godfrey Ozumba,¹⁹ to mention but a few. They have been able to synthesise African thoughts with Western individualistic method of philosophising that tends to be more analytic. This finds its climax in conversationalism, which is a method of philosophising that thrives on individual African philosophers engaging one another's concepts, ideas and thoughts with a critical and creative mindset.²⁰ In this art, there is synthesis of thoughts as well as transformation of ideas and thought such that epistemic vista is expanded beyond what it used to be.

The next challenge that bedevils philosophising in Africa is the inability of African philosophers to bring their original and innovative African thought to the global platform of philosophising. The reason for this attitude is that African philosophers and scholars feel that African thoughts are inferior to both Western and Oriental thoughts. They do not see their ideas as innovative enough to withstand the thoughts of their counterparts from the West and Oriental worlds. It is in this light that scholars, such as Peter Bodunrin²¹ and Paulin Hountondji,²² call African philosophers to follow the Western method of philosophizing. This has for many reasons been a setback to the development of African philosophy as well as hinders its relevance in comparative and intercultural philosophy.

¹⁸Innocent I. Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology, Beyond World-Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction and Imposition*. (London: Transaction, 2007); Innocent I. Asouzu, *The Heavy Burden of Philosophy beyond African Philosophy*. (London: Transaction, 2007); Innocent I. Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda Ontology: and the Philosophy of Essence (Philosophy, the Science of Missing Links of Reality)*. University of Calabar 50th Inaugural Lecture. (Calabar: University of Calabar, 2011); Innocent I. Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and Some Basic Problems in Africa*. (Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH and Co. KG Wien, 2013).

¹⁹Godfrey Ozumba, and Jonathan Chimakonam, *Njikoka Amaka: Further Discussion on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism*. (Calabar: 3rd logic option, 2014).

²⁰Jonathan Chimakonam, "Addressing Uduma's Africanness of a Philosophy Question and Shifting the paradigm from Metaphilosophy to Conversational Philosophy." *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*. 4.1. (2015); Chimakonam, The Criteria Question in Africa Philosophy; Chimakonam, Conversationalism as an Emerging Method; Jonathan Chimakonam, "The Demise of Philosophical Universalism and the Rise of Conversational Thinking in Contemporary African Philosophy." In Edwin Etieyibo ed. *Method, Substance and the Future of African Philosophy* (Palgrave: New York, 2018).

²¹Bodunrin, The Question of African Philosophy.

²²Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

The worst aspect of this challenge is the idea that African philosophy is totally different from other philosophies. African scholars see their philosophy as not worthy to be given a place in the global philosophy. According to Asouzu:

Many have come to regard African philosophy as a strange type of scientific undertaking... This is when some less-determined African scholars become conditioned, and actually start to think that theirs must be another type of reflection. Indeed, many often assume that theirs is the crudest form of philosophy and philosophising.²³

This is a derogatory view of African philosophy that gives it a global disregard and dismissal as non-philosophical. Asouzu frowns at the above view of African philosophy and goes on to show how African philosophers could transcend this problem as he notes that:

The contributions of African philosophers and African philosophy become more credible if these were to be defined within a more embracing framework as to transcend their localised settings. It is in view of this new task, that I insist that African philosophy has more to it than preoccupation with ethno-centric ideas aimed at showing how such ideas are peculiar to African framework of meaning. These so-called peculiar or ambient issues must be articulated and schematised within a wider framework. This is important since all inquiries get their full meaning when they are related to all missing links and not when they recoil to their raw primary cognitive ambiances.²⁴

What Asouzu is putting across is that African philosophy should not be regarded as a localised enterprise, even when it draws its inspiration from a particular locality (Africa). Therefore, African philosophy should not be seen as philosophy of the African people and for the African people. Rather, it is a philosophy of and for the entire humanity, which has its root from the African (philosophical) place. This to say that African philosophy ought to be both particularistic and universalistic in its nature and orientation. This resolves the problem of particularity/universality divide in African philosophy.

Furthermore, African philosophy has as its challenge the question of who qualifies as an African philosopher, especially in this era of globalisation. A lot of answers have been offered with respect to this question. For some, an African

²³Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*, 306.

²⁴Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*, 309.

philosopher is one who is African by having an African ancestry or descent.²⁵ For others, it is one who is resident in Africa for a long time and writes on African philosophy/issues.²⁶ For another set, it is one who is versed in the African life-world and issues as well as culture.²⁷ For yet others, it is one who employs an African background logic;²⁸ while for yet another group, it is one who engages him/herself in philosophy using African background ontology.²⁹ Despite all these, Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya have argued that it is neither the Africanness of the philosophy nor the issue that defines a philosophy as African.³⁰ It is not true that an African philosopher is one who is of an African descent, or one who resides in Africa and/or versed in African life-world and issues as well as deliberates on them. We also do not agree with Chimakonam that it is one who philosophises using an African logic that is three-valued and reflects a trivalent thought system. For us, an African philosopher is one who does philosophy using the African background ontology which is communitarian and relational in line with Maurier's relational theoretical framework.³¹ By this, Ogbonnaya³² is saying one qualifies as an African philosophy if the philosopher employs an Africa-inspired communitarian and relational ontology.

²⁵Odera Oruka, "The Fundamental Principles in the Question of African Philosophy." *Second Order* 4. 1.(1975), 50

²⁶Oruka, *The Fundamental Principles*, 50.; Bodunrin, *The Question of African Philosophy*, 72.

²⁷Nwala, *Igbo Philosophy*, 46; Sophie Oluwole, *Readings in African Philosophy* (Lagos: Masstech, 1989), 209; Uduma Uduma, "The Question of the 'African' in African Philosophy: In Search of a Criterion for the Africanness of a Philosophy." *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*. 3. 1. (2014), 143.

²⁸Chimakonam, *Addressing Uduma's Africanness*; Chimakonam, *The Criteria Question in Africa Philosophy*.

²⁹Kwasi Wiredu, "Philosophical Research and Teaching in Africa: Some Suggestions Toward Conceptual Decolonization." *Teaching and Research in Philosophy: Africa*. (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 38-42; Innocent Onyewuenyi, "Is There an African Philosophy." In Tsenay Serequeberhan ed. *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, (New York: Paragon, 1991), 44-45; Lucky Ogbonnaya, "Between the Ontology and Logic Criteria of African Philosophy." In Edwin Etiyiebo ed. *Method, Substance and the Future of African Philosophy*, (Charm: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

³⁰Chimakonam, *Addressing Uduma's Africanness*, 121-129.

³¹Henri Maurier, "Do We Have an African Philosophy." In Richard Wright ed. *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 30-36.

³²Ogbonnaya, *Between the Ontology and Logic*

Prospects of African Philosophy in the Era of Globalisation

African philosophy is not the crudest form of philosophising; it is a living and active philosophy that is developing and taking its place in the global stage. African philosophy has a lot of unique innovative and original thoughts or systems of thought that can be offered to the world in this present era. This section is, therefore, dedicated to point out some of the ideas inherent in African philosophy that can be relevant to global philosophy and philosophising. Some of these are: *Negritude*, *Ujamaa*, *Ubuntu*, *Ibanyidanda*, *Njikoka Amaka*, *Ezumezu* and *Arumaru-uka* (Arumarustics [conversationalism]).

The concept, *Negritude*, was first articulated by Aime Cesaire,³³ but it was Senghor who gave it a philosophical articulation. Senghor's conception of negritude is a follow up to Levy-Bruhl's position of African system of thought. Although Levy-Bruhl argues that Africans as primitive people are pre-logical, he later renovated his thought by stating that Africans have a system of thought that is distinct from the Western system, which he previously presented as the standard of thought for all humans. Senghor avers that Africans have a distinct system of thought from that of the West. His argument is that African system of thought is emotive, while Western system of thought is rational.³⁴ Thus, emotivism and rationalism are two sides of logic – they are the two mentalities of Levy-Bruhl. Emotivism as an African aspect of logic holds that logic is not possible with the individuals or community. It is in this light that emotivism is participatory. It is a system of logic wherein the logician is not divorced from the knowing process. That is to say, knowledge of an object is not possible without the knowing subject. This logical system takes away the subject-object divide inherent in Western philosophy and logic. This is a unique epistemological insight that the world philosophy can/should take seriously. Global philosophy must come to the point of realising that authentic epistemology and philosophy is not possible without the subject and object of knowledge.

The second concept, *Ujamaa*, is an ideology that has its root in Africa and was developed by Julius Nyerere. Nyerere sees *Ujamaa*, which he interpreted to mean family or the extended family, as the very foundation of African socialism.³⁵

³³Aime Cesaire, *Return to My Native Land*. (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969).

³⁴Leopold Senghor, "African-Negro Aesthetics." *Diogenes*. 16. (1956); Leopold Sedar Senghor, "Negrohood: Psychology of the African Negro." *Diogenes*. 37.(1962).

³⁵Julius Nyerere, "Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism." *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*. (London: Oxford University, 1968), 11.

His argument is that when people see themselves as members of a family, they will have no reason to consider themselves as enemies; they will also consider themselves as brothers and sisters and share what they possess in common without sentiment. Indeed, this extended family mentality can really help overcome the 'we-them' mentality in philosophy and interpersonal relation as well as international relation. This is an ideology that can help the world overcome the problem of racism and segregation that is experienced in the world today. This ideology can help prevent philosophers and other human beings from saying that this idea is ours and should not be shared with those who are not members of our society or continent. It will enable philosophers to share every of their ideas and thoughts with one another knowing that all humans are members of a family or the same extended family. It will further cause people not to amass wealth for themselves while others are in abject poverty. If this ideology is brought in and incorporated into global philosophy and philosophizing, the world will experience peace and unity, since no nation will seek to harm other nations or denigrate others, owing to the fact that they are members of one big family – a common humanity. There will be no first/third-worlds divide, since there will be equitable harnessing and distribution of wealth across nations, and no nation would be said to be developed or underdeveloped any longer.

The idea of a common humanity in the concept of *Ujamaa* is given a strong philosophical explanation in another African concept known as *Ubuntu*. The word *Ubuntu* means 'to be a human being or humane'. According to Mogobe Ramose, 'it may nonetheless be construed to mean to be a human being is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them. *Ubuntu* understood as being human (humanness); a humane, respectful and polite attitude towards others constitutes the core meaning of this aphorism.'³⁶ It is being a human being or a person through another human or person. In this context, one must be humane in order to gain his/her humanity or be termed a person. What this entails is that if one does not treat others as humans or persons, he/she cannot be termed a human being or a person. This idea of *Ubuntu* places a moral obligation on every individual to treat one another with care, compassion, equity, fairness, justice, kindness, love, etc; for these are the hallmarks of being humane and a person. This notion of *Ubuntu* can make the world a better place for all humanity and even non-humans, if taught within and outside Africa. It

³⁶Mogobe Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu* (Harare: Mond Books, 2005), 37.

is a moral theory that has a lot in store for human peaceful co-existence. Therefore, it should be harnessed and applied in our day-to-day life.

Ibuanyidanda is another African concept that can become a significant contribution of African philosophy to global philosophising. *Ibuanyidanda* is an Igbo aphorism that has been given philosophical articulation by Innocent Asouzu. Asouzu has given this concept an ontological foundation and sees it as a concept that has a lot of implication for global philosophising and globalisation in general. Asouzu posits that being consists of substance and accident which are in mutual complementary relationship. In this relationship, both substance and accident affirm and strengthen the existence of each other within the whole called being. This brings one to the position that they are serving as missing links to each other and are mutually dependent.³⁷ It is in this light that Asouzu calls *ibuanyidanda* philosophy a philosophy of complementarity. He also avers that just as substance and accident co-exist and are in mutual service to each other, that is, how beings are with one another. Following this, Asouzu argues that no philosophy is self-sufficient, and that they all stand in need of complementation from one another. What Asouzu is saying is that African philosophy, Oriental philosophy and Western philosophy, all have what to contribute to the philosophical enterprise as a whole. This is because they affirm and complement the being and insufficiencies of one another. Thus, no philosophy can be said to be self-sufficient and exists independent of other philosophical systems or traditions. By implication and extension, no individual, human society or entity can exist in isolation or on its own. The reason is that everyone is a missing link, insufficient on its own and complementary to the other in a mutual sense.³⁸ This gives one the idea that we need one another to continue to exist and survive in the cosmos. This African concept, which inspired Asouzu's ontology and philosophy, has a lot implication for interpersonal relationship as well as the ecosystem.

Furthermore, *Njikoka Amaka* is another Igbo aphorism that African philosophers can carry into global philosophizing, as it holds that togetherness is better. This system of thought was philosophically systematised by Godfrey Ozumba and further developed with Jonathan Chimakonam. According to Ozumba and Chimakonam, *Njikoka Amaka* means 'to integrate is better than to disintegrate.' This idea shows the need to bring various philosophies, philosophical systems, traditions and methods together in order to produce philosophising that is global in

³⁷Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*,

³⁸Ozumba, and Chimakonam, *Njikoka Amaka*

outlook. It also connotes peaceful co-existence and better interpersonal relation among individuals in a given community, among communities and among nations of the world. It brings out the idea of individuals and collection of individuals pulling their knowledge and resource to promote the common well-being, which is the well-being of the society. In this context, if individuals pull their knowledge or resources together for the common good of the society, they invariably promote their individual well-being. In the same light, when communities of individuals pull the resources together, they achieve anything they want to achieve and overcome any global social challenge that confronts humanity in this world. This is the idea enshrined in the Igbo aphorism '*Njikoka Amaka*' employed by Ozumba and Chimakonam in explaining their philosophy of 'Integrative Humanism'.

Chimakonam, on his part, sees no system of philosophising or logical system as sufficient philosophising for humankind, and therefore comes up with his *Ezumezu* logic. This idea implies completing what is incomplete or to complement what is incomplete. Hence, no philosophy or logic can be said to be complete unless it is being complemented by other existing systems or methods of philosophising and logic. In the same vein, no individual or nation of the world can exist in isolation. They need to be complemented by the opposite other, just as *ezu* and *izu* are complemented and made complete through the combination of both in *Ezumezu*. This implies that every individual needs to be completed by another individual who he/she also complements. This idea can be employed to promote and enhance human interpersonal relationship, as every individual sees him/herself as standing in need of the other.

Another philosophical idea that Chimakonam has adduced from the African worldview has to do with 'relationship'. According to Chimakonam, Conversational Philosophy and its peculiar method known as conversationalism are built on the sub-Saharan notion of 'relationship'. This relationship, for Chimakonam, is enshrined in and deduced from the Igbo word *Arumaru-uka* or *Iru-uka*— meaning 'to converse'. This relationship is a critical and creative engagement that ensues between a proponent (*nwansa*) and an opponent (*nwanju*),³⁹ who seek to address human existential situation through conceptual analysis and clarification. This critical and creative engagement does not lead to a final solution, but a temporal consensus between *nwansa* and *nwanju*, which becomes another frontier for further engagement in an endless manner. This kind of thinking can be

³⁹Chimakonam, The Demise of Philosophical Universalism

employed in conflict management as it brings out the view that conflict cannot be completely resolved, but it can only be managed. The reason is that conflicts keep manifesting inspite of the number of times that peace talks have been held to resolve them. So, with the idea of *Arumaristics*, one can effectively manage conflict.

Conclusion

What this paper has come to at this point is that African philosophy has a lot of challenges it has to surmount to enhance its relevance at the global level. These challenges include issues such as distinct method of African philosophy and philosophising, the move of African philosophy from particular to universal philosophy, and the problem of relevance within and beyond Africa. If one should look at these challenges, one might conclude that African philosophy has no place in the philosophical space. This paper tried to argue that, on the contrary, African philosophy has a lot of prospects for the philosophical enterprise and the entire world.

It is to substantiate the position that African philosophy has a lot to offer global philosophising that this paper dug deep into some African concepts that African philosophers can boldly present as its unique contribution to the philosophical enterprise. The paper discussed concepts such as *Negritude*, *Ujamaa*, *Ubuntu*, *Ibuanyidanda*, *Njikoka Amaka*, *Ezumezu*, etc. These concepts that have been developed by African philosophers/scholars are pointers to the fact that African philosophy has come of age and can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with any other philosophy in the world. African philosophy needs not be done in isolation; rather, it should be done with other philosophies at the level of comparative/intercultural/cross-cultural philosophy. It is at this level that its relevance will be seen and recognised by philosophers from other philosophical tradition. When African philosophers begin to take African philosophy to the global stage, they will not only enrich global philosophising, they will also enrich the philosophical traditions of other philosophers as well as enrich African philosophy in turn.

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