

PHILOSOPHIES THROUGH AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY A Historico-critical and Definitional Approach

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Abstract

Philosophy is a human disciplinary enterprise established in many philosophical traditions as world critical heritage which has birthed African Philosophical Traditions (APT) and Abrahamic (Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (AbPT) as well as Eastern-Oriental Philosophical Traditions (EOPT) and Western Philosophical Traditions (WPT). Philosophies are products of different philosophical traditions. These philosophies acknowledged that ancient Egyptian Philosophy or African Philosophy as oldest critical excursus springs from the oldest philosophical traditions which is African Philosophical tradition. Equally, in the chequered history of humanity Philosophy has gained a lot of traditional, etymological and classical definitions from scholars in their varieties of authorships. An appreciation and comparative analysis of two most prominently succinct and precisely concise definitions of Philosophy primarily as philosophia and or fundamentally as habitus-intellectu which are within the methodological moment of hermeneutics is the thrust of this paper. Within the limits of proposed critical analysis, the researcher appreciates habitus intellectu as very basic in the proper definition of philosophy within the bounds of unaided human reason within the limits of other philosophies in African philosophy.

Keywords: Philosophy, Philosophies, African philosophy, *philosophia*, *habitus intellectu*, philosophical traditions.

Introduction

Philosophy remains a systematic reflective thinking on life, (Yulan, 1976). However there are many definitions philosophy as there are many philosophers encountering realities from many points of views. Our interest in this paper is African philosophy. Today than ever there is need to streamline the borders of philosophical enterprise while looking at its succinct definitions and utmost contents. This calls for proper information and conversance with the traditions of African philosophy from the remote times to contemporary times, (Obenga, 2004). It is very crystal clear that the lengthy history of African philosophy is directly connected with other continents especially Europe and Graeco-Roman world. Obenga (2004) continuing opined that “it is a mere prejudice to believe that the philosophical epoch of humanity begins first among the Greeks in the 5th century BC”. Philosophy remains a world philosophical heritage. African philosophy shares greatly in this philosophical tradition. There is need for proper appreciation of African Philosophical Tradition as the oldest traditions of philosophy that gave birth to African Philosophy and other Philosophical traditions that birthed other philosophies.

This paper x-rays philosophies as products of many philosophical traditions. However there is this recognition that African philosophical traditions was prominent in being the oldest

tradition that gave philosophy to the world. One can say that philosophies as we have them today in many epochs and traditions of philosophy came through African philosophy as Egypt in a philosophy of the Black Pharaohs. This paper equally shows the interconnectedness of philosophical engagement among the ancient people of Egypt in Africa with speculative thoughts on realities which transcend mere experience. Their speculative thoughts, often in oral or written forms, borders on *Ma'at*. Focusing on some of these issues, this paper tries a kind of expose of the ancient history of African philosophy. Obenga (2004) reiterating on these contextual issues maintains that “the spirit of Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy, African philosophy, European philosophy and Maya philosophy can differ greatly in their treatment of a subject but philosophy always deals with human knowledge”. In the preceding pages the researcher will dwell on African philosophy within the edges of proper definitional appreciation and different contextual equipoise.

Philosophy as World Heritage: Objective -Subjective Limits of Philosophy

In examining the Object and Subject of Philosophy, one finds out that Philosophy possesses a dual nature. As renowned philosopher Kant (1997) once stated, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not seek or conjecture either of them as if they were veiled obscurities or extravagances beyond the horizon of my vision; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence." This quote encapsulates the essence of philosophy's object and subject—the external world and the internal realm of human morality and consciousness. Philosophy remains the basis for investigating both the object and subject of critical enquiry, making philosophy a fundamental and essential discipline in the pursuit of human knowledge. Philosophy with these attendants of subject and object one is propelled beyond the superficialities and superfluities of everyday life, enabling one to seek deeper insights into the world surrounding us.

Philosophical excursus is unlimited as long as unaided human reasoning is the sole instrument of critical engagements. Equally the profundity of the power of the human mind is unfathomable. Osuagwu, I.M. (2010) in this regards defines philosophy as the “man’s serious attempt to push his capacity to the limit, in fact, beyond the limit. God is at this limit, even if also beyond it. Philosophy has interest in this limit and its beyond; it has the audacity to delve in to investigate and grasp even when it has to depend on the unaided instrumentality of man’s natural faculty”, (p.23).

However, this is why the content of Philosophy should not be limited only to a general understanding of Philosophy within the Philosophical traditions as world philosophical heritage. To this extent philosophy should and ought to be studied by exposition of philosophies, philosophers and traditions of philosophy before any deviation to specificity save when the need is required. But in our Universities and Seminaries, Western philosophy has been the content of our studies to the chagrin of many of us. Throngs of intellectuals among us neglect this anomaly. Philosophy ought to be a faculty and school for the Universities (Institutes) and Colleges of Education respectively. This why Philosophy remains *regina scientia* or *mater scientia* while it retains the status of the highest of human sciences (save

theology hence, its *ancillae thologiae*, handmaid of theology) with the highest qualification one can get in the field of study as PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). In this line of thought philosophy is unlimited in relation to other disciplines. Philosophy cuts across every facets of human studies as love of wisdom and more, the habit of the intellect and the will.

Philosophy, as a field of great enquiry, covers a wide range x-ray subjects that aim to examine the fundamental nature of reality, existence, knowledge, values and the basic principles of reasoning. This expansive scope allows philosophy to tackle thoughtful questions about the meaning of life, the nature of knowledge and truth, the existence of God, and the ethico-moral implications of human acts and acts of man. Such critical engagement and enquiry offer one great insights into the complexness of the world around us as well as invites to personal development and a deeper apprehension of the human experiential existence. This is why Philosophy primarily fosters critical reflection. The object of philosophy simply improve on a better human appreciation and understanding of reality.

In exploring the object or of philosophy, we delve into the fundamental concepts, ideas and questions that philosophy seeks to unravel. By identifying and examining the object of philosophy, we obtain insights into the underlying aspects and foundation of human existence and the universe. It is not solely about finding definitive answers but rather enhancing our comprehension. Scholars have maintained that the object of philosophy is not to prove, but to improve the understanding. This sentiment aligns with Plato's allegory of the Cave, emphasizing the importance of questioning the nature of reality. Understanding the object of philosophy permits exploration of profound questions and the acquisition of valuable insights, leading to personal growth and intellectual development. However, Socrates, in line with the Delphic inscription man know thyself, challenged people from all walks of life to question their own beliefs. The contemporary philosophies of Simone *de* Beauvoir and Frantz Fanon have broadened the scope of philosophical inquiry accommodating critical issues within the bounds of like gender, race, and society. Philosophical enterprise we must admit is not confined to academia but it's a man's effort in understanding and appreciating reality as such.

The historical development of philosophy's object and subject, traced as philosophy sort for the basic stuff of reality and better respond to human realistic problem while dealing with eternal and enduring life changing and challenging concepts, is crucial in understanding the evolution and complexities of this discipline. Moreover, during the Middle Ages, philosophers like Thomas Aquinas integrated philosophical ideas with religious doctrines, further expanding the object and subject of philosophy. This period saw significant debates regarding the relationship between *fides et ratio*, faith and reason and the role of philosophical inquiry in understanding theological concepts. Hence, philosophy becomes *ancillae theologiae*, handmaid of theology. The Renaissance and Enlightenment periods brought about a shift in the object and subject of philosophy. Contemporary astute thinkers like Descartes and Kant emphasized the use of reason and self-reflection as integral to philosophical investigations. Nature of human existence was explored with an unaided human reasoning within the limits and bounds of knowledge, and the ethical implications of philosophical thought.

The dynamism in the relationship between the object and subject of philosophy is very intricate, as philosophy plays a crucial role in critical inquiry. The sole object of philosophy embraces a wide range of fundamental inquiries and ideas that philosophers seek to address, including issues on reality, knowledge, morality, and existence. Equally, the sole subject of philosophy, on the other hand, refers to the individuals who engage in philosophizing grappling with quintessence of life and realities. It is through the subject that the object of philosophy is shaped and interpreted. Hence, the interplay between the object and subject of philosophy highlights the intricate nature of philosophical inquiry and emphasizes the importance of studying both aspects to gain a comprehensive understanding of this discipline. By examining both the object and subject of philosophy, we can attain a comprehensive understanding of philosophy's purpose and its relevance in our lives.

The rich tapestry and complexities with regard to the object and subject of philosophy, as discussed in the previous paragraph is directly connected and intertwined like a cobweb of ideas with an extensive exploration of its impact on other disciplines and other fields of study. Philosophy reaches out to a comprehensive understanding of realities as things that are. Hence, Philosophy, with its intense inquiry into fundamental questions about existence and essences; knowledge and realities exerts a profound influence on various academic disciplines. It significantly impacts on the object and subject of philosophical studies great influence. This complex and multifaceted nature of philosophy allows it to interact synergistically with other fields, particularly in the realm of science as systematic pursuits. By pushing the boundaries of understanding and challenging traditional scientific assumptions, philosophical investigations propel scientific progress, effectively shaping theoretical frameworks and paradigms. The application of philosophical principles enhances decision-making processes and problem-solving abilities, allowing individuals to navigate intricate scenarios adeptly. Thus, the object and subject of philosophy not only augment knowledge but also foster practical implications throughout different academic spheres, thus necessitating a deeper appreciation for the far-reaching impact of philosophy.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) argues that rationalism is “a theory that reason is in itself a source of knowledge superior to and independent of sense perceptions”. It is therefore, “a view that reason and experience rather than the nonrational are the fundamental criteria in the solution of problems”. Rationalism asserts that knowledge comes primarily through reason, while empiricism focuses on sensory experience as the source of knowledge. By utilizing these philosophical frameworks, thinkers gain insights into the complexities of philosophy's object and subject, enabling them to ask meaningful questions and propose coherent arguments, as noted by Johnson (2018). However, the formal object is the perspective or the point of view from which a discipline approaches its material object.

Methodological Systems and Isms of Philosophy

Schools of Thought in Philosophy according to Maritain (2005) strongly was of the opinion that traditionally philosophy is divided into three principal sections: Logic, Speculative

philosophy and Practical philosophy. Philosophy as love of wisdom or habit of the intellect and will searches for knowledge through unaided reason as a great tool or instrument. Logic is the study of reason as an instrument for acquiring knowledge or means of discovering truth. In a strict sense rather than being a section of its own, logic was treated as a handmaid of philosophical enterprise. In this sense, it's only through logic, a sound and proper reasoning can one engage in any meaningful philosophical discourse. The other 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.

Onebunne (2019d) maintains that “no method, no philosophy” (p.1). Method of Philosophy is very *ad rem*. Philosophy is a human enterprise that cut across every known discipline. Of all the philosophies, Philosophical methods refer to *modus operandi* that is exclusively associated either with a class or with an object. Method usually consists of a sequence of statements of perform action, within parameters (Onebunne, 2019d). The purpose of method is to provide a mechanism for accessing philosophy. A good philosophical method guarantees one reaching the primary goal of philosophical engagements. Method (Ancient Greek, *methodos*) literally means a pursuit of knowledge, investigation, mode of prosecuting such inquiry, or system. In recent centuries, it means a prescribed process for completing a task. Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2023) has it that method is mode or way implying a manner in which a thing is done or in which it happens. Therefore, there are Socratic Method (used Socrates, father of western ethics and moral philosophy, referred to as method of *Elenchus* or Socratic Debate as well as dialectic method of inquiry, largely applied to the examination of key moral concepts); Dialectics (Greek term *dialektike*, meaning to converse, to discuss. It is the logic of reasoning, or a logical structure that holds together a continuous line of thought or exposition, determining the truth *via* thesis, antithesis and synthesis); Phenomenological Method (method of inquiry based on the premise that reality consists of objects and events as they are perceived or understood in human consciousness. It emphasizes immediacy of experience, pure data of consciousness, uncontaminated by metaphysical theories or scientific assumptions); Referencing as a Method (stands on the authority and sincere contributions of great thinkers, ever appealing to authority); Methodic Doubt (systematic process of being sceptical about (or doubting) the truth of one's belief as so be certain with what is true); Hermeneutics (meaning interpretation, theory and practice of interpretation, originally the interpretation, of texts, especially religious texts) Analytic Method-Analysis (means breaking-down of a whole into parts i.e. analysing) and Historical Method (borrowed from African Philosophy is an attempt to go into the past of any issue so as to be well footed in the present with deposits of history dealing with a record narrative of the past event with regard to particular event, period, nation or individual), (Onebunne, 2019).

Ism is a distinctive practice, system, or philosophy, typically a political ideology or an artistic movement. Definitions of ism have narrowed it as a belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school. Its synonyms are theories, doctrine, philosophical

system, school of thought. The concept of an ism may resemble that of a grand narrative. *Wikipedia* describes ism as a suffix in many English words, originally derived from the ancient Greek suffix *-ismos* and reaching English through the Latin *-ismus*, and the French *-isme*. It means taking side with or imitation of, and is often used to describe philosophies, theories, religions, social movements, artistic movements and behaviours. It is typically added to nouns. The first recorded usage of the suffix ism as a separate word in its own right was in 1680. By the nineteenth century it was being used by Thomas Carlyle to signify a pre-packaged ideology, (*Wikipedia*, n.d.). Often the concept of ism is as a collective derogatory term to lump together the radical social reform movements of the day such as Feminism, pacifism, socialism and various spiritual or religious movements considered non-mainstream by the standards of the time (such as traditionalism, Catholicism).

Philosophy as *Philosophia*, Love of Wisdom

Western Philosophy appreciates greatly the idea of *philosophia*. The etymology of the word "philosophy" traces its roots back to the Greek term *philosophia*, which combines *philos*, meaning love friendship, and *sophia*, meaning wisdom or knowledge. This linguistic combination succinctly encapsulates the essence of philosophy as a profound and passionate quest for knowledge and understanding. Philosophy, at its core, is not merely a subject of study or a set of abstract theories, but rather a lifelong commitment to seeking wisdom and uncovering the fundamental truths of existence. Throughout history, various philosophical traditions have arisen in different cultures and time periods, each imbued with its unique approach to the pursuit of wisdom. From the ancient Egypt of Pharaonic period unto Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle through the Indian thinkers of the Vedanta school and Jewish Philosophers, philosophy has evolved and adapted to the diverse intellectual landscapes it has encountered. Through careful analysis and critical examination, philosophers have posed profound questions, challenged conventional wisdom, and proposed innovative theories that continue to shape our understanding of the world. By exploring the multifaceted and ever-evolving nature of philosophy as the love of wisdom, we can ascertain its profound impact on human thought and existence. Philosophy has captivated the minds of thinkers throughout centuries, offering an intellectual journey that delves deep into the roots of human understanding. Within this intricate complexity of ideas and inquiries, the essence of philosophy lies in its embodiment of wisdom, known in ancient Greek as *philosophia*, the love of wisdom or pursuit of wisdom. The word or pursuit are action words that entail efforts and movement towards. This idea of activities in love or pursuit greatly contrasts much with that of habit as a concept.

Combining these elements, philosophy can be understood as a profound devotion to the pursuit and attainment of wisdom. Philosophy is, therefore, friendship with knowledge. In this perspective, therefore, philosophy embraces the quest for knowledge, truth, and understanding, as it seeks to comprehend and uncover the cardinal principles and ensures development of critical and thinking skills. In this line of thought, one cannot but see clearly the relevance of philosophy which makes it indispensable for our pursuit of wisdom in the betterment of humanity. With this mere understanding of philosophy as the love of wisdom, one can reach

out into the intricacies and explore profound implications of philosophy for humanity. To comprehensively grasp this connectedness between philosophy and wisdom, it is essential to considerably show that wisdom as the ultimate goal of philosophical inquiry. Wisdom, of course, goes beyond mere knowledge. It encompasses the practical application of knowledge in a wise, virtuous and prudent manner. Virtuous in our understanding has to do with the knowledge of virtue as something that lies in the middle, *in medio stat virtus*. Philosophy serves as a means to attain wisdom, while wisdom provides the guiding principles and insights for philosophical exploration. Wisdom acts as a compass, directing philosophical inquiry towards meaningful and valuable knowledge. In this understanding, philosophy can be seen as a route through wisdom and pathway towards wisdom, as it questions all known and professed assumptions, conceptual clarity and investigating the nature of reality; pursues critical thinking, and assures truth. In searching for the intricate connection between philosophy and wisdom, it is necessary to look into the diverse branches and schools of philosophy.

The impact of philosophical ideas with its branches cobwebbing all facets of life amidst theories on human thought and behaviour demonstrates the significant role of philosophy as the love of wisdom (*philosophia*), with strong influential emphasis on shaping individual beliefs, societal norms and moral decision-making. The functional examination and re-examination of the connection and the application of philosophical ideas and constructs to real-world issues and problems opens up the entry to exploring the role of philosophy in the formation of our personal beliefs and Weltanschauung. Philosophy, as the love of wisdom (*philosophia*), offers a unique perspective on world of reality and provides necessary frameworks for understanding and addressing such realities. Through philosophical inquiry, we can critically assess societal problems and propose innovative solutions. This assertion highlights the importance of philosophical analysis in addressing the multifaceted challenges of the real world while lays the foundation for practical applications by offering conceptual clarity and rigorous reasoning. Philosophy, however, equips individuals with the skills to critically analyse and evaluate information, enabling them to make sound judgements and decisions. There is therefore, a profound meaning with regard to philosophy as love of wisdom with its profound impact on human thought and a profound comprehension of reality as it affects us. Ultimately, this critical analysis has showcased philosophy's enduring significance as an intellectual pursuit that not only shapes our understanding of the world but also provides a foundation for seeking wisdom and loving knowledge.

Philosophy as *Habitus Intellectu*, Habit of the Intellect

William Anton Amo, a Ghanaian, once defined Philosophy as *habitus intellectus*, habit of the intellect. Within the vast realm of intellectual pursuits and gamut of Philosophical enterprise, philosophy stands as a perennial habit of intellect, captivating human minds with its profound inquiries and introspective musings. As Aristotle once proclaimed, "All men by nature desire to know," highlighting the enduring allure of philosophical contemplation. Indeed, in the modern landscape, the study of philosophy has witnessed an unprecedented surge in interest, as individuals seek a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them while engaging the intellect. In the midst of tumultuous decisions, philosophy acts as a guiding

beacon, illuminating the path towards comprehensive understanding and knowledge. The philosophies of ancient philosophers of the Western philosophical tradition like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as well as philosophers of other philosophical traditions played pivotal roles in reshaping the foundational formulation of philosophy as a habit of intellect.

However, as rationalism, on the other hand, focused on reason as the basic primary source of knowledge, existentialism challenged traditional philosophical beliefs by emphasizing individual existence and choice. Through the examination of these philosophical movements, it becomes evident that critical thinking and reflection are essential components of philosophical inquiry. A kind of engagement in deep intellectual exploration continues to shape our understanding of the world and ourselves by inspiring intellectual curiosity, critical analysis, and self-reflection. Within the realm of philosophy, if it is imperative to explore the major philosophical schools of thought and their profound contributions as regards *habitus intellectus* before delving into the role of critical thinking as an essential habit of intellect. Rationalism as a school of thought which emphasizes the power of reason and logic in understanding the world and acquiring knowledge. Scholars maintain that renowned philosopher René Descartes, a prominent figure within the rationalist tradition, put forth the notion of innate ideas, asserting that reason is the key to comprehending the world. Equally, is of the opinion that Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas laid the foundation for the cultivation of intellectual habits of reflection and skepticism. Thus, rationalism offers invaluable insights, fostering critical thinking and intellectual reflection as integral components of the *habitus intellectus*. However, Bertrand Russell noted, that "The essence of the independent mind lies not in what it thinks but in how it thinks," and as well emphasizes that the significance of this intellectual prowess envisioned in the habit of the intellect. Equally, Rene Descartes reiterated on the importance of critical thinking, stating thus: *cogito ergo sum*, that is, I think, therefore I am. These statements further underscore the intricate relationship between critical thinking and philosophy as a habit of intellect.

The discipline prompts individuals to question the very nature of reality, ponder over the meaning of life, and scrutinize the foundations of knowledge. Such profound philosophical inquiries require a heightened level of critical thinking beyond what may be demanded in other academic fields. Consequently, by actively engaging in critical thinking, individuals not only sharpen their analytical prowess, but also foster personal growth and intellectual development. Therefore, philosophy maintains a fundamental role as a habit of intellect allowing individuals to delve into complex ideas, evaluate arguments, and ultimately develop their own philosophical beliefs. Philosophy as a habit of intellect holds immense value in personal development and self-reflection. Engaging in philosophical thinking serves as a catalyst for individuals to cultivate critical thinking skills and analyse complex ideas in a profound systematicity. This intellectual habit sustains scholarship and encourages authorship. Philosophical inquiry allows individuals to make sense of the complexity in a heightened sense of criticality. Philosophy as a habit of intellect introspection and self-examination, stimulates self-reflection by prompting individuals to contemplate their own beliefs, values, and experiences. This introspection and self-examination foster personal growth and self-

awareness, creativity ultimately leading to a more enriched and fulfilling life within the intricate realms of intellectual pursuit. The concept of habit of intellect refers to a characteristic way of thinking, reasoning, and approaching knowledge acquisition prevalent within the boundaries knowledge. As French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu once remarked, "Philosophy is the most radical critique of all of the established principles and institutions which govern social life, all of the common representations which are collectively accredited." In this way, philosophy as a habit of intellect offers a distinct avenue of intellectual inquiry that fosters deeper reflections and promotes critical engagement with the complexities of human existence and knowledge acquisition.

Despite its value, philosophy as a habit of intellect faces several challenges and limitations. One challenge is the inherent subjectivity of philosophical inquiries, which can lead to varied interpretations and conflicting perspectives. For instance, different philosophers may propose conflicting theories and ideas, making it difficult to ascertain the ultimate truth or reach a consensus. Furthermore, the abstract nature of philosophical concepts often makes them complex and open to multiple interpretations, contributing to the challenges of understanding and applying philosophical principles. To illustrate this point, the theories of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche exemplify the contrasting ideas within philosophy. Schopenhauer argues for the negation of desires and individuality as a means to escape suffering, while Nietzsche emphasizes the affirmation of life and personal power. These divergent views highlight the challenges in determining a definitive path for intellectual growth within philosophy.

Amidst the complexities in our world world, the habit of philosophizing or habit of the intellect remains as relevant as ever. This is why Philosophy equips one with essential skills and broaden ones perspectives enabling him or her in navigating across the intricacies of contemporary realities. Through a genuine philosophical engagement and inquiry, people are encouraged to examine their own beliefs, re-examine their values, and analyse their actions. This form of critical introspection enables self realization, self-growth and helps one to cultivate a clearer sense of whom one is and an appreciable act within realities. Moreover, while supporting this view many scholars maintains that, philosophy is an instrument of culture and tradition in the same sense that the fine arts, the sciences, the crafts are instruments of culture. It is a method of discovering spiritual values... it is concerned with the processes and conditions that make for social welfare". This idea or statement highlights the relevance of philosophy as a habit of intellect in enhancing cultural and social welfare, emphasizing its practical application in today's society. The role of philosophy as a habit of intellect in shaping societal values and norms is a topic that demands nuanced analysis. It is essential to explore how philosophy, as a habit of intellect subjects societal values to critical examinations By embracing diverse perspectives, philosophy as a habit of intellect expands beyond the confines of singular ideologies, rendering it a more comprehensive and inclusive field of study.

On the Traditions of Philosophy

Traditions of Philosophy is also known as the philosophical traditions. It is the study of traditions or institutions of philosophy within the history of philosophy as a human excursus.

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 have to do with proper understanding of philosophy from the regional and historical aspects of its development, (Onebunne & Okoye, 2023). 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 philosophers do not necessarily agree but their thoughts endure.

The idea of tradition is very pertinent in 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. Philosophy as a part of world philosophical heritage is a product of traditions of Philosophy: Western Philosophical Traditions (WPT), Eastern/Oriental Philosophical Traditions (EOPT), Abrahamic (Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (AbPT) and African Philosophical Traditions (APT), (Onebunne & Okoye, 2023).

Origin of Critical inquiry in Philosophical Traditions

Philosophical enterprise began with the human specie that reasons or tries to make use of the intellect. In our judgement, therefore, philosophy is as old as *homo cogitans* and all forms *animal rationals* and *homo loquens*. The field of philosophy has long been a subject of fascination and inquiry, with its origins deeply rooted in the annals of human history. Understanding the beginnings of philosophy is crucial in comprehending the intricate tapestry of human thought and existence.

Understanding the origins of philosophy is crucial in order to fully appreciate its development and influence throughout history. For centuries, Eurocentric views have dominated academic discourse, erroneously portraying ancient Greece as the birthplace of philosophical thought. However, Theophilus Obenga's seminal work and ground-breaking book, *African Philosophy: Pharaonic Period (2780-330BC)*, challenges this Eurocentric narrative and unearths the rich philosophical traditions of ancient Africa. Through meticulous research and analysis of primary texts, archaeological findings and linguistic evidence, Obenga (1990) reveals the deep philosophical concepts and ideas embedded within ancient Egyptian culture and society. His exploration of wisdom teachings found in the *Pyramid Texts*, the *Coffin Texts*, and the *Book of the Dead* demonstrate a profound engagement with metaphysics, ethics, and cosmology, suggesting a sophisticated philosophical tradition that pre-dates Greek philosophy. By providing concrete evidence and shedding light on an often overlooked aspect of history, Obenga's seminal work challenges the notion that philosophy emerged solely from Greek intellectual traditions and highlights the significant contributions made by ancient African philosophy. Such scholarly evidence is very crucial in contributing to a more inclusive understanding of the origins and development of philosophy, especially given the tendency of Western scholarship to overlook non-European perspectives. As we explore the origins of

philosophy, it is imperative to acknowledge and appreciate the profound influence of ancient African thought on global intellectual traditions.

The contribution of ancient African philosophy to the world of critical and unaided thought is significant and often overlooked. In order to fully understand and appreciate the impact of ancient African philosophy, it is essential to delve into the key contributions made by this rich intellectual tradition. Theophilus Obenga's book, *African Philosophy: Pharaonic Period (2780-330BC)*, serves as a valuable resource in unearthing the origins of philosophy and shedding light on the profound influence of African philosophical traditions and thoughts. Obenga (1990) meticulously looks into the Pharaonic period, providing detailed explanations and analysis of the philosophical concepts and ideas that emerged during this era. Obenga (1990) emphasizes that "African philosophical thought is rooted in a holistic world-view that encompasses the interconnections between humanity, nature, and the divine, providing a foundation for complex metaphysical and ethical systems" (p. 243). This quote underscores the comprehensive nature of African philosophy and its far-reaching implications. Thus, through a punctilious examination of Obenga's work, it becomes evident that African philosophical thought holds immense value and has greatly influenced the development of philosophical ideas worldwide within philosophical traditions. As we delve deeper into the exploration of ancient African philosophy, it becomes clear that its significance cannot be underestimated.

The Pharaonic period of ancient Egypt holds a powerful legacy and has significantly influenced contemporary African thought and world philosophical enterprise. The concept of *Ma'at* demonstrates the profound philosophical depth of the Pharaonic period and its impact on shaping the world-view and ideologies of ancient Egyptians. This philosophical framework, rooted in an understanding of cosmic balance and harmony, permeated various aspects of ancient Egyptian society, from their legal systems to religious rituals. Theophilus Obenga's book provides numerous quotes and references to primary sources that illustrate the enduring importance of *Ma'at* in ancient Egyptian philosophy. Additionally, the advancements in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine achieved during the Pharaonic period further reflect the sophisticated intellectual climate of the time. These scientific achievements not only highlight the depth of philosophical thought but also emphasize the interconnectedness of diverse fields of knowledge in ancient Egyptian society. The significant contributions made in these areas were driven by a philosophical mindset that sought to uncover the underlying principles of the cosmos. By examining the rich philosophical heritage of the Pharaonic period, we gain insight into the intellectual traditions and philosophies that continue to shape contemporary African thought. Consequently, it is crucial to acknowledge the enduring legacy and significant influence of Pharaonic philosophy when critiquing the scholarly neglect of Western philosophy in appreciating the uniqueness and recognizing the contributions of African philosophy.

By highlighting the neglected contributions of African thinkers, Obenga (1990) fosters a more inclusive and accurate understanding of the global history of philosophy. As scholars, it is essential to acknowledge and engage with this research to rectify the long-standing neglect of African philosophy and contribute to a more diverse and comprehensive body of philosophical

knowledge. Drawing from a diverse range of sources, from hieroglyphic inscriptions to temple morals, Obenga (1990) delves deep into the philosophical ideas embedded within these ancient texts. His approach also includes a careful examination of linguistic aspects, as he traces the underlying philosophical concepts through an analysis of ancient African languages. By merging the archaeological findings, linguistic analysis, and extensive textual interpretations, Obenga (1990) offers a comprehensive exploration of the philosophical foundations during the Pharaonic period.

Enduring Significant Contributions From Philosophical Traditions: An Appraisal

Firstly, in the review of the intellectual legacies of ancient philosophers of the Western Philosophical Tradition below, there is this close link in their definitional appreciation of philosophy as *philosophia*. Their fundamental basic critical thoughts are linked with every act of *Philosophia*, that is *love of wisdom*. In the second review below, the contributions of Theophilus Obenga and William Anton Amo Philosophies were directly connected with philosophy as habit of the intellect (Amo) alongside hermeneutics of culture (Okere) seen and implied in the seminal work of Obenga, T. on Ancient Egypt of Pharaonic period. An extensive and expansive interpretations of such Egyptian concepts show philosophy as primarily as an unaided intellectual act, that is *habitus intellectus*. It is, however, clear that in the course of philosophical traditions especially, within the bounds of Western Philosophical Tradition and African Philosophical Tradition, there is this strong definitional indices of philosophy as *philosophia* (love of wisdom) and *habitus intellectus* (habit of the intellect). Both delineations try to define in a proper sense what philosophy is all about. However, the need for this definitional balance. Such is the thrust of this paper and reviews below.

Review of the Intellectual Legacy of Thales as First Philosopher

Thales has the privilege of being the first philosopher of the western philosophical tradition. The intellectual revolution brought forth by Thales in Western philosophical tradition, with his concept of water as the *urstoff* (primary substance or stuff), has left an lasting significance on the development of philosophy, sparking a legacy that resonates to this day. As we delve into the realm of Thales' philosophy, it becomes evident that his contributions transcend time and continue to shape our understanding of the world.

Thales, widely regarded as the first philosopher in Western history, proposed a groundbreaking concept as the primary substance that formed the bedrock of his philosophical framework. For Thales, the primary substance was water, and he believed that all things originated from it. In asserting water's transformative quality, Thales posited that it could change into different forms and, in doing so, gave rise to all existence. This profound insight into the fundamental nature of reality marked a significant departure from traditional mythological explanations of reality. Thales supported his theory by observing water's ability to solidify into ice or evaporate into vapour, highlighting its inherent capacity for change. Such observations laid the groundwork for understanding the dynamic nature of the universe and influenced subsequent philosophers like Anaximenes, Anaximander and Heraclitus, who further built upon and expanded Thales' ideas. Thales' philosophy thus not only occupied a

crucial position in the timeline of philosophical development but also demonstrated the power of observation and deduction in shaping our understanding of the world. This ground-breaking idea, though materialistic, served as a catalyst for other philosophers to explore and expand upon. Anaximander, a disciple of Thales, built upon this concept by proposing that the primary substance is an unlimited and indeterminate *apeiron*. This notion of a fundamental substance laid the groundwork for philosophical discourse surrounding the nature of reality and existence.

In Thales' philosophy, unassisted observation and unaided reason held a pivotal role, serving as fundamental elements in his philosophical approach. Thales strongly emphasized the importance of careful observation of the natural world and logical reasoning in the pursuit of knowledge. This emphasis on observation is distinctly evident in his exploration of the concept of the primary substance. Thales sought to identify the fundamental element from which all things in the universe are composed, and through observation and logical reasoning, he proposed water as the primary substance. This assertion was supported by his observations of water's transformative properties, including its ability to change states and its indispensability for all forms of life. Moreover, Thales employed reason to establish this claim, as he logically concluded that water could exist in various forms and give rise to other substances through a transformative process. Admittedly, some may argue that Thales' focus on observation and reason fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature of reality and existence, asserting that his emphasis on identifying the primary substance overlooks other significant aspects of philosophical inquiry hence his choice of foundation of reality was mere elemental. Moreover, this concept challenged the prevailing mythological explanations of natural phenomena, marking a significant shift towards rational and empirical inquiry. However, it is crucial to recognize that Thales' approach laid a solid foundation for future philosophical investigations. By prioritizing observation and reason, Thales paved the way for further exploration and refinement of philosophical concepts. Consequently, Thales' philosophy, with its underlying focus on observation and reason, not only shaped his own contributions but also served as a cornerstone for subsequent philosophers to build upon in their exploration of existential questions.

Thales, often hailed as the father of philosophy, had a remarkably unique perspective on the nature of reality and existence with just an unaided reasoning. By recognizing water as the foundation of reality, Thales ingeniously reached beyond the surface appearances of the world and delved into the essence of existence itself. Thales' radical ideas not only revolutionized ancient Greek thought but also played an instrumental role in shaping the course of Western philosophy. Thales' emphasis on observation and reason as the sources of knowledge distinguished him from earlier philosophical accounts rooted in mythology, making him an innovator in the realm of philosophy. These ideas were not mere speculations but were grounded in Thales' recognition of the elemental transformative nature of water. Thales' influence on philosophy extends far beyond his contributions to scientific inquiry and empirical evidence. As the popularly acclaimed first philosopher, he sought to understand the fundamental nature of reality and taught that everything could be traced back to a single, underlying substance.

Furthermore, Thales' impact on the field of philosophy extends beyond his contributions to empirical evidence and metaphysics. Thales' critical views had a fundamental result on metaphysical study of being. He was very premier in inquiring into the fundamental nature of reality and his concept of the *urstoff* or primary substance laid the foundation for later metaphysical discussions. Thales believed that water was the primary substance from which all things were formed, challenging the prevailing mythological explanations and initiating a shift towards rational and systematic inquiry. As Aristotle noted, Thales sought the underlying principles governing the universe, and this pursuit of knowledge influenced subsequent philosophers to explore the metaphysical realm. Thales' exploration of metaphysics and the study of being established a framework for understanding the fundamental nature of reality. Thales' involvement in metaphysics and the analysis of existence demonstrates his significant impact, which is closely tied to his perspective on the nature of change and permanence. Thales of Miletus left an indelible mark on the development of Western philosophy. Thus, in examining the intellectual contributions of Thales, we gain insight into the origins of Western philosophy and the enduring impact of his ideas.

Exploring Unlocking the Ancient Wisdom of Socrates to Philosophy

The compelling quote from Socrates: *the only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing* sets to unlock the depth and breadth of Socrates' contributions to philosophical enterprise. Spanning various aspects, from his unique approach to inquiry through the Socratic method, his utilization of Socratic irony to challenge assumptions, his role in shaping Western philosophy and influencing Plato, his profound impact on his students such as Xenophon and Aristippus, his ethical considerations through virtue ethics, his concept of "The Unexamined Life is not Worth Living," his critique of Athenian society and democracy, to his unyielding pursuit of genuine wisdom and eventful death as result of of being falsely accused of corrupting the youth or most probably enwisdomizing the youth, Socrates' contributions revolutionized the field of philosophy.

Socrates' scholarly contributions to philosophy was uniquely foundational. Socrates coming form a humble background unlike other philosophers of his era. Socrates' early experiences and education played a significant role in shaping his principles and beliefs. Growing up in a relatively modest environment allowed him to get acquainted with low-life standard, as well as challenge the traditional norms and explore new ideas. His diverse perspective, influenced by his background, provided him with a fresh and critical approach to philosophical inquiry. Furthermore, delving into Socrates' life and background provides a gateway to understanding his unique approach to inquiry - the Socratic Method.

The Socratic Method reveals its profound impact on the field of philosophy during ancient times. Developed by Socrates, this innovative methodological approach revolutionized the way inquiries were conducted and philosophies were examined. The Socratic Method, also known as *elenchus*, encompassed a systematic process of questioning and dialogue aimed at uncovering underlying assumptions and pursuing truth. Unlike other philosophical approaches

of the time, such as sophism, which often promoted rhetoric and manipulation; nihilism, which acclaims that nothing exists, the Socratic Method placed moral and intellectual integrity at its core. Socrates employed this method in his dialogues with fellow Athenians, like a midwife, attends to their lives-pregnant with meaning, challenging their beliefs and exposing contradictions through a series of thought-provoking questions. By employing this method, Socrates not only encouraged critical thinking but also fostered self-examination and the acknowledgement of one's own ignorance—a crucial step towards the pursuit of wisdom.

Korab-Karpowicz, W. J. (n.d.) asserts that, the dialogues recorded by Plato, one of Socrates' disciples, provide concrete evidence of Socrates' unique approach to inquiry. For instance, Pangle, T. L. (1985) maintains that in Plato's "Apology," Socrates engages in a series of back-and-forth exchanges with his accusers, effectively demonstrating the transformative power of the Socratic Method. Equally, Socrates skilfully employs Socratic irony during his trial, pretending to be ignorant of the charges against him while subtly exposing the ignorance of his accusers. This technique served not only as a rhetorical device but also as a tool to uncover the underlying truths and inconsistencies within the arguments presented. Moreover, Socratic irony had a profound impact on the development and evolution of philosophical discourse. It introduced a new way of engaging in philosophical conversations, focusing on the process of questioning, doubting and challenging established beliefs rather than providing definitive answers. This approach fostered intellectual curiosity and encouraged thinkers to critically examine their own beliefs as well as those of others, leading to the advancement of philosophical thinking, (Korab-Karpowicz, n.d.).

Socrates' approach to philosophy with critical thinking, a kind of self thinking, was revolutionary for his time, marked by a tireless quest for knowledge and a determination to challenge the beliefs and assumptions of his fellow Athenians, hence, his consequent death with hemlock. Critical thinking is a skill that has become increasingly crucial and highly valued in contemporary society. It empowers individuals to approach complex problems with clarity and objectivity, enabling them to make clearly reasoned judgements and find distinct innovative solutions. The origin and evolution of critical thinking can be traced back to ancient philosophers and scholars who were opportune to have recorded theirs from a variety of intellectual traditions, thus emphasizing the enduring importance of Thales and his influence on successive thinkers. In this line of thought, the burning of Alexandrian library and the questions surrounding the stolen of African legacies perturbs. The roots of critical thinking can be traced back to the wisdom of old civilization, that is, the intellectual richness of ancient civilizations and ancient philosophers who illuminated the path to intellectual enlightenment. Through the intellectual traditions of African Philosophy, reflective traditions of Eastern philosophy and the inquisitive methods of ancient philosophers of western philosophical traditions, particularly the profound influence of Greek philosophers who however, amongst others, made significant contributions to its development and Socratic questioning and maxim: *man know thyself* and Aristotelian maxim: *unexamined life is not worth living*, the foundation for critical thinking was laid. The development and practice of critical thinking can equally be traced back to the intellectual traditions of ancient civilizations, particularly in the realms of

Eastern philosophy and ancient civilizations, such as Confucianism and Buddhism, also emphasized critical thinking through introspection, mindfulness and the examination of multiple perspectives while emphasizing the significance of rational inquiry and logical reasoning.

Additionally, it is important to note that some critics argue that Socrates' emphasis on questioning and skepticism was detrimental to society, as it challenged established beliefs and societal norms. However, it can be argued that Socrates' approach was necessary for intellectual prowess and the expansion of knowledge. By encouraging individuals to question their beliefs and assumptions, Socrates promoted critical thinking and the development of new ideas. Through his provocative inquiries, Socrates prompted individuals to examine the foundations of their beliefs, ultimately leading to intellectual growth and the exploration of alternative perspectives. Socrates' contributions to philosophy were significant and unquantifiable with a profound impact on Western philosophical tradition as he challenged conventional wisdom and encouraged critical inquiry. Socrates simply laid the foundation for reflective development and inspired generations of thinkers after him to engage in the pursuit of wisdom and truth. Socratic legacies continue to shape philosophical discourse and serves as a guiding and leading light for those seeking a deeper and holistic understanding of the world.

Plato, being one of Socrates' most dedicated students, studied under his guidance for a significant period of time. This student-teacher relationship is evident in Plato's extensive writings about his teacher, demonstrating his deep admiration for Socrates. In incorporating Socratic dialogues into his own philosophical works, Plato further solidified the influence of Socrates' teachings. By employing Socrates' method of inquiry, Plato encouraged critical thinking and the pursuit of truth in his dialogues. Notable examples of Socratic influence include *The Republic* and, where Socrates' teachings are prominent. Moreover, Socrates' emphasis on seeking universal truth contributed to Plato's theory of Forms. Plato integrated Socrates' ideology into his own concept of reality, culminating in the belief that true knowledge lies in the realm of eternal and unchangeable forms. Most citations from Plato's works, such as *The Allegory of the Cave*, shows his internalization of Socrates' critical teachings. Therefore, it is clear that Socrates' contributions to philosophy are not only confined to his own ideas but also extended to his disciples as well as the students of his disciples beginning with Plato. Xenophon, was a very prominent disciple of Socrates. He was deeply influenced by his mentor's ideas and principles. In Xenophon's works, such as *Memorabilia and Symposium*, we witness the manifestation of Socrates' teachings and their impact on Xenophon's philosophical world-view. Moreover, Aristippus, another significant student of Socrates, further exemplifies the lasting impact of Socrates' teachings. Aristippus, known for his hedonistic leanings, was initially drawn to Socrates and his philosophy of virtue ethics. Socrates' emphasis on the importance of character and moral development had a profound effect on Aristippus, leading him to develop his own variant of hedonism that focused on the pursuit of pleasure while maintaining a virtuous soul. In summary, Socrates' contributions to ethical concerns and virtue-ethics have shed light on the importance of moral behaviour and self-examination. His emphasis on ethics and virtue continues to inspire philosophical debates and shape our

understanding of ethical principles today. The limit of Socratic influence on Philosophy with particular reference to Western Philosophical Tradition and her philosophers was duly informed by the fact that Socrates remains a product of African Philosophical Tradition and her philosophers. Our next section is to look into African Philosophical Tradition as well as the contributions of her philosophers especially the unique contributions of Theophilus Obenga and ancient African Philosophy with the possibility of first African philosopher as well as William Anto Amo involvement in Philosophy

Review of Obenga's African Philosophy: Pharaonic Period (2780-330BC)

This review will help in understanding the Pharaonic period of ancient Egypt. Such a venture through African Philosophical tradition is very crucial in unearthing the origins of philosophy. Theophilus Obenga's book *African Philosophy: Pharaonic Period (2780-330BC)* delves deep into the Pharaonic era of ancient Egypt to unveil the origins of philosophy as human excursus. Through his meticulous analysis and hermeneutics, Obenga uncovers a wealth of evidence that supports the existence of philosophical thought during that time. One primary source that Obenga references much was the *Pyramid Texts*: a collection of ancient Egyptian writings inscribed on the inner walls of pyramids. These texts encompass a wide range of topics, including religious rituals, cosmology, and moral teachings, which indicate a philosophical dimension to ancient Egyptian culture. Additionally, Obenga examines the *Coffin Texts*, which were inscribed on coffins and funerary furniture, and reveals further philosophical ideas and concepts embedded within these texts. Furthermore, Obenga shines a spotlight on the role of the Pharaonic priesthood in shaping philosophical thought in Egyptian society. The priesthood, being the custodians of knowledge and wisdom, had a deep influence on the philosophical development of ancient Africa. By studying the writings and teachings of the Pharaonic period, Obenga unravels the philosophical heritage that has long been overlooked and engaged with by Western philosophies. Through his comprehensive analysis of the texts and artefacts of this era, Obenga enhances our understanding of the diverse intellectual traditions that emerged from African soil. The exploration of these philosophical roots is instrumental in broadening our perspectives and acknowledging the significant contributions of ancient Africa to world thought.

Egypt's Pharaonic period, which lasted from 2780-330 BC, marked the reign of numerous pharaohs and the establishment of a powerful civilization. It was during this period that ancient Egyptians developed complex belief systems, religious practices and intellectual traditions. Delving deeper into the philosophical aspects of this era, we find the emergence of key concepts and ideas in ancient Egyptian culture. One such concept is *Ma'at* (fundamental and cosmic principle of truth, balance and order), which encompassed the principles of truth, justice and harmony. The Egyptians also embraced the notion of balancing opposites, a philosophy reflected in their understanding of natural phenomena such as day and night, life and death, and, order and chaos. Moreover, the belief in an afterlife and the intricate rituals surrounding death further attest to the philosophical underpinnings of the Pharaonic period. By studying this era, we gain insight into the philosophical foundations that laid the groundwork for later African philosophical traditions. It challenges Eurocentric views that erroneously and narrowly

placed the origin of philosophy solely within Western traditions, highlighting the vast contributions of African thought to world philosophy. In conclusion, comprehending the Pharaonic period of ancient Egypt plays a vital role in revealing the origins of philosophy and recognizing the rich legacy of African philosophical perspectives. The comprehensive understanding of this ancient civilization provides a vital backdrop for further exploration of philosophy's origins.

Primacy of African Civilizations

The Primacy of African Civilizations is seen in the fact that it precedes European Civilization and Later European Colonization. Civilizations therefore are through African civilization. In the chequered history of humanity, the dawn of human civilization can be traced back to the immense and diverse continent of Africa. African, a blessed land very abundant with a thriving and wealthy history civilizations predating the arrival of Imperial masters as European Colonizers through their exploration that turned into exploitation. The world has witnessed many powerful kingdoms that originated from the ancient kingdom of Egypt. Across the ages and epochs, drawing upon a variety of historical accounts, profound understanding of archaeological discoveries, and tapestry of scholarly research, strong kingdoms and great empires emerged leaving an ineradicable mark on the socio-cultural and politico-economic landscape of Africa leading to a significant Egyptian civilization which gave room to an enduring African civilization. Notably, as a hub of contemporary and modern innovations, Egypt remains the pioneer cultural heritage and the centre of many scientific cum technological advancements in areas as sophisticated irrigation systems, monumental architecture like the pyramids, mathematics, medicine, and writing systems. Egypt pioneered these innovative prowess which has influenced other African and global societies. The geo-strategic location of Egypt between continents of Africa and Europe as well as Asia served as a great network for great exchanges of natural and human resources, ideas and sociocultural cum economic dealings. A look at the Egyptian civilization shows that African civilization is part of the Egyptian civilization.

Egypt: The First African Civilization

Africa remains the cradle of humankind and civilization while men lived in a state of nature with no rules or development witnessed today. However, in the process the first African civilization emerged with three early or oldest African civilizations, which were kingdoms of: Egypt, Kush and Axum. Others were Empires of: Carthage, Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Great Zimbabwe.

Egypt is found in the north-eastern parts of Africa along the great river Nile. The Nile River provided the Egyptians with much-needed water for farming. However, Egypt was the first African country to undergo and contend civilization. In the tenth millennia BC, the early Egyptians lived a nomadic life where they hunted and gathered food which was replaced by agricultural farming, where grains were the main food source. In 6000BC, a Neolithic society was established, (Wesley, 2022). In course of time, Egyptians shifted from Agricultural life unto established new forms of leadership, complex societies, and other professional labours. With

time Egyptians continued to develop more complicated cultures, which eventually led to the development and innovation of writing in 3200 BC, (Wesley, 2022). During the old kingdom, Egypt developed greatly in arts, architecture, pyramids, and complex palaces for their kings. During this period, Egypt succeeded greatly in trading sectors as it traded with other neighbouring kingdoms. According to Wesley (2022), “in 3100 BCE, the upper and lower Egypt were united by King Menes and formed one united first kingdom of Egypt. Through the leadership of Menes, the first kingdom from 2700-2200bc experienced massive civilization and the construction of the Pyramids. This period of civilization was called the old kingdom, and it was also the period when Egyptian kings adopted the title Pharaoh”. In spite of the massive success, there was instability in Egypt of which King Ahmose I restored the stability by establishing the new kingdom from 1550 to 1070 BC leading to the bureaucratic and administrative reforms were established, which helped Egypt prosper economically and politically, (Wesley, 2022).

Kush: The Kingdom of Kush exercised its powers for over 1000years. Andrews (2017) maintains that “this ancient Nubian empire reached its peak in the second millennium B.C. when it ruled over a vast swath of territory along the Nile River in what is now Sudan. Almost all that is known about Kush comes from Egyptian sources...The kingdom... even ruled Egypt as the 25th Dynasty—and it adopted many of its neighbour’s customs. The Kushites worshipped some of the Egyptian gods, mummified their dead and built their own types of pyramids”. *The Land of Punt:* This Kingdom dates to around 2500 B.C. It was known as a “Land of the Gods”. As a mysterious empire researchers claimed that Punt is located somewhere on the Red Sea coast of East Africa, or in a modern-day Ethiopia and Eritrea, the precise location of the Land of Punt has still yet to be confirmed. *Carthage:* A North African commercial hub that flourished for over 500 years. The city-state began its life in the 8th or 9th century B.C. as a Phoenician settlement in what is now Tunisia (Andrews, 2017). Carthage was destroyed in one of the bloody Punic wars around 264 B.C. unto 146 B.C. (Andrews, 2017). *Aksum:* The Kingdom of Aksum is now located around Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. Surprisingly little is known about Aksum’s origins, but by the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. it was a trading juggernaut whose gold and ivory made it a vital link between ancient Europe and the Far East (Andrews, 2017). *Malian Empire:* Andrew (2017) maintains that “the founding of the Mali Empire dates to the 1200s when a ruler named Sundiata Keita—sometimes called the “Lion King”—led a revolt against a Sosso king and united his subjects into a new state”. Malian empire has cities of Djenne and Timbuktu. *Songhai Empire:* It was formed in 15th century from some of the former regions of the Mali Empire. This West African kingdom was larger than Western Europe and comprised parts of a dozen modern-day nations and was favoured by vigorous trade policies. *Zimbabwe Empire:* It is know as the capital city of an indigenous empire that thrived in the region between the 13th and 15th centuries. This kingdom ruled over a large chunk of modern-day Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

African civilizations predates European civilization as well as European colonization. Nevertheless, with its rich history and diverse civilizations, African civilizations contributed greatly to world history and culture, John G. Jackson, Pan Africanist Writer asserts in a *Tiktok*

presentations thus that, “I found out that the Greeks who were supposed to have been the founders of civilization, because they were the first civilised white folks. But the Greeks got their civilization from the Egyptians and the Egyptians were Black people and the Greeks passed that civilisation on to the Romans. They couldn’t retain it, they lost it. They had a dark age in Europe for 500 years and then another bunch of Africans, the Moors from North Africa moved into Spain and started civilization all over again. So instead of Europe civilising Africa, Africa has civilised Europe two times”. It is worthy of note that Jackson (writer) John Glover Jackson (1907-1993) remains was an American Pan-Africanist historian, lecturer, teacher and writer who promoted ideas of Afrocentrism, atheism, and Jesus Christ in comparative mythology. He remains an authority with his intellectual contributions to African civilization. Moreover, the aforementioned powerful kingdoms, with their advanced political cum economic, and psychocultural systems, challenge the narratives that Africa is solely a passive recipient of foreign influence. These kingdoms rather illustrate the complex richness, sophisticated trans-Saharan economic activities and tortuous innovation of African civilizations before European colonization.

Ma’at: A Traditional African Philosophical Principle

African philosophy has come to be like other philosophies sharing in the world philosophical heritage. The immortal words of Chinua Achebe (the prominent Nigerian novelist and essayist, in a 1994 interview with the *Paris Review*) resounds thus: "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter". It is time to tell our story as Africans more as African Philosophers. African philosophy in its unique way holds a distinct and defined place as a critical heritage in a vibrant tapestry of critical thought which has continued in reshaping the societal norms and intellectual discourses. Obenga (in Wiredu, 2004) maintains that “in remote times African philosophy was mainly located in the Nile Valley, that is, in Kemet or ancient Egypt and in Kush (Napata-Meroe). Philosophy flourished in Egypt from about 3400BC to 343BC and in Kush (also known as Nubia or Ethiopia by the Greeks) from about 1000BC to 625BC”, (p.31).

The grandeur and wonder of ancient Egypt of the Pharaonic period shows the intellectual and cultural achievements of ancient African civilizations that enriches the study of African philosophy with its deep and profound impact on the contemporary African identity and culture while at the same time links the interconnectedness and continuity of African critical thoughts throughout history. During the established Pharaonic period (2780-330 BC), African philosophy showcased distinctive characteristics that distinguished it from other ancient philosophical traditions. One of such notable characteristic was the inherent connection between philosophy, spirituality and the power of human thought. However, a discussion the core principles and beliefs of Pharaonic philosophy during the designated period of 2780-330 BC reveals the significant influence it had on the forming and shaping of the ancient African civilizations. Based on a complex cosmological worldview, Pharaonic philosophy encompassed various concepts and principles like *Ma’at* that formed the foundation of ancient civilizations, (Obenga in Wiredu, 2004).

Ma'at is the central principle of Pharaonic philosophy that spanned from 2780 to 330 BC. Obenga (in Wiredu 2004) is of the opinion that “a philosopher champions moderate views or judgement, as he loves truth (*maat*)...A great philosophical and scientific tradition existed in ancient Egypt (p.35)”. Rooted in the ancient Egyptian civilization, *Ma'at* emphasized the importance of balance, justice, and harmony in all aspects of life. This concept provided a kind of moral equipoise and ethico-moral framework for the ancient African societies. This principle *Ma'at* permeated various aspects of Pharaonic society, influencing learning especially in politics, law, ethics, economics and spirituality. The profound significance of *Ma'at* extended far beyond the boundaries of ancient Egypt civilizations and continues to resonate in contemporary African societies. Obenga shows in his seminal work showed that *Ma'at* serves as a moral compass, and ethical orbit guiding individuals in their daily interactions while serving as a foundation for establishing societal norm, social order and cohesion. Equally, *Ma'at* influences the governance, art, and education systems. Under the guiding principle of *Ma'at*, rulers were expected to maintain order and uphold justice, ensuring the well-being of their people. People from all walks of life like art and architecture also reflected this philosophical principle, with depictions of deities and Pharaohs showcasing their adherence to *Ma'at* and its general guiding discipline. These ideas stand in total contrast to Greek philosophy that simply focused more on rationality, that is, an unaided reasoning and human agency as well as Indian philosophy with its much emphasis on karma and liberation from samsara. Moreover, Pharaonic philosophy, characterised by its symbolism and use of hieroglyphs is quite different from the abstract and analytic approach of Chinese philosophy, seen in Daoism and Confucianism. *Ma'at* remains the keystone of Egyptian Philosophy. *Ma'at* is rooted in the word *maa* which basically means the *real, reality*. *Ma'at* is reality as a whole, that is, the totality of all things possessing actuality, existence, or essence. *Ma'at* is that which exists objectively. In fact, *Ma'at* is that which has necessary and not just contingent existence....*Ma'at* is an exhaustive and comprehensive concept (Obenga, 2004).

This understanding of *Ma'at* allowed the Egyptians to recognize the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of maintaining harmony in the world. Additionally, the Egyptian concept of *Heqa* or wisdom was highly revered, emphasizing the importance of *intellect* and knowledge in their society. Obenga supports his claims with evidence from ancient texts and archaeological findings, highlighting the rich philosophical heritage of ancient Africa. By shedding light on the origins of philosophy in ancient Egypt, Obenga challenges traditional Eurocentric narratives that solely attribute philosophy to ancient Greece. This calls for a more inclusive and comprehensive study of human intellectual traditions. Understanding the philosophical concepts in ancient Egyptian society opens up avenues for further analysis and exploration of key philosophical concepts in subsequent African philosophical traditions. The philosophical contributions of African civilizations, particularly ancient Egypt, have often been overlooked, but through Obenga's book, we gain valuable insight into their significance, offering a platform for further scholarly inquiry and recognition.

First Philosopher of Philosophical Traditions and African Philosophy.

For centuries now and until recently, the history of philosophy is often recounted ignorantly through the lens of Western thinkers binoculars like Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Hence, to the question usual *who is the first philosopher?* many have answer presumably *Alexander Thales*. Knowledge of Philosophical traditions makes such an answer incorrect. But it is correct if one talks of Western Philosophical Traditions, (WPT). But once it has to do with philosophy in general (be it APT, AbPT and EOPT), the first philosopher must be located with the oldest philosophical tradition which rightly resides in APT and Egypt in particular, as the cradle of ancient civilization. This why the historical roots of philosophical inquiry extend far beyond ancient Greece. It, however, extends into the rich complexity of African intellectual past. While records of ancient African philosophy are scarce then due to the oral tradition that predominated in many African societies, there are indications of profound philosophical thought dating back to millennia of Africa history. However, today there are tapestries of great scholarship and authorship to this cause.

The title of the first philosopher in Egyptian records is often attributed to Ptahhotep (pounced *Ta-ho-tep*), a vizier who served during the fifth dynasty of ancient Egypt, circa 24th century BCE, while Thales was reckoned 4th BCE. Ptahhotep is renowned for his wisdom and moral teachings, which have been preserved in the form of the "Maxims of Ptahhotep." These maxims offer practical advice on ethics, governance and interpersonal relationships, reflecting Ptahhotep's philosophical insights into human nature and the proper conduct of life. "Maxims of Ptahhotep," remains an enduring collection of moral and ethical teachings that emphasize wisdom, humility and respect for others. These maxims provide insights into ancient Egyptian philosophical thought, particularly regarding the importance of virtuous living and the pursuit of *ma'at*, the concept of cosmic balance and harmony (Wikipedia, n.d.).

The "Maxims of Ptahhotep" is a literary work consisting of a series of aphorisms and proverbs attributed to Ptahhotep, who is believed to have authored the text as a guide for his son. The maxims cover a wide range of topics, including civic and theological as well as philosophical virtues: humility, respect for authority, and the pursuit of wisdom. Ptahhotep emphasizes the importance of virtuous behaviour and the cultivation of moral character, advocating for a life of integrity and righteousness. One of the central themes of Ptahhotep's philosophy is the concept of *ma'at*, which represents the ancient Egyptian ideal of cosmic balance and harmony. *Ma'at* encompasses notions of truth, justice and order, serving as a guiding principle for ethical conduct and social cohesion. Ptahhotep's maxims exhort individuals to uphold *ma'at* in their actions and interactions, promoting a society governed by moral integrity and mutual respect. (Wikipedia, n.d.) maintains that Ptahhotep's philosophical teachings also reflect an awareness of the complexities of human nature and the challenges of moral decision-making. He acknowledges the existence of temptation and wrongdoing but advises against succumbing to base desires or selfish impulses. Instead, Ptahhotep counsels self-discipline, moderation, and self-awareness as means of achieving inner peace and moral rectitude.

The influence of Ptahhotep's philosophy extends beyond the confines of ancient Egypt, inspiring later generations of thinkers and scholars within the confines philosophical traditions. His maxims have been studied and revered for millennia, serving as a testament to the enduring relevance of his wisdom. Ptahhotep's emphasis on ethical living and the pursuit of virtue resonates with philosophical traditions around the world, reflecting universal truths about the nature of human existence and the quest for meaning. In addition to Ptahhotep, other figures in ancient Egyptian history have been recognized for their philosophical contributions.

This historical figure, Ptah-Hotep, qualifies for the status of the first African philosopher is Ptah-Hotep (Ptahhotep). African philosophical tradition being the oldest tradition of philosophy makes him undoubtedly the first philosopher. This notion of being the first philosopher not just African can be traced back to Ptahhotep, one of the pioneer philosophers in African philosophical tradition. His texts, such as *The Maxims of Ptahhotep*, expressed a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of human existence with the world around them. Ptahhotep's philosophical ideas set the foundation for subsequent African thinkers who would continue to explore and expand upon this notion. Through his teachings, Ptahhotep laid the groundwork for the development of a unique African philosophical tradition that respects and values the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. Thus, Ptahhotep can be rightfully regarded as the first philosopher in African philosophical tradition, providing an early example of the rich and diverse perspectives that have shaped African philosophy and then Philosophy throughout history. Obenga (in Wiredu, 2004) was very succinct in maintaining that “a great philosophical and scientific tradition existed in ancient Egypt. The philosopher was regarded as one who could penetrate ancient writings and avail himself of the instructions available therein. These works constitute a philosophical tradition, that is, a set of teachings (*sebayit*) viewed as a coherent body of procedures influencing the present”. This idea shows there was and is an African philosophy in ancient Egypt of Black Pharaohs. Obenga (in Wiredu, 2004) continuing reiterates on the fact of history of philosophy as part and parcel of African philosophy writes that, “the history of philosophy was thus already a system. Ptah-Hotep, Imhotep, Hor-Djed-Ef and Kagemni in the Old Kingdom (2686-181BC) built the the first philosophical tradition in world philosophical history (p.35)”. We cannot but remember them as first African philosophers as well as the the actual first philosophers of philosophical traditions. *Papyrus Beatty IV, Verso* extols these ideas when it reads that “Books of wisdom (i. e, philosophy) were theirs. And the pen was their child...Is there anyone here like Ptah-Hotep, Hor-Djed-Ef ...Imhotep...But their names through their writings cause them to be remembered”. The ancient Egypt had a philosophy that is highly connected with the critical building of knowledge, intellectual and profundity and defined philosopher as *rekh* or *sai* (a wise human being or a philosopher) according to Obenga. Their philosophical dynamism in spans across mere intellectuality unto virtues and wisdom for perfection. The word *wnn* stands for existence, that is *to be* or *to exist*. Ancient Egyptian philosophy has concepts across philosophical enterprise dealing with *ma'at*, which is reality as a whole (Obenga, 2004).

Another known African philosophers of the earliest times is Imhotep, an ancient Egyptian polymath who lived around 2700 BCE, during the Third Dynasty. Imhotep served as the vizier

to Pharaoh Djoser and is credited with numerous achievements, including architecture, medicine, and engineering. His philosophical contributions are less well-documented but are evident in his writings on medicine and ethics. Imhotep's holistic approach to healing, which emphasized the interconnectedness of the body and soul, reflects a philosophical worldview that predates the more formalized systems of Greek philosophy.

Imhotep: Second African Philosopher

Over the years, the western narratives have challenged the compelling and undeniable facts with regard to the origins of African philosophy and the question of first formal African philosopher. As we delve into the rich historical landscape of African philosophy, seeking to illuminate on the birth of African philosophical thought but also to understand its enduring impact on the world philosophical heritage. It is crucial to first grasp the defining characteristics of the African Philosophical Tradition. The African Philosophical Tradition is a multifaceted and diverse body of thoughts, encompassing myriads of philosophical perspectives, beliefs, and worldviews, developed by African thinkers throughout African developing history. Oral tradition, orature to be precise, characterized by the vibrant conveyance of ideas, stories, and cultural practices, encrypted in idioms and proverbs stands as the cornerstone of African philosophical thought, acting according as the paramount medium through which philosophical ideas were transmitted and preserved. Griots, the revered oral historians and storytellers of West Africa, played a prominent role in upholding and disseminating philosophical ideas through the recitation of historical accounts, proverbs, and myths. To further underscore the significance of oral tradition, Kwasi Wiredu, a distinguished African philosopher, aptly asserts, "In Africa, the oral tradition is not simply a means of communication; it constitutes the very fabric of existence," enabling the perpetuation of philosophical concepts from one generation to the next., serving as a catalyst for the development of philosophical thought.

One unique significant contributor to the development of African philosophy was the ancient Egyptian civilization, whose profound philosophical ideas set the stage for subsequent philosophical developments in Africa. The name Imhotep, often overshadowed by the likes of Socrates and Aristotle, holds a crucial position as the first philosopher in African philosophical tradition. By delving into his life and works, we gain inestimable and valuable insights into the development and influence of philosophical thought in ancient Africa. The scarcity of accurate and inadequacy of historical facts and records as well as written sources presents a formidable challenge in determining the exact identity of the African Philosopher. Additionally, Imhotep, an ancient Egyptian polymath and architect, has also been considered as a pioneer of African philosophy. Obenga (in Wiredu, 2004) writes "Imhotep was the grand vizier to King Djoser (2668-2649BC), 3rd dynasty. He was also high priest at Heliopolis, the main city of the Sun-God, *Ra*"(p.36).

Imhotep, often regarded as the first Egyptian philosopher, played a crucial role in shaping the African Philosophical Tradition. His expressive wisdom and intellectual contributions established the groundwork for the rich intellectual heritage that defines African philosophy

today. Through his philosophical thoughts, Imhotep not only provided insights into the nature of human existence and the complexities of the world but also contributed valuable perspectives on the principles of morality and ethics. His ideas centred around the belief that knowledge and wisdom remain the essentials for a flourishing society and promising individuals. Imhotep's intellectual legacy resonated throughout Africa and served as a catalyst for critical thinking and intellectual inquiry, laying the foundation for the vibrant African Philosophical Tradition that endures to this very day.

Imhotep's historical importance and historic signification cannot be understated, as he emerged as an Egyptian sage during the 27th century BCE. Notably, he measures as Pharaoh Djoser's trusted advisor, architect of the iconic Step-Pyramid at Saqqara (which remains the first construction in Hewn stone in world history) as well as a skilled physician respected and revered s such for his curative potentials and therapeutic abilities, (Obenga, 2004). However, it is Imhotep's deep critical ideas that truly archived his place in African philosophical tradition. However, he believed that physical and mental well-being were rooted in a harmonious balance between the anthropological appreciation of the body and the metaphysical understanding of the soul. Imhotep's philosophies laid the foundation for ancient African civilizations, influencing generations of scholars and resonating with subsequent philosophical and spiritual thinkers across the continent. Scholars in the field of Egyptology, like Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop, underscores the import of Imhotep's contributions, asserting that he masterminded African philosophical project long before the Greeks surfaced on the philosophical scene. Thus, Imhotep's role as the first philosopher in African philosophical tradition is undeniable, serving as a fundamental basis in the rich complexness of African intellectual critical thought.

Review of A Modern History of African Philosophy: Focus on Antioch Wilhelm Amo An African Philosopher in 18th Century German Diaspora by I. Madukaloam Osuagwu

Osuagwu (2010) demonstrated a tapestry of Philosophy as a human enterprise when he writes that “Amo’s conception, conduct and constitution of philosophy as this emerges notably from his practice and production evidenced in his major work, the *Tractatus*. But we shall also draw insight from his other three works, *De Humanae Mentis*, the *Ideam Distinctam* including also his *De Iure Marorum*” (p.123). Amo’s philosophical *magnum corpus* has to do with his conception and constitution of philosophy with regard to its origin, nature, definition, methodology, objective as well as the doctrine of intention and learning; classification of Philosophy into two major parts: speculative philosophy{ontology, pneumatology (theology, angelology, demonology and anthropology), physics and jurisprudence} and practical philosophy (logic, ethics, natural theology, law and politics).

Equally, Osuagwu (2010) showed that Amo’s literary works display a good influence of Aristotle, Epictetus, Ovid Apuleius, M.T. Cicero, L.A Seneca and Stoicism as well as early medievalism with scholarships-authors like St. Cyprian, Optatius, Arnobius and St. Augustine of Hippo alongside later medievalism in the likes of Scholastics- St. Thomas Aquinas and of Thomists and modern European philosophers. For decades, Amo in his critical excursus, dealt with philosophical systems, championed in renaissance, rationalism and idealism which

ravaged Europe then. Osuagwu (2010) analyzed the impending situation then thus: “for over three centuries into the time of Amo, modernity ruled and reigned with its rationalism and idealism throughout Europe... he (Amo) may have also been influenced by British empiricism, J. Locke, D. Hume and G. Berkeley (*philosophical thoughts*). Amo also came under the influence of the Vitalism of the Stahlians as well as of the materialism of the mechanists”, (p.124). These influences made Amo to chart a better and significant course for his philosophical innuendoes. More so, in the cause of his critical engagements, especially with regard to African Philosophy, Amo showed that *in medio stat virtus* and proves the fact that extremes may not be the best position in any critical positioning. Osuagwu (2010) refers to such influence on African Philosophy thus: “in the context of the great controversy on what is African philosophy, namely, on how to do African philosophy, African philosophers have a lot to learn from Amo about the exigence and aim of philosophizing, about the critical manner, proper procedure and needed tools of philosophizing, of what our compatriot logically calls philosophizing soberly- accurately” (p. 125).

In some of his propounded philosophical doctrines, Amo puts forward two issues: *intention* and *learning*. Osuagwu (2010), however, notes that “intention is the mind’s cognitive principle of learning” (p.125). Equally, he notes that “learning is the intention of education and of the educated who want to understand intelligible things - *ens*” (p. 125). Accordingly, Amo defines intention as “the faculty or property of the intelligent substance” or “intellective faculty”, by “which it determines known things as things either to be done or not to be done, for an end of which it is conscious to itself.” Amo leaned so much on the scripture in his elaborate explanation of intention. Humanly explained, intention for Amo is the subjective-intellective-determinative act of the human mind deciding what is or not. Through learning Amo deduced that intention can be learned or informed as *habitus*. Hence, Amo in the proper definition of Philosophy, draws much from the above nuances to write thus: “in genus a *habitus* of the intellect and the will, philosophy coincides with all the other branches of learning...”. Amo maintains that “for whatever exists nowhere outside the intellect is actually nothing.” However, Osuagwu (2010) gave a succinct appreciation of this seminal definition of philosophy when he writes that “philosophy is a pillar of man’s learnedness, of his mental capacity and quest for knowledge of things. In this, we hear Amo calling philosophy the mother (the *matrix*, measure) of sciences, the science of sciences (*scientia scientiarum*). Amo finally defines philosophy as *Speculatively an intellectual learning, Volitionally as effective learning* and *Comprehensively*, philosophy is “the *habitus* of the intellect and the will whereby we continuously deal with things themselves which have to be known in their certainty determinately and adequately as far as may be possible: in order that by the application of this kind of cognition the perfection of man might take on all possible increase”.

The truism of Amo’s philosophy is seen in the projection of showing the sources of philosophy as rooted in the *intellect* and *will*. To this Osuagwu (2010) explicitly declares that “those who today define philosophy exclusively with reference to the action of intellect and ignore its pragmatic part can easily err. Since philosophy is nothing other than wisdom, and wisdom is virtue, and virtue is the perpetual exercise of known truth”. Furthermore, Osuagwu (2010)

insists that “of special note is Amo’s insistence that philosophy be defined, not by the human intellect alone, but also by the human will and its action. And nothing exists outside human intellect. It remains an abode of things willed and to be willed. Amo nevertheless takes a crucial critical stand against the exclusive intellectualization of philosophy; for philosophy is not only or merely theoretical or speculative, but also very and equally importantly volitional and pragmatic or practical”. Philosophy, therefore, is not only theory or ideas but is also practice and actions. This is why, the will is informed by the intellect, becomes the end or the purpose of philosophy. Amo nevertheless made philosophy possess status of profound dynamism with qualities of soberness and accuracy, determinateness and adequacy, distinctiveness and clarity, in the words of MAduakolam I. Osuagwu, (Osuagwu, 2010).

Evaluation

The unique history of African philosophy is very rich and diverse, embracing a wide range of philosophical traditions and ideas that, nevertheless, predates Western philosophically traditions. From the ancient wisdom of Egypt to the vibrant intellectual culture of medieval West through continental Africa, African philosophers have grappled with fundamental questions about existence, morality and the nature of reality. Their insights continue to inspire and inform philosophical inquiry around the world, demonstrating the significant relevance of African thought to the global philosophical conversation.

Wikipedia (n.d.) avers that in the then ancient Nubia, the kingdom of Kush produced scholars and thinkers who made enduring contributions to philosophy. The Meroitic script, used by the Nubians, contains inscriptions that likely contain philosophical ideas, although much of this knowledge remains untranslated. Additionally, the Nubian city of Meroe was a center of learning and intellectual exchange, where scholars from across Africa and the Mediterranean world gathered to discuss philosophy, science and religion, (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2018). The philosophical traditions of North Africa were, however, influencing the interactions within the neighboring civilizations, including the Greeks, Romans and Arabs. The city of Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE, became a hub of intellectual activity, blending with and popularly influencing Greek philosophy with Egyptian and African thought. Centuries later, scholars like Plotinus, who founded Neoplatonism in the third century CE, synthesized elements of Egyptian and Greek philosophy to develop a spiritual and metaphysical system that would influence later Western thought and other philosophical traditions.

In West Africa, the ancient empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai fostered intellectual inquiry and scholarship. The University of Timbuktu, founded in the 12th century, attracted scholars from across the Muslim world and served as a center for the study of Islamic law, theology and philosophy. While much of the philosophical discourse in West Africa was conducted in Arabic, indigenous philosophical traditions also flourished, with scholars like Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti contributing to debates on ethics, politics, and metaphysics. The Akan people of present-day Ghana developed a philosophical system known as *Sankofa*, which emphasizes the importance of learning from the past to build a better future (Wikipedia, n.d.). The Adinkra

symbols, which are used by the Akan to convey moral and philosophical concepts, reflect this worldview, with symbols representing concepts like wisdom, unity and resilience. In Southern Africa, the Bantu-speaking peoples developed philosophical traditions rooted in oral storytelling and communal wisdom. Concepts like ubuntu, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the importance of compassion and community, have deep philosophical implications. Ubuntu challenges Western notions of individualism and highlights the communal aspect of human existence. The legacy of African philosophy continues to resonate in contemporary discourse, as scholars reclaim and reinterpret ancient philosophical traditions. African philosophers like JB Danquah, Meinrad Hebga, George James, SK. Akesson, William Abraham, Aime Cesaire, John Mbiti, Odera Oruka, Julius Nyerere, Placid Tempels, Janheinz Jahn, Leopold Senghor, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Obafemi Awolowo, Alexis Kegame, Uzodinma Nwala, Emmanuel Edeh, Innocent Onyewuenyi, and Henry Olela, to name just a few, opened the doors of ideas,(Chimakonam, n.d.), Anto William Amo, Theophilus Okere, Pantaleon Iroegbu, Paulin Hountodji, Sophie Oluwole, Madukaolam Osuagwu and Achille Mbembe have made significant contributions to fields like ethics, political philosophy and postcolonial theory. Their work challenges Eurocentric perspectives and offers alternative frameworks for understanding the human experience.

Conclusion

Philosophy as our unique world heritage has enjoyed the privilege of definitional nuances. Most classical as well as enduring of all these definitions is its etymological definition as *philosophia* and Amo's definition as *habitus intellectus*. Osuagwu (2010) opined that "*philosophia*, love and wisdom, belongs to man's highest realm of mental capacity and quest. They are among the most sublime and supreme concepts, among the highest virtues and values", (p. 22). African philosophy, in its unique right, as a discipline of its own, remains, in line with the cradle of ancient civilization, the *primus inter pares* of all philosophies in terms of origin and contextual engagement. These Philosophies nevertheless borrowed much from African philosophy that dated back to the Pharaonic period ably identified as such by Theophile Obenga in his seminal corpus: *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period, 2780-330BC*. The Ancient Egyptian concepts of Philosophy shows, according to Obenga (2004), that it is a "synthesis of all learning and also to the pursuit of wisdom and moral and spiritual perfection... a pedagogy fielding the wise teachings (*sebayit*) of the old sages...". Again, the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic signs depict much of Egyptian philosophical languages alluding to philosophical jargons and conceptual innuendoes. Moreover, Obenga (2004) stressed that "two thousand years ago in ancient Egypt, without a doubt, *the inscription of Antel*, gave the first clear and distinct statement conveying the fundamental meaning of a *philosopher*", (p.35). The sole idea of philosophies through African philosophy, therefore, is a fact. In *stretto sensu*, it remains an indubitable fact that the world philosophies grew out of African philosophy. Authoritatively, Obenga (2004) like Onyewuenyi (1999) asserts that "Ancient Egypt did contribute significantly to the continuing philosophy, ethics, or world consciousness of later times by receiving and educating many Greek scholars and philosophers. For example, Plato recorded that Thales, the first Greek philosopher of western philosophical traditions was educated in Egypt under the priests", (Obenga, 2004). In conclusion, Ptahhotep stands as the first

philosopher in Egyptian records, known for his moral teachings and philosophical reflections on the nature of virtue and ethical conduct. His "Maxims of Ptahhotep" offer timeless wisdom that continues to inspire and inform philosophical inquiry to this day, exploring the interconnectedness between humans and nature, making Ptahhotep a foundational figure in the history of philosophy. Philosophy as world philosophical heritage actually came through Egyptian Philosophical orientation or African Philosophy. These facts are deeply exposed within the edges of definitional particularity and contextual equipoise as one appreciates African philosophy, through a historico-critical approach..

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