

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AS THE FOUNDATION OF HEALTH AND ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION IN AFRICA

CHUKWU PETER DAMIAN EZECHI, Ph.D

School of General Studies

Gregory University Uturu

Abia State

d.ezechi@gregoryuniversityuturu.edu.ng

Introduction

Nature gives human being leverage over other animals. The seat of reason otherwise called intellect is the primary distinctive feature of man over all other temporal beings. With intellect, man is naturally inclined to wonder, and as a result of his efforts to giving answers to the curiosity, he becomes a philosopher by nature. Philosophy itself does not exist outside a culture hence man is a culture bearing fellow, therefore all human effort to education is culture bound and philosophy oriented. The present work consequently takes a critical insight to the fundamental role of African philosophy in health and entertainment education in Africa. The peculiarity of African philosophy is necessary here in health and entertainment education because: “People have developed various ways to assert their continued cultural identity” (Rosman and Rubel, 1988: 316). The work argues that African philosophy is actually the cornerstone of any sustainable health and entertainment education among the people of Africa, since it presupposes the culture, values and norms which constitute the realities of Africans.

In fact, education and culture are interwoven and complement each other concurrently but with a given underlying philosophy. African philosophy as the work emphasizes is a practical philosophy which is an integral part of the people’s daily life. In this vein, it must put all those elements of African thought into consideration if it is to provide a reliable health and entertainment education. Thus, myth, legend, folklore, stories, culture and tradition are all important elements of African thought-pattern and ingredients of African worldview. Hence, they play important part in African philosophy as a catalyst to health and entertainment education. No matter how one looks at it: “cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche” (Stigler, Shweder and Herdt, 1990: 1). Africans as a people do have their mode of perceiving the world and that is why the paper argues that African philosophy must be put into consideration in a bid to achieving health and entertainment education. Any step to employ alien categories in this regard could be counterproductive since such measures might not incorporate the authentic African socio-cultural realities. The work ends with a conclusion which is a synopsis of the major issues raised.

KEYWORDS: Africa, Education, Entertainment, Health, Philosophy, Culture

1:1: Education and Culture

Education is an integral part of human nature. Every human being has a relationship with education for his continuous formation as a rational being. Both informal and formal education is geared towards the bodily, psychological, spiritual, material and moral growth of man. Man is a society dependent being, as a result he is shaped by culture and culture is naturally interwoven with education, just as it is argued that: “Culture is that which binds men together” (Benedict, 1983: 14). Human life is not an isolated life. It is naturally a group affair because man lacks what it takes to provide all his needs all alone. He needs the help of an organized society for the solution to the problems which are related to his quest for survival. To talk of an organized society is to talk of education, culture and philosophy because no society can survive without these basic elements which actually determine the worldview of a people. For a society to excel it needs norms and values and these cannot come to fruition without discipline, and discipline per se is a product of education. The only thing is that the method of education, culture and philosophy do change from one society to another.

Since man is a social animal, it is then imperative that he usually looks forward to sharing a common way of life with others. Common way of life is naturally grounded on culture which usually provides the ideal methodology for the regulation of their collective existence as a people. Obviously, this nature of life leads to a synergy between education, culture and philosophy as instruments which shape the people’s way of life. In fact: “The instruments with which men cope with their environment and organize their collective existence are derived from culture” (Chinoy, 1967: 72). Whichever way it goes, it is obvious that the individual lives shared life and behaviour. “The individual learns to satisfy his needs in a socially approved fashion....In short, he becomes a social being as he absorbs a culture that enables him to survive and to live in society that guides his actions and gives meaning to his existence (p. 73). Culture and education really give meaning to the life of the people in harmony with the underlying philosophy.

From the private life point of view, it is demonstrable that the individual response and perception of life is usually influenced by culture. In a nutshell, the famous English anthropologist defines culture as: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor Edward as quoted in Johnson, 1968: 10). That man is a member of the society means that he is a participant in continuous interaction with and dependence on others. Culture is usually comprehensive to the extent that it is made up of cultural patterns which are sufficiently diversified enough to enable such a society or group to fulfill the necessary requirements of a social life. Thus, the comprehensive meaning of social culture implies that such a society is culturally self sufficient. A culturally self-sufficient society should then be in possession of adequate philosophy on which its education lies; health and entertainment education inclusive. Africa in this regard has a dependable philosophy on which health and entertainment education on the continent is founded too.

Philosophy is the substratum of human action and education shapes all that man does in accord with the philosophy of the people just as the ancient Greek philosophy Socrates (469 – 399 B. C.) insists that unexamined life is not worth living. Education enables man to distinguish between just and unjust actions. Plato (427 – 347 B. C.), who grew under the tutelage of Socrates reasoned that education should direct man rationally to justice and good life in general. Plato made important contribution to education and philosophy of education. He used his master Socrates as the mouthpiece of his Dialogues since no record shows that Socrates wrote any work. In addition, Plato founded a school known as the Academy which in most quarters is regarded as the pioneer academic institution for systematic studies. One of his works entitled *The Republic* is a piece on justice and good life in the *polis*. Plato argued that the best approach to education is through dialogue. Hence, through dialogue we unveil the ignorance in our thoughts and by extension would be able to enrich our knowledge by listening and understanding our interlocutors and people from other culture.

Aristotle (384 – 322 B. C.) attended Plato's Academy and is regarded as one of the greatest thinkers of all times. He made a lot of contribution to academics and education in general as his vast work covers diverse areas of human endeavours. Intellectually, he was a genius, he surpassed his master Plato, as his works cover logic, metaphysics, politics, aesthetics, biology and physics. In his books *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics* are contained mainly his educational ideas. "Hence, Aristotle concludes that the function of the human being, our essence and nature, is to use our intelligence in suitable ways. And, therefore, this must be what it is natural for us to do; and if natural, then also good and right" (Ellin, 1999: 94). Education is reflective of ethics in the light of Aristotle. Thus: "For Aristotle, ethics was a practical science, since by it an organized pattern of life is developed by man in practical ways to achieve happiness and thereby attain the good. Politics, according to Aristotle, concerns the state in so far as it establishes the means to achieve the good" (Iwuchukwu, 2003: 151). In this regard: "Thus, education of the individual in society is a matter of ethics and politics. While one of the values of ethics is individual-oriented, the other, politics, is State-oriented but aims at one thing: to attain good" (p. 151). Education of man must reflect on his relationship with the society. Man or individual here is human being and society in question is human society and all geared towards the attainment of common good.

Education is therefore not necessarily formal instruction as it is obtainable in the academic institutions. Actually, formal education is a complement to informal education which is part of the everyday training of human life. The most important thing is that education in its entirety is channeled towards the good as Aristotle reasons. It is obvious that in the course of human history a lot of people have gained the needed knowledge and skill without necessarily passing through the four walls of academic institutions. As a result, they acquire the values and prospects of their society without the acquisition of formal education. By following the footsteps of their parents and elders, taking note of the instructions given to them, partaking in the community activities and rituals, children gradually learn to perform those acts which are expected of them both in the early

part of their lives and as adults. In traditional societies, traditional beliefs, social norms, customs, rituals, moral standards and values are usually absorbed unconsciously in the course of people's daily lives. Sometimes these could be achieved through explicit instruction and in some cases it is imbibed through revelation or initiation into adulthood. (Chinoy, 1967: 384). This is an indication that education is not confined to the classroom since it is an integral part of the complex process of socialization, which as a result transforms the people into given philosophy of life. For children, such a process continues in their lives till their adulthood.

1:2: The Origin of Philosophy and Its Relationship with Myth

Life is full of mystery and uncertainties, thereby leading to a chain of curiosities. However, man's permanent desire and response to these continuous questions raised is the rationale behind philosophy. Every human being has this puzzle over the incessant why and how surrounding nature. The fact that one is more educated than the other does not make any difference, since education here is only a matter of difference or degree of knowledge. If all men are involved with the curiosity to nature and in one way or the other gives response to these objects of curiosity, then it logically implies that all men are in possession of either a particular characteristics or a set of same features. Scholars for Ages have struggled to discover the distinguishing factor of human nature which underlies his capacity to curiosity and ability to proffer solutions. It is this awe and efforts to respond which constitute the object of philosophy. In this vein, every man is a philosopher by nature, since everyman is not only endowed with the faculty of curiosity, he has also the knowhow to react and find answers to those questions.

All living things have instinct including plants. All animals have instinct and sense organs. However, man is the only living being in possession of not only instinct and senses, but reason in addition. The ancient Greek philosopher and one of the greatest thinkers of all time Aristotle identifies intellect or reason as the distinguishing characteristic of man. From Aristotle's analysis man is a rational animal and with the aid of the intellect he is the only temporal being that has the capacity to dominate the environment and give answers to the questions raised by nature. This is the genesis of philosophy as a result it is a typical human phenomenon irrespective of time, space, race, color or location. In any case, the manner and method with which different people device response to the puzzle raised in the cosmos, determine their own philosophy in such a social context. Hence: "Within this social context, an array of interpretations of man and culture which share certain common presuppositions find widespread currency" (Merton, 1968: 512). In this direction, the manner the Western part of the world respond to human and environmental questions is determined by their philosophy, while the ways, and mindset Africans on the other hand use in response to the curiosities of nature and ambient also determine the fundamentals of African philosophy.

The truth of the matter is that: "To understand an age or a nation, we must understand its philosophy, and to understand its philosophy we must ourselves be in some degree philosophers.

There is here a reciprocal causation: the circumstances of men's lives do much to determine their philosophy, but conversely, their philosophy does so much to determine their circumstances" (Russell, 1962:14). Different societies have different philosophy because man is shaped by the reality inherent in his society or environment and "in such a society, systematic ideological analysis and a derived sociology of knowledge take on a socially grounded pertinence and cogency" (Merton, 1968: 513). The worldview of a man who is born and brought up in a rural community in Umunumo-Mbano Igbo Nigeria, cannot be homogenous with a man born and brought up in the mega cosmopolitan city of New York. Hence, they would definitely perceive life from different perspectives.

Having acknowledged that every man is a philosopher by nature, it needs to be stated that philosophy as a field of academic thought started in ancient Greece with the Ionian philosophers called the materialist philosophers. Prior to the emergence of philosophy as a typical formally structured rational inquiry, mythology dominated the Greek thought and description of life pattern. Myth preceded philosophy even in ancient Greece where formal and systematic philosophy started. The ancient Greek traditional myth no doubt provided its people a measure of worldview. In the process of this, elements of the Olympian worship and other elements which emanated from the older cults eventually intermingled, as was the case in Athens, whereby a massive procession had an interface with the ancient mystery cult center situated at Eleusis to the Acropolis. In a similar way, the worship of Dionysus was evident, as it: "became the occasion for dramatic presentations of myths drawn indiscriminately from the Olympian and from the pre-Olympian religious traditions....The creation of cult statues for such temples, offered scope for sculptors. Classical Greek art was fundamentally shaped by the requirements of this sort of public use" (McNeil, 1979: 98). Myth contains message and value and it is used to achieve certain purposes ranging from education, training of the mind, history and the nature of the known. Myth therefore actually served as a launch pad to ancient Greek philosophy.

One of the ever lived Greek poets Homer may be lived 850 and 700 B.C. in Asia Minor. He used his poems to deal with Mycenaean heroes and he in fact used his works to capture the picture and life of that Age, which must have been in any case transmitted orally. However, Homer's account of the wrath of Achilles and of Odysseus' travels have gained more plausibility through modern archeological discoveries. Homer has *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to his credit too. Homer's comment on heroic ideal, which is a combination of fierceness and joy in action, permeated the ancient Greece perception of life and today it is obvious in the Catholic Church for instance that: "Many rituals are symbolic representations of myths, in our technical sense. The Holy Eucharist, for example, represents the Last Supper – the communion meal that Christ shared with his disciples. The Mass, in Catholic dogma, is a re-enactment of the Crucifixion" (Johnson, 1968: 411). Myth cannot be dissociated from the philosophy of a people because it actually plays an integrative function.

Actually, the ancient Greeks noticed that they needed to go beyond myths for a better understanding of life and reality. This need to understand more was commendable since they had by then recorded a lot of successes both in the *polis* and the ordering of things. Their interaction with other people, especially from the Middle East led to their discovery that there was no general agreement, even among the notable priests, on the rationale behind the being of the world even the movement of the planet and other basic issues. Thus: “it was in Ionia that men first confronted this sort of question systematically enough to bother recording their views. These, first philosophers, sought to explain the phenomena of the world by imaginative exercise of their power of reason” (McNeil, 1979: 99). In a critical manner, the Ionians started a rational and systematic study of the highest principles and reality. By so doing, human experience and knowledge are objectively assessed with reference to reality, morality and socio-political life of man and the universe in general.

With the imaginative power of reason, these pioneer rational philosophical thinkers tried to explain the phenomena in the universe, having found the conflicting and often unjustifiable explanations of the gods unsatisfactory. Hence: “they took the drastic step of omitting the gods entirely, and boldly substituted natural law instead as the ruling force of the universe....their attempts at using speculative reason to explain the nature of things marked a major turning point in human intellectual development” (p.99). The Ionian thinkers started to make a rational inquiry into reality without the aid of any divine personality. From this point of view, the ancient Greeks from Thales, AnPythagoras aximander, Anaximenes, , Heraclitus, Permenides, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle etc. made a landmark contribution to not only the history of Greek and Western philosophy, but the being of philosophy *qua* philosophy.

1: 3: The Nature of African Philosophy

As we have observed earlier in the work, every society has its peculiar worldview. In the western part of the world, philosophy was foreshadowed by myth as we have seen in the case of Homer who among others was as a precursor to the ancient Greek philosophers starting from Thales. However, Africans have their own thought-pattern and their own experience of life which as a result leads to the peculiarity of their worldview and philosophy. A detailed investigation into Western philosophy would reveal a philosophical system which is to a large extent quite abstract. African philosophy on the other hand is a practical and lived philosophy which directly reflects in the everyday life of the people. It is a concrete human action as it is evidenced in various ways of their lives. In fact: “The distinctive feature of African philosophy is that it cannot be thought of in terms of an objective, abstract science as was fashionable in Western philosophy. In African philosophy we are dealing with a practical theoretical science in the sense that by nature African Metaphysics is a lived philosophy rather than a purely theoretical or scientific enterprise” (Edeh, 2007: 1). In this regard, African philosophy is all about human action as it involves the demonstrable everyday life of an average African.

The peculiarity of African philosophy is epitomized in its practicality. It embraces the beliefs and practices in the African culture. In this vein, it comprises a set of the people's worldview. By world view of Africans, philosophy of the people becomes a common identity rather than individualist enterprise. Unlike Western philosophical model which is full of abstract configurations and rationalization, African philosophy rather is manifest in the people's rituals, their language, social life and cultural manifestations. "Therefore, African people of the past and the present make sense of their existence, of their destiny and of the world in which they live" (Akaile, C., in Uzoamaka, O. 2009: 4). It is admitted that the philosophical reflections of African thinkers in the past were neither preserved nor transmitted by written accounts and that is why these philosophers individually remain unknown to the present generation. In any case, this does not mean that they never existed or that Africa never had philosophy in the past.

Like the Westerners and Orientals, Africa has always had philosophy and philosophers and the fragments of their philosophical reflections and beliefs are generally preserved and communicated through other channels other than writing. They used: "mythologies, formulas of wise-sayings, traditional proverbs, stories, and especially religion. This is to say that writing, though the most effective, is not the only means of transmitting knowledge across generations. Apart from mythologies, wise-sayings, world-views, knowledge can be preserved in the socio-political set-up of the people" (Omerogbe, J. I. "African Philosophy: Yesterday and Today" in Bodunrin 1985: 6-7). These channels have been used by generations for the transmission of knowledge by African philosophers. "These philosophical reflections and views have therefore become, in the process of transmission over ages, part of the African way of life, part of the African culture and heritage. But the individual original authors of these views remain unknown to us" (p. 7). Irrespective of the fact that the original fellows behind such thinking are not known, it is still believed that such views are the product of profound and committed thinkers of the past.

Those unknown African philosophers of the past no doubt played similar roles in African thought-pattern similar to those of their Western counterparts like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hegel and Kant, Hobbes and Locke etc. It will be difficult to deny these ancient African thinkers as philosophers, since their thoughts and reflections were critical objects of their intellect like their Western and Oriental counterparts. After all, their thought never emanated from the vacuum, as they had rational and reflective coloration. For a rational being as we know: "the hallmark of his human nature is in the modes of conduct which depend on his reason. The specifically human conduct, which is thus implied by rational conduct accordingly signifies man's natural law: man's authentic mode of conduct which depends upon his self-determination and responsibility as rational being" (Messner, 1965: 13). For one to understand Africans from philosophical point of view, one must make a critical understanding of their belief-system and operational ideals.

African philosophy is thus best understood by studying the African worldview preferably from within Africa, just as the ancient Greeks undertook the rational investigation of Greek and by

extension Western philosophy by investigating their worldview from Greek polis. Some Western scholars in the past felt that Africa is bereft of philosophy, but such empty talk is as a result of the non-written nature of philosophy in the traditional Africa and their inability to have lived with the people for a better and objective understanding of their being. A de-biased understanding of Africans from this point of view is very necessary because Africa has its particularities as a people. Thus: “In studying African life from a philosophical perspective, we must look at the integrative and interactive dimensions that give meaning and substance to it. Since Africa has a unique environment of occurrence, attention must be paid to the perception of life patterns and belief-systems” (Njoku, 2009: 3). One cannot make an informed analysis of a people without a thorough understanding of their physical, psychical, emotional, behavioral, cultural and rational dimensions of their life. African philosophy exists and Africans perceive the reality of their philosophy in their daily lives, irrespective of whether they are identifiable with any alien categories or not.

2:1: African Philosophy and Health Education

Health education in Africa is a product of African worldview. In the traditional African setting, a healthy society is a society which lives in consonance with the customs, norms and values therein. In this vein, the moral life of African society is in consideration with the discourse of health education in Africa. Hence, African philosophy is the bedrock on which the material and spiritual health education of the people lie. Basically, health education in Africa must put into consideration African culture, folklores, legend and myth. These cultural pointers actually serve social, educational, moral and therapeutic purposes. Just like the poems of Homer, which were used to evoke the heroic values of the Ancient Greeks, African philosophy on the other hand has its inherent cultural elements which serve the purpose of moral formation of the people as individuals and a society. In this regard: “It has been suggested that the most important aim of philosophy is the search for a right method that could be employed to find a secure foundation for our knowledge of the real world” (Makinde, 2007: 75). For philosophy to find the foundation of our knowledge of the world, it will evaluate the concrete realities of human experience in various societies. The experience of Africans in their own worldview is basically the basis of their philosophy with its potential in providing for health education in the African social context.

Every society has its culture and a sustainable culture has its content. The culture content serves as the memory of the society which it serves. Through cultural practices inherent in the African philosophy, Africans embark on health, spiritual or moral education of their people. African philosophy, as the *substratum* of African culture enhances the use of African cultural trait and items in the provision of the sanity and sanctity of the society. Hence, for the purpose of health education in Africa: “Culture always intervenes and, in most cases, aids the process of adjustment. Just as our houses shelter us from the storm, so also does our culture insulate us from natural dangers and assist us to survive” (Bierstedt, 1974: 132). Without culture, man would find it quite difficult to survive because: “A culture is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designated members of a group”

(Kluckhohn and Kelly, 1944: 98). It is then culture and philosophy which distinguish one people from another. It is culture and philosophy which make us human. It is culture and philosophy which distinguish man from other living species. There are some societies for instance where nudity is cherished and in a typical African society it is immoral, as a result a taboo.

Health education in the African worldview is a continuous undertaking starting from the family, kindred, clan and all different groups of socialization like Age-grade, community meetings like *Umunna*, typical of the Igbo society etc. Cultural education is transmitted through traditional dance, cultural festivals like *Mbomama* (cleaning road festival) *Iwa-akwa* (wearing cloth ceremony/initiation into manhood) and so on. They are all medium of moral health education in the African context. They ascertain the fact that: “African philosophy is the way of life expressed in the people’s rituals, language, and other cultural manifestations. This philosophy offers people an ideal of human existence, an ideal of human dignity based upon the belief that all beings created by God are ontologically good and deserving of care and respect” (Edeh, 2007: 1). African philosophy is a lived or practical philosophy and to understand its utility in health education one needs to identify with the African cultural life because: “All societies seem to have ideas that are peculiar to their culture and that cannot be precisely translated into the language of another society. For this reason translations from one language to another are difficult at best. One has to sacrifice either the flavor of the original or its meaning” (Bierstedt, 1974: 141 – 142). In fact, what we learn is a function of our culture because it is only by virtue of living in certain cultural backgrounds shall we be in position to understand the acts which are permissible or abominable in such a society.

The classical definition of philosophy is ‘love of wisdom,’ therefore any man anywhere who has intellect has the propensity for the love of wisdom irrespective of where he is found. African philosophy to this end gives Africans a socio-cultural health education from her diverse traditional heritage. In addition: “Not only our knowledge and our education but also our goals and our aspirations are set for us by the culture of our society. What we are and what we want to become can therefore be understood only with reference to culture” (p. 143). To achieve a sustainable health or moral education in Africa through African philosophy is a call for relevance. Today: “In Africa, a call for relevance is a call for Africanness” (Bodunrin “Introduction” in Bodunrin, 1985: VII). Basically there are recent writings to that effect on: “African History, African Literature, African Music, African Art, African this and African that....Philosophical enquiry has a peculiarity” (p. VIII – IX). Some thinkers may attribute African philosophy to ethno-philosophy but the point remains that African philosophy is vital in the provision of health education for Africans because: “Properly understood, ethno-philosophy is the quest for the restoration of the humanity of the African. This is done through the instrumentality of philosophy” (Oguejiofor J. O. “African Philosophy and the Function of Socio-Political Criticism: A Skeptical Consideration” in *UCHE*, 2004, Volume 10. p. 24). African thought-pattern is an African issue and to give health education in Africa a sustainable solution, African philosophy takes a fundamental position.

Education is vital in the life of a society. Not only that education enhances the development and transmission of values, it also facilitates the sustenance of culture. Health education in Africa therefore requires the foundational root of African philosophy for its actualization, since education is: “above all the means by which society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence” (Durkheim, 1956: 123). By recreating the conditions of its very existence African philosophy takes a major stand considering the fact that it is: “by interpreting the symbols of a culture that one can arrive at reflexion, philosophy” (Okere, 1983: 17). Thus, to address health education in Africa requires a philosophical input since: “Questions of meaning have a pre-eminence in philosophy which they may not have in other disciplines” (Bodunrin in Bodunrin, 1985: X). There is the need to understand that African philosophers are not inferior to their counterparts elsewhere. They have developed a philosophy which is in accord with African realities. Hence: “African philosophers therefore must have gone through a process of observation, reasoning and reflection before arriving at the ideas, views or world-views which they have transmitted to us through the channels of proverbs, wise-sayings, stories, mythology, socio-political organizations, religious doctrines, etc”(Omoregbe in Bodunrin, 1985: 9). These socio-cultural elements are part of African philosophy and they aid in the health education of man in the society.

2:2: African Philosophy and Entertainment Education

Entertainment education in Africa, especially in the African traditional context is quite instructive. However, its foundation is African philosophy and culture which obviously comprises folktales, legend, rituals and myths. In this vein, entertainment education from the African traditional context is made to serve some implicit purposes like the attainment of moral uprightness, civic education, explanation of the history of the people, impartation of heroic ideals, the development of a sense of communality, spirit of brotherhood and the rudiments of human reality, among others. “Especially in some so-called primitive tribes, where often only one religion and one structure of society are known, religious rituals may symbolize not only myths and the supernatural order and man’s attitude toward it but also aspects of the natural order and the social order” (Johnson, 1968: 411). Therefore entertainment education is part of African culture and is not necessarily part of formal education. One must not be in the academic environment to benefit from the entertainment education because it is part of the people’s way of life even before the coming of the colonial government and formal education.

To benefit from the typical African entertainment education and philosophy one needs to understand the people’s language and culture because: “The two main avenues to the thought-content of any people are its language and culture. In fact, philosophy of a people can be stated as the underlying principles of the people’s way of life as expressed in language and culture” (Edeh, 1985: 45). There is no doubt that it is only through language and culture that even African philosophy is not only preserved, but equally transmitted from one generation to another. For

instance: “The language of the Igbos is Igbo. It is a tonal language in which both grammar and speech tones play an essential role. The stress on syllables of a word, regardless of whether they are high, intermediate or low, is determinative of meaning. Thus many words that have the same orthography do not have the same tone” (p. 45). The central argument is that a good understanding of the African culture and language within the ambit of the African philosophy is a pointer to a better perception of entertainment education. The ignorance of the people’s language and culture would render an outsider as a mere peripheral analyst whose assessment might not be in conformity with the reality on ground.

There are some elements of *omenala*(tradition)through which entertainment education are imparted to the people.They comprise the medium of myths, rituals and language. Thus: “Myths abound in stories, proverbs, idioms, and songs describing the origin and nature of the universe, the various community deities, origin of all the created beings, life in remote past, etc” (Nwala, 1985: 71). While myths may not actually contain the real stories, yet they incorporate ideas, beliefs and values which in the real sense influence the belief-system and life of the people in general. By virtue of this role, myths impart on the moral, intellectual and totality of health and entertainment lives of the people. “They tell myths about the origins of the world and of people and their social groups. They tell stories about the exploits ofsupernatural animals that talk; about big bad wolves that swallow grandmothers; about the brother of the wolf...They tell stories about fairies, elves, and the Little people” (Rosman & Rubel, 1988: 247). The fact about these stories is that they deal with universal matters like death, birth, the relationship between male and female, rules and regulations, social order and values with all the lessons derivable from them.

African myth and legend are fundamental instruments of health and entertainment education, just like myth and legend were part of the ancient Greek health and entertainment education too and obviously they are part of the people’s ways of lives and philosophy in general. The fact is that even in the present Age: “African states have much in common, not only their origins as colonial territories, but the similar hazards and difficulties they have faced” (Meredith, 2005: 14). In fact: “For just as a well-trained phalanx rushed into battle like a single being, animated by a single will and inspired by a common ferocity, so each individual Greek of the classical age tended to regard his particular polis as though it were one of Homer’s heroes, and was easily persuaded to strive for the collective gain and glory of his city regardless of personal costs or consequences” (McNeil, 1979: 98). Education be it entertainment education or otherwise in the African context must not be value free. It ought to inculcate the fundamentals of African philosophy. Hence: “Any true education must be integral. It must prepare young men and women for positions of rule and responsibility in the world; it must shape their minds with a sense of method, measure....The key to the future of all nations is to be found in how the citizens of countries are able to make correct judgments about who they are, the meaning and value of life” (Ilo, 2008, 333). When education takes this philosophical shape, it enables the people to work towards the ultimate destiny of man.

Other aspects of African philosophy through which entertainment education is achievable in Africa include rituals, festivals, songs and folk stories. In the Igbo speaking part of Nigeria rituals include sacrifice (*aja*) and initiation ceremony (*mkpobata*). Ritual is generally part of festivals and both practices are integral part of the people's belief. Songs are important component of African philosophy and they serve as major ingredients of entertainment education. References are made to the deities, ancestors and gods of the land in songs and in the process, some components of their ideas, social ideals and philosophy are emphasized for one purpose or the other. Thus, some of the songs bear message of moral values and spiritual health. In a typical African society like the Igbo, folk stories equally play key role in entertainment education. They are generally found in Igbo and African life and literature. They consist of the origin of the world itself, human being, animals and other beings. These folk stories are used for the explanation of the rationale for certain existence and why some kinds of relationships do exist among various beings (Nwala, 1985: 72). Ritual not only affirms certain attitudes and manners, but it equally confirms them. Outside the African traditional society for example, sophisticated Confucianists do not generally believe in ancestral spirits, but they approve of ancestor worship since in their belief it tends to strengthen the socially important relationship and attitudes of respect of son for father, and of younger brother for his elder one (Chan. W., as cited in Johnson 1968: 412). Ritual is then of important consideration in the African health education.

In both entertainment and health education, African philosophy has made it imperative that: "Myths, legends, and folktales form a continuum. Though these categories derive from their own culture, they provide a useful framework for organizing...All three deal with times past. Myths deal with the remote past...Folktales deal with an indeterminate time...myth takes place in the distant past when the culture heroes and heroines who created everything in the world lived" (Rosman and Rubel, 1988: 247). Gradually as the period of time becomes less remote on the other hand, myths eventually fade into legend. A similar thing was also evident in the ancient Greece whereby the myth of Homer for instance was the anchorage of heroic ideals and service to the city state. Hence: "In this simple fashion the Greeks were able to reconcile the self-effacement required by the phalanx with the older, aristocratic, and self-assertive ideal enshrined in Homer's poetry. To harness heroic violence and unbridled self-assertiveness to the service of the polis, as the Greeks were thus able to do was really quite as remarkable" (McNeil, 1979: 98-99). It is therefore understandable that: "Folklores are stories that embody and transmit the memory and beliefs of a people" (Njoku, 2009: 3). It is equally difficult to rule these elements out in health and entertainment education within the African cultural cum philosophical considerations.

Conclusion

As the work has shown, the philosophy of a people is key to the survival of such a society because it is the foundation of their worldview. African philosophy on the other hand is the pedestal on which health and entertainment education in Africa lie. In this vein, the African thought-pattern, belief-system, myth, folktale, legend are fundamental aspects of culture and in Africa, they serve

important purposes for the moral sanity of the people. As the paper shows, their meanings go beyond their face-value or denotative meanings in African thought and here thought refers to: “the manner and process of forming ideas, concepts and judgments, and hence the process of arriving at belief and holding opinion as to the truth or nature of anything” (Nwala, 1985: 76). While they literally intend to entertain the audience, they have important message which are coded in the instructive package. We have also seen that culture is vital in the life of Africans because it is through culture that the philosophical life of the people is retained and transmitted. Therefore a combination of African philosophy and culture constitute the foundation for health and entertainment education on the continent.

To make it easier, African philosophy as we have seen is a practical philosophy different from the Western philosophical modus which is full of abstractions. The most important thing is that however it goes, African culture or African philosophy: “sets the practical end of which would be the training of people to be good members of the society” (Makinde, 2007: 13). African philosophy is an authentic philosophy of the people, even though it only became a written academic and systematic reference point just of late, when compared with western philosophy. It is more of a lived reality than a mere abstract entity. Thanks to *omenana* (tradition) in the Igbo speaking part of Nigeria, the cultural and philosophical practices of the people are *practicalized*. “one can conclude that African philosophy is both philosophical and theological.... Even though it seems to be a recent development, is as old as when the people of Africa began to exist. In other words, the people recognize their uniqueness as modeled by their environment which fashioned their mode of interaction with one another, environment and higher beings” (Akaile, C., in Uzoamaka, O. 2009: 8). It is then imperative that African philosophy is the bedrock on which health and entertainment education in Africa lie.

References

- Benedict, R. (1983). *Patterns of Culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Bierstedt, R. (1974). *The Social Order*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book.
- Bodunrin, P. O. (1985). Editor, *Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives*. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press Ltd.
- Chinoy, E. (1967). *Society: An Introduction to Sociology*. New York: Random House.
- Chukwu, E. P. D. (2011). Editor, *Aspects of Edeh's Philosophy* Vol. 11. Enugu: Madonna University Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1956). *Education and Sociology*. Translated by Sherwood D. Fox. New York: Free Press.
- Edeh, E.M.P. (1985). *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics*. Chicago: Loyola University Press.
- .(2007). *Peace to the Modern World: A Way Forward through the Concrete Living of the Existential Dictates of the African Philosophy of Being*. Banbury: Minuteman Press.
- Ellin, J. (1995). *Morality and the Meaning of Life: An Introduction to Ethical Theory*. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Ilo, S. C. (2008). *The Face of Africa: Looking Beyond the Shadows*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Iwuchukwu, C. B. (2003). *Philosophy of Education: A First Course*. Owerri: Cel-Bez & Co. Publishers.

Johnson, H. M. (1968). *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Kluckhohn, C. and Kelly, W. H. (1944). "The Concept of Culture" in Ralph Linton. Editor, *The Science of Man in the World Crisis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Makinde, M. A. (2007). *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.

McNeil, William H. (1979). *A World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meladu, M. (2011). *The Dignity of Man in African Metaphysics as Epitomized in EPTAISM*. Enugu: Madonna University Press.

Merton, R. K. (1968). *The Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: The Free Press.

Meredith, M. (2005). *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Messner, J. (1965). *Social Ethics: Natural Law in the Western World*. Translated by J.J. Doherty revised edition. London: B. Herder Books and Co.

Njoku, F. O.C. (2009). *Ana Atutu: Igbo Philosophy*. An African Perspective on the Problem of Identity and Conflict Resolution. New Jersey: Goldline & Jacobs Publishers.

Njoku, R, Ubani, E. O & Okeagu C. (2010). *Nigerian Government and Politics: From Pre-Colonial to Independence*. Aba: Cheedel Global Prints Limited.

Nwala, T. U. (1985). *Igbo Philosophy*. Lagos: Lantern Books.

Okere, T. (1983). *African Philosophy: A Historico-Hermeneutical Investigation of the Conditions of its Possibility* (Lanham: University Press of America.

Rosman, Abraham & Rubel, Paula G. (1988). *The Tapestry of Culture: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Russell, B. (1962). *History of Western Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 18th edition.

Stigler, J., Shweder, R. A and Herdt, G. (1990) Editors, *Cultural Psychology: Essays on Comparative Human Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Uzoamaka, O. (2009). Editor, *Authentic Human Development*. Enugu: Madonna University Press.

Journal

UCHE, Journal of the department of Philosophy. University of Nigeria Nsukka. Volume 10, 2004.