

A RETHOUGHTFUL RETHINKING OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

Philosophy of education is the application of critical thoughts on education. It is, therefore, a critical appreciation of *educere* (to lead out) and *educare* (to lead into) as regards teaching and learning. African Philosophy of education is in the same way is an application of African critical thoughts on African system of education which is necessitated by the colonial collateral damage done by the colonized system of education forcefully introduced into Africa as part of their colonial agenda. The West *via* colonialism interfered in African system of education with very many consequential implications. Hence, there is need for a paradigm shift in the contemporary rethinking and rethought of African education and the philosophy behind it. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher discovers that there is necessarily serious need to rethink and have a rethought of African education through an African philosophy of education against the inherent and continued damaged of neocolonialism and post-coloniality. A *rethoughtful rethinking* of African philosophy of education will simply take care of a system of education that is for the good of Africans in content development and curriculum expansion within the bounds of African language than any foreign language.

Keywords: African, philosophy, education, rethinking, rethought

Introduction

The conceptual expression of *rethoughtful rethinking* is a creative or poetic use of language. Rethoughtful, from the word thoughtful, suggests a thinking again, deeply or more carefully as it combines *rethought* (past tense of rethink) with *thoughtful*. Rethinking means the act of reconsidering or reviewing something. So, *rethoughtful rethinking* is appreciated as a very deep, careful reconsideration of something with profound insight or reflection. *Rethoughtful rethinking* emphasizes not just rethinking, but doing so in a mindful, conscious, deliberate, and introspective way showing intense reflection and profound understanding.

Now, the search for a genuine African philosophy of education requires a re-theming, a rethinking and a re-thought of its premises, objectives and activities. Frame of reference shows that colonial and Western epistemologies have traditionally influenced African educational thought to an extent where it has become alienated from indigenous knowledge systems and the values that underpin the learning and teaching styles in most African communities (Higgs & Van Wyk, 2007). A rethinking invites a critical scrutiny of epistemologically inherited paradigms; a rethought aspires towards fresh frameworks grounded in African world views, or ontologies like the *afromdals*¹, which favour relationality, dignity and mutual interdependence (Letseka, 2012). This paper analyses the reconceptualization of African philosophy of education from a mimetic of Western models to a decolonized and contextually situated praxis. It engages with the philosophical task of reweaving Africa's educational narratives through indigenous perspectives that embrace wholeness, ethical responsibility, and transformative learning (Waghid, 2014). In the process,

¹ The concept and idea of *Afromodal*, coined by Jude I. Onebunne (published first in *Nnadiesbube Journal of Philosophy*, Vol.8, No. 3, 2025), springs from the words: Africa for *Afro* and modal from modes or modalities, expresses and explores all the differential avenues for connectedness and interconnectedness in a form of relation or connexion within the bounds of African Weltanschauung. *Afromodal* is the interconnection of African modalities of being expressed and cobwebbed in African concepts. *Afromodals* are all about the African connecting models, that is, African models of connectedness and interconnectedness as shown and specified in *igwebuike*, *onyeaghananwanneya*, *ubuntu*, *kwetuism*, *ibirikambiri*, *egbeberegobere*, *ibuanidanda*, *ohazurume*, *njikoka*, *et cetera*.

rethoughtful rethinking wishes for an emerging conversation in which African philosophy of education is not only reactive, but is also creatively artistic.

The arrival of colonized education in Africa signified a huge loss in the linkage between local indigenous knowledge systems with the marginalizing of African languages, science and technology. With the pre-colonial contact in 1898, African societies had their own forms of education, which were village/community, or oral, and holistic in approach. These systems incorporated life skills, culture values, language, religion and moral ethos according to the socio-ecological setting of each society (Fafunwa 1974). Education was not only in school, it was the very fabric of life and knowledge as was handed down generationally, through oral tradition, apprenticeship, storytelling and rituals of the community.

Colonialism brought the Western education system to African countries. The ulterior motive of this education was not the development of the African nations but the maintenance of a class of middlemen to act as middlemen in the colonies who will assist them in their quest to accomplish their 3-Cs: colonialism, commerce and Christianity. It was no accident the children are to be educated under the new system in addition to mathematics, history. Under colonial education, European languages, values, history and sciences were privileged and seen as normative and indigenous knowledge was devalued and marginalized. This was reflected in the design of colonial curricula, which endorsed European dominance and showed that African culture and knowledge were inferior or non-existent.

In summary, the colonized education system that was introduced into Africa disturbed the traditional indigenous systems that sustained the communities for countless years. At the same time, by making European languages the primary languages of knowledge, colonial education not only decentered African languages but also delegitimized indigenous science and technology. To achieve such a decolonized and culturally relevant education, it becomes imperative to consciously embrace an authentic revalorization of indigenous languages and epistemologies in the reconceptualization of African educational self-determination.

Undersatanding Rethinking

Rethinking is the process of challenging and reexamining our established beliefs, approaches, and assumptions. Rethinking entails questioning our assumptions, challenging our mental habits and analyzing how we approach our work more generally. Many of us are living in bondage of mental slavery according to Bob Marley. Rethinking challenges that as such and emancipates us from that. It's a tool of cognition, a way of thinking that frees us from old mental models and sets us free to create new option. The best kinds of reconsideration occur when we come to what we know with humility and curiosity. By challenging what we know and exploring new vantage points, we make room for innovations. This does not entail jettisoning all prior knowledge, but staying open-handed enough in our convictions to be corrected when the evidence leads us to such a place. In a fast-changing and challenging world, rethinking is not just valuable, it's also necessary. Individuals who can reconsider their mental models occasionally, at times of unexpectedness, tend to have clearer thinking and are able to respond more effectively to new events. It's a practice that takes intellectual courage: acknowledging the possibility that we're wrong stings a little, but it is ultimately liberating. When we shift toward seeing rethinking as an ongoing process as opposed to an isolated event, we build ourselves up with greater cognitive flexibility and resilience. In the end, rethinking is not about ceaseless questioning, but about considering insights that lead to deeper understanding and better decisions.

Appreciation of Rethought

Rethought represents the outcome of critical reexamination, the transformed understanding that emerges when we challenge our established perspectives. It is, therefore, the re-articulation which is the result of rethinking; a new understanding that arises when we push

against the entrenched way things appear. It's not just revisionism, it's a fundamental recalibration that necessitates essential revision of what had been our previous world view. And a true rethought means that we do see the world again, but in a different way. Issues that we thought were impossible suddenly have a new dimension from which they can be resolved. Things you couldn't see before become more visible. This reoriented way of thinking typically seems strange but compelling, offering a vivid directness that can only shine forth from a deeper truth. There's nothing wrong with a rethought, unless the rethought is misguided or ineffective. It allows us to let go of mental models that do us no good, and adopt frameworks that are more accurate to how the world works. History is littered with transformative rethoughts, from scientific revolutions to shifts in business models, art and social institutions. The best rethinks tend to come from conversations and from diverse inputs, and from not being afraid to question our most cherished and often presumed assumptions. Every rethink allows for a new basis from which to work. In accepting rethought, we affirm that progress which derives not from guarding our views but from the fact that such views evolves.

Rethinking and Rethought: A Conceptual Clarification

Re-thinking and re-thought are looped processes that animate philosophical inquiry, as well as critical pedagogy, and transformative scholarship. Rethinking is a process of conscious, reflective, and critical reconsideration of ideas, assumptions, or structures. It's an ongoing intellectual exercise designed to question received wisdom and find new ways of thinking. As Giroux (2011) insists, rethinking "is predicated on a willingness to question the taken-for-granted narratives that inform dominant ideologies and social practices." It is a willingness to engage with other models and discourses.

Rethought, however, is the result of the act of rethinking. It would be an altered or reconstructed, second-hand knowledge that comes out of reflection upon reflection. Reimagined concepts often bore into deeper levels of insight, opening the possibility to reforge knowledge and practice. For Freire (1970) change starts with conscientization, which is the process of being conscious of and critically understanding the contradictions of existence. This constructive perception will obviously result in rethinking attitudes, thus in action changing positions.

In the domain of African philosophy of education, the re-thinking here, in a nutshell, is displacement of colonial epistemologies and rediscovery of indigenous values and knowledge systems (Higgs, 2012). The rethought might be educational models based on afromodals, orality, and relationality-fundamentals that have been displaced by (and from) Eurocentric paradigms. As Waghid (2014) underlines, "rethinking African education is to acknowledge its depth in philosophy and to reconstruct it to meet current socio-educational needs".

Rethought and rethinking thus designate a dialectic of critique and creativity. They are also powerful instruments of decolonization, innovation and revalidation of silenced voices and perspectives. The theme *A Rethoughtful Rethinking of African Philosophy of Education* signals a dual-layered philosophical engagement: it is both reflective and reconstructive. Rethinking African philosophy of education involves questioning the inherited frameworks shaped by coloniality and the dominance of Western epistemologies (Wiredu, 1998). However, a rethoughtful approach goes further as it calls for the imaginative reconstruction of educational ideas grounded in African worldviews, communal ethics, and indigenous knowledge systems (Waghid, 2014).

Understanding of Philosophy²

² These sections: "Understanding Philosophy" and "Appreciation of Philosophical Tradition" are works from Onebunne, J.I. (2024). *Philosophies Through African Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism*. Awka: FabAnieh EduBooks

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. 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). 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). Philosophy is a product of different philosophical traditions. Hence, world philosophies acknowledged that ancient Egyptian Philosophy or African Philosophy as the oldest critical excursus that springs from the oldest philosophical tradition 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.

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. 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* in the Universities (Institutes) and Colleges of Education respectively. This is so because 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 primarily fosters critical reflection. The object of philosophy simply improves on a better human appreciation and understanding of reality.

The Dawn of African Philosophy³

Africa is resourcefully blessed with humanity and naturality. This blessedness attracted the explorers and informed the exploiters. Africa’s encounter with the West, in the much lauded exploration that turned into exploitation, left her with indices of developmental growth more wounded: her education was truncated; her politics was bastardized with an alien system of governance; her economy was chancefully fugacious; her socio-cultural life was stifled of any human countenance; her human capital development was ignored and neglected, and her other legacies were completely blackjacked, extorted and stolen. Predicaments is synonymous with Africa since the imperial intrusion into the continent. Africa remains an unfortunate continent with litany of crisis of continental growth.

African philosophy is philosophy as it is done in and for Africa and others. It is a philosophical tradition that is African within the mainstream of philosophy as a systematic study. African philosophy is the critical and universalizing interpretation of the culture and the worldview of African people by philosophers within and outside African continent. It is philosophy done within African philosophical tradition designating the corpus of African philosophical writings. However, African philosophy like other philosophical traditions has

³ This section is culled from a work: Onebunne, J. (2025). *Philosophies Through African Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism*. Fab Anieh Book: Awka

an historical development along the path of human consciousness, critically encountering such realities. This is against some philosophers' views and philosophical currents trying to demean and oppose the existence of African philosophy. African philosophy is a critical enterprise in complete *philosophicality* and *Africanity*. According to Osuagwu, I., (*A contemporary history of African philosophy, Amamihe Lecture Series, Vol. IV*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1999: 31) "African philosophy is a particular regional contextualization, reflection and expression of the universal of and by its philosophicality, it is a universalization, a universal vocation, ordination, destination and determination of and in the African particular". The era of engaging oneself on the possibility of African Philosophy has gone. We are in the era of practical appreciation of African philosophy through a methodological approach that will locate African philosophy within the comity of philosophical traditions and epochs as well as *philosophico-historical* figures. African philosophy, as a human enterprise, is fundamentally *African* and *Philosophical* in accordance to genuine scientific exigencies and within the bounds of Africa's societal and trado-cultural milieu. African philosophy has over the time permeated different cultures and traditions. Philosophy as the critical worldview of the people or *ethnos* remains according to Okere, T.(1983) *the hermeneutics of culture*. The Cambridge English Dictionary states that culture is "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time." To philosophize, therefore, is to interpret the way of life of the people embedded in their belief system and customs. Philosophy, therefore, is fundamentally an interpretation of culture. It is the clarification and an explanation of the way and life of a people.

Proper Understanding of Education

Education is a complex and an evolving process, and it is not limited to school. It involves the coordinated transfer of information, abilities, feelings and cultural practices from oral communication to another (Dewey, 1916). Socially, it encourages cultural perpetuation, political attentiveness and economic growth (Freire, 1970). John Dewey stressed the need for education based on passive experience and active interaction. He contended that education is not a preparation for life, but life itself, emphasizing the experiential and democratic form of learning (Dewey, 1916). Thus, learning does not remain confined to the classroom -it widens to home, community and work situations. Paulo Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* presented an innovative perspective of education. He criticized the "banking model" of education, in which students are treated like passive containers waiting to be filled with knowledge. Instead, he proposed an alternative dialogical and participative model that makes subjects be able to question, reflect and act with regard to their reality. For Freire, education is a practice of freedom, the critical consciousness people develop to change their world. There is an increasing attention on inclusive and holistic education in current perspectives as well. Education should foster equity, social justice and sustainable development (UNESCO 2015). Education should be comprehensive, context sensitive and contribute towards the well-being of individuals and community.

Education, rooted in the Latin terms *educere* and *educare*, reveals its dual purpose and depth. *Educere*, meaning "to lead out," emphasizes the development of latent potential, encouraging critical thinking and the unfolding of innate abilities. *Educare*, meaning "to nourish" "to lead into" or "to raise," stresses the nurturing, formative aspects of learning, instilling values, norms, and social cohesion (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Together, these roots illustrate that education is both the drawing out of internal capabilities and the cultivation of individuals through guided growth. In African philosophy, education is deeply communal. Concepts such as the Afromodals like *ubuntu*, *igwebuike*, etc affirm that personhood is realized through relationships, "I am because we are" (Letseka, 2012). Education thus extends beyond intellectual development to include moral and social formation. It is a communal endeavor aimed at creating harmonious societies rooted in respect, responsibility, and interdependence. In sum, a good understanding of education synthesizes its etymological roots, *educere* and *educare*, with philosophical and cultural perspectives. Education draws out the potential while also nurturing individuals to become responsible, ethical, and engaged members of society. It

is a transformative, inclusive, and lifelong journey that balances personal growth with collective responsibility. Education also plays a crucial role in human development by improving healthcare outcomes, increasing life expectancy, and reducing child mortality (UNESCO, 2021). Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018) argue that education breaks the cycle of poverty by providing individuals with better employment opportunities and financial stability. In sum, education is a cornerstone of development, fostering economic prosperity, social cohesion, and human well-being. Investing in education ensures long-term progress and equitable opportunities for all.

Products of Education

The real meaning and idea of *product* is contextual. However, at its core it refers to something that is created or produced. A product is anything that is made, created, or offered to meet a need or want. This could be physical (like a phone), digital (like an app), or intangible (like a service). Businesswise, a product is a good or service that is sold to customers: a physical item (like a shoe), a service (like a haircut) or a digital solution (like Spotify or ChatGPT). Mathematically, a product is the result of multiplying numbers. In Scientific context especially in Chemistry, a product is the substance that results from a chemical reaction. In Agriculture, product is the finished outcome from the from the produce, diferctly gotten from the farm or nature. So, *product* always implies an outcome, something that results from a process, effort, or interaction. Eduaction has this impressive implications and outcomes with proper philosophy as shown below:

Knowledge as Product of Education

According to Francis Bacon, knowledge is power. Knowledge, as a product of education, is acquired through structured learning, experience, and critical inquiry (Dewey, 1916). Education refines cognitive abilities, enabling individuals to analyze, interpret, and apply information meaningfully (Piaget, 1950). Freire (1970) argues that knowledge is actively constructed through dialogue and reflection. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes social interaction in learning, while Bruner (1960) highlights education's role in preserving and advancing cultural and scientific achievements. Ultimately, education transforms knowledge into a tool for personal and societal progress, fostering innovation, ethical reasoning, and lifelong learning (Illich, 1971). However, against knowledge is ignorance which, not only backfires but is vampire.

Value as Product of Education

Value, as a product of education, is cultivated through moral, social, and intellectual development. Dewey (1916) asserts that education shapes ethical reasoning and democratic participation. Freire (1970) emphasizes critical consciousness, enabling individuals to challenge injustices. Vygotsky (1978) highlights the social context of value formation through interaction. Illich (1971) critiques institutionalized education but acknowledges its role in shaping societal norms. Bruner (1960) argues that education transmits cultural values, fostering adaptability and innovation. Ultimately, education nurtures values that guide behavior, decision-making, and social responsibility. Against value, one ends up in crisis.

Truth as Product of Education

The product of education, truth, emerges through inquiry, critical thinking, and discourse. Dewey (1916) argues that education fosters reflective thinking, enabling individuals to evaluate claims and seek objective truths. Freire (1970) emphasizes critical consciousness, where education empowers learners to question dominant ideologies. Piaget (1950) highlights cognitive development in constructing truth through experience and reasoning. Vygotsky (1978) stresses the social dimension, where truth is shaped through dialogue and cultural interaction. Bruner (1960) asserts that education refines our understanding of truth by fostering adaptability. In the end, education nurtures truth-seeking through logic, evidence, and ethical reasoning.

Critical Thinking as a Product of Education

Critical thinking is a fundamental outcome of education, enabling individuals to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information for informed decision-making. Education nurtures this skill by exposing learners to diverse perspectives, encouraging inquiry, and fostering logical reasoning. According to Paul and Elder (2019), critical thinking involves intellectual traits such as clarity, accuracy, precision, and logical consistency, all of which are cultivated through structured education. Dewey (1910) emphasized the role of reflective thinking in education, arguing that students should be trained to think independently rather than passively absorb information. This aligns with Freire's (1970) concept of problem-posing education, which encourages dialogue and critical consciousness over rote memorization. By engaging with complex issues, students develop the ability to question assumptions, recognize biases, and construct reasoned arguments. Furthermore, educational institutions promote critical thinking through disciplines such as philosophy, science, and mathematics. Ennis (2011) asserts that critical thinking involves both cognitive skills (e.g., analysis, inference, and evaluation) and dispositions (e.g., open-mindedness and skepticism). The Socratic method, commonly employed in philosophy, exemplifies how structured questioning in education enhances logical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

Skill as a Product of Education

Education plays a pivotal role in skill development by equipping individuals with the knowledge, competencies, and practical abilities necessary for personal and professional success. Through structured learning, individuals acquire both cognitive and technical skills that enhance their adaptability and productivity in various fields. According to Bloom (1956), education fosters skills through three domains of learning: cognitive (knowledge-based skills), affective (interpersonal skills), and psychomotor (practical skills). And recently kinaesthetic is recognized as one of the domains of learning. Vocational and technical education emphasize skill acquisition for employment and economic development. Schultz's (1961) human capital theory highlights education's role in enhancing workforce skills, thereby increasing productivity and economic growth. Similarly, Heckman and Kautz (2012) argue that formal education not only imparts technical expertise but also nurtures essential soft skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. These skills are crucial for career advancement and societal development. Moreover, competency-based education (CBE) ensures that learners acquire industry-relevant skills through experiential learning and assessment (Le, Wolfe, & Steinberg, 2014). In addition to technical skills, education fosters lifelong learning and self-improvement. The World Bank (2018) underscores the importance of education in enhancing skills for the knowledge economy, enabling individuals to navigate a rapidly changing world. Through continuous learning, education empowers individuals to refine their skills, remain competitive, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Global Impact as a Product of Education

Education has a profound global impact, driving economic growth, social development, and political stability. It enhances human capital, reduces poverty, and fosters innovation, making it a cornerstone of sustainable development (Schultz, 1961). According to the World Bank (2018), education contributes to higher incomes, improved health outcomes, and increased life expectancy, demonstrating its transformative effect on individuals and societies. One of the most significant global impacts of education is economic progress. Research by Hanushek and Woessmann (2008) shows that countries with higher levels of educational attainment experience faster economic growth due to increased workforce productivity and technological advancements. Additionally, education reduces income inequality by providing individuals with the skills necessary for employment and social mobility (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Education also promotes social and political stability by fostering civic engagement and democratic values. Lipset (1959) argues that educated populations are more likely to support democratic institutions, reducing the likelihood of conflict and authoritarianism. Furthermore, UNESCO (2021) highlights education's role in advancing gender equality and human rights, as educated individuals are more likely to advocate for social justice and

inclusive policies. On a global scale, education facilitates international cooperation by promoting cultural understanding and collaboration. As nations invest in education, they contribute to a more interconnected and peaceful world (OECD, 2019). In conclusion, education is a powerful driver of global progress, shaping economies, societies, and governance systems for a better future.

Social Mobility as a Product of Education

Education is a key driver of social mobility, enabling individuals to improve their socioeconomic status and break the cycle of poverty. It provides people with knowledge, skills, and credentials that enhance employment opportunities and income potential (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). According to Becker (1964), investment in education increases human capital, leading to better economic prospects and upward mobility. Research indicates that access to quality education significantly reduces income inequality and promotes economic mobility. Chetty et al (2014) found that children from low-income families who receive higher education are more likely to achieve upward social mobility. Furthermore, UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that education fosters equal opportunities, especially for marginalized groups, by eliminating social and economic barriers. Education also promotes intergenerational mobility, meaning that children of educated parents are more likely to attain higher social and economic status (Blanden, Gregg, & Macmillan, 2013). Additionally, the OECD (2018) highlights the role of education in fostering social cohesion and reducing disparities within societies. In conclusion, education is a powerful tool for enhancing social mobility by providing individuals with the skills and opportunities needed to improve their lives, reduce inequality, and contribute to a more equitable society.

Economic Growth and Stability Products of Education

Education is a crucial driver of economic growth and stability, as it enhances human capital, boosts productivity, and fosters innovation. Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964) argue that education increases the skills and efficiency of the workforce, leading to higher wages and economic expansion. Countries that invest in education experience sustained economic growth, as educated populations contribute to technological advancements and entrepreneurship (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). Research shows that higher levels of educational attainment correlate with increased GDP *per capita*. Barro (2013) found that improvements in schooling significantly impact long-term economic performance by enhancing labor market efficiency. Furthermore, Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018) highlight that returns on investment in education are highest in low-income countries, where education reduces poverty and income inequality. Education also promotes economic stability by reducing unemployment and enhancing workforce adaptability. The OECD (2019) emphasizes that educated individuals are more likely to secure stable employment, reducing reliance on social welfare programs. Additionally, education fosters social cohesion and political stability, which are essential for sustainable economic development (World Bank, 2018). In sum, education is a fundamental pillar of economic growth and stability, ensuring a skilled workforce, reducing inequality, and fostering innovation for long-term prosperity.

Proper and Functional Definition of African Philosophy of Education

There is, therefore, this unique differential nuances of the definitions of African philosophy of education. This leads to the the idea of linking education and philosophy with prepositional conjuncts like *and*, *of*, *in*, *at* and *for* which, however, was borrowed from the unique work of Smith, G. (1964), *Philosophy of Education*. We attempt at defining African philosophy of education by applying the conjuncts between African philosophy and education.

● **African Philosophy as Education**

African philosophy can be conceivably appreciated in many ways alongside the idea of education. *In lato sensu*, African philosophy of education can be understood in many ways. Primarily African philosophy can be seen as an activity of the mind while education remains a process of personal development, (Smith, 1964). This is why African Philosophy of

Education is appreciated more within the conjunctive bound of *as*. *As* compares when it is used in between words. Equally it can play the role or function in a sentence like *He works as a teacher*. In this other understanding, African Philosophy as Education is appreciated.

- **African philosophy and Education**

The concepts of African philosophy and education show a relationship between African philosophy as a discipline and education as disciplinary meaningful process of *educere* and *educare*. The *and* in between African philosophy and education connects the two concepts. It links the conceptual ideas of African philosophy and education. Beyond the sequential appreciation of and in the theme above it expresses a joint action and shared characteristics between African philosophy and education. African philosophy, therefore, studies and is greatly concerned with the products of education as regards nature of reality, knowledge and values. The relationship between African philosophy and education is deeply rooted in the values and principles of traditional African societies. African philosophy provides a framework for understanding education as a holistic, communal, and utilitarian process that aligns with the cultural, moral, and practical needs of African communities. In African Philosophical dispensation, education goes beyond formal schooling to encompass moral, spiritual, intellectual, and physical development; emphasizes learning by doing, that is acquiring practical skills that ensures learners are equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Education in this relationship entails and involves the community participation in nurturing values and skills that benefit everyone, reflecting the belief that "a person is a person through other people". African education within the limits of African philosophy is utilitarian in nature. Hence, African philosophy of education challenges colonial legacies by reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems, integrating African values and perspectives into curricula, emphasizing the preservation and celebration of African heritage. African philosophy views education as a process of enculturation, aimed at preserving cultural identity, fostering social cohesion, and equipping individuals for meaningful participation in their societies. (Smith, P. G. 1964. *Philosophy of Education*. London: Harper and Row)

- **African Philosophy in Education**

The preposition "in" is used to indicate various relationships involving location, time, state, condition, or involvement. Its meaning depends on the context in which it is used, (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Here are the primary uses of "in": African philosophy in education shows a form of involvement of African philosophy in education. To what extent is African philosophy involved in the development of the content of the curriculum and general pursuit of education. The *in* in the African philosophy in education serves to establish a relationship of presence, containment, or engagement of African philosophy in education. This is why, African philosophy in education refers to the application of African philosophical principles to teaching, learning, and the overall approach to knowledge. It emphasizes values, cultural relevance, and the holistic development of individuals within their communities. In sum, African philosophy in education advocates for a system that respects and integrates African cultural heritage, emphasizes communal values, and prepares individuals for practical and moral contributions to their communities. It is a call for education that reflects Africa's unique identity. Expanding Smith, P. G. (1964) view, one can say that African philosophy in education is the sole attempt to view education in the comprehensive, penetrating and flexible manner that has characterized the philosophic approach regardless of the problem area

- **African Philosophy for Education**

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) maintains that *for* is used as a function word to indicate the object or recipient of a perception, desire, or activity. The preposition "for" before a concept or word indicates purpose or reason, support or advocacy, intent, Suitability or appropriateness, benefit or representation. Its meaning depends on the context. In these presumed and presupposed uses, "for" establishes a connection that emphasizes the idea of purpose, benefit, or alignment with the concept that follows. In this appreciable understanding, therefore,

African Philosophy for education suggests the application, contribution, or alignment of African philosophy to the field of education. The phrase could carry several nuanced meanings depending on the context. African philosophy as a framework or foundation to shape educational systems, curricula, and teaching practices. Promoting African philosophy remains a critical component of education that ensures representation, diversity, and decolonization of knowledge systems. African philosophy is well-designed and suited to address specific educational challenges or goals. African philosophy being taught in or for educational institutions as a subject to cultivate critical thinking, identity, and cultural awareness. African philosophy contributes to the development of education especially the content of the curriculum by providing alternative ways of understanding knowledge, ethics, and human development. In sum, African philosophy for education emphasizes the role of African philosophy in enhancing, transforming, or informing educational systems and practices, (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.).

African Philosophy of Education

The preposition *of* primarily indicates a relationship or connection between two elements in a sentence. Its meaning can vary depending on the context, but it often denotes possession or belonging, Part-whole relationship, origin or source, cause or reason, material or content, subject or reference and apposition or identification. *Of* serves as a versatile connector, linking ideas and clarifying relationships between nouns, (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). By way of definition, African philosophy of education, appreciating all the conjunctual nuances that try to define African Philosophy and Education, is an applied philosophical discipline that explores how African cultural, ethical, and philosophical traditions while reshaping the purposes, processes, and ideals of education. African philosophy of education encompasses the onerous acts of directing, guiding and regulating education as such as a product (of knowledge, truth and value), process (via mentoring, training, teaching, instruction, etc) and a discipline (as one of the formal subjects and courses in our schools and institutions of learning). It seeks to align educational practices with the continent's socio-political cum traditional realities, cultural values and developmental needs. Rooted in African concepts, it emphasizes Afrocentric models in its approaches reflecting African worldviews. This philosophy also critiques Eurocentric models, aiming to decolonize education and make it relevant to African contexts, fostering holistic development and societal progress.

A Rethoughtful Rethinking of African Philosophy of Education

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) explains that rethought is a verb and defines it as a past tense of rethink; as in to reconsider as well as past participle of rethink. It is, therefore, means to consider again, thought better of especially with possibility a better change. In my book title, *A Rethoughtful in African Philosophy of Education*, *rethought* is used as a noun (part of the name of a book) and a verb, meaning a reconsideration as well as a new way of thinking about something. The theme of this paper; *A Rethoughtful in African Philosophy of Education* may be appreciated from many nuances of applicable interpretations with conjuncts like *on*, *of* and *for*. Hence, the theme *A Rethoughtful in African Philosophy on Education* suggests a critical re-examination and redefinition of the principles, methods, and goals of education in Africa through the lens of African philosophy. It implies questioning existing educational frameworks, many of which are influenced by colonial legacies, and proposing a more authentic, contextually relevant approach rooted in African epistemology, values, and traditions. More so, the topic *A Rethoughtful in African Philosophy for Education* implies a critical reassessment, revision, and possible transformation of the foundational ideas that shape African educational philosophy. It suggests a need to rethink how African traditions, values, and indigenous knowledge systems inform education in contemporary society. Moreover, the theme *A Rethoughtful in African Philosophy of Education* suggests the need for a deliberate and critical re-evaluation of the foundations, goals, and methods of education in Africa through the lens of African philosophy. The phrase *rethoughtful rethinking* implies an intentional effort to reform or reshape African educational philosophy to better serve contemporary African realities. Furthermore, the theme *A Rethoughtful Rethinking in African*

Philosophy of Education suggests a critical reassessment, reinterpretation, and potential transformation of African educational philosophy. It calls for a deep reflection on how African philosophical traditions, indigenous knowledge systems, and cultural values can reshape education to be more relevant, inclusive, and reflective of African realities. *A Rethoughtful in African Philosophy of Education* is about African philosophical foundations of education.

However, these aligning nuanced themes, therefore, cover several key aspects: *Decolonization of Education* (challenging Eurocentric curricula and advocating for an education system that reflects African knowledge systems, indigenous languages, and cultural values), integration of indigenous knowledge (emphasizing oral traditions, communal learning, and African ethical frameworks in shaping modern education), African philosophical foundations (examining how afromodals are expressing human interconnectedness, ethno-philosophy -wisdom of the people- and Sage Philosophy -wisdom of elders, can shape pedagogy and learning), relevance to African realities (ensuring that education addresses Africa's socio-political and economic needs, rather than simply replicating Western models) and holistic learning approaches (moving beyond Western rationalist traditions to embrace African perspectives on spirituality, morality, and communal development). The singular unique theme *A Rethoughtful Rethinking in African Philosophy of Education* resonates with the idea of redefining African philosophy and asserting its importance in global discourse. *A Rethoughtful Rethinking in African Philosophy of Education* is an Afrocentric based with a cosmocentric bent. The need for a rethought in African philosophy of education arises from the recognition that education should not be a one-size-fits-all system but should be contextually grounded. As Wiredu (1998) argues, African philosophy must emerge from indigenous realities and traditions rather than being an imitation of Western models. This paper, therefore, aims to reposition African educational thought within its rightful historical and philosophical framework, emphasizing the importance of decolonization, indigenous knowledge, and cultural relevance.

African philosophy of education is, therefore, a branch of African philosophy that seeks to understand and develop educational systems based on African worldviews, values, and knowledge traditions (Higgs & van Wyk, 2007). It critiques the imposition of Western educational models, which often disregard African indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and teaching. As Okere (1983) asserts, African philosophy of education should not merely be reactive but should offer proactive and original insights into the nature of knowledge, pedagogy, and ethical development. *A Rethoughtful Rethinking in African Philosophy of Education* builds upon the works of prominent African philosophers, from the dawn of African Philosophy to the contemporary times with established robust framework for rethinking African education. It examines the epistemological foundations of African education, particularly the role of oral traditions, communal learning, and indigenous pedagogical approaches. It dwells on the central challenges to African philosophy of education that started with the enduring legacy of colonialism. In contrast to the individualistic and compartmentalized nature of Western education, African education emphasizes holism, community participation, and moral development, (Makinde, 1988).

To rethink African philosophy of education, there must be a deliberate effort to create a curriculum that reflects African realities. As Dei (2012) asserts, a decolonized African curriculum should incorporate African history, indigenous sciences, and traditional problem-solving methods. Education should not merely be about acquiring Western knowledge but should empower African students to engage with their own heritage and develop solutions for their societies. This paper critiques the current African curriculum for its continued reliance on Western epistemologies and argues for an educational system that promotes African intellectual heritage. The integration of African literature, history, and indigenous sciences into the mainstream education is essential for fostering self-awareness, critical thinking, and cultural pride among African students (Mazrui, 1986). In the contemporary era, African

education must evolve to meet the challenges of globalization, technological advancement, and socio-political transformation. This paper argues that African philosophy of education should not be static but should dynamically engage with modern knowledge systems while maintaining its cultural foundations. Technology, for instance, can be used as a tool for preserving and disseminating African knowledge. Digital platforms can document and share indigenous oral traditions, proverbs, and philosophical discourses, ensuring that African educational thought is not lost in the digital age (Asante, 2003). Furthermore, African philosophy of education must address contemporary issues such as environmental sustainability, economic development, and governance, providing African-centered solutions to global challenges.

A Rethoughtful Rethinking in African Philosophy of Education is a call for a paradigm shift in the way education is conceptualized, structured, and implemented in Africa. It challenges the hegemony of Western epistemologies and advocates for an educational system that is rooted in African philosophy, ethics, and knowledge traditions. By drawing from indigenous African philosophies, this paper offers a roadmap for an education system that is decolonized, contextually relevant, and intellectually empowering. *A Rethoughtful Rethinking in African Philosophy of Education* invites scholars, educators, and policymakers to engage in critical dialogue about the future of African education and to work towards an Afrocentric approach that is both historically grounded and forward-looking. This rethinking of African philosophy of education is not merely an academic exercise but a necessary step toward intellectual liberation and self-determination. As Africa continues to navigate the complexities of modernity, its education systems must be designed to nurture critical thinkers, ethical leaders, and culturally conscious citizens. This rethought approach argues for a curriculum that prioritizes African languages, histories, and epistemologies, ensuring that education empowers African learners rather than alienating them (Mazrui, 1986). It is a call for an Afrocentric educational paradigm that is intellectually liberating, culturally affirming, and practically relevant to Africa's socio-economic needs. This paper, therefore, serves both as a critique of existing educational paradigms and a vision for an African-centered philosophy of education that is truly transformative.

Today than ever, there is this growing awareness of the beautiful blessedness of Continental Africa with regard to her rich natural resources and prosperous human resources that are yet untapped in Africa. These facts of untapped natural endowments make Africa to be steadily attractive as it were before the time of acclaimed world inglorious exploration that later turned into Western exploitative plundering of Africa *via* slavery and colonialism as well as the subsequent neocolonialism with all manners of contemporary capital flights.

African Development Through African Philosophy of Education

A good rethoughtful rethinking of African philosophy of education ends in a functional and proper African continuous development. Development is as old as man. In the chequered history of man, every one of man's activities is tailored towards development. From the dawn of creation, man was mandated by God to conquer the earth (Gen. 1:²⁸: So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth). Man is, therefore, ordered to *manipulate* nature to his very advantage. Development is in line with the *Old Testament Divine mandated mission of man* with regard to taking charge of the earth and subduing it as *homo faber*, tools man. *Homo faber* is a concept articulated by Hannah Arendt and Max Scheler referring to humans as controlling the environment through tools. Development, therefore, is part of man's fulfillment as *animal laborans*, a working animal, a labouring animal. Labour is that activity which corresponds to the biological processes and necessities of human existence, the practices which are necessary for the maintenance of life itself. However, labour is distinguished by its never-ending character; it creates nothing of permanence, its efforts are quickly consumed, and must therefore be

perpetually renewed so as to sustain life. Tools man and Labour man are concepts that are by extended logic rooted in the concept of development. Schumacher (1975) names education, organization and discipline as the three ingredients of development. And the greatest elemental factor of development is *education*. Education is a continued process of leading one out of ignorance (*educere*) and the consequent act of cultivating or leading one into knowledge (*educare*).

Development via education (as fundamental index in basic human capital development) has changed great many products of education. Human person, therefore, remains a being-for-development within the under-listed productive qualities. Development, therefore, is a process of *transformational agenda* within the context of a people in relation to their level of growth as well as the progress of individual members of a human family within the natural society. Development in this context becomes a constant *recurring human response decimal* for a better society as humanity responds to nature bringing forth sustainable civilization. However, the primary aim of development is human well-being. The main development is development of the people which nevertheless borders on human, social, economic, industrial growth and sustainable development. And man is at the centre of it while *education* is the sure way to achieve it as no nation grows nor develops beyond the quality of her education

The concept of African development is questionable as long as the West came to colonize Africa instead developing Africa. African development was never the purpose of the imperial exploration and the consequent colonization. One continues to ask: why colonialism and not developmentalism of Africa. The whole idea about independence and building of African Nation States remains a post-independent issue. Development, nevertheless, is for the human society with man at the centre. In this understanding and appreciation, development has many meanings as it tries to bring forth another reality from a given reality as a result of creativity.

Conclusion

The expression *A Rethoughtful Rethinking of African Philosophy of Education* indicates a two-layer philosophy engagement, which is on one hand a reflex, and on the other hand a construction. Rethinking African philosophy of education is to cast the inherited models of education born out of colonialism and imperialism, the hegemony of Western epistemologies (Wiredu, 1998). Rather than that, a reconceptualised approach pushes the envelope and suggests that we need to imaginatively reconsider educational discourse based on African ways of thinking about the world, community based ethical stances, and knowledge systems indigenous to African peoples (Waghid, 2014). This article contends that African philosophy of education should be less of a reactive critique and that it should become more a creative project drawing on afromodal ideas and confronting concepts of the traditionalist philosophers like negritude, consciencism, ujamaa, etc, to forge philosophies of education affirming African identities and lives (Letseka, 2012). From this perspective, the rethoughtful rethinking is not just an academic matter, but a transformative venture that seeks to recoup African subjectivity in education, thus also giving impetus to holistic, contextualized and ethical pedagogic practices. It encourages a re-thinking of African philosophies as not fixed traditions (or relics) of the past but as flexible and pragmatic frame-work that can address educational challenges in the 21st century.

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