

The Challenges in Defining African Philosophy

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Abstract

The topic of this paper is on the challenges in defining African philosophy. African philosophy is a field of study that seeks to explore the intellectual traditions and cultural heritage of Africa, African philosophy faces numerous challenges in its quest for definition and articulation. This paper examines the key obstacles that have hindered the development of a cohesive and universally accepted African philosophy. The paper delves into the issues of cultural diversity, linguistic barriers, colonial legacy, and the tension between traditional discourse and modernity. Additionally, it also explores the debate surrounding the role of oral traditions, the impact of Eurocentrism, and the quest for a distinctive African epistemology. This paper shall employ the use of expository and critical methods in discussing the challenges in defining African philosophy by also presenting the trends of African philosophy. We aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in defining African philosophy and pave the way for a more inclusive and nuanced discourse.

Key Words: African Philosophy, Eurocentrism, Tradition, Modernity

Introduction

The definition of philosophy has remained a perennial philosophical problem and there is little agreement as to what it is. Rather, what many seem to agree on is the description of philosophy, that is, what it encompasses which will provide the basis for our definition. In the same vein, it has been difficult to define what African philosophy is; rather most philosophers have contented themselves in describing what African philosophy is. According to Sogolo, the controversy over what constitutes an African philosophy tends to dominate sometimes so much that it forms almost the entire content of the course. (1). In this paper, the attempt is to say what African philosophy is, in spite of the seeming unending polemics in the sphere and practice of African philosophy. In doing this, we shall start by attempting to describe and possibly define what philosophy is. Subsequently we shall be in a position to define African philosophy by looking at the origin of the debate on African philosophy which was as a result of the charge of irrationality leveled against the Africans. Let us recall that many European scholars mostly anthropologists and sociologists in the like of E. Durkheim, Auguste Comte, James Frazer, Sigmund Freud, Malinowski, Max Muller, Herbert Spencer, Edward Tylor and even Levy Bruhl, have attempted to give an answer to what the African traditional world views were through their

theories on religions of the primitive people. For instance, Levy Bruhl rejected the rationality of the primitive people and claimed that they were largely pre-logical and that what their practices point to is a kind of symbolism.

We reject the postulations of these scholars, which were largely anthropological, psychological and sociological as the philosophy of the primitive people or Africans. In the same vein any attempt by contemporary African philosophers to present a purely descriptive, conjectural account of the African worldview as African philosophy will also be rejected. We conclude that African philosophy consists in speculative, conceptual and analytical as well as the critical examination of the African traditional thought in the light of contemporary global events.

The Definition Problem and the Concept of African Philosophy

Philosophy generally arises because of problems. When we talk about core issues in African philosophy, we directly or indirectly mean the issues with which African philosophy is concerned (Obioha 157). But these issues constitute problems because it is typical to philosophy that critical reflection and speculation generate different opinions and ideas that are most times conflicting. As such, it is hard in philosophy for everyone to hold the same opinion about an issue. In this regard, problems even in African philosophy often take two dimensions. One dimension is to identify the problems that philosophical reflections attempt to resolve under certain contexts and circumstances; the other dimension is to assess or re-assess the problems generated by the various attempts to resolve or respond to the same problems. Therefore, it is a common phenomenon in philosophy that critical attempts to solve problems generate more problems, some of which may be associated with conceptual analysis.

Concerning African philosophy, given the circumstances of the origin of African philosophy in the middle twentieth century, Oladipo as quoted by Bello, observes that African philosophers today should focus on addressing the basic problems that confront Africans today such as the problem of cultural identity, which has to do with the problem of how we can achieve a significant level of development of both human and natural resources without compromising our identity; the problem of knowledge, which has to do with how we can acquire and apply scientific knowledge and other kinds of knowledge to promote human co-existence and well-being; and the problem of social control, which is concerned with the development and maintenance of social order where individuals can exercise their rights and develop their potentials (271).

The Major Components and Issues Regarding the Existence of African Philosophy

The Nature of the African Intellect

Barry Hallen argues that this was the pioneer problem that laid the foundation for what is regarded today as African philosophy (99). This is evident in his words:

The debate about the nature of the African intellect marked a kind of watershed in the history of Anglophone African philosophy, for it incited the scholarly momentum, the motivation, which led to coalescing of philosophical discussions, debates, and endeavours in Africa that would result in an autochthonous, independently minded, analytic tradition. Many philosophers in the African context felt that religious studies and anthropology were exceedingly their

disciplinary limits if and when they claimed the right to define rationality in the African cultural context. Rationality, as both concept and capacity, constitutes part of the core of philosophy as a discipline (104).

Placide Tempels (51) was underscoring the problem of the nature of the African intellect, when he described the Bantu people as being unable to conceive the transcendental notion of being by separating it from its attributes. Hallen supports this by saying that Tempels' work created the impression that Africans themselves are incapable of articulating the views he reported (99). In a similar manner, Horton, as explained by Hallen, actually described some systems of thought in African philosophy as logically and empirically erroneous', which seemed to discredit the integrity of African thought as intellectual statements (103) While some may think that African philosophy at the moment has gone beyond this problem it is quite difficult to discard this problem because it is the foundational problem that led to the origin of African philosophy (Hallen 104).

Moreover, many authors of African philosophy one make reference to the unjust degradation of the intellectual products of Africans by their Western counterparts as a premise to justify the uniqueness of indigenous research and theoretical inquiry; and also to show that the somewhat 'less developed' status of African societies with respect to different aspects of intellectual property such as those bordering on science and technology is not the case because Africans have an inferior intellect or rational capability. For instance, Ijiomah, before proceeding to excavate African logic from the worldview of traditional Africans has to reject Levy Bruhl's position that the traditional peoples of the third world countries including Africans were pre-logical (*African Journal* 29-32). The problem of the nature of the African intellect remains a core issue in African philosophy even today because it is foundational to discussions on rationality as culturally universal and rationality as culturally relative. The works of African philosophers like Mbiti, Paulin Houtondji, Kwasi Wiredu, and indeed a host of others in recent times can either fall into these two categories. following this arguments Umotong posits a rhetorical question “is African philosophy any philosophical posit by Africans or any philosophical issue about Africans or philosophical issues discussed in Africa weather by Africans or none Africans”? (Umotong 2024: 202). Rationality as culturally universal maintains that all human beings are rational and as such critical philosophical strides are also definitive to traditional and modern African philosophers; whereas rationality as culturally relative argues that the way we reason can be coloured by our cultural worldviews, and this in turn informs the uniqueness of the way Africans conceive reality as different from the Western tradition (Umotong 2024: 203). But Innocent Asouzu is right to observe that sometimes rationality as cultural relativity' can be an obstacle to authentic philosophizing because of what he calls unintended ethnocentric commitment, a burden to African philosophy (*Ibuaru* 40-43). And in such circumstances the ambivalence of human interests, if unchecked prevents the mind from achieving an unbiased complementary mode of reflection (*Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection* 101; *Ibuanyidanda* 264-269).

- **On the Issue of Tempelsian Damage**

The problem of the nature of the African intellect has given rise to another problem that Asouzu describes as the 'Tempelsian damage'. 'Tempelsian damage' is Asouzu's coinage for a philosophy model whereby actors consciously or unconsciously presuppose that anything that could be tagged 'African', from science to Arts, (by comparison to Western circumstances) must be about encrypted phenomena (*Ibuaru* 75). This suggests that the latter somewhat has an inferior status or value. The Tempelsian damage announces a mindset even among some

professional Africans who either deny the existence of philosophical thought among traditional Africans or tend to settle for a somewhat 'second class' kind of philosophy for Africa. This includes instances where scholars present African science or African philosophy as mysticism, spiritualism, religion, proverbs and myths; not because they regard these things as raw data to deduce what can be described as a philosophy, but because they give the same impression that Tempels gave in *Bantu Philosophy*, that African logic reflects a peculiar weakness that is a product of the nature of Africans as a cultural people or as individuals. Some of the arguments of Asouzu on this issue are very interesting and I will love to capture one of them as follows:

The Tempelsian damage takes a radical turn in African philosophy when some African philosophers assume that African philosophy has to deal exclusively with what I call encrypted phenomena. To encrypted phenomena, belong most things that have spiritual supernatural foundations and such that lay claims to some special types of preconditions for knowing them. Some of the major constituents of those means devised to control and penetrate these encrypted phenomena include encrypted languages, encrypted mentality, encrypted individuals and all resources adjudged necessary to obscure the character of such phenomena against outside intrusion. Thus, in keeping with Tempels' view that African experience of the world is "vital force and dynamic" many set out to declare these encrypted phenomena and the means needed to investigating them as the special domain of African philosophy (87).

The foregoing arguments are put forward by Asouzu to show that many professional works in African philosophy retain the tendency to describe the subject matter of African philosophy as the spiritual, the mystical and the masquerading-phenomena, which presupposes that only those that can be described as 'cultural initiates' can credibly participate (88). For instance, he accuses Momoh of explicating this mindset (89); and reading through Momoh's article in "Metaphysics, Phenomenology and African Philosophy", one discovers that Momoh actually avers that for the African, reality is fundamentally spiritual and anything that must be described as African philosophy must preserve the spirit of African philosophy, which does not in any way undermine the spiritual (18). For Asouzu, some professional African academics who adopt this theory of reality, proceed to argue that doing science in Africa should entail engaging in analyses about the spiritual; but however, this is not the case among professional African scientists in the natural sciences who in their various laboratories are actually not invoking spirits but carrying out empirical researches (*Ibuaru* 91). Therefore, does the description of African science as a 'science' preoccupied with spiritual phenomena mean that professional African scientists who are getting breakthroughs in different scientific researches that are not about spiritual phenomena and not explicating the African mind should be called to order?

Asouzu therefore calls for the radicalization of the problem of the Tempelsian damage, where African philosophy has to be set free from this stereotyped mentality that reflects an uncritical commitment to the questionable presupposition that the intellectual products of the African, for it to be described as "pro-African" must be encrypted. However, it is hard to say whether the different works we have on ethno-philosophy, which characteristically contain treatises on spiritual elements in different worldview theories, are actually attempts to argue that the subject matter of African philosophy must essentially be spiritual or include spiritual beings.

c. African Philosophy: The Question of Identity-Reference

Africa is a large continent with many countries. Each of these countries, even where they are divided into states, have numerous ethnic groups and tribal villages. It is common to observe that the traditional inhabitants of the Northern part of Africa are predominantly light-skinned, whereas the inhabitants of the Western, Eastern and Southern parts of the continent are predominantly dark-skinned. Whenever we are faced with the question of African philosophy, these disparities surface and the problem of identity-reference arises. When we talk of African philosophy are we referring to: (i) a philosophy from Africa; (ii) or a philosophy about all the peoples presently occupying the African continent:

- or a philosophy of some groups of people occupying selected parts of the continent
- or a philosophy by anyone (irrespective of the latter's geo-political origin, location and affinity) about the people that are currently living in Africa;
- or a philosophy of the traditional peoples who inhabited the continent before the influx of Western interference due to trade, slave trade and colonization?

The concept "African" in "African Philosophy" constitutes a philosophical problem, which many writers on the topic hardly take into consideration. The plausibility of this observation arises because to talk about the core issues in African philosophy, one needs to establish the context from which one is approaching the notion of African philosophy. The plausibility of this observation also arises from the work of George James (xvi), that is, *Stolen Legacy*, which purports that "Greek philosophy" is "a copycat" philosophy of the ancient African Mystery School in Egypt. The implication of the theory of stolen legacy for the history of Western philosophy is that the ancient Egyptian mystery school had a system of philosophy, which became a model for ancient Greek philosophy. This idea is also somewhat re-iterated by Innocent Onyewuenyi in his book *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism*, published in 1994.

d) Methodological Issues in African Philosophy

One of the greatest challenges of African philosophy is the problem of method. In our study of Western philosophy, we come across different methods such as the inductive-deductive approach, the synthetic-analytic method, the transcendental method developed by Kant, the phenomenological-hermeneutic or interpretational method used by Paul Ricoeur (Iroegbu 322). Iroegbu mentions that Emmanuel Edeh was the first to state what he called the African method, which he described as analysis and interpretation (323). However, Edeh's Folk-philosophy was greatly criticized by Iroegbu who averred that Edeh in his presentation of Igbo Philosophy, did not get to the level of philosophical reflection, which professional philosophy requires but rather stopped at the level of phenomenological description and transcendental phenomenology (323). What the latter suggests is that methodological issues in African philosophy revolve around the prevailing schools of thought that we shall discuss.

It is a common feature in philosophy to adopt a historical method whereby the philosophical ideas of early philosophers in the ancient, medieval and early modern periods are studied, reexamined, criticized and sometimes applied to current researches and problems. We find this to be very common among those who study Western philosophy. This method has also been adopted by African scholars in recent times. But the question arises: if the dark-skinned people of Africa have existed all through the ages just as their Western counterparts, why is literature in their philosophy only beginning in the late 40s or early 50s? What happened to oral

and written culture of the native peoples of Africa south of the Sahara, when their Northern cotemporaries in Egypt can boast of pre-Hellenistic legacy? This question remains begging, even as professional dark-skinned African philosophers seem to be contented with what looks like a secondary renovation of African philosophy on the premise that the written tradition is a global criterion for the credibility of what should pass as philosophy. So, it is not surprising to hear some scholars say that while Western philosophy in the ancient Greek period began with wonder, African philosophy began with the question: is there an African philosophy? If yes, who are the proponents and do they have documented evidence?

While it will be fallacious to say that the run which some imperialist persons described as save” regarded as objects to be used especially during the era of Trans-Atlantic slave trade, had no thought-system, it is nevertheless painful to comprehend the loss of the written traditions of the rational beings”. However, it is in attempt to presume the veridical status of the former that scholars of African philosophy like Henry Odera Oruka thought it wise to introduce the concept of sage philosophy as something we can historically hold unto to show that at least wise thinking and wise speculation was not totally bereft of the traditional indigenous peoples of Africa south of the Sahara. Therefore, looking backwards, the developments in the field can be grouped into different schools of thought or what Mbaegbu calls the currents of African philosophy (78). Effort is made in the succeeding paragraphs to articulate the central idea underscoring these different schools:

i) **Sage Philosophy or Philosophical Sagacity**

As we have already mentioned, this approach to African philosophy was championed by the Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka. According to Ikechukwu Kanu, Oruka identified two categories of sages who in traditional African settings were regarded as the custodians of wisdom, namely, the folk sages and the philosophical sages (280). We can say that the wise men of the indigenous African communities who left no writings are somewhat analogous to the great Socrates who also left no personal writings (Kanu 279). The proposal of the existence of Sage philosophy in traditional Africa was Oruka's attempt at an apologetics to debunk the position of Houtondji and other Western critics that Africans had no philosophy but philosophical jargons on the premise that they do not engage in critical reflection, and there was no written traditions indicating the philosophy. Oruka's theory of Sage philosophy did not just argue for the existence of African philosophy as philosophical sagacity, it also announced a method for doing African philosophy, which involved seeking out those regarded as the indigenous wise men of traditional African societies and getting relevant information from them.

ii) Of course, even at present, many traditional African cultures still attribute wisdom to old age. So, one may not expect the folk sages and the philosophical sages of Oruka's Sage philosophy to have been men younger than Oruka himself. While this approach to philosophy may be relevant in getting undocumented history about cultural events that may be necessary for philosophical analysis, we must point out that that it is fallacious to suppose something is wisdom simply because it comes from someone who is uncritically accepted as a repository of wisdom. When the oracle described Socrates as the wisest man, did it mean that Socrates himself was infallible or inerrant? Of course, the fallacy of argumentum ad *veriacondiam* (the appeal to authority) is most likely to be an obstacle to truth if the method introduced by sage philosophy must be adhered to in doing African philosophy today. This observation is necessary because it is common to find among professional African philosophers, the tendency to suppose that because a

particular person occupying a particular chair of a particular branch of philosophy has made a pronouncement about a particular issue, therefore he or she must be correct because he is an authority in the field. This is what this paper has chosen to call the fallacy of the sage-syndrome within a community of professional philosophers. But experience has shown that while it is true in certain instances that such authorities are correct, in other instances they are found to be wrong or on the ignorant side; thereby leading to the stagnation of knowledge, the obsolescence of ideas and the deterioration of the growth of research in new and current ideas. Our position here is that whereas we can harness the experiential information sages may have for the growth and development of new ideas, we must be careful not to encourage the growth of the fallacy of the sage-syndrome. Nevertheless, the problem with this method of doing African philosophy is that it will be difficult to delineate the views of the interviewed sage from the views of the editing philosopher just as we can say that it is difficult to delineate which ideas in Plato's dialogues are Socrates' and which are Plato's

iii) **Ethno-Philosophy and the Particularists**

According to Moses Udoh, ethno-philosophy is the approach to African philosophy that is concerned with exposing or articulating the collective, uncritical views of people and traditional worldview or outlook in life (55). Kanu observes that the proponents of this approach to African philosophy argue that what should be regarded as African philosophy is the philosophical thought patterns that could be sieved from their worldviews, myths, folklores, proverbs, et cetera (278). Moses Udoh in *Trends and Perspective*, further averred that, as a collective view of a people it is often criticized as communal and not individuals point of view (42). It is important to mention here that the proponents of this approach to African philosophy like Placide Tempels, Henri Maurier, John Mbiti and Leopold Senghor attempted to anchor the uniqueness of African philosophy on the differences between the thought-patterns of the category of Africans we have already described as our identity-reference, from what is documented as Western philosophy. However, whereas Mbiti and Senghor, being indigenous Africans, were simply trying to establish that Africans within this reference-category have unique thought patterns and lived experiences from which we can sieve out what may stand as African philosophy; some Western writers like Tempels and Maurier were only doing so to show some kind of Superiority of Western philosophy over African philosophy. For instance, as the paper did argue in Uduigwornen's book that was earlier mentioned, Tempels was simply trying to say that the African thought-system, using the Bantu people as a case study, is different from that of the West because of a particular inability (392-393). Specifically, this is where he (Tempels) categorically states that whereas we the West can conceive the transcendent notion of being by separating it from its attribute force, the Bantus cannot (50-51). According to Bello, Godwin Sogolo and Olusegun Oladipo are also proponents of this school (263). According to Kwasi Wiredu, the particularist school of thought is coterminous with philosophical investigations having a special relevance to Africa (149). Commenting on this, Bello observes that the particularist conception that no philosophy is African philosophy unless it deals with a specifically African theme or problem such as, for instance, the Yoruba concept of human person or the Akan concept of truth or Bantu philosophy or the *Luo* concept of God, Igbo philosophy or African sage philosophy (264).

However, it must be mentioned here that this should not in any way imply that doing African philosophy entails searching only for what is perceived to be African and eliminating whatever is perceived to be non-African or common between Africans and Westerners. Some

scholars in African philosophy tend to give the impression that what is tagged African must be at par with what is tagged "Western. We have already discussed this under the problem of the Tempelsian fallacy where some contemporary African scholars suppose that, for instance, African philosophy or African Science has to include magic, *witchcraft*, mysticism in order to differentiate it from Western philosophy or science. In other instances, we find that many contemporary African scholars attempt to carve out a unique logic they can call African by simply searching for a model that is in conflict with Western models. This is where they argue that whereas for the West, logic is formal, in Africa logic is informal; or that whereas for the West, two-valued logic is operational, in Africa three-valued logic is what is operational. These arguments are pursued without second thought as if two-valued logic is not also Operational in Africa or as if three-valued logic is not applicable to any context in the West; or that mathematical models of logic cannot be constructed from respective thought-systems in Africa.

iv) **Nationalist-Ideological Approach**

Some political figures in Africa some of whom are not even professional philosophers have been immortalized in discourses on African philosophy because of their effort to radically construct idealistic models that will serve the purpose of the development and emancipation of their indigenous peoples as a nation, especially from the shackles of imperialist rule and subordination. They are often regarded as nationalists since their ideologies are politically driven towards the struggle for political and economic emancipation. They include Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere, et cetera. It is not that these nationalists intended to come out with an African philosophy when they documented their ideas through publications and manifestoes; rather, it is their academic fans who have thought their ideas is worthy of being transmitted, that have greatly led to their being named philosophers and their ideologies given philosophical aphorisms. *Zikism* or *Neo-Welfarism* names the contributions of Nnamdi Azikiwe, "*Ujamaa* socialism" names the contributions of Julius Nyerere, and Nkrumah's contribution is called "*Philosophical Consciencism*".

v) **Professional Trend in African Philosophy or the Universalist School**

The professional school of African philosophy holds that the definitive feature of philosophy should be universal in the sense that whatever criteria define philosophy in the West should also apply to African philosophy. Some of these criteria include literal documentation, methodology, argumentation, criticisms, logicalities, and systematization. Proponents of this school include Peter Bodunrin, Kwasi Wiredu, Odera Oruka and Paulin Houtondji. But other professional philosophers in the past decades have also shared this position. Scholars like Theophilus Okere, Emmanuel Edeh, Innocent Onyewuenyi, Pantaleon Iroegbu of blessed memory, Joseph Omoregbe, Sodipo, and a host of others. We need to include more recent proponents who share the ideologies of this school. African scholars like Innocent Asouzu (the proponent of the philosophy and method of Complementary Reflection), Godfrey Ozumba (the proponent of the philosophy and method of Integrative Humanism), Andrew Uduigwomen (the copious contributor to different fields in philosophy) and Chris Ijiomah (the proponent of the philosophy and logic of harmonious monism), Iniobong Umotong (the arrow head of indigenizing philosophy), Ephraim Essien (the proponent of Defallibilism as a model for international conflict resolution) can be listed among the contributors to the development of the professional trend.

Critical Reflection and Personal Contribution to Learning

Indeed, this paper supports the idea that African philosophy should target solving African problems. However, it is not the case that we should set limits to what we can consider as African philosophical problems. It is more rational to say that besides other possible issues that are discussable within African philosophy, we can add real socio-political issues touching on the problems of leadership and followership, sustainability of the environment, economic emancipation, scientific and technological advancement. But one may argue that this would expand the curriculum-content of African philosophy. Of course, in my opinion this 'expanse' is actually needed because it is high time we stopped doing African philosophy simply as a chapter in philosophy. There is need to develop African philosophy into specialties like African Metaphysics, African Epistemology, African Ethics, African Socio-political Philosophy, African Philosophy of Science, et cetera.

On the other hand, as we can notice to be the case in Western philosophy, some philosophical problems are often perennial and recurring especially those having to do with cosmology. On this note, the core issues in African philosophy can as well be treated from an historical perspective or from a perspective that attempts a comparative analysis between the positions of philosophers about a particular issue at different historical periods within the African context of identity-reference. We can identify core issues of African philosophy in different literature. I crave your indulgence to mention here that as compared to what we have in the Western tradition, literature in African philosophy is merely developing given that the 70s stand as the period of apologetics in defense of some misgivings introduced in the late 40s and the 50s by scholars like Placid Tempels. nevertheless, it is common to see in the works of many professional African philosophers, the tendency to discuss issues bordering on the origin of African philosophy, while very few make bold steps to developing ethno-philosophy. However, going through the available literature in African philosophy, one can identify what can be described as the predominantly core issues of African philosophy. One of such issues is the pioneer problem of the nature of the African intellect.

Conclusion

There are many other issues in African philosophy that have not been treated here ; issues like cause and effect, human person, categories of being, African political philosophy etc. Nevertheless, the much that has been mentioned and discussed in this work, it is hoped would serve the Purpose of provoking in the mind of the reader, thoughts for further reflection and research in thematic areas. Philosophy assumes man to be a rational agent who can distinguish between that which is good and bad, useful or otherwise. Therefore. the pre-occupation of African philosophers in African philosophy must be relevant to the improvement of the Africans in their worldly outlook (Umotong 2015: 29). In this regard, African philosophy is an attempt by philosophers to make the folklores, myth, sooth sayings, religion, education, socio political organizations and other aspects of the African culture relevant to African needs not through any dogmatic attachment to standards used in evaluating the African culture through creative critical examination and logical methodologies which are not peculiar to the Western culture (Umotong 2023:170). While it is a fact that cultural isolation is not possible in contemporary world and it is also true that cross-cultural interdependence and mutual borrowings cannot be over-emphasized, we should use African philosophy to create a fertile ground for cross- cultural pollination of ideas between the Africans and people of other races. Except for arguments sake,

any philosophy that does not recognize the importance of cross-cultural interaction, for instance, the impact of science and technology, in contemporary times, is nothing but a waste of time, a mere hair-splitting exercise, because whether we like it or not, whatever affects any part of the world will necessarily affect us in Africa, directly or indirectly either positively or negatively. Hence, we cannot afford to waste time. Our philosophy and indeed African philosophy can only be made relevant to the needs of our time only through speculative construction and critical examination of the ideas that govern our existence as Africans.

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