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AGORA JOURNAL

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Contents

From the Editor-in-chief	v
The Validity of Agora Philosophy - FABIDUN, Francis Kayode	1
“I am Good” and Other Aberrations: An Analysis of the Philosophy of Language - APEBENDE, Stephen Atah	22
Conscience and Psycho-Social Maturity in Living the Values of the Consecrated Life - EKE, Theresa, D.C.	40
Historical Development of Knowledge of God and Its Consequen- ces (Hosea 4: 6) - NWANZE, John Chike	63
Marx and Feuerbach’s Humanism: the Anthropological Source of Atheism - IGWE ALUFO, Evarestus, C.M.	85
A Critique of Quine’s Naturalizing Epistemology - JIMOH, Anselm Kole	105
African Claims to Christian Origin - LEWIS, Emmanuel	126
The Consequences of a Fragmented Humanity - EGBE, Peter	146
Canonical Perspectives on Exorcism and the Nigerian Experience - OMOROGBE, Edwin	170
Feyerabend’s Anarchism, Implications for Africa’s Development: A Philosophical Appraisal - NTUI, Victor Ntui	189
Shifting the “Goalpost” on African Ethics? - OLATUNJI, Cyril-Mary Pius	208

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Editorial

Welcome to AGORA! This is a scholarly journal of philosophical and theological studies of St Albert the Great Major Seminary Idowu-Offonran, Abeokuta, Nigeria. AGORA Journal is the newest intellectual and institutional journal in the South-Western Nigeria. An eloquent testimony to the structural ground breaking, intellectual innovation, industry and commitment on the part of the Seminary, the Rector- Very Rev Fr Anselm Ekhelar, Ph.D., the editors, the contributors and the professorial consultants.

Coincidentally, AGORA Journal (AGORA-J) is hitting the academic world during this era of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), without a page on it. However, no worries!! Covid-19 revolution is duly reflected upon and covered in its “new normal” in SAGS-Series, an immediate publication following this journal.

This AGORA-J maiden edition contains eleven well researched articles, the product of a long process of screening and expert review by Internationally reputed Assessors and Consultants. Based on the objectives, there are included in it seven (7) philosophical articles, three (3) theological articles, and one (1) article in psycho-social spirituality. These are well- written articles, their logic is easy to grasp and very interesting to read.

I thank all our editorial board members, editorial consultants, our contributors, the consulting publisher, and you our patrons for making this a reality. While promising more oracular issues subsequently, I invite you to share in the meal of knowledge herein, and feel free to provide us with feedbacks on the way forward. Thank you for sharing in this intellectual exercise even as you are a reader.

Evarestus Igwe-Alufo, CM,
Editor in Chief.

THE VALIDITY OF AGORA PHILOSOPHY

By

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Introduction

Cross pollination of ideas is a common practice in philosophy. This is clearly seen in the writings of Plato who presents his ideas in a dramatic form. In most cases, core issues are presented in the form of dialogue and argumentation and sieved in sound reasoning. This practice did not begin with Plato as depicted in his *Academy*, it was a common practice among the Greeks to meet in a designated place for deliberations. One of such meeting places is the Agora. In the Agora, people gather in large number to participate, among other things, in public issues either by listening or presentation of opinions. It is this important role that Agora played in Ancient Greek cities that propel a desire to do a historical survey of such activities with the aim of identifying how other philosophical traditions of later eras replicate what Agora stood for ages ago. This is aimed at providing a justification of Agora philosophy as a birthplace of ideas and discusses that cover a wide range of issues that are replicated in the 20th century. Furthermore, this paper showed that parallels of Agora exist in African traditional societies.

Therefore, this paper is both a historical analysis and discursive on the philosophical activities that took place in the Agora. It considers among other things, the religious activities of that era as they concerned Agora, because religion and philosophy are mutual disciplines in the service of humanity. Furthermore, the paper singled out Socrates as a prominent figure with Plato and Aristotle adding further coloration to philosophical dialectical activities carried out in the Athenian

Agora. It also considers other phenomena in the Agora with the view to emphasize its centrality to the Greek state.

Agora at a Glance

‘Agora’ is a Greek word roughly used to designate a place of meeting in ancient Greek cities. Heather Whipps points out that, “nearly every city of ancient Greece had an Agora – meaning meeting place – by about 600 B.C., when the classical period of Greek civilization began to flourish”.¹ As such, the Agora formed an important element of all Greek villages and towns, and it was the most outstanding characteristic or constituent feature of an urban environment. Due to the importance attached to it, any community without the Agora, was considered as lawless because it failed to provide a meeting place of common interest for the people.

Probably to make it easily accessible to the people, Agora was founded at the center of the city. Precisely, it was in the middle of the city or built close to the harbor, and was in the middle of other public buildings like temples and gyms. Invariably, the Agora developed as a necessary feature along with the Greek civilization. There was the usual practice of isolating the Agora from the rest of the buildings. History has it that Peisistratus played a significant role in the development and organization of the Agora; remarkably, he constituted the Agora as a political center. He evacuated residential homes close to the Agora and closed up the wells around it. This account for its centrality and consequently been found at the central marketplace in most Greek city-states. It was the assembly where the ultimate decisions of government were made.²

The Agora was the center of political and public life in the city of Athens. It was a large open area surrounded by buildings of various functions. It was the seat of administrative officials and the judiciary, a religious center, a place for commercial transac

tions, cultural events, and athletic contests. Meetings were held four times per month to enact legislation, to hear embassies, and deal with the defense of the city-state.³

Pertinent to note that the word Agora was used both as a physical building and as a gathering of people. It is a meeting or a place where people assemble for various activities. It also means the assembly of people as noted in the work of Homer, who used the word to designate the assembly of people or a physical setting.⁴ Here, to certain degree though, it shares a resemblance with the Hebrew word '*basilaie*', Greek '*ekklesis*' and Latin '*ecclesia*' which means the gathering of people. Joshua Mark describes the agora in the following manner:

The word 'Agora' (pronounced 'ah-go-RAH') is Greek for 'open place of assembly' and, early in the history of Greece, designated the area in the city where free-born citizens could gather to hear civic announcements, muster for military campaigns or discuss politics.⁵

This description already indicated that agora was a place for variety of activities. It was the center of all aspects of public life, and could therefore simply be described as a multipurpose center for the Athenians. Based on archaeological evidence, Agora was a place where various activities took place:

The excavation of cavalry archives and victory monuments, as well as the roadway used for processions and the training of horses, has shown that the Agora, focus of so much of Athenian life, was also for centuries the center of equestrian activity in the ancient city.⁶

From the above there is an indication that, among other things, Greeks placed important value on horses and Agora was also a place where heroes were honoured. Hence, sculptures of such heroes and their houses were carved on the walls as ornaments in the Agora

In the Agora the earliest evidence for the association of horsemanship and high social status is found in the burials of the Iron Age cemetery which underlies the later civic center... Though they do not survive today, monumental paintings adorned the walls of many public buildings in the Agora, and they often depicted cavalry battles.⁷

This shows the agora also as a museum, a place where memories of great men of wealth and strength are kept for late generations to come. These are kept in the form of inscription on the Agora walls. Such sculptures show the faces of the horse rider and the horse.

Honorary statues of generals or statesmen on horseback and monuments commemorating victories in the equestrian events of the games were set up in the Agora, and vases and small objects decorated with pictures of horses were sold in the marketplace in all periods. As with many other aspects of Athenian life, the Agora is an excellent place to develop and illustrate a picture of horses and horsemanship in antiquity.⁸

From the foregoing, it has become clear that apart from being a center of gathering or a market place, Agora also served like a form of miniature museum that provides information of past Athenian heroes and warriors. Memories of great personalities are kept due to their legendary role in the development of

such civilization. Several statues in bronze of successful generals or statesmen on horseback are known to have been set up in the Agora. One of such equestrian statue in the Agora is the Macedonian king Demetrios Poliorcetes, who ruled Athens after the death of Alexander the Great.⁹

Being a center that accommodated various activities, religious activities were not left out in the Agora. Athenians honoured several gods and goddesses who are represented in the Agora. At the heart of the city, the large open square of the Agora was an ideal place for many of the festivals held in honor of the gods.

These gods and goddesses were honoured in different places or spaces designated to them. This was an area where Peisistratus paid serious attention to, by building a drainage system, fountains and the Altar of the Twelve Gods.¹⁰ For the sake of allowance of space, some of these gods and goddesses are considered here. For example, Apollo considered as the father of Ion and founder of the Ionian race, is at the center of worship as the paternal deity of all Athenians. There was also Theseus who was considered as one of the legendary founders of the city of Athens, and alluded as the most beloved of Athenian heroes, something of a rival of Herakles, the great Peloponnesian hero, has a center where he is worshipped at a large sanctuary east of the Agora which contained his bones, recovered from the island of Skyros by Kimon in 476/5.C. Another god well represented in the Agora is Zeus who is regarded as father of the Olympian gods.¹¹ Furthermore, a colonnade or stoa was built along the west side of the square in the late 5th century B.C. and dedicated to Zeus Eleutherios (Freedom).¹²

Among the goddesses worshipped by the Athenians was Athena, the daughter of Zeus and Metis, the goddess of wisdom. The Greeks believed and worshipped Athena as the patron deity of Athens and also honored her as a goddess of arts and crafts and this made her an important figure in the Agora. Agriculture plays a significant role in the life of any human community and civi-

lization. Hence, most cultures usually associate a deity or more with issues that concern soil fertility and farm produce. In the same way, ancient Greeks regarded and honoured Demeter as the goddess of vegetation and fertility, with a sanctuary located to the southeast of the Agora. Other female deities include; Artemis, sister of Apollo, invoked before every meeting of the Athenian assembly, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love, worshipped above the Agora on the slopes of the Akropolis.¹³

Consequent upon the worship of these gods and goddesses, the Athenian year was full of days set aside for religious activities. These festivals consisted of solemn religious observances with lavish processions. They were also avenues for good entertainment, theatrical and choral performances and athletic contests. In addition, the sacrifices of animals provided a great deal of meat which was distributed to the citizens for large communal feasts. Thus, many of the festivals took place in a holiday atmosphere, thus the whole population would have partaken of the religious life of the city.¹⁴

Apart from their daily religious activities, the Agora was a center of political, judicial, social, and commercial activities for the Athenians. In the Agora, there were political dialogue and sharing of ideas on matters of governance, welfare of the state and the citizenry at large and issues concerning diplomatic relations. By its very nature, political discourse entails that issues are considered from different perspectives with the intention of arriving at what is of paramount good of the society. This will be clearly seen in the latter of this paper where Socrates' activities are situated within the context of Jurgen Habermas' Rational Discuss.

It is worthy to note that there were two types of agora - the archaic and the Ionic. The former existed earlier and more primitive. This version was without colonnades and other buildings. Example of archaic Agora is that of Elis built after 470 BC and that of Athens rebuilt after the Persian Wars (490–449 B.C.). On the other hand, the Ionic Agora was more symmetrical having

colonnades to form either three sides of a rectangle or a regular square. This is the sense of Agora depicted as a center of multiple activities like those located in the cities of Miletus, Priene, Magnesia and Maeandrum, cities in Asia Minor.¹⁵

Socrates and Athenian Agora

As a place where people gather for different activities, the Agora was a veritable ground for group dialogue associated with the Socratic period. It was the 'stage' where Socrates carried out his theatrico-dialectical and philosophical activities. Socrates involved people in dialogue as they carry out their commercial activities. This is because, the Agora was easily accessible to every citizen, saw heavy traffic every single day of the week. As a city center, ordinary citizens bought and sold goods, politics were discussed and ideas were passed among great minds among whom was Socrates who engaged the youths in critical discussions. Among these youths were Plato and Aristotle. Plato in *Theaetetus* tests that great minds learn to go to the Agora to form their youths in order to avoid being ignorant. This is the basis of Plato's Socratic advocacy that philosopher-king ought to be political leaders because they have been groomed through their participation in rigorous discussion on political issues in the Agora.

Furthermore, Socrates took advantage of the heavy traffic of people due to commercial activities, and was persisted in interrogating passer-by on their understanding of what wisdom is.

Therefore, it was in the Athenian Agora that Socrates, pre-eminent among Greek world-merchants, was mostly to be found...he was always on public view; for early in the morning he used to go to the walkways and gymnasias, to appear in the agora as it filled up, and to be present wherever he would meet with the most people.¹⁶

Socrates was doing this because of his interest to get those who could philosophize and join in the interest of unraveling the oracle's riddle. This led to the development of the Socratic method. The dialectical method of Socrates. The Socratic method, also known as method of elenchus, elenctic method, or Socratic debate, which is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presuppositions. Through this method Socrates contested traditional ideas and revealed that most people did not know what they claimed or assumed to know. This is why it is said that Socrates emphasizes that his conversations were aimed at benefitting, of himself and his interlocutors.¹⁷ This method appeared to pay off as Socrates attracted the attention of a group of young Athenians who would always gather around him to learn from his philosophical discuss. As Ober remarked,

Socrates went about his ordinary philosophical round: earnestly seeking conversation-partners in the public space of the agora as well as in private and elite gatherings, humiliating those who failed to avoid self-contradiction, and in the process gathering about himself a group of young men eager to be known as his students.¹⁸

This seemed to bring a sense of fulfillment of responsibility to Socrates who, despite being knowledgeable and politically astute after his own fashion of not being a public speaker or being able to serve as high ranking political delegate, nevertheless believed that he did have a particular area of excellence in which he could serve Athens: as an educational public gadfly. This attitude was against the practice of the day where by regular Athenian citizens had the power to vote for anything and everything, and were fiercely proud of their democratic ways. No citizen was above the law – laws were posted in the agora for all

to see – or was exempt from being a part of the legal process. In fact, Athenians considered it a duty and a privilege to serve on juries.¹⁹

However, Socrates' most profound disciple, Plato would later defend his master's unwillingness to partake in public debates. Plato justified this claim because it was not everyone who participated in public debates, more so, relatively few Athenians spoke in public meetings. This sort of "quietism" was not exceptional and was in no sense incompatible with an active record of public service; indeed, it was structurally essential to democratic governance - had even a substantial minority of Athenians actively sought to exercise their equal right of public speech (*isegoria*) at major public meetings, the polis would be rendered ungovernable.

Along with been accused of anti-state teaching to the youth and failure to participate in tyrannical Athenian government for which was considered an act of civil disobedience, Socrates was subjected to persecution. The Basileus summoned Socrates, along with four other Athenians to his office in the Athenian agora (public square) for a preliminary hearing. Since the agora was a public place for the Athenians, it was the very place Socratic was carrying out his teaching that ironically turned to be the same place for his public prosecution. Upon been convicted, Socrates was given a cup of brewed hemlock which he courageously drank in the prison, despite been persuaded to flee the city.

Later Models of Agora

After the death of Socrates, later models of the Agora include Plato's Academy formed in 387 BC. The Academy was a fraternal association devoted to research and teaching named after the sacred site on the outskirts of Athens where it was located,²⁰ a site sacred to the hero Academus.²¹ The Academy attracted young men from across Greece and became a prominent place of learning. In building the Academy, Plato avoided any form of being suspected of training people who will develop radical minds,

and be perceived as enemies of the state. The Academy was built to have a shrine in the garden and a further step was taken to legally incorporate it as a religious fraternity.²²

Plato adopted these ideas because of his association and attachment to Socrates' course. He was careful of not being accused of atheism and the consequent punishment. Therefore, while the Academy had the outlook of religious fraternity; students were exposed to studies in botany, zoology, mathematics, natural science, astronomy, dialectics, philosophy, and politics. In addition, Plato focused on training the soul. For him, the natural way to educate both body and soul is to follow the traditional system, divided into gymnastics and music, and so he takes these as his basis.²³ Though not in the modern understanding as we have it now, the Academy was regarded as a 'university' or 'college', and was remarkable for being a center for political training of people to carry out a life of service for their communities and to investigate questions of science and mathematics.

Plato's purpose seems to have been the training of future political leaders who would furnish an environment in which his own moral ideals could be implanted. During two visits to Sicily he attempted to put those ideals into practice but was stymied by the impetuous young King Dionysius.²⁴

After the death of Plato, the Academy went through series of changes in leadership and thoughts, but remained a center of great intellectual activities. The dominance of the Academy continued through the middle of the second century when Carneades founded the New Academy which was of a skeptical tradition. However, Ascalon broke away in order to recover what he considered as a more authentic form of Platonism.²⁵ At the destruction of the physical structures of the original Academy in 88 BC, its leadership became notional than real, and strived till the fourth century A.D.²⁶ The Academy survived more than

900 years from its founding, until 529 C.E. when the Christian Byzantine emperor Justinian closed it forever along with all the educational centers of Athens, thus defining the actual end of ancient world.²⁷ Nevertheless, before it was destroyed, the Academy housed multiple activities like the Agora; the Academy was a school of philosophy, a home, a church, and a moral society all wrapped into one.²⁸

The best known and most outstanding student of the Academy was Aristotle. He joined the Academy at the age of seventeen, and spent twenty years in the Academy, or in study with Plato, and left apparently well satisfied with his experience.²⁹ After the death of Plato in 347 BC, and with Speusippus succeeding Plato as the head of the Academy, Aristotle left and traveled to Assos where he stayed for a while, and later moved to Lesbos where he came in contact with Theophrastus and collected a wealth of bibliographical data. Aristotle moved to Macedonia at the invitation of Philip to tutor Alexander the Great. It was upon returning to Athens in 335 that he founded his own philosophical school in the Lyceum.³⁰ The Lyceum took twelve to thirteen years of preparation, and was an institution engaged with pursuit of program, and of investigation and speculation in almost every branch of inquiry, and to compose of all, or most, or at least the scientific portions of those of his writings.³¹

Just outside the city boundary, he established his own school in a gymnasium known as the Lyceum. He built a substantial library and gathered around him a group of brilliant research students, called "*peripatetics*" from the name of the cloister (*peripatos*) in which they walked and held their discussions. The Lyceum was not a private club like the Academy; many of the lectures there were open to the general public and given free of charge.³²

Aristotle structured the Lyceum after the standards of Plato's Academy: lessons for advanced students would take place

Agora: Journal of Philosophical & Theological Studies

in the morning (the early morning walk), whereas for beginners' classes were scheduled for late afternoon/early evening (the evening walk). Philosophy was taught in the morning, classics and rhetoric was taught in the early evening classes, out in the open. The Lyceum also served as practice ground for Athenian men and youth in the military service to the state. It was there that Aristotle developed his philosophical doctrine having gathered opinions from his folks in the Agora. Aristotle is known for his contributions to science, and may have developed his important theories on the empirical method, zoology and physics, among others, while chatting in the agora's food stalls or sitting by its fountains.³³

This paved a way for the medieval period when philosophical activities took place in the university and cathedrals. This era was known as Scholastic period and they taught Logic, Metaphysics and Semantics. The philosophers of this era were predominantly Christians who worked to reconcile ancient classical philosophical teachings with Christian doctrines. At a later time within this era, the scholasticism moved beyond theology to further applications in many other fields of study including epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of nature, psychology and even economic theory. Basically, scholasticism employed the dialectical reasoning which consists of exchange of argument, or thesis, and counter argument, or antithesis, in a pursuit of a conclusion or synthesis, directed at answering questions or resolving contradictions. What portrayed group learning was the monastic lives of the Franciscan and the Dominican orders. Some of the philosophers of this era are; St. Augustine, Albert Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, William of Ockham and John Dun Scotus.

Just to mention in brief. Philosophy in the modern period was more of individual contributions to the general endeavor of the time which was basically on the question of method that could be adopted for doing philosophy. During this era, philosophers paid more attention to epistemology than metaphysics as a

reaction to the over emphasis the scholastics placed on the latter. The era witnessed the advent of modern science. However, the 20th century had a resonance of people coming together with the aim of influencing the intellectual current of the time and beyond Logical empiricists of the Vienna Circle.

The Vienna Circle consisted of philosophers who came together with the aim of conceptualizing empiricism by employing the tool of analysis of observable data. The school of thought that resulted from the Vienna Circle is Logical positivism. Logical Positivism as a school of thought is best defined as a general theory of the human mind, a spirit of inquiry, an approach to the facts of human existence. It aimed at re-constructing empiricist criteria and approach for analyzing epistemic claims.³⁴ This movement was popular for the verification principle as the method of meaningfulness. According to this principle, the meaning of a statement is its method of verification; that is, we know the meaning of a statement if we know the conditions under which the statement is true or false. This has continued to influence how philosophy is done till date as evident in the great attention given to the analysis of scientific thought and in the definitely acquired results of the technical researches on formal logic and the theory of probability. Nevertheless, what is of interest to this paper is the discursive nature of this group that was resemblance of the Agora.

African Paradigm of Agora

The communal sense of African society predisposes discursive approach to issues both at the individual and community levels. This is because of the holistic approach Africans usually adopted in attending to issues. The traditional system among the Igbo of the south-eastern part of Nigeria, practices a republican consultative assembly of the common people, and consequently, have a long history of coming together in making and enforcement of decisions in the community. In the Igbo community, there was no paramount ruler; the eldest man (*onye ishi ani*) in the

community was vested with the political and administrative authority to oversee along with heads (*okenye umu nna*) of different linages, (*umu nna*) the affairs of the community. This council of village heads (*ndi ishi ani*) meet to deliberate on issues that boarder on the community. Their decisions are further taken to the community and subsequently disseminated to the family heads for implementation.

They have regular meetings composed of all adult males and very aged women which usually take place at the village square (*ododo*). The meeting was an avenue for all to contribute to the issue under discussion, and speakers are applauded or booed in some instances based on how well they presented their contributions. Nevertheless, the final verdict is the sole responsibility of the *onye ishi ani*. Linage heads take such decision to their respective clan and subsequently disseminate to the family for enforcement. This captures a picture of the Athenian Agora. Another sense that it applies to the Agora in the sense of gathering is the informal meeting place of the people called *Ihu obom* or *Osotosiri* - a place where people gather and discourse issues of every kind. People gather in this place and freely express their minds on variety of issues taking place in the community. Through the discussions people become aware of and contribute to events, decisions and other issues of interest within the community. Though, not vested with political authority, nevertheless, it is an avenue for opinion pull and, important decisions could be reached and subsequently taken to the council of elders for consideration and subsequent approval if need be.

Legacy of Socrates' Rational Discuss in the Agora

The idea of rational discourse is a major part of Jurgen Habermas who is prominent for his philosophical contributions in social philosophy particularly in his principle of Communicative Rationality, more so as it concerns democracy. Habermas considers communicative rationality as a disposition to rational argument that produces political decisions which are

products of rational engagement and not of force arms, power and propaganda. At the basis of communicative rationality is use of reason; the power of the mind to think, understand and form judgement logically. This is for the fact that communicative rationality aims at the truth, and participants must be guided by this consciousness.

As a principle in rational discourse, one follows the norm of saying only things one has good reason to believe or convinced about. This is a major task in philosophical discourse. Philosophical discourse is a desire for truth; a philosopher must first be convinced of the truth of the issue he is bringing up and have reasons to believe such. This commitment to truth is what distinguishes communicative rationality from instrumental rationality employed as a means to attain the aim of the discourse.

Socrates' activities in the Agora could be said to have anticipated Habermas' view of rational discourse. The activities of Socrates in the Agora portrayed him as a philosopher; a lover of wisdom and passionate for imparting knowledge founded on personal convince. In trading of ideas with people in the Agora, Socrates craved to impart others with wisdom so that they are able to improve their lives, and live in conformity with the good of the society. This is further evident in all the works of Plato, which portrayed Socrates as a philosopher who is engrossed in the love of wisdom; who loves a certain kind of truth and convincingly dialogued with others on this. Hence, Plato aptly described Socrates as a man who practiced what he preached: 'the unexamined life is not worth living'.³⁶

In this light, to profess to be a philosopher, as described after the example of Socrates by Peter Kreeft, was not to be a university "professor". It was not to be a "professional" at all but an "amateur". "Amateur" means "lover". From this, a philosopher is not one who, necessarily knows all the facts in the library. Rather, as a lover of wisdom, a philosopher is one who has knowledge of values, of what is humanly important, he possesses a knowledge that is lived, that is learnt by experience and lived out in

experience.³⁷ This was what Socrates did, and this was evident in Plato and Aristotle as they impart others with the experience they acquired from their masters.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Socrates brought philosophers' interest from abstract theorization to the realm of concrete human experience. Earliest Ionian philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, and Parmenides were preoccupied with the mysteries of nature, the heavenly bodies, the gods, numbers, etc. But Socrates focused on issues of human life and its moral problems - virtue and vice, wisdom and follies, right and wrong.³⁸ This finds basis still in his popular admonition of "man know thyself" which is a focus on knowledge of man as an existent. It simply means that we know what it is to be a human being; know the difference between men and beasts, between men and gods, and between good and evil. These are issues that concerns human life and are more beneficial knowledge than from those of the planetary bodies which have no link with human moral status.

It is evident that Socrates forestalled the systematized 20th century Jurgen Habermas' theoretical and methodological discourse on rationality. For Habermas, rationality consists not so much in the possession of particular knowledge, but rather in "how speaking and acting subjects acquire and use knowledge".³⁹ Habermas does not consider rationality as what an individual knows or particular knowledge of an object, rather rationality is pragmatic in the sense that one is able to show it in speech and actions. This was evident in Socrates who focused on human actions and society. In the events that took place in the Agora, people were engaged in discusses. This was a veritable ground for Socrates to develop and employ the dialectical method which further strengthen group discussion.

Conclusion

Dialogue is a constant variable in the development and history of philosophy. This traces back to the Athenian Agora

in which Socrates and other important successive traditions that followed him employed in their philosophical activities. Group discussions have always afforded participants the opportunity of sharing, reconsidering and rethinking of ideas particularly and reconsidering ideas through others' lens of view. This is the precise point of Habermas' rational discourse with the emphasis that argumentation appears in the form of public discussion, debates ought to focus on practical questions.⁴⁰

The activities of Socrates in the Agora revealed that group discussion is an avenue to critique received traditions and opinions, with the aim of arriving at higher degree of clarity, presentation of better arguments and improvement of human society. This paper has shown that Athenian Agora provided these opportunities and it therefore, contributed in the development of our social and political life. Hence, Camp John McK remarked argues that:

Who knows where we'd be without the "agoras" of ancient Greece. Lacking the concept of democracy, perhaps, or the formula for the length of the sides of a triangle (young math students, rejoice!). Modern doctors might not have anything to mutter as an oath. What went on at the agora went beyond the simple daily transactions of the market. The conversations that happened there and the ideas that they bore continue to affect us to this day, from the way scientists carry out their work to how we pass our laws.⁴¹

From this discourse, the philosophical tradition that developed from the Athenian Agora make us to understand that it was a "public sphere in which reason rather than power does the talking".⁴² This is an indispensable element in our era, in which many countries where democracy is practiced, there are instances

Agora: Journal of Philosophical & Theological Studies

of political leaders who through their action relegate public discourse and opinion to the background. As an institution that lays credit to being a product of Athenian Agora, democracy should place high premium on dialogue.

End Notes

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Stephen Atah APEBENDE

**“I AM GOOD” AND OTHER ABERRATIONS: AN
ANALYSIS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE**

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Abstract

Language is not just an intrinsic natural capacity given to the human species as a mode of self-expression but also the only means through which the myriads of individual thoughts and opinions could be communicated, that is, made known to the other parties or persons with whom one lives in a society. It is thus an obviously necessary tool both for individual self-expression as well as human interpersonal relationship in the community. Given that both the individual person and the specific human communities are unique, their specific language tools and medium of expression may differ. Consequently, a conventional synergy is always sought for when a heterogeneous group needs to interact or have an interface. At such a mega level, the individual tools, means, and modes are either suppressed or adapted for a more widely acceptable tool, means, or mode of communication. This is what becomes known as conventional language. But unfortunately, in many circumstances as in our world today, this harmonization is not done as many individuals or language groups seek rather to impose or superimpose their micro paradigms on the macro community under the pretext of a private language. This leads only to societal disharmony, communal disintegration, and interpersonal incommunicability.

Keywords: Private Language; Linguistic Aberrations; Philosophy of Language

1. PREAMBLE

The human person, in spite of his¹ giant strides and exceedingly bold accomplishments in life still remains a mystery on to himself. It is not surprising then that no one scholar has been able to exhaustively define who man (in generic terms) is. The nearest and most widely acceptable attempt at this was that of Aristotle who identified the essence of the human person with his rationality. But as we have come to know, that far more than being homo rationalis, he is also essentially homo loquens. In fact, man's rationality comes to naught but for the descriptive, communicative, and expressive roles of language that render even the concept and content of rationality intelligible. With these in mind we shall attempt to define language as that method or medium through which human beings communicate, either in spoken, manual, or written form, consisting of the use of words or symbols in a structured and conventional way.

Language is thus understood as that basic instrument by which man as a social being, a mitsein (an I-Thou), effectuates communicative skills. As homo symbolicus (a symbolic being), he also creates symbolic instruments to communicate with the other human beings with whom he coexists.² This symbolic dimension of man is so proper to him that he always carries it with himself and never ceases to exercise it. This was what emboldened Heidegger to assert that man by nature is a speaker:

We speak when we are awake and when we dream. We always speak, even when we do not use the word, but listen or read, dedicate ourselves to a job, or lose ourselves in idleness. Speech is not borne of a particular act of will. It is said that man is by nature a speaker, and it is true that man, diversely from plants and animals, is the living being capable of words. Saying this, we do not only intend to say that man possesses, besides other capacities, also

the one of speech. We intend to say that it is exactly language that makes of man that living being that he is, in as much as he is man³.

But this compulsive speaking activity of man is not equitable to a meaningless babble. It is a symbolic representation based on a conventionally agreed phonetic, syntax, and semantic. It is therefore out of place when anyone presumes to privately invent an incoherent word or set of words or phrases and imposes it on himself and/or on others under the pretext of language. It goes against the grain too to impose/superimpose a 'new' meaning upon a word or group of words that already have their own conventional, traditional, or lexical meanings. These noticeable aberrations that seem to be gaining ground in the society today need therefore to be reexamined with a view to re-positioning language in its privileged status as that objective, measurable standard by which human communication is made. The methodology we shall employ to get the job done in this paper shall be a critico-analytic assessment of published literature sources, surveys and documented observations in the field of Philosophy of Language.

2. THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF LANGUAGE:

Language is a very complex human phenomenon and all attempts in defining it, have in one perspective or another, been shown to be inadequate. Etymologically, the word language has been traced by most scholars to either the Latin *Lingua* or the French *Langu*, both of which mean 'tongue' in English. Naturally, it refers to the entire complex of phenomenon associated with human vocal, manual, and auditory communication of emotions and ideas. It is usually called a social phenomenon⁴ because it has relevance only in a social setting. It is that means by which the human person communicates with his peers. It is undoubtedly an exquisitely human activity.

Every tongue (be it English, French, Italian, German, Russian, Chinese, Yoruba, Efik, Bette, etc.) contains a myriad of signs able to be combined in the most varied ways, capable of representing an infinity of ideas and sentiments. Still, notwithstanding the enormous multiplicity and diversity which are encountered in the vast realm of tongues, there are common fundamental elements that always recur when a linguistic activity is expressed. These essential elements are called transcendental conditions, in as much as without them linguistic activity becomes impossible.

There are three of these elements: First is the Subject who speaks (and who by speaking expresses himself); next is the Object that is being spoken of (and which is symbolized and indicated through the word); and finally, is the Interlocutor who is spoken to and with whom one wishes to communicate by speaking⁵. Suffice it to say that these three elements are both necessary and sufficient for communication in any language or tongue to take place. That means, if any one of these three elements is missing, any linguistic activity either ceases or becomes nonsensical⁶. Consequently, there is no language if no one speaks; but, language does not occur also if there is nothing to say about something or if there is no one with whom to communicate. This leads us then to a critical interrogation on the validity of the Private Language Thesis.

3. WHITHER THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT:

The idea of a private language was made famous in Philosophy by Ludwig Wittgenstein, who in his *Philosophical Investigations* asserted that: "The words of this language are to refer to what only the speaker can know – to his immediate private sensations. So, another person cannot understand the language."⁷ This scenario is not synonymous with the possible cases where one's experiences and thoughts could be recorded with a personalized code. For in this case, the code, no matter how twisted it might be, is essentially connected to an already known language and could in principle be deciphered, though apparently obscure.

Wittgenstein's original thoughts on this subject are said to be in reference to a language that is necessarily comprehensible only to its single originator because the things which define its vocabulary are necessarily inaccessible to others. This view was succinctly captured by Ojong who indicated that Wittgenstein's concept was in reference to "a language whose words refer to what can only be known by the person speaking to his immediate sensations."⁸ It is evident from this assertion that such a language has very strong philosophical importance because of its consequences for Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, and Metaphysics. Some philosophers have, for instance, thought that the only matters of fact we really know are our own experiences.⁹ In other words, what we claim to know about the world of other people is based on our knowledge of our mental states, or private experiences.

It could also be taken for granted that our experiential knowledge can be expressed in language, at least to ourselves. But the possibility of expression does not presuppose any acquaintance with the external world or other minds. This kind of view lies at the heart of the private language controversy because, whosoever accepts it would believe in the possibility of a private language whose words acquire meaning simply by being linked to private experiences. But as Anthony Kenny rightly observed, if words are thought of as acquiring meaning, as is presupposed in the private language scheme, a doubt may arise whether the samples from which one person has acquired his vocabulary are really like the sample from which another person has done so.¹⁰ The problem being highlighted here is that of incommunicability of the privacy of subjective experience. Words that refer to such experiences will not make any meaning to other minds since they cannot be known, neither would their truth conditions be objectively determined.

The private linguist also associates names with sensations and uses the names as descriptions for his private sensation. But the problem here is to affirm how this process of association

is established. Since the private linguist is the only speaker of his language, there is therefore no possibility of his relying on other persons so as to learn the correct association of names and the objects they designate as is the case in ordinary language, where the child or the person learning the language could be guided by other speakers of the language. In the private language situation, the lone speaker generates, and at the same time, learns the correct association of names with his private sensation.

On the whole, the points that the analysis of private language brings forth are these: The words of a private language are known only by the speaker and they refer to his private sensations. A private language requires the process of concept formation, if the private linguist must describe his private experiences by ostentation. More so, the private language procedure of associating sensation with the private object is akin to the empiricist conception of language to some extent; and if that is the case, then the idea of privacy would not hold very strictly. The problematic that these issues have raised in the private language controversy are what will form the core of our next section.

4. THE ABSURDITY OF A PRIVATE LANGUAGE THEORY

Immediately after introducing the idea, Wittgenstein, the progenitor of this novel idea, went on to argue that there cannot be such a language.¹¹ This is as good as saying that the concept was dead soon after conception; it was dead on arrival! The importance of drawing philosophers' attention to a largely unheard-of notion and then arguing that it is unrealized lies in the fact that an unformulated reliance on the possibility of a private language is arguably essential to mainstream Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, and Metaphysics from Descartes to versions of the representational theory of mind which became prominent in the late twentieth century cognitive science.

There are several sources of controversy in the private language argument that deserve special consideration, particularly because they have culminated in diverse views about the possibility or otherwise of private languages. Among those crucial issues are the problem of inadequacy of memory as the sole repository of knowledge and language, and the problem of criterion of “correctness” by which the private linguist could check his knowledge of past experiences as to correlate them with the present sensations.¹² To these two popular and well-developed thoughts, we shall add a third as the “Conceptual Absurdity” of a private language theory.

i) Memory and Criterion of “Correctness” in Private Language: Any claim to knowledge must have some degree of epistemic warrant. In other words, there must be some basis by which the truth or falsehood of such claims could be ascertained. In the private language argument, doubts have been raised concerning the defining criterion by which the private language speaker ascertains the claims he makes about his private experiences, and words. Wittgenstein, who qualifies both as the main proponent and opponent of the private language idea queried as follows:

To the question ‘how do you know that so and so is the case?’ we sometimes answer by giving ‘symptoms.’ In practice, if you were asked which phenomenon is the defining criterion and which is a symptom, you would in most cases be unable to answer this question except by making an arbitrary decision and it may be practical to define a word by taking some phenomenon as the defining criterion, but we shall easily be persuaded to define the word by means of what, according to our first use was a symptom.¹³

The point that is being made here is that to have a criterion in the use of language does not consist only in giving definitions of special words. The reason is that in some cases, we are unable clearly to circumscribe the concepts we use, not because we do not know their real definition, but because there is no real definition to them. In such cases, therefore, the use of words or concepts is determined by the context in the grammatical structure of the language.

In the private language, one of the main arguments as that above is that, “the elements in the private language theory are insufficient to provide the structure and articulations necessary for the formation of sentences.”¹⁴ If we relate this claim to the argument that a private language composed of piecemeal linguistic signs is an incoherent system of communication, then it becomes clear that the concept of criterion is lacking in a private language. This is so because it lacks the grammatical explanation that ought to set the standard for judging the meaning and right application of its linguistic signs.¹⁵ The obvious consequence of this limitation is that whatever interpretation of linguistic signs that seem right to the private language speaker is right. But if that is the case, then private language is rendered inconsistent and unreliable. In other words, the truth condition of its linguistic signs cannot be firmly ascertained.

ii) Meaning: The concept of meaning plays a vital role in language and it features very prominently even in the private language argument. A critical analysis of the latter shows that its vocabulary or linguistic signs are interpreted in line with the correspondence theory of meaning. In this theory of meaning, individual words in a language name objects, and the objects for which a word stands, is its meaning¹⁶. However, Wittgenstein’s concern about this theory of meaning was not its affirmation. On the contrary, he sought to show that actual use of language does not portray such a pictorial relation of words to some particular object.

St. Augustine had expressed the view that the mastery of language consists in learning the objects that words signify. Consequently, he asserted that: "...as I hear words repeatedly used in their proper place in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand the objects they signified; and after I had trained to form these signs, I used them to express my own ideas."¹⁷

But Wittgenstein objected to this Augustinian conception by pointing out that: "Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of words. If you describe the learning of language in this way, you are, I believe, thinking primarily of nouns like 'table,' 'chair,' 'bread,' and of people's names and only secondarily of the names of certain actions and properties, and of the remaining kind of words..."¹⁸ It follows from this that language and the mastery of it does not consist mainly in knowing the names of things, but in understanding the grammatical relations that tie up words and give them meaning.

However, another problem arises for the notion of private language from the foregoing analysis. If the language consists of merely naming objects with words, one could argue that even this process might not be possible. Let us look at it this way. Suppose we deny A. J. Ayer's opinion that private languages are parasitic on public or ordinary language?¹⁹ This would imply that a private language speaker would have to invent words for his language. How then will he go about it? It could thus be thought that the private linguist would utter different spoken sounds and attempt to attach meaning to them. But even this will still be difficult for him to do consistently for two reasons. First, he is not guided by alphabetical norms which guide him from deviations in speech.²⁰ Second, phonemes, that is, units of sounds of language are learnt through habit by hearing them repeated by other speakers of the language.

Thus, arguing from the above points, the private linguist is not guided by alphabetical norms to regulate the phonemes of his spoken sounds, and since he will not be opportune to hear such phonemes uttered by others, then it is possible for him to forget the

specific or different spoken sounds he had uttered in the past. The implication, therefore, is that, the private language hypothesis does not satisfy the requirement entailed by the definition of language as a system which correlates meaning with sounds.

iii) Conceptual Absurdity: As has been mentioned earlier, the private language argument was good as dead on arrival. Conceptually and by definition, the word language evokes the sense of existence of a society with interpersonal relationship. Language is thus that tool by which the different individuals, within the human community, break into the thought patterns and freely relate with the other minds like oneself. It is therefore absurd to think of a language without a linguistic community. Without a community of persons language is neither useful nor necessary.

Basically, because it presupposes the existence of others, language by its very nature has three basic functions. These are the Descriptive, Communicative, and the Expressive functions. The descriptive function of language aims at giving a vivid and specific exposition of the subject matter. It adds purpose, emotion, and aesthetic value to a text thereby helping the addressee to imagine a scene he did not actually witness. Consequently, it implies or presupposes the presence of at least a speaker and an interlocutor. The communicative function of language involves commenting, requesting, protecting, directing attention, showing, and rejecting. Obviously, all the acts exhibited by this function are so because language is essentially that instrument with which man seeks to put himself in contact and communicate with his own peers. At the expressive level, language is a great force of socialization. This is so because language is primarily a vocal actualization of the tendency to see realities symbolically.

Thus, for any language whatsoever to exist, there must be a group of people. Language consequently presupposes a community and the existence of a community presupposes a language that binds and aids in the interpersonal relationship therein. It is thus absurd to imagine a 'private' language which is known and spoken by just a single individual. It can at best be called a

code, cryptograph, cipher, or key but never a language. Just like in Epistemology, one's personal thought or opinion, no matter how strong, involving, and convincing, does not translate into knowledge unless the tripartite conditions of Justification, Truth, and Belief have been met. In like manner, no secret writing or cryptograph can translate into a language unless the stipulated conventional indices for such a transition are met.

5. "I AM GOOD" AND OTHER ABERRATIONS:

From the foregoing discussion every word in any given language has a definite and predetermined meaning attached to it. Basically, it is the appeal to convention that determines to a large extent the meaning and correct interpretation of a linguistic expression.²¹ It is thus illogical for a mere user of an already established language to choose to give a 'new' meaning to a word for which he was not the originator. Any such act amounts to an attempt to distort the stipulative and lexical definitions of that word or expression. A case in point that has become prevalent in our time is the misleading use of the word "good."

"Good," according to the Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, is a word that functions either as an Adjective, a Noun, or as an Adverb. As an adjective, it is used in reference to something that is of high quality, pleasant, sensible, strong, favourable, skilful, suitable, etc. In its reference as an adverb, it has to do with the state of wellness of something. As a noun, it is used with regard to the behavior of someone as being morally right or of something or somebody as being helpful. From these lexical meanings of the word 'good', it is out of place to respond "I am good" to a question "How are you?" "I am fine," "I am well," "I am Okay," are legitimate examples of depicting your state of health or mental well-being, when you are greeted "How are you?" The answer "I am good" to the question "How are you?" though popular among many in our present generation is nevertheless grossly wrong and can only at best be considered humorous, since the greeting is not about whether you are

a good or bad person, it is not about your mode of behaviour, or whether you are cruel or pleasant. The same argument goes with the response “I am great” to the same or similar question. People may or may not believe that you are that mighty. The question is obviously not an inquiry into your status or fame but your state of well-being. Having discountenanced the possibility of private language; it is therefore unacceptable to admit a meaning given to a word other than its conventional or lexical meaning. The referents in English that are the proper definiens to the word “being” as a definiendum are obviously not the same as those that describe “wellbeing” as a definiendum. While the former deals with the state of existence, the later focuses on the general health, emotional, physical and psychological feelings of the person.

Even from the perspective of morality, goodness is not a value one can justifiably attribute to himself. Anyone who attempts to assume such a posture only manifests the vice of pride which vitiates his presumed goodness. In the Christian Scriptures Jesus Christ even noted in humility that no one is good but God (Mark 10:18). The person who is truly good and knows that he is good does not usually appropriate it to himself but God. It is against moral ethos then to say “I am Good” even if you know you are.

It is not obvious as to which source this trend emanated but it has been in vogue for at least two decades now. There are three possible reasons that suggest how this expression may have been brought to limelight. The first is the possibility that this was an introduction by the learners of English who, for lack of sufficient vocabulary, used “good” in place of “fine”. This probability is high because in languages like French, Italian, Spanish, etc, the words for “fine” and “good” are of the same root. It is most likely that any English language learner from these language groups will unwittingly use “good” in place of “fine.”

The second reason has to do with the humanistic culture that came at the dawn of the Twenty-first century, with a great emphasis on the intrinsic goodness of the human person, and

made quite a number of psychologists and positivists to focus on individual's self-image, self-worth, and self-actualization. Man influenced by this trend of thought literally over bloated his own ego and inserted himself at the centre of all affairs. Efforts are being made, by protagonists of this school of thought, to rewrite the age-old history of humanity that painted man as a fallen creature who stands in need of redemption into a more glamorous story with man as a perfect being with unalterable goodness. These humanists see everything about humanity as good in itself and from the outset; every man is by nature good.

Closely connected to the humanistic influence is the standardless standard paradigm of postmodernism. This ideology is notably opposed to the universalist notions of objective reality, morality, truth, reason, science, language, and social progress. Those who hold this school of thought prefer contingent or socially-conditioned nature of knowledge claims and value systems to the erstwhile objectively held foundational truths. They are of the view that the individual human person is the standard of measure and not an objectively held notion out there. Having no faith on any reference to objective standard therefore, each and every individual becomes his own selfsame standard resulting in the epistemological anarchism hinted by Paul Feyerabend. "Anything goes!"²² becomes the rule. In summary, therefore, and barring any possibility of relativistic and "privatized" insinuations, the proper response to "How are you?" as a question of wellbeing is "I am fine" while that to the question of moral status is either "I am good" or "I am bad."

6. CONCLUSION

Many notable philosophers, following the thoughts of Ludwig Wittgenstein, have vehemently opposed the private language thesis, asserting therefore that private languages are impossible. Armed with this conviction, they have argued against solipsism, phenomenalism, the analogical or empirical view of one's knowledge of other minds, and against mind-body dualism.

Some of them have further argued for certain versions of philosophical behaviorism as well as for the view that the meaning of a word consists of its use or employment in a social practice and not in its reference to something or its designation of a kind of entity. It is partly the effort to develop a solid footing to this quagmire that led R. M. W. Dixon to propose a linguistic theory which became charged with the role of describing the theoretical framework and basic concepts that are generally used in grammatical description of languages, and in linguistic topology. Linguistic theory became primarily concerned with the specifications of the universals of language, the principles of organization and interpretation that are invariant from one natural language to another. It seeks to specify particular linguistic descriptions that account for the diverse ways in which natural languages realize the abstract structural patterns that express and organize the facts about a natural language.

It must be categorically pointed out too that the concept of private language is not akin to the concept of artificial language, like the language of computers and robots. That is to say that the concept of private language belongs to the genre of natural languages and ought to respect the rules and standards laid down by the linguistic theory. If that is the case, it should yield to at least, some models for linguistic theories to be able to analyze its structure and derive certain patterns in its locations. But is it possible, since such a language is essentially private to its inventor and user? Or granted, for the sake of argument, that the private linguist can himself attempt to apply the principles of linguistic theory to the assessment of the pattern and models of a private language, will such an effort be successful given the slippery nature of tracking the private linguist's vocabulary?

Having brought to naught the absurdity of any argument in support of a private language theory, it becomes clear that, any mention of language, as human activity is not only tied to a linguistic community, but also owes its meaning and existence to that same community. No one individual then can claim to invent

or reconstruct the use of certain words even within a known language and be logically justified. This is so because: “the ability of speakers (of a language) to transmit their thoughts and ideas, to another through the vehicle of articulated speech sounds, presupposes that each speaker has mastered a common system of rules within which each well-formed utterance, receives a fixed semantic interpretation.”²³

From the foregoing, any society, language group, or tongue that allows the mutation, adulteration or reinvention of her communication tool by means of some irregular alterations under the pretext of popular slangs, inter-lingual, or inter-cultural pollination, or anything of the sort, only risk being at the fastest lane to extinction. As F. De Saussure rightly noted, language is not just a succession of words that correspond to so many objects or ideas as could be suggested by just anyone, but it is rather a combination of equivalent sounds and signs.²⁴ The value of every single sign does not depend on its realization with objects or ideas, but rather on the realization that, it has with other signs, which precedes or follow it and with all the rest of the linguistic field of which it makes up a part. Consequently, every single new entrant into a language (be it a word or a “new” meaning of an already existing word) must cohere with the already existing body of meanings of that particular language, for it to be accepted as a valid entrant.

No doubt, language, like all human related realities, is dynamic and thus open to development and advancement, but this ought to be done in a scientific, methodic form, not the haphazard distortion of the language structure like the misinterpretation of already fixed vocabularies or phrases or a superimposition of same in conceptually opposing substructures. Therefore, “I am good” as a response to the question “How are you?” – though a popular trend in our time – is definitely a linguistic aberration.

End-Notes

¹For easy read and free flow of thought we plead with our reader to permit the use of ‘Man’ in the generic sense as well as the masculine pronouns thereof. It shouldn’t be construed as a negligence of the feminine gender.

²Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1998), 130.

³Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982), 27.

⁴Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 133 - 134.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Heidegger, *op. cit.*, 42.

⁷Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, (New Jersey: Basil Blackwell Publishing, 2001, [1953]), 243.

⁸Kyrian A. Ojong, *A Refutation of Private Language Epistemology*, (Calabar: Jochrisam Publications), 10.

⁹Cf. Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, (New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing, 1982), 65 – 69.

¹⁰Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 179.

¹¹Stewart Candlish & George Wrisley, “Private Language” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Fall 2019).

¹²Ojong, *Op. Cit.*, 25.

¹³Wittgenstein, *Op. cit.*, 25 – 26.

¹⁴Peter M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 234.

¹⁵Herman Cappelen, *Bad Language*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 87.

¹⁶Alexander Miller, *Philosophy of Language*, (New Zealand: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2018), 63.

¹⁷Augustine, *Confessions*, Henry Chadwick (Trans.), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.

¹⁸Wittgenstein, *Op. cit.*, 15.

¹⁹Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, (United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 1990 [1936]), 44.

²⁰Cappelen, *Op. cit.*, 32.

²¹Miller, *Op. Cit.* 29

²²Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, (London: Verso Publications, 1993), 139, 142.

²³John R. Searle. "What Your Computer Can't Know," in *The Fourth Revolution*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 104.

²⁴Cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publications, 1916), 122.

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Theresa Eke

**CONSCIENCE AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL MATURITY IN
LIVING THE VALUES OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE**

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INTRODUCTION

In both traditional and modern societies, it is generally the desire of parents that their children or wards turn out right, and to a large extent, they (parents/guardians) make the necessary provisions within their specific abilities and means, to ensure the fulfillment of this desire. However, whatever a particular individual turns out to be will depend largely on the interaction between nature (gene and other natural endowments) and nurture (environment and forms of socialization) in addition to the personal response of the person to this interaction. An imbalance in the said interaction will inevitably take its toll on human development and its outcome.

Human development or maturation is dynamic. Formation, which is an aid to this development or maturation is also dynamic and multi-faceted contrary to erroneous and obsolete concept of formation as “molding”, in which case the individual is expected to take the exact shape of the mold or container which is the medium or mode of formation/training. In this sense, the individual is divested of any responsibility in his/her development and the credit or blame for what they eventually become is heaped on the parent, guardian or formator. Not only is the person’s responsibility robbed, but also his or her freedom is undermined.

Moral development as part of human development is also dynamic. According to Barth Kiely in his presentation of Lawrence Kohlberg's levels and stages in the Development of Moral Reasoning, "individuals are found to move through a series of six different ways of moral reasoning; that is, through six stages in the strict and technical meaning of the word "stage". In this technical sense, each stage is qualitatively different from each other; the stages follow one another in an invariant sequence; each stage has a coherent inner logic of its own, so that each stage forms a 'structured whole', and each stage subsumes and transforms the preceding stage."²

This stage development is not so much structural in the sense of chronology as it is systemic, following an inner logic, as already stated. Not all individuals reach the highest level of moral development, but for one to get to a higher stage, one must definitely traverse the earlier stages and fulfill the required tasks.³ In as much as there are behaviors that are expected of persons at a certain age, not everyone of that particular age would exhibit this expected behavior. The ability to exhibit age appropriate behavior in any aspect of human development is what leads to the classification of a person as 'mature' in that aspect.

In the context of Religious Life, moral choices become the yardstick for measuring maturity or lack of it, in the following of Christ through the internalization of Christian values.⁴ It is important to note that moral development, unlike some other aspects of human development, does not relate solely to single entity or to God alone as it were, but to every dimension of human relationship – personal, social and spiritual.⁵ In other words, morality is universal and so touches on all manner of things. This is why a psycho-social approach to the development and function of the conscience becomes paramount in the practice of the Evangelical Counsels and the fundamental value of Christian love.

Theresa Eke

There can be no talk of moral development without the development of the conscience and the consciousness that enables one to act right. It is the development of the Psychological and moral conscience of an individual that awakens the consciousness of how one's actions and non-actions affect others and the environment, thus turning on their sense of responsibility and challenging their interior freedom to act according to the person they would want to identify with or be identified as. Beyond evoking a sense of "personhood" or "identity", it further evokes the sense of the "social" and "rational" (spiritual) self; the self in relation to others thus emphasizing "responsibility" and "freedom".

Consequently, given the appropriate environment and formation, the individual who takes to the Religious Life may acquire enough interior freedom to assume responsibility for the way he/she lives based on his/her personal convictions and commitments rather than on what the society says or what the religious authority expects of her. The exemption to this assertion will be the case of psychopathology in the Religious vocationer who, because of his or her mental state, may not be held responsible for poor cognitive or emotional growth, and consequently, assumes no moral responsibility for his or her actions while in that pathological state.⁶ Every decision of conscience ought to grow from a person's more fundamental commitment to be and to become a certain kind of person through the core moral commitments of his or her life.⁷

In the light of the foregoing, there is, therefore, a certain level of responsibility expected of those who accompany vocations to the Priestly and Religious Life. They too must acquire a significant degree of interior freedom to be able to understand the interior movements of the other and to encourage vocational maturity through internalization of values, rather than compliance and non-internalizing identification with authority figures or significant others. The morally mature person must perceive, choose and identify the self with what he or she does. It thus

becomes a question of character and authentic living.

Definition/Description of Relevant Terms:

Conscience:

The whole person's commitment to value and the judgment one makes in light of that commitment of who one ought to be and what one ought to do or not to do.⁸ Conscience includes not only cognitive and volitional aspects, but also affective, intuitive, and somatic aspects as well.

Psycho-social maturity:

This is an individual's attainment of the expected personal and social level of human development which enables him/her to live harmoniously with others and to approach conflicts, both internal and external, with the needed psychological and social equanimity that achieves positive results or resolutions.

Values:

Enduring abstract ideals of a person, which may be ideal end-states of existence (terminal values) or ideal modes of conduct (instrumental values). Whereas terminal values, such as 'Imitation of Christ', are end values, instrumental values such as, 'chastity, poverty and obedience', are means to an end.⁹

Consecrated Life:

This is a state of life in the Catholic Church lived by believers who wish to follow Christ in a more thorough way. It is characterized by the profession of evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience in a stable state of life recognized by the Church.¹⁰

Psycho-Social and moral Understanding of Conscience:

Conscience, psychologically defined, is a cognitive process that elicits emotion and rational associations based on an individual's moral philosophy or value system. The Cambridge

Theresa Eke

English dictionary corpus qualifies conscience as “the inner sense of what is right or wrong in one’s conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action; to follow the dictates of conscience, the complex of ethical and moral principles that control or inhibit the actions or thoughts of an individual.” This draws the individual into basic interactions with realities other than oneself and in that context, evokes value judgment upon these interactions.

This implies a systemic reality where one does not live solely unto one’s self but in relationship with others. There is, as it were, a transition from a one-person psychology of instinctual needs, to a two-person psychology of relational needs, activating emotions, motivation and systems theory. It is in the light of this that some familiar concepts such as the “super ego” which was considered the “internalized parental voice”, are re-conceptualized. This re-conceptualization views the “superego” as “a psychic regulation system for self-evaluation, comprising the capacity for empathy, the proneness to experience self-conscious emotions, such as shame, pride and guilt, and the capacity for moral reasoning.”¹¹ It is no longer the internalized parental voice that pushes the individual to take or not to take a particular line of action, but an inner conviction that what one does is for a greater good.¹² It is not the guilt laden soldier which stands guard over the individual to chastise wrong thoughts and actions but rather a system of regulation which develops in the individual as other neurobiological systems of the body. It therefore requires the adaptive and positive environment, both intra and inter, to grow into maturity and wholeness like every other part of the human person. This system of regulation is the conscience.

According to Fr. Allain Thomasset, S.J, “Psychoanalysis teaches us that moral judgment is formed in relationships with others from early childhood through traditional taboos found in all cultures that introduce children into humanity. Taboos are laws that constitute and form the subject and his (or her) personal conscience. It involves leaving the undifferentiated confusion with the (familiar) milieu to deal with difference and relations,

Agora: Journal of Philosophical & Theological Studies triggering personal identity and opening of the social space.”¹³ Thus, the individual begins to understand that he or she does not exist for and by himself/herself only, but in relation to others. Thus, there is a relational turn based on relational needs and systems for attachment, emotion regulation or mentalization and so, community and sense of belonging are born.

Shifting from the original conception of the self or ego as driven by sexual and aggressive impulses, which are chastised by the super ego, to the conception that we are rather driven by affects, emotions and feelings, as well as some higher goals, the “super-ego” is re-conceptualized into “conscience.”¹⁴ In this conceptualization, Schalkwijk, describes three subsystems that participate in the functioning of the conscience. These are: (1) The capacity for empathy. (2) The proneness to experience self-conscious emotions such as shame, guilt and pride. (3) The capacity for logical, moral thinking.

In his conceptualization of the super-ego into conscience, Schalkwijk opted for a functional system instead of a mental structure. This was my attraction to his work. The structural model would imply “cause and effect”, a linear sort of model of drives which in effect limits the individual’s freedom, and consequently his or her responsibility. In replacing the causal thinking with systems theory, human freedom, dignity and responsibility are restored as the brain and the mind, seen as functional systems, interact with other regions and co-create in every situation and thus assume responsibility for such creation.

Conscience and the Self:

The conscience is at the service of the self. It is the self (or the ego in Freudian terms) that is regulated by the conscience and tends to checkmate its excesses. As the Psychologist, Kohut, proposes in the development of the self,¹⁵ there is a shift from the intra-psycho unconscious and cognitive ego to relational unconscious and an emotion-processing self. The self develops out of the interaction with the primary caretakers; the child internalizes the

Theresa Eke

way his or her emotions are regulated in the interaction. This forms an intrinsic part of the individual's development and opens him or her up to the reality of a world that is larger than the ego or a single unitary self.¹⁶

From an attachment theory perspective, Psychologists opine that the "self-as-agent" is established around the second year of life. This is a repository of unconscious processes and actions. When in later development, the quality of the important relationships has gradually been internalized into the self and object representation, the self-as-subject develops. The child begins to experience affects and thoughts about its being and doing. The child can feel happy following an action and is able to associate such affect to the action. Still later in development, the self-as-object begins to develop as a result of growing mental capacities, such as mentalization, emotion regulation, attachment pattern and symbolic thinking.¹⁷ Around age 7, the conscious capacity for regulation of the self begins to develop: the self is continually evaluated against the backdrop of self and object representations. It becomes "a self in relationship" and not just the self. It is no wonder then, in the Christian life, the Church advises that the sacraments, apart from baptism, be initiated at the age of 7 at the earliest, for at this age, the conscience or sense of morality is relatively developed. Once developed, the conscience cannot be switched off and on as one pleases, but is thereafter on stand-by until an emotion signals a threat to one's self-esteem, which thereupon activates some defense mechanism.¹⁸ This means that this "system" conscience has the function of ensuring that the self remains stable. However, this stability is hardly achieved in daily life as the functioning of the conscience can be volatile. In other words, a person may choose to act in a way that is contrary to what the person believes and this would not mean that the conscience has been switched off but that, perhaps, there is reduced consciousness which may cause him/her to falter in a given situation. For instance, the individual may become less empathetic in certain situations than in others; he/she may be harsh in self or other evaluations but in some other instanc-

es, may be ruled by more empathy or compassion in self-judgment or judgment of others.

Empathy:

As already noted, the capacity for empathy plays a very important role in the functioning of the conscience. It is the ability to adequately experience the emotion of another as separate from one's own emotions. Empathy in the evaluation of the self can take place inter-psychically in real or factual relationship with others, and intra-psychically in relation to internalized self-objects as well. The empathic domain distributes to the functioning of the conscience in such a way that individuals with limited capacity for empathy will show limited responses to the distress of others. They may notice that people are in pain as a result of their action or non-action but this realization does not inhibit their behavior.

Except one is able to put oneself in another's space, and feel the other's feeling, decisions may remain self-centered and narcissistic, suggestive of some disfunction or fixation in development.

As said earlier, if a situation, real or imagined, signals danger to the self or its esteem, the conscience might be overruled by a defense mechanism in protection of the self. This is why one may choose to lie, to defend self from shame, from an obvious failure than to accept the truth and face the shame, thus contradicting the system functioning of the conscience. It is in situations as this that psychology gives way to morality and "self-transcendence" in the exercise of conscience, because it clearly shows that self-knowledge or the knowledge of values (the good), does not ipso facto presuppose right choices or right living.

Self-Conscious Emotions:

Another psychic system that contributes to the functioning of conscience is the proneness to experience self-conscious emotions. In interpersonal relationships, feeling emotions are in

Theresa Eke

dicative of a certain level of maturity. There are signs that the self strives to evaluate itself in relation to others, thus it experiences self-conscious emotions of shame, guilt, embarrassment and pride. It therefore becomes a problem when an individual does not experience these or show them. The regulation systems for self-conscious emotions can have an interpersonal and an intrapersonal quality but they are not biologically given. They are rather “a result of relatively complex mental processes and are less imbedded in biological determined action tendencies than basic emotions.”¹⁹

Self-conscious emotions such as shame, guilt, pride or embarrassment, can appear in relation to the strictly individual self and to whom, someone is in a relational, social, or cultural context. Once the emotion relates to one’s identity, it is consciously or unconsciously regulated as it touches on the self-as-object. In other words, “this has to do with me” and so I have to check it.

Just as personalities differ, people differ in their proneness to experience self-conscious emotions. While some individuals may genuinely lack any self-consciousness, which is a sign of pathology, others suffer greatly from excessive guilt or shame. To cope with shame, individuals may adopt different styles. They may attack the self, avoid or deny the issue or attack the other.²⁰ This also touches on self-evaluation and self-as-object where “this has to do with me” and can direct right behavior.

In some research on guilt, one of the positive qualities ascribed to guilt is that, it pertains to one’s action and enables repair and reconstruction. Guilt has been particularly linked with other processing including reading other’s state of mind/feelings/thoughts.²¹ In this, we see how guilt and empathy do indeed converge in the functioning of the conscience. Let us bear in mind here again, that the guilt in question is not the affliction of the super-ego in form of guilt but the consciousness of one’s error which leads to sorrow and change.

As noted by Kohut in the work already cited, the self develops out of the interaction with primary caretakers as the child

internalizes the way his/her emotions are regulated in the interaction. This internalized emotion regulation influences the individual's emotional response to situations. This is what promotes differences in affective experiences from one person to another. However, intoxication due to drugs or alcohol can sometimes alter how one experiences self-conscious emotions, and in such cases, people may be classed as "deadening their consciences" or as "having no feelings". In the same vein, very important or serious life events such as the loss of a child or a parent, divorce or the birth of a child can alter how we experience self-conscious emotions. The individual, for instance, may exhibit some odd behavior without feeling shame or embarrassment. A man who has lost an only son, may not care the world, what anyone is thinking or saying when he wails for the late son even if his mourning pattern is bizarre or effeminate as may be considered in some quarters in the African society.

Moral Reasoning:

The third Psychic system which exercises influence on the functioning of the conscience is associated with the cognitive capacity for moral knowledge and reasoning. "This cognitive ability functions as a cognitive backdrop against which self-evaluation takes place, not so much based on the interaction with others, but more on a cognitive, rational level of experiencing."²² It is from this particular aspect of cognitive ability that integrity is born. Thus, one can choose the right line of action even when no one is looking.

In evaluating the self-as-object, people have moral beliefs that play a significant role. From infancy, the individual begins to learn some codes of behavior through facial and other non-verbal expressions. As words are formed, the child learns to associate expressions with words and actions, and so in his or her interaction with caregivers, some codes of conducts are internalized. In psycho-analytic literature, the super-ego is the place where the internalized parental "does" and "does not" are found.

Theresa Eke

Once the individual begins to ask fundamental questions such as, “Who am I?” there is the question of morality, which at the same time elicits self-conscious emotions. In the course of cognitive development, a child acquires a wide range of social and moral norms. These become the individual’s guiding principles or ethical guidelines. If there is any conflict between ‘who I am’ and ‘what I thought myself to be’, the self-conscious emotions surface and the conscience is influenced.

Here again, we see an interface of moral reasoning and self-conscious emotions in the functioning of the conscience. From the foregoing, one can conclude that an individual’s conscience develops as one develops physically, socially and mentally. However, like every other aspect of human development, there are differences in maturation. Individuals differ in their degree of development and this includes the formation of the conscience. The method, quality, as well as the content of the values or norms internalized show themselves forth in the life of the individuals in the Consecrated Life as much as they show in those in other vocations.

CONSCIENCE AND THE PROCESS OF INTERNALIZATION:

Depth Psychologists have identified three levels in the process of internalization of values. These are: *Compliance; identification;* and active *internalization*. Each level defines the degree of maturity of an individual in relation to values.²³

The basic characteristic of a mature moral conscience is the ability to make up one’s mind for oneself about what to be done.²⁴ If a person always does what he or she is told because an authority has said so or because it is expected by the group to which he or she belongs, then the person never really makes any moral decisions of her own nor can the person be said to have grown up. For moral maturity, one must be a person of her own and act according to his or her own beliefs and convictions.

“The morally mature person must be able to perceive,

choose and identify the self with what one does.”²⁵ This is where the question of (moral) identity comes in. “This has to do with me” and I am acting in the way I perceive myself. The person’s behaviors are not based on “shoulds” or “have-tos” of the super-ego, which look to authority but on “wants” of the moral conscience, which look to personalized and internalized values.²⁶

Compliance:

Compliance occurs when an individual accepts influence from another person or group with the hope of gaining some reward or avoiding some punishment controlled by this person or group; attitudes are not adopted because the individual believes in their content, but simply in order to gain external incentives.²⁷ The super-ego is the ego of another person which is superimposed on our own to serve as an internal censor to regulate our conduct by using guilt as its powerful weapon. It stores all the “should and “have-tos” which we absorb in the process of growing up under the influence of authority figures. These authority figures range from parents to teachers, from law enforcement agents to church leaders and formators. When we do what these people who are placed over us ask us to do we feel we are good, and we feel we are bad when we do not do as they say. It is as though we are perpetually living on the other’s terms without reflecting, analyzing and accepting or rejecting such as our own belief system. When this happens, it means we are still caught in the infantile web of life, both psychologically and morally.

This adherence to norms is believed by both psychology and religion to be born of the need for love and the fear of punishment. The child, through socialization, learns that certain behaviors are rewarded while others are punished. Since the human nature prefers comfort (homeostasis), to pain and discomfort, the child would tend to exhibit those actions that would bring comfort and avoid those that would bring discomfort. “Reward” and “Punishment” thus become the underlying motivation for adopting a right behavior (good) and avoiding the wrong one (bad).

Theresa Eke

Comparing this to the theory of “Classical Conditioning” by Ivan Pavlov, one can say that the individual’s will, like that of the dog in the theory, is discounted. Reason is less functional than emotion at this stage.

In the process of internalization as described by Luigi Rulla, Franco Imoda and Joyce Ridickin their research on *Psychological Structure and Vocation*, the vocationer who did not grow out of this stage will be ‘complying’ to rules without any conscious and critical evaluation that might lead to integration with personal belief system. The authors classified such a person as being at “Degree 1 of developmental maturity” as he or she has a poor capacity to handle his/her core conflicts, which appear strong enough to “always” have a debilitating influence on the person’s functioning in the area of education (academic performance), interpersonal relationships, or moral-religious values. The one who follows the dictates of authority figures, without an appreciable degree of personal conviction, but does what he/she does in order to win favor (material or psychological) or to avoid punitive treatment (physical or psychological) by the said authority figure, is compliant. To remain at the level of compliance in the observance of rules and the practice of virtue is indicative of psychological and moral, as well as vocational immaturity.²⁸

Identification:

The second level in the process of internalization is “Identification”. Here, the individual still lives by an external locus of control. The difference between this stage of identification and the first level of ‘Compliance’ is the underlying motivation. In the first case, the individual follows the dictates of authority figures, which may be physically or psychologically present as a voice within him or her for the singular purpose of gaining love and approval (reward) and avoiding disapproval or unacceptable (punishment). Thus, such people live under the control of others, both present and past.

In the second case, which is “Identification”, the motiva-

tion is basically to have or maintain a satisfying relationship with the other (authority figure). Identification occurs when an individual adopts another person's or group's beliefs because these beliefs are associated with a satisfying self-defining relationship with this person or group.²⁹ The person here still functions within an external control system; operating still not out of personal conviction but for self-satisfaction. Thus, the good practice, or living of moral religious values lasts as long as the relationship with the other lasts, although in some cases (internalizing identification), the individual may eventually assume the values into his or her own value system even after the satisfying relationship ceases to exist.

When there are underlying subconscious inconsistencies between what one ought to be (Ideal self) and what one actually is (Latent actual self), even the practice of virtue "can be a means of self-defense against conflictual needs rather than a means of self-transcendence in affirming values; a forced retreat rather than a free advance."³⁰ This passive, reactive way of dealing with internal subconscious needs may be tied to the family or educational background of the vocationer.

In effect, different individuals who pass through the same formative programme and with the same formators, may turn out differently for obvious reasons ranging from personality traits, family influence and its residue, educational background and other forms of socialization in the environment. This challenges the formator to pay particular attention to the unique stories of the individuals. This extra attention is relevant for two important reasons. First, the formator will gain a better understanding or knowledge of the vocationer which enhances good accompaniment. Second, the formation plan can be adapted to address the unique needs of each individual so that the objective goal of formation can be pursued by all. Excuses for failure or laxity in living the values of the consecrated life would also not be made on grounds of family, educational or social backgrounds since the impact of these variables would have been largely cushioned.

Theresa Eke

ioned by the formation program. The point of this, therefore, is that the greater the interior freedom of the vocationer, in terms of handling inconsistencies, the higher the strength or possibility of his or her practice of virtue.³¹

A well-formed conscience is at the same time well informed. Knowledge plays a very significant role in the development of the moral self. From childhood, children begin to ask questions about why they should or should not do certain things. The way these questions are handled by the adults contributes significantly to the way these children would approach reality in their adult lives. An individual who is always ordered to “do what you are told, do not ask questions!” may end up, either becoming rebellious or submissive, depending on the personality construct.³² Again, depending on how much help the person gets in later life, he or she may have difficulty forming a personal opinion on matters, including those of a moral nature. Their judgment may become fluid. If such people find themselves in the religious life, the opinions of authority figures or any significant other in their lives may become their opinion with little or no personal choice. This condition changes with one who has an active internalizing capacity.

Internalization:

Internalization has been defined by Rulla as “the process of adopting a way of behaving or thinking because it is congruent with one’s value system.”³³ It is my argument that, to the degree which a person appreciates or believes in a value, to that extent, he/she will defend or uphold it. It is often said that one cannot give what one does not have, and a teacher cannot teach what he or she has not learned. The concept of knowledge thus becomes a recurrent and important concept in the process of moral development, formation of the conscience and the internalization of values. The evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience are abstract concepts and, without undermining the exalted place of grace in living out these virtues, the individual who is undertaking the route

of the consecrated life must have the capacity to understand things in abstraction. He or she must be knowledgeable enough to take in abstract concepts. Let me quickly say that the argument here is not merely about being “chaste”, “poor” or “obedient” but about understanding the import of those virtues. The individual must have the capacity to ask and address questions like: “Why am I choosing to live this way?” “Why am I doing what I am doing?” These are existential questions which are at the heart of a meaningful living of any style of life, but particularly the Consecrated Life.

This understanding lays in the difference between: “I am doing the dishes because the Sister-in-charge asks me to do it” and “I am doing the dishes because it is part of my contribution to building up the community”. Or “The Rules say that we should not engage in unchaste behavior and so I will not do it” and “I have chosen to live this life of consecration and so I will apply myself to chaste living”. Consequently, this “rule-keeping” individual (compliant), who may not be well grounded in her own conviction and does not consciously appreciate the value of chastity, may very well change his or her position if a convincing argument that disfavors chaste living is presented. This may be evident in situations where there are “extremely subjective interpretations” of the institutional values or “double binds” (double messages) from the superior or significant other.³⁴

“Blind obedience” or “doing what I am told” is an illusion of the conscience which can lead the moral conscience astray. Indeed, the conscience can be subjected to intense conditioning as in an overly severe super-ego that provokes repression of desires and rigid ways of behaving, but also the conditioning of ideologies which could contradict moral living.³⁵

What this points to is lack of freedom; going along with the dictates of fads or prevailing opinion without thinking much about it. As earlier mentioned, compliance and non-internalizing identification can compromise responsible behavior. Alain Thomasset would describe this as “a disease of the mind that

Theresa Eke

prevents us from thinking. We act like everyone else, in part because we are dependent on the group to which we belong and its judgment on us.”³⁶ The opinion of others rather than an objective good may become the basis of moral or value judgment, especially where there is a significant poverty of the mind.

Good moral judgment is accompanied by knowledge, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and the capacity to process experience, analyze behavior, evaluate actions and reflect on motives. These mental processes are of utmost necessity and are achievable only with an active and functional conscience that can forestall the assault of the ego and its subconscious needs.

A Word to Formators:

Formators, just like parents and teachers, are known to have great influence on the lives of those under them. The impact can be positive or negative depending largely, on the personalities involved, their psycho-spiritual disposition, level of maturity and the relationship that exists between them. Where all these elements are relatively high and positive, the outcome will be positive and negative if otherwise. Just as was said earlier in this article, this interaction between the ‘subject’ (the candidate in formation) and the person accompanying him or her, is so important that it becomes a defining factor in the outcome of the formation that the candidate receives. The kind of representation of the formator in the mind of those formed influences their reception of the content of training, and their adaptation to the process.³⁷ We generally relate to people according to the image of them we have in our minds. If we represent someone as mean, or wicked, kind or gracious, we assume a particular attitude, when we come in contact with such a person. This is how we started out our lives as children. We represented our parents and siblings differently and related to them accordingly. Through this process of internal representation of significant persons in our lives, we are able to establish life-giving or destructive relationships with them.

This same process happens throughout our lives but is mostly evident in formative environments such as families, schools, formation houses, internship situations, etc. Our internal representation of others comes from our relationship with them and it influences the way we may respond to values, both social and religious. According to William Glasser, in the work already quoted, this representation is so important that it forms part of our quality world and influences how we perceive and relate to reality. Quality world is a personal world which contains ‘pictures’ of things, persons and experiences or ideas that we consider important in the realization of our specific needs and values. Glasser affirms that whenever we feel very good about situations, it is probably because something or someone in the present is matching the picture of a person, a thing or a belief that governs most of our behavior in our quality world.³⁸ Where the formator is mature, in the psycho-social and spiritual sense, the representation of the formator in the mind of the candidate will definitely be positive and healthy. But where there are inconsistencies of both psychological and social nature,³⁹ the influence on the candidate or vocationer will definitely be negative or unhealthy. This negativity will affect more adversely those candidates who are operating at the level of Compliance or Non-internalizing identification where external influence, especially of the authority figure, defines how they practice virtue or internalize values. Formators, just like parents, are called to be consistent in their effort to lead those under them to maturity. Since growth is dynamic and ongoing, the candidates for the Consecrated Life are not “already-made” but progressively acquire principles and virtues that help them to be configured to Christ, who has called them.⁴⁰ Formation actually happens, when the person of Jesus and the values he proclaimed become real in the quality world of the candidate through the mediation of the relationship between the candidate and their formators. It makes no moral sense, for instance, when formators teach the candidates how Jesus respects and affirms the uniqueness of those who follow him, while they, the formators, trample on the uniqueness and indi

Theresa Eke

vidual differences, or freedom of the candidates by imposing rules and regulations without appealing to the consciences, intellect or moral reasoning of the candidates. This style of formation, which is largely authoritarian and military in nature, ends up producing conformists, “children in adult bodies” who may be lacking in responsible attention to the challenges of their mission or vocation. They may also lack in personal initiative since they were not challenged enough to think and behave like responsible adults during the period of initial formation, thus undermining their interior freedom and moral responsibility.

Conclusion:

The development of the conscience takes into consideration psychological, social, intellectual and emotional maturity, all of which culminate in moral maturity. Moral development begins from cradle to grave and like the general human development, none can claim to have arrived at the final destination until all is ended in this earthly life. However, there is the possibility of attaining an appreciable degree of human maturity which enables one to function effectively in both personal and interpersonal relationships.

An individual learns from parents and other significant persons in his or her life (and this is all through life), what is acceptable or unacceptable in interpersonal interactions and with time, he or she makes the choice of how to adapt this to his or her value system. There is a process of socialization which includes formal and informal education, cognitive, emotional and moral education.

Psychologists and Moral Theologians are agreed on the point that there are different stages through which an individual ought to pass before he or she can be judged, according to moral law, as mature or immature. These stages are both intrapersonal and interpersonal. Inasmuch as the teaching and presentation of values are generally done interpersonally, the development of the system of values rest within the individual. It is these that

form the conscience of the individual and influence the way he or she perceives the world and/or relates to it. Again, the manner in which an individual internalized the emotions raised by his or her interactions with caregivers in the earlier stages of life, with regard to value-orientation, will play a very significant role in the manner in which the said individual will relate with people and reality in later life. Consequently, one who internalized fear through constant blames and intimidation by the significant-other in earlier stages of life, may tend to conform to rules and regulations without internalizing the principles of the rules or even understanding them. The purpose of the individual here will be primarily to avoid punishment and gain reward. Although the person might make ‘sacrifices’ for the sake of the Kingdom of God in the Consecrated Life, his or her individual will and interior freedom, are compromised and personal responsibility diminished. This does not however exempt the person from social or moral responsibility. Psychologically, the lack of interior freedom is understood as an internal conflict where needs and attitudes are not in consonance with the values that the individual professes, but that does not free the person from all responsibility. This is because, at every stage in life, opportunities present themselves for the person to re-evaluate his or her way of living based on the values that are presented in the following of Christ (particularly the value of love that has to do, not just with the self, but with the other and with the Divine Being) that he or she professes as a Consecrated person. It therefore presupposes some form of psycho-social and moral immaturity (stagnation) where the individual does not utilize the opportunities that life presents to make a shift in a positive direction and to learn how to live beyond the satisfaction of personal needs. The morally mature adult is called to commit his or her freedom and not to *submit it*.⁴¹ As long as we do not direct our own behavior or activity, in a conscious way, following the principle of ‘the good’ as presented by Jesus, we are not yet free, morally-mature Consecrated persons.

Endnotes

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Theresa Eke

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Historical Development of Knowledge of God and its consequences (Hosea 4:6)

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1. ABSTRACT

There is nothing in philosophy which does not stem from Epistemology. Even metaphysics, the most abstract aspect of philosophy, makes sense only in as much as it relates to epistemology. Consequently, this paper hopes to argue the centrality of knowledge of God to human existence. Hosea 4:6 shall serve as the launching pad. Hosea's explorative Semitic language as seen in the text provides depth in the argumentation. The nuanced meaning of the Hebrew verb *yd'* (to know) from which Hosea used the noun *da'at* serves as the basis for his argumentation and presentation. There is a presupposition here based on the thesis that a nexus exists between the human person and God. St. Paul talks about how natural things ease such knowledge while serving as a conduit in maintaining the relationship between God and man. Nature makes it easy for man to know God. Aquinas representing the Scholastics supported St. Paul's natural knowledge of God in his cosmological argument. All this points towards knowability of God. If God is knowable, what kind of knowledge would that be, experiential or religious or even cognitive or emotive? This knowledge transforms. The article concludes on a note of recommendation.

KEY WORDS: Epistemology, Knowledge, Knowledge of God, humanity, nature.

INTRODUCTION:

Most people, as soon as you challenge their behaviour, often retort, “I know”. This response simply hinges around epistemology, which is at the center of philosophy. The phrase ‘I know’ does not correspond to the true context, namely, wrong doing (action) and knowledge. The need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between knowledge and action led me to even probe further into the fundamental connection between knowledge and right living as its consequence. At the base of this topic is a simmering philosophical innuendo, epistemology, science of knowledge. The topic is knowledge-focused. In dealing with a topic of this sort, it would be expedient to establish the attainability of what the topic states, so as to have a good ground for its justification. This is to say that the philosophical foundation gives support to the claim on the knowability of God. In this way, it prepares the ground for a safe biblico-theological debate. Philosophy, by itself, is handicapped to probe into the character, personality, nature and quality of God. It is simply the domain of theology. The first question becomes, is it possible to know God? This shall be answered as discussions progress.

It would be expedient at this initial time to clarify two closely related terms: knowledge of God and knowledge about God. On the surface, they seem to mean the same, but that is not the case. The former has to do with an intimate knowledge of someone or something, with the potentiality of transforming the one who knows. Key to the understanding of the term is the word *intimacy*. The latter on the other hand, has to do with every other kind of knowledge one has in respect of God. It does not require intimacy and it cannot transform the person who gets to know God. Herein lies the great difference. Many people have this kind of knowledge and so are not in anyway transformed to live ethical lives (no consequence knowing God). This kind of knowledge is derived from reading books about God, attending lectures that address God, writing and reading about God in tracts and listening to programs on God on the television or

radio. None of these situations takes the individual beyond the level of passive participation in the pursuit of knowledge. This will not result in an intimate knowledge of God, though having the capacity of initiating the process that can possibly result in the intimate knowledge of God. Hence, one can safely say that knowledge about God can lead and bring about knowledge of God.

2. CLARIFICATION OF TERM

I would like to clarify the term Knowledge of God because of its centrality in the understanding of the article. Knowledge of God is to be understood in this paper as an intimate interpersonal relationship existing between the individual and God. Thus, the individual is drawn to understand God in such a way that he/she shares in the Being of God. Sharing in the divine Being transforms the person, since the person becomes what is known. In this state, the person lives an upright life.

3. HISTORY OF THE DISCUSSION ON KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

This will be discussed from three vantage points: biblical, philosophical and African traditional religion, though sometimes one could find a blurred line between them.

4.1 BIBLICAL

Speaking about knowledge of God in the bible, the prophetic corpus seems to occupy a much broader space. In this article, I shall focus more on Hosea. The choice of Hosea is as a result of the centrality of the theme in his work.¹ It is an important hermeneutic key in the work of the prophet Hosea. Looking at Hosea and the writing of the other prophets, Hosea seems to have given a much broader understanding of the concept than the others. Regardless of this, I do intend to prefix the excursus of Hosea's knowledge of God by looking at Wisdom 13:1-9 and some parts of the Old Testament on the topic. The passages that

would be cited have pointers to knowledge of God.²

The Old Testament teaches about the fundamental knowledge of God. Antonine DeGuglielmo examines the book of Job on this. In the article, “Job 12: 7-9 and the knowability of God”, he sees an orthodox teaching on the knowledge of God. The argument is that Job’s friend, Sophar, enquired to know if Job could have a perfect knowledge of God (Job 11:7). In response to that, Job makes a deductive judgment, namely that the beasts of the field can “give us information about the Godhead.”³ If the lower beings (animals) can give information about God, then it would be much easier for rational beings to have natural knowledge of God. Job proceeds from lower beings to higher beings in affirming the possibility of the knowledge of God. This statement captures everything: “If the brute animal has this knowledge of God, how much more so should not rational man?”.⁴ The animals in themselves impart information that will lead to knowledge of God, but do not in themselves possess the knowledge.⁵ The book of Job teaches that by observing ‘animated creation’, humankind can arrive at the creator.⁶ In short, Job leaves us the legacy that a mere glance at God’s handwork will lead us to obtain knowledge of God. The Old Testament argumentation finds continuity in the New Testament in the letter to the Romans. John O’Rourke articulates this idea in the article “Romans 1:20 and Natural Revelation.” According to O’Rourke, “the human mind can arrive at the knowledge of God and his existence from created things by arguing from cause to effects....”⁷ Kathy Garca supporting O’Rourke holds that, human beings are created with the natural ability to know God. They come to such knowledge through the works of the creator by the aid of the use of reason. Ultimately, “knowledge of God is manifestly” in all. In other words,⁸ the Gentiles have no reason to claim they have no knowledge of God.⁹

Wisdom 13: 1-9, emphasizes quite clearly that God is to be known from “studying his works.”¹⁰ The focus here is that natural things point towards God. Indeed, their mechanics impart knowledge of God to humans.

This was why Hosea saw the ‘knowledge of God’ as crucial in the life of the people of Israel. In Hosea 4:6 we find a terse presentation of the prophet’s argumentation. This verse states precisely the reason for knowledge of God. In verse 6a we find an accusation against the priest. The first part of v. 6a reads: *Nidmû ‘mmi mibblîhaddā ‘aṭ*(my people are perishing for lack of knowledge-this is the effect of what the priest failed to do. Now what the priest failed to do is seen in the second part of v.6a) which reads: *kî - ‘attāhhaddā ‘atmā ‘asṭā*(because you have abandoned knowledge). Without doubt, the people’s lack of knowledge was caused by the priest. He abandoned knowledge. The punishment for the priest is laid out in two parts in the form of *lex talionis*.¹¹ The prophet points out what God will do to the priest as he states: *wə’em ‘ās ‘kāmikkahēnlî*(and I will abandon you as my priest) as the first punishment (response) to the first accusation. The second punishment is presented thus: v.6b *wattîškaḥtōraṭ ‘ēlōhēkā*(and because you have forgotten the instruction of your God) and he concludes by saying *‘eškaḥbānēkā gam- ‘ānî*(I shall forget also your sons). The high point of the punishment is reached in the termination of the continuity of the priestly line, if God should forget the sons of the priests.¹² This is a terrific consequence for not knowing God. In this way, one can see that knowledge of God is a *conditio sine qua non* for living right, but above all, for good relationship with God which begins with one’s neighbour. Little wonder ‘Knowledge of God’ determines how the people would relate to God. If the people are ignorant of God, who has been at the epicentre of their history, their life will demonstrate it. Several scholars have looked at this text. Emmanuel Nwauru believes that knowledge of God means readiness to hear and obey God’s commandments.¹³ This is imparted by and entrusted to the priest by reason of his office.¹⁴ For Gregory Vall, Hosea does not speak about general knowledge while speaking about knowledge of God.¹⁵ Knowledge of God implies that the moral law has to be observed while offering proper ritual to God.¹⁶ This relatedness is clearly stated in Hosea 6:6. A good moral life is to

be supported by proper and adequate ritual. At the base of this is the exercise of the role of the priest. John McKenzie in the article "Knowledge of God in Hosea" did not mince words in saying that Hosea sees the priest as the possessor of the knowledge of God.¹⁸ Consequently, he is bound to disseminate such knowledge to other people especially those who do not have such a knowledge. He draws a connection between the Torah and knowledge. From the beginning, the priest had a cultic and ethical/moral obligation. It is important to note that the verb *yd'* (to know) has to be understood beyond "objective and theoretical knowledge."¹⁹ Knowledge in the Hebrew sense becomes, therefore, a "vital union with the traditional morality."²⁰ Knowledge of YHWH is a summary of all that is understood within religion. Knowledge is therefore to be understood in the context of the Hebrew world as both cultic and ethical.²¹ This knowledge has as its objective to transform the lives of the people so that they cease to be ignorant. In this way, God takes a central stage in the quest for knowledge in scriptures. Such knowledge has practical consequences even for church men and women as enunciated by Harrelson. In his article titled "Knowledge of God in the Church", he gets closer to the text Hosea 4:6, as he contends that, "knowledge of God would have been noticed on the earth if priests and prophets had not cast their eyes away from knowledge."²² As they rejected knowledge of God, they went for something far less. This was responsible for their failure to teach the people about God.

Biblical knowledge of God continued to enjoy critical examination in the world of philosophy. Philosophers in the medieval era made God the focus of their discussion.

4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL

Aquinas, in his cosmological argument, the *quinque-viae*, was able to step into the murky waters regarding natural knowledge of God.²³ He used this cosmological argument to achieve two things. First, to prove God's existence and second, to affirm the possibility of the knowledge of God. Here, there is a progression from the natural to the supernatural. Hence, the five

ways proposed on the knowledge of God, help us to acknowledge the existence of an unchanging being through transcendence. The work of Aquinas has remained monumental in opening the path for a healthy dialogue between philosophy and theology. This is why it is crucial to note that every natural knowledge commences with the sensory perceptions.²⁴ If knowledge begins from the sensory perceptions, Aquinas plants a caveat by noting that the only way the human person can get close to knowing God is by speaking about God using a denial technique (knowledge by negation). Mary Clark was very clear on that as she states: "For we can apprehend not what God is, but what he is not, and the relations of other things to him..."²⁵ This finds echo in Francis Ogunmodede's article as he writes about positive denial while speaking about God. In this way, humans get to know God through analogy. The point being made is that God is beyond comprehension. Does this foreclose knowing God? This does not seem to be the case because God is better known through what he is not. There are two necessary characteristics that would enable us know a thing-an object. These are its genus (general characteristic) and its differences. The differences make the object or thing distinguishable from other things. As humans negate certain characteristics in relation to God, they invariably distinguish God from other beings and hence get close to knowing God. Charles Patterson in the article "Can man know God?" attempts to give a historical development of knowledge of God in the field of philosophy. He began by stating that the Thomists would believe that man is capable of knowing God through revelation and use of pure reason. Patterson may refer to that as the "correct use of one's reasoning powers." In contrast to this, protestant reformers disagree that God can be known on rational grounds. Patterson observes that Kant's Critique of Practical Reason does not allow any claim to be made about God's existence or non-existence. Such justifications, if they do exist, is tied down to a "consideration of moral reasons." Frank Dilley in the article "Is there true knowledge of God?" examines the possibility of the

John chike Nwanze

conceptual knowledge of God. Can philosophy or theology help humans attain a conceptual knowledge of God? Dilley sees God as “being itself.” In other words, there is a relationship between God and other beings. If God is therefore linked with other beings, his existence cannot be denied. Denial as such would cause collateral damage to the human person. Dilley’s argument therefore establishes and affirms the fact of God’s existence. If God exists, then knowledge of God is attainable.

What does systematic theology from the viewpoint of a protestant say about the possibility of such knowledge? A consideration of Karl Barth would be useful here.

4.3 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Karl Barth seems to diametrically oppose the view that God can be known through natural theology. Emerging as a dogmatic theologian, he seeks to protect God’s integrity. God can be known only by looking at and interpreting “his being and external act.” In other words, God can only be understood in a relational way to the world and not to an individual person. This would make it difficult for any personal knowledge and encounter with God.

Barth has a robust account of God’s perfection that he means to liberate from general conceptual and metaphysical strictures for the sake of employing it in ways that most transparently map onto God’s self-demonstration in Christ. To this end, he distances his doctrine of God from certain traditional and modern teleological constraints in order to affirm that God orders himself in accordance with his self-determination.³²

It is important to underscore the fact that Barth does not question the possibility of knowing God. He believes God can be known. Holder observes:

Barth's lengthy treatment of the problem of the knowledge of God is an attempt at extracting the presuppositions behind the Church's confession of God and Christ. Here he rejects two questions as representative of false starting points. First, theology starts from the given fact that in his Word, "God is actually known and will be known again." Hence, the question is inappropriate as to whether God is known in the church, or at least it is inappropriate where ventured on any grounds other than the fact that in revelation God questions our knowledge. Second, equally as inappropriate is the question about the possibility of the knowledge of God in view of the fact that God is known. In a statement that reflects perhaps his most predominant pattern of reasoning, Barth says that where 'the actuality exists there is also the corresponding possibility. The question cannot then be posed in the abstract but only concretely; not a priori but only a posteriori.' Therefore, the 'only legitimate and meaningful questions' in this respect are: 'how far is God known? and how far is God knowable?' This initial foray into the knowledge of God reveals two formal features of theological inquiry that one encounters throughout the Church Dogmatics. Respectively, these consist in the noetic prioritization of actuality over possibility and the corresponding a posteriori articulation of possibility in light of actuality and not versa. These two formal features reveal a preference for questions that ask 'how far?' rather than 'did God really say?'³³

The statement by Holder is a true representation of Karl Barth's notion on knowledge of God. However, it is important to note that Anselm influenced greatly the thoughts of Karl Barth. We find this reflected in the observation of Rodner.

Through this orientation toward the necessity of God's being and act, Barth argues that God in his self-revelation is that than which nothing greater may be thought (*id quod maiuscogitarenequit*). However God reveals himself, 'it is not for man to try to turn the page. He can and must read only that which is set before him, only that which he has to read.' Theology therefore is bound to its object in a manner that circumscribes its freedom and elicits its obedience before God's revelation.³⁴

There seems to be little freedom man could exercise towards the knowledge of God. God's self-revelation, in the judgement of Karl Barth, determines how much man could actually know about God.³⁵ Helen Wodehouse seems to argue along same line but with some difference. Wodehouse, writing on "Martin Buber's I and Thou" states that Buber does not think that God can be known the way persons or inanimate objects are known.³⁶ The term "I and Thou" establishes a three-phase world of relations for the human person: Life with nature; life with men; and life with intelligible forms (*geistigen Wesenheiten*). In the first form of relation, there is no interaction in terms of communication. The relation here for the human person sways in gloom.³⁷ In the second relation, things begin to change. Here, humans interact amongst themselves and with themselves. It is an open relation here and the 'thou' can be given and received in return. The third relation is life with intelligible forms (*geistigen Wesenheiten*) and is quite confusing. There is no clear communication between humans and the perceived intelligible forms. Humans at this level feel that someone is addressing or communicating

with them, but it is not totally clear. The second level of relation, namely, that between humans is the most beneficial because the 'Thou' is received and given in return. Hence, Wodehouse concludes that in the view of Buber, "the relation with men is a mirror of the relation with God."³⁸ Further, the "I-Thou" relationship begins with the "I-It". The "I-It" allows the objectifying of the other.³⁹ This kind of relationship is not mutual. Contrary to that, relation by its nature is expected to be mutual (*Beziehungist Gegenseitigkeit*).⁴⁰ 'I-It' relation is exploitative, while the 'I-Thou' is open and respectful/mindful. The first level of relation is not applicable to God because God cannot at any point in time be an object. However, the reason for this level of relationship is that it allows for a depth in relation between humans. A depth in relation can be arrived at after humans have experienced the objectifying of the other. Having attained such a knowledge, the human person now moves to the level of the 'I-Thou' where relationship reaches a reasonable height of mutual respect for each other and one another. This is the true place of knowledge of one another. In the 'I-Thou' relationship, the human person acquires a better knowledge of the fellow human. For Buber, as Wodehouse would represent, God is the "eternal Thou."⁴¹ If God is the eternal 'Thou' it means that he is in the human person from the time of creation. This implies that the human person can only know God by stepping out of himself. Losing the present form of existence (death) will initiate the process for humans to know God. Karl Barth will conveniently acquiesce to this conclusion in relation to knowledge of God. It is a knowledge that is emanating from natural theology. Knowledge of God can therefore take place in the eternal flow from I to Thou.⁴² Simon Tugwell's article on "Contemplation and the knowledge of God" employs Buber's concept of the 'I-It and I-Thou'.⁴³ This relationship involves the entire person and relinquishes the ego to a lower status. There are two I's in every relationship. These two I's⁴⁴ are important because they make relationship possible. Knowing God requires some sort of relationship. God is known through faith. Based on

this, Tugwell concludes that God is known at two levels: at the level of the 'I-It' (faith) which takes place here on earth and at the level of the 'I-Thou' which takes place at the beatific vision.⁴⁵ In his final thoughts and reflections, Tugwell says that, "largely earthly knowledge of God is a statement about human dependence on God."⁴⁶ T. A Roberts in the review of the article, "The Christian knowledge of God by H.P Owen" examines how Natural theology appeals to religious experience in the proof of God's existence and ultimately as a path towards knowledge of God. This approach emerged at the dawn of Kantian critique of traditional approach to the knowledge or proof of God's existence. However, Owen in his book *Christian Knowledge of God*, while rejecting modern tradition on knowledge of God, seems to admire the scholastic approach to the knowledge of God. The scholastic approach is an older way in the discourse about knowledge of God. It can be attained with "the mind's natural powers."⁴⁷ Consequent upon this, the appeal to religious experience, as the path to knowledge of God, was abandoned. This knowledge can come about through a two-step process: through created order (knowledge by mediation) and through Christ who is the revelation of God himself. Even such knowledge of God through Christ is a mediated knowledge. Hence, the two steps to knowing God are through reason and revelation. Adam Green sees the necessity to cling to revelation as a true and surer way to know God. As he argues in the article, "Cognitive Science and the Natural Knowledge of God" employs Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) in his attempt to reshape classical teaching of Christianity on the knowledge of God. In his investigation, he came to the conclusion that the knowledge of God arrived at through Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) is flawed and corrupt. This is because CSR only leads to a natural knowledge of God.⁴⁸ Such a flawed and corrupt knowledge would require some element of divine revelation to enable the human person know God. Green concludes then that revelation enables man (humans) to know God.⁴⁹

This paper does not think that God has to be understood as an object of knowledge. Rather, knowing God will entail a broad spectrum of understanding the relational effect arising from such knowledge. In other words, knowledge of God commences already from the moment one knows oneself/himself. No wonder Socrates speaks about ‘Man know thy self’. As soon as man knows himself, then he moves on further to know his surroundings and people around him. Such a knowledge of God is participatory. God communicates himself to man and man comes to knowledge of God by encountering this God in his self-revelation mode. This finds great support in Islamic theology and religion.

4.4 ISLAMIC RELIGION

Knowledge of God in Islam is well articulated by Qamar-ul Huda in the article titled “Knowledge of Allah and the Islamic view of other Religions”. In the article, he makes it clear that Prophet Muhammad “is the vehicle through whom human beings received a message regarding the Real and Absolute one God.”⁵⁰ The message is communicated through the Qur’an. In this way, the Qur’an becomes the medium for relating the revelation of the one God communicated to the Prophet Muhammad.⁵¹ Its central focus is God and the human person.

The human person constantly struggles to engage this God to have an understanding of him. Hence, the entire goal in Islam is to have knowledge of God communicated through both temporal and spiritual realms.⁵² This is why the Qur’an is the primary authority for all “matters of religious practice, guidance, insight, serious theological reflection, legal understanding, philosophical inquiries, and everything dealing with social, economic, and political dimensions of life.”⁵³ Quite rightly Islam captures, based on her principles of origin, teachings about God. In the same token, African traditional religion offers some form of uniquely natural knowledge of God. It points simply towards the naturalness of the religion.

4.5 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The African Traditional concept of the knowledge of God takes its root from belief. In other words, when African authors speak about belief in God they refer therefore to knowledge of God. Bolaji Idowu in his monumental work *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, brought to clarity the possibility of the knowledge of God within the African culture and religious setting.⁵⁴ African cosmology is infused with divine elements⁵⁵ and thus, knowledge of God is second to the nature of the African. As a matter of fact, God is a household name amongst Africans. The proof of this is the Ashanti proverb which states, “No one shows a Child the Supreme Being.”⁵⁶ The claim is that, the existence of God is not merely in the mind and consequently knowledge of God is a concrete reality.⁵⁷ Hence, this goes headlong against the proposition of the Europeans that Africans have no knowledge of God.⁵⁸ There are also some Europeans who have been sympathetic with the African mind and have affirmed the fact that “the belief and worship of the one God, Supreme Deity, is common to all peoples of the world, though this may not be performed in the same way and degree all over.” From all available sources, no African scholar has held a contrary view to the fact that Africans have knowledge of God. The African person knows God in an unmitigated way. Such a knowledge makes a fearful demand from its adherents. If God is known and known from the right motive and perspective, the lives of people need be transformed. There may, therefore, be a correspondence between knowing God and right living.

4. THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Knowing God leaves humanity with very serious implications. This plays out clearly in the responsibility that the human person has to assume. It is an ethical imperative that demands that action corresponds to one’s knowledge. If one knows ‘what the good is, one will do that which is good’. In the case of the priest, it is in

the wake of this that consequences abound for knowing God. The priest serves as an intermediary between the people and God. He speaks on behalf of the people to God while making offering to atone for his sins and the sins of the people (Heb).

One of such consequences for knowing God is the obligation it places on the priest and by extension the people. The Priest is to lead others to the knowledge of God so that the people will live morally good lives. He has the duty to teach the commandments (*tôrah*). God is known through the *tôrah*, since the *tôrah* is the self-revelation of God. Consequently, knowing the *tôrah* and keeping the words of the commandment amount to knowledge of God. The *tôrah* was meant to guide the priest and people, but it has been apparently transgressed. If they had known God, by recognizing his deeds in their history, they would not have behaved contrary to the *tôrah*, which carries with it some repercussions (blessing and curse). The people and priest faced the judgment of God as a consequence in failing to follow his commandments. Hence, for the men and women of our time, on their part, they are to multiply whatever they have learnt from the priest. In this way, the world will be filled with knowledge of God.

Since knowledge of God is communicable through teaching, this knowledge of God can only thrive if it is inculcated in the evangelization of the people (inculturated-evangelization). Culture is an essential ingredient while teaching the people about God. God has to be understood by every culture in categories that are not foreign to it. In this way, the people will get to know God⁵⁹ and live right. The scriptures, especially the beatitudes articulate this quite clearly.

In the beatitudes, found in Matthew 5:3-10, Jesus presents the *magna carta* document for the Christian, and I dare say for any human person. The scriptures are meant to guide those who follow Jesus in their daily existential experiences, though the ancient literature allows access to anyone. Reading the beatitudes, one can see quite clearly that living out those items mentioned

would put the individual on a platform, showing clearly that he/she has known God. The manifestation of these virtuous actions⁶⁰ towards fellow humans, flows from the depth of profound divine knowledge. Here the individual's action witnesses and professes knowledge of God, which is very important and necessary for a fulfilled life. Hosea was emphatic about this. He went as far as spelling out the role of the priest in this divine exercise in service among the people of God.

5. SUMMARY

This paper has attempted to establish that God is knowable through use of reason and experience. The experiential knowledge of God emanates from contact with nature. Since humans are close to nature, it becomes absolutely important that natural things will help them to arrive at knowing God. Such a knowledge of God leaves an indelible impression on their minds to the extent that they find God to be synonymous with nature. Philosophy, theology and African traditional religion all affirm that God is knowable. The consequence of such knowledge is the transformation of the individual with the ultimate goal of obliterating ignorance as the consequence for knowing God.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Hosea 4:6 emphasizes the fact that the people are perishing for lack of knowledge. This was caused by the priests who abandoned knowledge. Abandoning knowledge brought disrepute to the priests. In this way lost favour in God's sight. In the light of Hosean text, the following are considered as necessary recommendation:

1. The Priest and people are to seek knowledge of God in a practical way by engaging in Bible Study, *Lectio Divina*, further theological study for both clergy and lay faithful.
2. The priest has the duty to teach the people in the church through his homilies at Mass and benediction. He can also engage in the use of social media to impart knowledge of God on the people.

3. All are to be involved in the new era of evangelization which has to keep in view the contextualization (inculturation) of the Gospel message. This will mean training collaborators who will have to champion the spread of the good news of Jesus Christ

7. CONCLUSION

The paper has been able to demonstrate that the topic under discussion “Historical Development of Knowledge of God and its consequences” (Hosea 4:6) is *ad rem* in a world that is going through turmoil.

It was clearly demonstrated that without such knowledge of God, the people would not get any better because they will remain perennially in ignorance. It is this ignorance that would cost them a great deal in life. Remember Plato’s dictum, that, “to know is to do”. Here doing is juxtaposed to inaction which is often caused by ignorance (lack of knowledge). Hosea 4:6 is clear on this point. God judges the priest and any other person who should know harshly because they have failed to lead the people from ignorance to knowledge. The rule of the thumb is that, inner workings of knowledge makes it obligatory to pass it on. It is enshrined in the Jewish *Shema Israel* (Deut. 6:4-9). The life of a Jewish father is to constantly teach the children. Where he cannot perform this task, he could hire a Rabbi to do this for him. Knowledge of God will help people live an ethical life as a logical consequence.

Endnotes

¹Gregory Vall, "An Epistemology of Faith: The knowledge of God in Israel's Prophetic Literature", (*In The Bible and Epistemology: Biblical Soundings on the Knowledge of God*, M. Healy and R. Parry Eds.), p. 24.

²Antonine DeGuglielmo, "Job 12:7-9 and the Knowability of God", (*The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 6/4), p. 476.

³Ibidem, p. 478.

⁴Ibidem, p. 479.

⁵Ibidem, p. 479.

⁶Ibidem, p. 481.

⁷John O'Rourke, "Romans 1, 20 and Natural Revelation", (*The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*), p.304. Cf. Paula FredriksenLandes (Trans.), *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans-Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, (Scholars Press, California, 1982), pp.3-5.

⁸Kathy Gaca, "Paul's Uncommon Declaration in Romans 1:18-32 and Its Problematic Legacy for Pagan and Christian Relations", (*The Harvard Theological Review* 92/2), p. 193. Cf. also Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *Romans*, (Doubleday: New York), p.273ff.

⁹For further reading, see Gerhard Swart "Why Without Excuse? An Inquiry into the Syntactic and Semantic Relations of Romans 1:18-21", (*Neotestamentica*39/2, (2005); Alec Lucas, "Reorienting the Structural Paradigm and Social Significance of Romans 1:18-32", (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 131/1, (2012). Also see Robert Frew, *Barnes Notes on the New Testament: Acts-Romans*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids: Michigan), p. 35ff.

¹⁰Addison G. Wright, "Wisdom",(*In The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer and Roland E. Murphy Eds.),p. 519.

¹¹This depicts reciprocity of action. This is mostly represented by the use of nouns as attested in Pentateuch. Cf. Ex. 21:23-25; Lev. 24: 18-20. Also see Hans Walter Wolff's commentary

on Hosea. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) p.79.

¹²The identity of the priests and sons that YHWH will abandon is rather not clear. This is because *kohen* and *komer* have been traced to be present in the text. *Kohen* refers to priest serving Adonai, while *komer* is used in referring to priests serving idol. At the time of the division of the kingdom (I Kg. 12: 1-33) Jeroboam had to construct Golden Calves for the North (vv.25-33). Invariably, *komer* would be referring to priests serving in these cults outside Jerusalem temple, where true worship of YHWH took place. The weakness of this claim is the fact of the inability to geographically circumscribe the *komer* priest. They are vestiges of their presence in the southern kingdom. On this note the question remains open as to who the priests and their sons could really be referring to.

¹³Emmanuel Nwaoru, "The Image of the Priest in the Prophecy of Hosea", (*Bigard Theological Studies* 22/2), p. 12.

¹⁴Cf. Deut. 33: 10 and Mal. 2:7

¹⁵Gregory Vall in the article "Hosea and Knowledge of God" delineated quite elaborately the meaning, content, and implication of the da' at_ēlōhīm "knowledge of God".

¹⁶Gregory Vall, "Hosea and Knowledge of God", (*The Bible Today* 39/6), p. 339.

¹⁷John McKenzie, "Knowledge of God in Hosea", (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 74/1), p. 23.

¹⁸There are scholars who do not seem to agree with this perspective.

¹⁹John McKenzie, op. cit., p. 27.

²⁰Ibidem, p.27.

²¹Further reading on the cultic and ethical sense contained in the concept of knowledge of God could be found in the works of Sean Kealy, Walter Wolff and Reinhard Kratz.

²²Walter Harrelson, "Knowledge of God in the Church", (*Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 30/1), p.14.

²³This is indeed murky because Karl Barth in an attempt to

preserve the integrity of God could not think about God as object of human perception and knowledge. Cf. Rodner D. Holder, *The heavens declare: Natural theology and the legacy of Karl Barth*, (Templeton, West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, 2012); Tyler R. Wittman, *God and Creation in the theology of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018);

²⁴Summa Theologica part 1 q. 12 Art. 12

²⁵Mary Clark, *An Aquinas Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Aquinas*, p.137.

²⁶Francis Ogunmodede, "The Metaphysical knowledge of God: An Analysis of Bobik and Owens Thomistic Controversy", (Ekpoma Review 1), p. 29.

²⁷John Nwanze, "Knowledge of God as Basis for right living (Hosea 4:1-6): A Study in Issele-Uku Diocese, Nigeria"(PhD diss., Catholic Institute of West Africa, 2019),p.10.

²⁸Charles Patterson, "Can man know God?", (Journal of Bible and Religion 2/3), p. 176.

²⁹Ibidem, p. 178

³⁰Frank Dilley, "Is there knowledge of God?", (*The Journal of Religion* 38/2), p.117.

³¹Rodner D. Holder, *The heavens declare: Natural theology and the legacy of Karl Barth*. (Templeton, West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, 2012).

³²Ibidem p. 150

³³Ibidem p. 153

³⁴Ibidem p. 154. Cf. Vincent G. Porter, *Karl Barth and the Ontological Argument*, (*The Journal of Religion*, vol. 45, no. 4 (Oct. 1965), pp. 309-325.

³⁵Karl Barth does not think that the natural sciences can assist humans in knowledge of God. This is a reflection of the Anselmian influence in his theology. Cf. J. Burton Fulmer, "Anselm and the Apophatic: "Something Greater than can Be Thought", "New Blackfriars" vol. 89, no. 1020 (2008), pp.177-193; A. Hilary Armstrong, "Karl Barth, The Fathers of the

Church, and Natural Theology”, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series, vol. 46, no. 1, (April 1995), pp. 191-195.

³⁶Helen Wodehouse, “Martin Buber’s I and Thou”, (*Philosophy* 20/25), p. 18.

³⁷*Ibidem*, p. 18.

³⁸*Ibidem*, p. 19.

³⁹John Nwanze, *op. cit.* p. 16.

⁴⁰Helen Wodehouse, *op. cit.* pp. 22-23.

⁴¹*Ibidem*, p. 30.

⁴²John Nwanze, *op. cit.* p. 17.

⁴³Simon Tugwell, “Contemplation and the Knowledge of God”, (*New Blackfriars* 48/567), p. 555.

⁴⁴The two I’s consist of the egocentric I and the communal I. The function of the communal I makes the I-Thou relationship useful and important. It does indeed reflect the fact of the existent relation in life.

⁴⁵Simon Tugwell, *op. cit.*, p. 591.

⁴⁶*Ibidem*, p. 591.

⁴⁷T. A. Roberts, Reviewed article on “The Christian Knowledge of God by H.P. Owen”, (*The Journal of Theological Studies* 23/1), p. 307.

⁴⁸Adam Green, “Cognitive Science and the Natural Knowledge of God”, (*The Monist* 96/3), p. 401.

⁴⁹*Ibidem*, p. 401.

⁵⁰Qamar-ul Huda, “Knowledge of Allah and the Islamic View of other Religions”, (*Theological Studies* 64/2), p.283.

⁵¹*Ibidem*, p. 283, 286.

⁵²*Ibidem*, p. 279.

⁵³*Ibidem*, p. 280.

⁵⁴John Nwanze, *op. cit.* p. 58.

⁵⁵A lot of the African scholars will agree to this. John Mbiti, Michael Ushe, Alex Kamwaria, Michael Katola, Emeka Ekeke and Chike Ekeopara see the divine completely permeating the cosmology of the African person.

⁵⁶Emeka Ekeke and Chike Ekeopara, “God, Divinities and Spir

its in African Traditional Religious Ontology”, (*American Journal of Social and Management Sciences* 1 /2), p. 210.

⁵⁷John Nwanze, op. cit. p.64.

⁵⁸Omosade Awolalu, “What is African Traditional Religion?”, (*Studies in Comparative Religion* 10/2), p.3.

⁵⁹Knowledge of God is important and necessary. The text of Hosea 4:1-6 was emphatic on how priests contributed to the lack of knowledge of God amongst the people. A good number of the literature has shown in varied ways that the human person has the capacity to know. This knowing/knowledge is made possible using the cognitive part of man. The human person knows by getting in contact with the object of knowledge. This knowledge of God can only thrive if it is entrenched in the culture of the people. Culture is an essential ingredient while teaching the people the knowledge of God. In the final analysis, the people will know God and thus live right.

⁶⁰These items are not mere ideologies. They are realizable here in our own human experience. We know people who practice them in the society. For example, the Gospel speaks about people who hunger and thirst for justice/righteousness (Mtt. 5: 6a). Such persons are often described as human right activists in a more general term. Another group would be persons who are merciful in their relationship with others (Mtt. 5:7a). They are not invisible to us. We see them in our world and society. Further, we have the group of peacemakers (Mtt. 5:9a). They are often called ‘pacifists’ in the secular world. These categories of persons live in correspondence to their knowledge of God.

**MARX AND FEUERBACH'S HUMANISM:
the Anthropological Source of Atheism**

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Abstract

This work examines Karl Marx and Ludwig Feuerbach's humanism to demonstrate the anthropological source of atheism in the contemporary world. With phenomenological and transcendental approaches proper to the study of philosophical anthropology in the background, the work employs the use of critical and conceptual analysis of Marx and Feuerbach's humanism to uncover the anthropocentric nature of modern anthropology. The question is: is modern anthropocentrism atheistic by necessity or by accident? Marx absolute humanism sets man at the summit of the cosmos, and man becomes the supreme being. Marx became an atheist for his passion for man; safeguarded with atheism for the greatness of man. He even destroyed religion for man's greatness. Based upon a dialectical-materialistic understanding of humanity's place in nature, Marx proposes that religion is the opium of the people, thus Marx advocates atheism, rather than religious belief. Feuerbach, on his own part, began his philosophy of religion with human nature as a starting point. He thought that the main work of modern philosophers from historical thesis is to humanize God while deifying man. To execute this project, atheism became not only a starting point but necessary. In order to open the way for a naturalistic humanism, the God of Christianity and the Absolute Spirit of Hegel has to be eliminated. Like humanists, both thinkers viewed religion broadly, as both a psychological (Feuerbach) and social (Marx). Finally, the study finds that the orientation of the modern philosophies of consciousness to atheism culminated in Marx' and Feuerbach's anthropology, which have significantly contributed to the pro

gressive ungodding of people.

Keywords: Anthropocentrism, Anthropology, Atheism, Dialectical Materialism, Humanism, and Naturalistic Religion.

Introduction

The contemporary man insists that he is living through an altogether original human experience; the claim to originality and novelty is correct. But attempt to identify the content of the originality is not always accurate. Scientific achievement, technology, industrialization, and urbanization are certain aspects of the actual human experience of atheism which is the decisive originality in the present context of contemporary man. This is the first time in human history that man has undertaken to organize his life, private and public, on a philosophical conviction that God does not exist. Contemporary atheism is the determination of man to live without God as a matter of principle.

With the advent of self exaltation and consciousness, as we see from Descartes on, philosophy waved a parting hand to the medieval synthesis and ushered in anti-theistic posture which later on formed a basis for the modern and contemporary atheism. Plunged into its vulgarized state by modernity, Philosophy has been begrudged of its genuine fore-occupation. Henceforth, philosophy is no longer oriented toward the first cause.² The science of the first principles and causes in confrontation with modernity, has been compelled to change its cause. Consequently, modern philosophy has acquired three basic characteristics, namely: First, that it is anthropological. Second, that it is anti-metaphysical, and finally, that it is atheistic.

Philosophical anthropology as a part of philosophy is channeled towards no less than the in depth examination of the being-man. Within this in-depth examination, the possibilities and capabilities of this specimen is not taken for granted. Modern and contemporary anthropology, in an attempt to achieve this over emphasized the autonomy of the ergo. Thus the outcome of

it was the total rejection and banishment of God from the cosmos. Consequently, there is no place for God. This question of God would later become problematic and schismatic among the Hegelians. Of course, Henri De Lubac (1896-1991), a French Jesuit priest and a Cardinal of the Catholic Church, affirmed that:

... in the years that followed Hegel's death in the 1831, the focus of philosophical debates was the problem of God, and it was on this subject, and not primarily on political and social matters that the split occurred between the right and left wings of Hegelianism.³

But before then, interpreting Marx, Feuerbach, Nietzsche and Comte, De Lubac traces the origin of the 19th century attempts to construct a humanism apart from God, observes that "the turning point in history will be the moment man becomes aware that the only god of man is man himself."⁴ De Lubac's observation is already evident in Marx's humanism.

However, having introduced this topic, this work is set to examining Karl Marx's Humanism and Ludwig Feuerbach's Religion to demonstrate the anthropological source of atheism. Today's atheism, as I said earlier, is a determination of man to live without God as a matter of principle. Hence, the consequences are so grievous.

The Atheistic Humanism of Karl Marx

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a German philosopher, economist, historian, socio-political theorist, journalist and socialist revolutionary. Like Feuerbach, humanism is the starting point of Marx's philosophy of religion.

Humanism as a theme in philosophy is geared towards the restoration of man's values and rights. As a movement, it emphasizes its concern over the subject - the human - having as its

principle objective, the amelioration of the human pitiable state. It is a current of thought which stresses the need for total emancipation of man from his deplorable condition with the aim of elevating the subject to the realm of the nearly absolute.

In consonance with Ludwig Feuerbach's line of thought, Marx redefined the goal of history in terms of 'humanism'. Man's ultimate goal is simply to become full human which is practically impossible as long as he remains alienated from himself in a religious fantasies of self-realization. The realm where the human seeks and must seek his true reality is of course, the existing world. The idea is that man as he now exists in the world, lacks reality as man. The problem did not arise from his failure to become God, but rather did arise from his failure to become human. Man's destiny is to realize his humanity, his human nature. Concomitant to this theory is the categorical imperative to topple and suppress all relations in which the human is dehumanized to a debased, enslaved, helpless and contemptible creature.

For Marx, man as a natural being must, like any other natural being, undergo developmental process of act of becoming. This self-developmental process of man is the act of world history. Closely associated with the essence of man is industry. This is the conviction of Marx that "industry is an essentially subjective phenomenon in relation to man writ large in the species".⁵ Labour enhances and ascertains man's creativity through which the species-life of man is objectified.

The object of labour is the objectification of the species-life of man ... Man is a world-creator, and his history is an activity of production of the worlds created objects that now surrounds him.⁶

Marx wittingly accepted Feuerbach's proposition that everything is ultimately nothing but matter. He thereby rejected the Hegelian interpretation of history as the unfolding of the absolute mind, the final spiritual reality.

Amalgamating Hegel's progressive dialectic with Feuerbach's radical materialism, Marx concluded that man, himself the real supreme being, was capable of discovering the precepts of history in the unfolding material conditions of society. Truth is the process of material change. As a result, the thinking man must seek to revolutionize the whole economic order of society. Through the agency of the creativity oriented world, man will eventually resolve the conflict in the millennium of communist society. Seriously engaged in this process, man becomes the creator of his cosmos, his history, himself.

Marx's materialism in dealing with the origin and essence of all existing things, supposes that things have not been created, but everything is in essence matter and matter-in-motion. With application of history and human affairs, materialism means that the basis of all human endeavors is found in man's material existence.

The essence of man consists in his being a worker. By his work, man raises himself above his natural state of animality. By his work, man conquers raw nature and adapts the cosmos to himself. Work, man's greatest form of revolution, seeks to restore the divinity of human.

Explicating the words: Dialectic and Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical materialism originated from Hegel. In the words of Vincent P. Miceli, S.J. (1915-1991), an American Catholic priest, theologian and philosopher, it is

... a philosophical stating that all reality is in continuous flux; that there are no immutable eternal truths and consequently no science of metaphysics that studies stable essences and eternal thing. But rather, change is eternal and proceeds by opposites opposing each other.⁷

Progress therefore is the product and consequence of struggle and antagonism. Progress is assured with struggle, without which it is impossible. Dialectic is “the struggle that leads to the enrichment of reality, for in every clash of beings there is the meaning of a unity on a higher level of being.”⁸ Dialectical struggle then, is far more fruitful than a static metaphysics because it calls for unlimited progress in knowledge, in being and in history.

CRITIQUE OF RELIGION IN MARX

At the heart of Marx’ profane and adulterated human, there inheres his buffet inclined ambition, to erase religion with special intent to Christianity. For Marx, “this is the premise of all criticisms. The criticism of religion is the premises of all criticisms.”⁹

Having set the first premise, there remains a further premise - the major premise which ought to be established to elicit the inference. Nevertheless, according to Marx, “the criticism of religion is the premise of all criticisms then atheism. Atheism is established by him as the major premise, the seminal proposition for a communist humanism.”¹⁰

The critique of religion revealed that man, in the quest of an overman in heaven somewhere, found nothing but the appearance of himself, an Unman. Man’s search for himself is not accomplished on the atomistic plane of individual psychology. On the contrary, man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man, the world of state and the world of society. This state and this society produce religion, an inverted consciousness of the world, because they are an inverted world.

Marx furthered this negative critique which reveals religion to be a norm of false consciousness that must be eliminated. Nevertheless, Judaism, has a share of the criticism.

Judaism is only one variety of the ideological false consciousness, which is religion. The “inverted

world” from which religion spring must be changed for man is to be emancipated “humanly”.¹¹

The first step, for Marx, towards the extermination of the illusory happiness of mankind is the abolition of religion. Accompanying this task is the demand and the need for the establishment of a new happiness. On the one hand, religious suffering is at one time the expression of actual suffering, and at the other hand, the protest against the actual suffering. Religion is the opium of the masses.¹² To awaken the masses to the real sufferings of the real world which are no longer hidden by ideological glasses, they must be detoxified from this narcotic substance.

To ensure success in this venture of human amelioration and emancipation - humanism - priority and invitation should be given to atheism.

The first act of human amelioration, because it is the first act of human liberation, must always be the cry, “there is no God”.¹³

With the idea of God dismissed, Marx enthusiastically embraced Feuerbach’s criticism that God is man’s own invention and that nothing lies beyond matter. For Marx and Marxists, atheism henceforth became an established dogma. With the idea of God unthought, man fills the vacuum created by the absence of God. Man consequently, becomes the only reality, the only meaning of the universe and of evolution of history.

Man liberated from the divine shackle, is now free to create himself fully in solidarity with his fellow men. With the idea of man exercising full control over nature and history, it becomes absurd to welcome a counter idea that counter forces have influence on history. In concurrence to this, Bultmann declared:

Man alone is responsible for his own and his world’s

social and scientific advancement. It is inconceivable, therefore, that modern man accept that fable that spirits and sacraments produce physical effects in history. ¹⁴

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) was a German Lutheran Theologian and professor of the New Testament at the University of Marburg. He is well known for his famous demythologization of the bible quest: to “demythologize” the New Testament, which is, to interpret the New Testament, according to the concepts of existentialist philosophy, the essential message of the New Testament.

However, with the idea of God cast into the realm of the imagination, of the more or less absurd, the salvation economy and history is thereby seen as a grotesque creature. But Bultmann is not done yet. He continues:

As for a God who destroys his own son in order to save man through a vicarious redemption, such a story is too barbaric and repulsive to be accepted as reasonable. ¹⁵

Such is the misguided speculation of a morbid thinker. Worse still, Nietzsche had attributed the death of God to the modern science. In the thought of Altizer, Nietzsche has been disproved regarding the accusation. Under Altizer’s jurisdiction, science has been acquitted of this charge:

Nietzsche was wrong on one very important point. Man has not killed God, heroic as that might have been. God died by his own hand. The death was an act, or rather a process, of divine suicide. ¹⁶

For Marx, the act of religious revolution is the first act of human history. It gives meaning to the history of man because

it restores man to his greatness and to himself. Man, therefore, is his own saviour. Man is the creation of man by man, man is the producer of maturing man.

For Hegel, the trouble with the Christian God is that He is only experienced and remembered when the human conscience is sick or in trouble. More so, the transcendent God of the Old and New Testaments succeeds in enslaving and alienating His worshippers. He sets before them the face to face eternal embrace of Himself as a goal that is actually beyond man's personal achievement. Yet he continually tortures man's metaphysical hunger as if this human aspiration for complete communion were actually attainable. Consequently, the Judeo-Christian God is a cruel tyrant who fosters between Himself and men, the infamous dialectical relationship of master and slave.

Yet according to Marx, atheism marks the commencement of history. History, then, advances through the revolutionary destruction of bourgeois society to the enthronement of man as his own god in the communist community. The human has his origin and projection from the very act of rebellion.

Man is born and projection into history by his act of revolt against God, his "I will not serve".¹⁷

Religion is doomed to disappear, being a symptom of unjust and self negative social conditions.

The Class Struggle

Karl Marx stressed the obvious truth that social groups have conflicts of interest that are often reflected in antagonistic political creeds. He tends to advance before this truism by implying that the classes have no common interests at all, and that their struggle, in which we perceive that great motive power of history, is essentially illimitable.

In the course of history, Marx saw each principle of social organization represented by a social class: feudalism by no

bility, capitalism by the entrepreneurs, socialism by the working class or workers. The struggle of the classes is identical with the dialectical conflict of organizational principles. Consequently, the class struggle is governed by the law of dialectics. The proletariat or the working class is subjugated to a dehumanized condition by the bourgeois and the capitalist.

To enfranchise the former from their abject status, there must be a classless society, which could be achieved but not without a revolution. The victory of the new class must be accompanied by the suppression of the former ruling class until the last vestiges of the older are extinguished. This squabble will eventually consequent to the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as the political form of society in the period of transition from capitalism to full communism.¹⁸

The Labour Theory

According to this Marx’s classical doctrine, the value of a commodity depends on the amount of labour and time necessary for its production. In other words, the economic value of a good or service, is determined by the total amount of labour required to produce it. Marx applied this theory with some refinements to human labour power.¹⁹ In his view, a worker’s labour power is sold like any other commodity, at a price determined by the labour - time necessary to produce it.

Labour power, however, is the only commodity that can produce a value greater than its own, because a worker can work: more hours than are necessary to keep him alive and to keep him in a position to reproduce his kind. In a nutshell, a surplus arises when the value of a worker’s labour power is less than the value that the labour produces during production. The product of this surplus labour is called “surplus value”.²⁰ This surplus value is the source of all non wage income: profit, rent and interest. The purchase of labour power at a price corresponding to its labour time value and therefore inevitably smaller

than labour time value of the products is called “exploitation of labour.”²¹

Marxist determinism launches promises of victory to the proletariat and this is apt to strengthen the working class’ self confidence in the class squabble. But at the same time the question arises as to why workers should make sacrifices in order to bring about developments which are unavoidable in any event?

The beginning of Marxist thought are closely bound up with the controversies surrounding the philosophical legacy of Hegel as this was known in the cultural atmosphere of the forties of the last (20th) century . The early work which he undertook with Engels, ‘the German ideology’ - describes the situation clearly.

In the general class powerful kingdoms were formed, as soon to fall, heroes emerged briefly only to be flung into darkness by more daring and more powerful rivals.²²

The conflict crystallized itself into two themes: Hegel’s philosophy of right and of religion. Understandingly, because here lay the social troubles of the day. On the one side, Germany experienced at this time an economic and political impetus. On the other side, there developed in Prussia a strongly authoritarian regime, bureaucratic and military, with a strong police force, censorship and intrigue against which many especially the young German students rebelled.

Marxism can be generally assessed as a system saturated with contradiction, though, he was able to synthesize the thoughts of many philosophers. But it is full of a contradiction, in the sense that a meticulous analysis of the Marxist theory of labor expresses laxities. Of course, this is not difficult to see. Taking cognizance of the Marxist maxim of the Labor theory that states, “from each according to his ability to each according to his needs,”²³ some questions come to mind. Among which is:

how can you know my needs? Moreover, the theory did not even imply giving each according to his or her own effort.

In another development, Marxism as a complete philosophy of life, clashes with scholastic philosophy on several fronts. The basic tenet of materialism - all things are matter - is refuted by the demonstrations for the existence of spiritual substances. Theodicy demonstrates the existence of an eternal necessary - Being who is an infinitely perfect spirit, the ACTUS PURUS (the pure act of existence). In cosmology, the impossibility of matter existing from eternity is evident. More so, matter in motion is impossible without a Prime Mover who is Himself unmoved. The Marxian Law of opposites violates the principle of identity and the principle of contradiction.

With Marx's atheistic humanism exposed, and Feuerbach's rebelliousness about to be examined, thus, the proof of anthropological source of atheism will not be in limbo. At this juncture then, it is necessary to examine Feuerbach and his rebellion.

Ludwig Feuerbach's Naturalistic Humanism

Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (1804-1872) was a German philosopher and anthropologist. As an anthropologist, human nature became a starting point of his philosophy of religion. He observed that human beings are constructed in such a way that they are needy and searching, intelligent and learning, and able to be both subject and object.

To execute his project of atheism, Feuerbach accepts Hegel's position up to a certain point and then invests with Hegel's influence the dialectical relation which he has temporarily conceded. According to him, in order to open the way for a naturalistic humanism, the God of Christianity and the Absolute Spirit of Hegel has to be eliminated. Feuerbach advances the historical thesis that the main work of modern thought is to humanize God while deifying man.²⁴ In accordance to his complementary principles that the secret of theology is anthropology, he employs the psy-

chogenetic method to break down claim of Christian theology and theistic philosophy to be concerned with independent reality.

Psychogenesis is a technique for tracing the doctrine on God back to certain drives of human nature itself. The theistic mind thinks that it is dealing with the real order, where as it is only engaged in objectifying the human aspirations and images which constitute the stuff of religion. Thus, he makes a twofold reduction: first of absolute idealism to theism. Second, of theism to our subjective religious disposition. Feuerbach's point is that speculation about God or absolute spirit is not merely in harmony with our subjective wishes but rather nothing more than a hypostatization of them.²⁵ God the object of theology, and "absolute spirit" the object of speculation are seen by Feuerbach as objectifications and projections of human characteristics into another world of individual human which is man's consciousness of himself.

The nature of man for Feuerbach is *ens realissimum*, the highest reach of being and the solid foundation of all philosophizing. Thus, with this as his criterion, he explained both religion and God entirely as functions of human nature and its tendencies. For Feuerbach, man's mind is filled with his own essential nature that he comes to regard himself as an infinite being. When religion is defined as the awareness of the infinite, it can be understood as an awareness of the infinity of man's own essential being. However, at first, the religious mind does not see that the proper object of its worship is the unlimited essence of man.

Man first of all sees his nature as outside of himself, before he finds himself. His own nature is in the first instance contemplated by himself as that of another being.²⁶

God is nothing more than this alienated way of viewing the human essence, which we abstract from empirical individuals and then set apart as a real repositioning of all the attributes and

perfections of human nature.

Since Feuerbach sees religion as nothing more than “man’s objective consciousness of himself and theology as an anthropology to understand itself, he then looks for the roots of specifically religious idealism in the individual human psyche: “Such are a man’s thought and dispositions, such is his God.”²⁷

For Feuerbach, “the divine being is nothing else than the human being ... freed from the limits of the individual, that is, real physical man, made objective, that is, contemplated and revered as another a distinct being.”²⁸

Feuerbach nevertheless was not over yet. He went further to proffer the source from which religious concept sprang. According to him, it is an intellectual, which consists in the inability of the individual to attribute to himself the human qualities of his endlessly self perfecting species. Religion becomes the very process of projecting our essential being into the ideal sphere of divinity and then humbling ourselves before our own objectified essence. In worshipping God, men are really paying homage to their own relinquished essence, viewed at an ideal distance. Man creates God that he returns to worship.²⁹

From this analysis, Feuerbach draws the paradoxical conclusion that a full self conscious, religious mind must be atheistic. *Homo homini deus* - man is the only true God for himself. As soon as a man pierces the real significance of religion, he dispenses with God or the absolute spirit and devotes himself to cultivating the potentialities of his own essential being. The only reason for which he ever splits his being into the empirical individual and the ideal maximum is that the perfections of human nature are jeopardized by actual conditions in nature and society. Consequently, the miseries of actual existence lead him to yearn after a more perfect condition, to picture his condition as an ideal essence, and finally to objectify that essence as an independent, infinite God.

Having exposed the illusory character of God and absolute spirit, Feuerbach wishes to keep religion within the atheistic

framework. Along with the French positivist philosopher, August Comte (1798-1857), with whom his secular religion (the Religion of Humanity),³⁰ Feuerbach became a pioneer advocate of a purely humanistic and social religion without God. According to him, the valid meaning for religion is to devote oneself to the improvement of interpersonal relation of I and thou among men, based on the exclusively immanent motive of a mutual love and sharing in the same essential nature. For Feuerbach, the criticism of religion is justified because in divesting God of the good qualities of the human species falsely attributed to him, mankind is enriched and liberated.

As if that is all, Feuerbach offers several reasons for applying a qualified sort of infinity to man. That human mind can somehow become all things through a cognitive union. Man is infinite and universal, in the sense of being capable of endless increase in his knowledge, which is not bound down entirely to the initial limits of sensation. More so, that our religious awareness of the infinite is simply an awareness of our own infinite nature. He went further to say that God is only an objectification of human nature in its desire for perfection.

Hegel believed that it is only infinite spirit that is actual and engaged in temporal process.³¹ Feuerbach counteracted the claim by saying that only a finite temporally developing being that is actual. Against the theists, Feuerbach maintains the infinity of man, but against Hegel, he strongly holds that finite being is the sole reality.

The trait of Feuerbach's thought is big with significance for the spread of atheism: His exploitation of two aspects of empiricism. He seeks to shift the emphasis of philosophy from idealism and theology to empiricism and natural science. This shift accounts for the two aspects of his atheistic argument: It is both psychological in approach, and practical bent as well. In the human tradition, Feuerbach hails psychology as the first and universal science, of which metaphysics is the secret objectification. The idea of psychologizing of metaphysics leads Feuerbach to

reduce the problem of God to that of psychogenesis of the idea of God. More so, that an infinite spiritual God is incompatible with natural things and our esthetic attitude toward them.³²

Again, Feuerbach said that speculative assent, whether demonstrative or probable, which some empiricist philosophers has previously given to the existence of God is pale, unreal and incompatible with their working criterion of being. In addition to that, that the affirmation of God's existence is a groundless one and should be withdrawn, out of consistency and honesty. Under Hegel's influence, Feuerbach broke with theology, considering it merely as a past phase in man's intellectual progression.

Conclusion - Towards An Ungodded People

By implication, we can conclude by inferring that the orientation of the modern philosophies of consciousness (right from Descartes, Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Husserl) to atheism that culminated in Marx' and Feuerbach's anthropology, has been investigated. We are enabled to see that the success of modern philosophy can be measured from the fact that a high percentage of educated people accept atheism as the intellectual stance proper to sophistication. The socialist theory of Proudhon and the political organization of Marxist-Leninist philosophy have established atheism among the urban industrial workers. Yet beneath these philosophical and political sources, there have been other movements which have significantly contributed to the progressive ungodding of people.³³

Modern philosophy arose out of the theological debacle presented by Martin Luther (1483-1546). Now man was the central theme of Lutheran theology. His reform was essentially the exaltation of the self over and against the Church. This anthropological emphasis has been a permanent characteristic of modernity. Modern philosophy, however, is not merely an anthropology. A philosophy is not necessarily erroneous because it is an anthropology. But rather that modern philosophy has become an anthropology that is resolutely anthropocentric.

With this then, it is necessary, at this Juncture to finalize in a concrete way, the impact of a philosophical anthropology that has become resolutely anthropocentric. By virtue of a philosophical anthropocentric orientation to atheism, modern philosophy was bound to consider religion in a superficial way. By virtue of its anthropocentric anthropology, it was bound to consider religion in terms of a this worldly immanence. In a this world anthropology, the theme of religion became man himself and his varied needs. With the vertical worship of God excluded as other world illusion, the core of this world religion becomes the good moral life, healing and social justice.

Morality, healing, social justice constitute significant abiding human issues. But when these themes are made to be the heart of a this world immanence, they effectively ungod the participants. Religion which is anthropocentric anthropology, which had shaped to the contours of culture and ethnic group, cannot hold man out into transcendence. Religion understood in the light of modernity is a factor in the ungodding of people.

This is not the first time that religion has been a factor in the ungodding of people. Natural pre-Christian religion has been constantly unable to sustain the metaphysical insights of natural theology. It has failed to hold man out into the transcendence of God. The darkness of excessive light seems to have defeated it. Natural pre-Christian theology has turned away into a subjection to the worldly powers. Bound upon the wheel of fire and with no exit from the world of the powers, the great human miseries move to center stage. Natural religion has continuously expanded itself on protection from enemies in the healing of sickness, in the explaining of death. In the midst of these woes, transcendence is side-tracked and natural religion becomes a process of ungodding.

However, that the pre-Christian natural religion of modernity should be agents of ungodding is not strange. What is strange, however, is the speed and enthusiasm with which many

exponents of the Christian faith have sought to make Christianity take its place among the religions of a this worldly immanence. From this then, theological consequences follow. In the practical order, Christianity is then shaped to the anthropocentric demands of the this world religion. The pastoral of social justice, of healing and the good moral life are not opening to Christ. They are being performed as exigencies of this world religion. In a grave moment, many Christian exponents have allied themselves with the forces active in ungodding.

Endnotes

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A CRITIQUE OF QUINE’S NATURALISING EPISTEMOLOGY

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Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to evaluate Quine’s idea of naturalising epistemology, which was an attempt to annex epistemology to psychology. Herein, I offer a critical analysis of Quine’s “Epistemology Naturalised,” a project to bring epistemology under the purview of natural science; by doing so, naturalised epistemology is to replace the normative preoccupations of traditional epistemology with a descriptive account of knowledge acquisition. Quine’s explanation of knowledge derivation is premised on the relationship between the mind’s vast theoretical output and the meagre empirical inputs of our sensory experience. I examine the argument of Quine and the objections to his argument and conclude that his project to naturalize epistemology failed because it could not satisfactorily account for the problem of circularity and normativity.

Keywords: Epistemology, Naturalism, Naturalised epistemology, Natural sciences, Normativity.

Introduction

Naturalised epistemology (NE) as a phrase was introduced into the epistemological parlance by Willard Van Orman Quine. It describes a collection of different philosophical views whose common ground is the emphasis on the role of the meth

ods of natural science in epistemic practice. It is a proposal that we study the epistemic activity of the cognitive agent using the methods of empirical science because the cognitive agent is considered as a natural phenomenon. This implies a shift in the focus of epistemic inquiry from traditional philosophical questions about epistemic concepts like; justification, truth, certainty, etc., to the empirical process of knowledge acquisition. In this way, it makes epistemic inquiry a branch of the scientific enterprise. Naturalised epistemologists argue that there are no fixed points to determine if our beliefs, and the practices by which we acquire and justify them are tenable outside science. They disagree with the traditional distinction between analytic and synthetic statements and argue in favour of an externalist theory of justification (at least a version of NE); the reliability of the mechanisms that generate beliefs determines whether the belief is justified or not. Primarily, NE explores how perceptual information becomes knowledge.¹ It has been expressed in three noticeable distinctive versions: (i) replacement naturalism, (ii) cooperative naturalism, and (iii) substantive naturalism. The concern of the present paper is to clarify and evaluate the idea of replacement naturalism, the version championed by Quine. First, I explicate philosophical naturalism, secondly, I examined the general idea of naturalized epistemology, thirdly, I offer a critical and evaluative analysis of replacement naturalism, and conclude that Quine's project to naturalise epistemology failed because it did not satisfactorily account for the problem of circularity and the question of epistemic normativity.

Naturalism in Philosophy

Naturalism is the view that only natural laws and forces operate in the world. As a philosophical theory, it is the view that the laws of nature govern the world, that is, the universe is structured, and behaves in a way determined by the rules of natural laws. Nature is considered as the original and fundamental source of everything that exists, as such, naturalists attempt to

explain all that is, in terms of nature. The assumption here is that all events can be adequately explained within nature. In contemporary philosophy, naturalism has no precise meaning, but naturalists like; John Dewey, Ernest Nagel, Sidney Hook, and Roy Sellers, argue that we can explain reality by nature because there is nothing “supernatural” in reality.² Therefore, they insist that we should apply the scientific method in our investigation of reality. The understanding that naturalism excludes anything supernatural, implies that science is possibly the necessary path to discover truth, even when they are truths about the human spirit.³

There are two versions of naturalism; (i) ontological naturalism, and (ii) methodological naturalism. Ontological naturalism is the study of the nature of reality, which is sometimes equated with materialism by some philosophers. Ontological naturalists like Paul Kurtz, argue that material principles like mass, energy, and other physical and chemical properties, provide us with the best account of nature. He avers that nature has no purpose and that there are no spirits, deities, and ghosts, because these are unreal.⁴

On the other hand, methodological naturalism is the assumption of naturalism in scientific inquiry. By this, I mean “the adoption ... of naturalism in scientific belief and practice without really believing in naturalism.”⁵ Here, methodological naturalism implies the principle that science can only study those things that its instruments and techniques can access. Its concern is with the methods employed to investigate nature, and not necessarily, the claims we make about what exists. In other words, it is a proposal that we use natural causes and events to explain and test our knowledge findings. This represents the cognitive approach to reality, it is a philosophy of knowledge.

Quine and some other philosophers like George Santayana hold the view that the success of naturalism in scientific inquiry, provides the grounds for philosophers to employ scientific methods in philosophical studies as well. So, they consider science and philosophy as a continuum. Quine assumes that nat

uralism shows that science is the final paradigm for truth because there are no methods better than the scientific method when it comes to judging the claims of science. The implication of this, is that abstract discourses like metaphysics and/or epistemology are not needed in the inquiry about truth and reality because they are not appropriately suited to defend or justify science. According to Lynne Rudder, Quine's understanding is that philosophy should use scientific findings in its project because philosophy is not only continuous with science but also empirical like science.⁶ This claim is representative of Quine's replacement naturalism, which I shall discuss below. It is important to note that naturalism does not necessarily imply that the modern view of science is entirely correct as a matter of dogma. Instead, it is the view that science provides the best method to investigate the processes of nature and modern science continues to strive to understand these processes.

The Project of Naturalising Epistemology

Roughly put, to naturalize epistemology is to make the study of how human beings acquire knowledge of the world a scientific enterprise, that is, using the tools and results of natural science to investigate knowledge acquisition. According to Stephen Stich, there are two different ways to accomplish this project: (i) strong naturalism, and (ii) weak naturalism. Strong naturalism is the view that "all legitimate epistemological questions can be resolved by science [while] weak naturalism [is the view that] there are some legitimate epistemological questions that are not scientific questions and cannot be resolved by scientific research."⁷ Both forms of naturalism share the common notion that there is an important role for empirical science in epistemology, namely; that epistemic questions, and indeed, epistemic inquiry can be conducted using the methods of the natural or social sciences. Stich further explains that much of epistemology is pursuing "three distinct though interrelated projects." The first is to assess belief-formation and belief revision strategies; this

consists of formulating the appropriate ways to build our body of beliefs, and to identify and eliminate inappropriate ways of belief formation. The second project tries to define knowledge by differentiating it from mere true opinion, ignorance, and error, and the third project aims at refuting scepticism. He argues that even though these projects are distinct, they are intertwined in various ways.⁸

Traditional epistemology (TE) is dominated by Cartesian foundationalism. This Cartesian approach conceives knowledge as a system of beliefs that rest on the foundations of clear and distinct ideas, which are themselves, the contents and operations of our minds.⁹ Through the process of logical deduction, non-foundational beliefs are justifiedly inferred from foundational beliefs, which are themselves; self-evident, clear and distinct, infallible ideas or beliefs. Descartes' singular aim in formulating his foundational theory of knowledge was to create an infallible foundation for epistemic inquiry that would guarantee knowledge and avoid error. Following his methodic doubt, Descartes concludes that only ideas that are clearly and distinctly perceived is true.¹⁰ Even though not many epistemologists today would agree with the Cartesian argument because of its circularism, or accept his infallibilism about what knowledge requires, the underlying assumptions of Descartes' project remain visible in modern epistemological enterprise. For example, TE theorises on knowledge, justification, evidence, and other important epistemic concepts. It takes careful reflection on these concepts as the proper method to arrive at accurate understanding of truth, provide a plausible response to scepticism, and considers its enterprise as autonomous, normative, and prescriptive.

Generally, the dominant Cartesian foundationalist approach in traditional philosophical discourse did not assign a role to natural science in philosophy. The findings of natural science were not considered relevant to philosophical inquiry, *vice versa*, philosophy was also not construed as useful to natural science. Ram Neta captures this scenario with the claim that natural sci

ence use sense data, obtained through observation, to construct a rational, coherent, and true understanding, of how the world works. On the other hand, philosophical engagement is about explaining the rules that qualify a particular event or state to be designated as rational, coherent, and true understanding. Philosophy relies only on reason (independent of sense data) to conduct its inquiry.¹¹ Neta's description of the situation is a confirmation that traditional analytic philosophy considers philosophy and natural science as, not only distinct fields of inquiry, but also that they could not provide useful information for each other's enterprise.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, much earlier before Neta, argues that "Philosophy is not one of the natural sciences ... Psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science."¹² This is a rejection of Quine's claim (which I shall consider below) that epistemology be harnessed as a chapter in psychology. If Wittgenstein and Neta are correct, it means that philosophy is either an inquiry above, or below the natural sciences, it is definitely not considered by traditional analytic philosophers to be at the same level with the natural sciences. Philosophy's business engagement is to clarify human thoughts, which makes its primary concern to discover the truths of reality through reflection alone, essentially explicative.

Naturalised epistemologists do not agree with the Cartesian position; neither do they agree with its residues in TE. They contrast the approach of applying naturalism to epistemology with the approach of TE and argue that philosophy is not prior to science. Epistemology for them, should start from our common sense and scientific understanding of the world outside, rather than our introspective awareness of our own conscious experience. They also do not agree that knowledge necessarily requires certainty. It is important to note here that the project to naturalise epistemology is particularly related to the first project of TE (as identified by Stich) about how we formulate our epistemic beliefs.

According to John Post, “by the end of the nineteenth century naturalist philosophers were making inroads where idealism once reigned unchallenged [and by] early in the twentieth century, Santayana’s naturalism strongly influenced a number of American philosophers.”¹³ Post’s claim provides us the prelude to the fact that the idea that philosophy and natural science are mutually exclusive slipped in the late twentieth century. At this time, some philosophers began to argue that epistemology, a central aspect of philosophy, is mutually interdependent with natural science, especially psychology. They claim that the task of epistemology to discover the rules, and lay out the paradigm for cognitive rationality and knowledge requires the findings of natural science. Quine, whose project of “Epistemology Naturalised” typically represents this position, argued that epistemology should be annexed as a chapter of psychology. This is an extreme view that implies the replacement of TE with psychological study of reasoning. Not many advocates of NE agree with him. Some of them are more concerned with methodological issues; they argue that epistemologists need the results of natural science to study human reasoning in their response to epistemological questions. And the more modest advocates argue that the results of those sciences that study cognition should be employed to resolve issues in epistemology.¹⁴

According to Alvin Goldman, there are some naturalistic theories of knowledge, which basically depict the cognitive agent as a physical system in a causal interaction with her environment. He cited the following as some examples of such theories: (i) the causal theory of knowing, and (ii) the information-theoretic approach. The causal theory of knowing is the view that S knows that P, if S’s belief that P has a suitable necessary connection to a corresponding state of affairs. The information-theoretic approach is the view that S knows that P, only if S gets the information that P, through some form of signal. ‘Information’ here refers to an objective commodity processed and transmitted through devices, and it is carried between two sites, when events

at both sites are lawfully dependent on each other. Goldman further claims that there are some naturalistic theories about the normative concept of justification. The interest of such theories; for example, the reliabilist theory of justification, is the psychological processes that are causally responsible for belief-formation. According to this theory, beliefs are justified only if they have been produced by processes that have a high ratio of truth, such processes are categorised as reliable belief-forming processes.¹⁵

For naturalised epistemologists, our cognitive capacities are aspects of the natural world, and because epistemology is driven by the empirical question about the possibility of human knowledge, it is open to scientific investigation. Therefore, they aim at investigating and developing a theory of how we can strengthen our cognitive capacities with the findings of natural science and improve our cognitive performance to gain knowledge of reality. They investigate how we form our beliefs within the daily circumstances of our lives that directly or indirectly influence the processes of belief formation. The invitation to naturalise epistemology is a demand that we move from philosophical discussion about knowledge to physiological and/or neural explanations of our knowledge.¹⁶

Quine's Replacement Naturalism: Annexing Epistemology to Psychology

Naturalised epistemologists are not homogeneous in their views about how the relationship between epistemology and natural science should be construed. Their differentiation is characterised into three basic versions: (i) Replacement naturalism, which is the view that we abandon TE in favour of natural science. (ii) Cooperative naturalism, the view that TE can benefit from the knowledge gained from the cognitive sciences. And (iii) Substantive naturalism, which emphasises the equality of the 'facts of knowledge' and 'natural facts.' The concern of the present paper is replacement naturalism, a strong version of naturalism advocated by Quine.

In his popular seminar paper on “Epistemology Naturalised,”¹⁷ Quine proposed a scientific understanding of how we formulate our justified beliefs – how we acquire our knowledge about the world. He argued that TE failed in its foundationalist response to scepticism, which for him, indicates that epistemology is impossible. Therefore, he proposed that we replace epistemology with a scientific account of how we arrive at our overall theory of the world.¹⁸ In Quine’s view, as expressed by Benny Karuvelil, “natural science is the only arbitrator of both ontological and epistemological truths. [Therefore,] epistemology is brought under the purview of natural sciences by replacing its traditional ‘normative’ preoccupations with a more descriptive theory of knowledge acquisition.”¹⁹ Quine expresses this in his own words thus: “The stimulation of his sensory receptors is all the evidence anybody has had to go on, ultimately, in arriving at his picture of the world. Why not just see how this construction really proceeds? Why not settle for psychology?”²⁰ The suggestion by Quine here is that we make epistemology a part of psychology because the latter can explain to us how our minds produce the vast amount of theoretical knowledge it possesses from the meagre sensorial/evidential input. For him, the psychological study of how we produce theoretical “output” from sensory “input” logically reconstructs our theoretical language in sensory terms. This is an invitation to abandon our epistemic efforts to show that we have knowledge and replace it, instead, with studies of the ways we form our beliefs.²¹

Quine expresses his understanding of the project to naturalise epistemology thus:

Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject. This human subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input – certain patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies, for instance – and in the fullness of time

the subject delivers as output a description of the three-dimensional external world and its history. The relation between the meagre input and the torrential output is a relation that we are prompted to study for somewhat the same reasons that always prompted epistemology; namely, in order to see how evidence relates to theory, and in what ways one's theory of nature transcends any available evidence...But a conspicuous difference between old epistemology and the epistemological enterprise in this new psychological setting is that we can now make free use of empirical psychology.²²

According to Jaegwon Kim, the difference the new psychological setting brings to the table is to investigate how our sensory evidence and our beliefs about the world are causally connected, against the old epistemological interest in rationality, justification, and knowledge, which tries to eliminate scepticism by investigating if our beliefs are deducible from the evidences purported to support them.²³ Even though the same issue of the relationship between sense data and beliefs are involved, they are studied from different relations-perspectives. While TE tries to understand if sense data provide epistemic support for our beliefs, the new psychological setting tries to understand the nature of the causal connection between sense data and beliefs.²⁴ This expresses the Quinean understanding of NE: The empirical study of how we develop a theory of the world of nature based on the inputs of our senses. As stated above, for Quine, all we need to arrive at a picture of the world is the stimulation of our sensory receptors, psychology provides us an understanding of how this process really works.

Decidedly, the bottom line of Quine's argument is that epistemology and natural science are continuous in the sense that they contain and constrain each other. According to Chase Wrenn, Quine's argument depends on three potentially controversial assumptions:

- i. The theory of confirmation holism; the view that only substantial bodies of theory, rather than individual claims, are empirically testable.
- ii. The main problem of epistemology is to explain how theories are related to observable evidence.
- iii. We can only approach the main problem of epistemology from two perspectives: (a) the psychological study of how people produce theoretical “output” from sensory “input,” and (b) the logical reconstruction of our theoretical vocabulary in sensory terms.²⁵

Wrenn argues that Quine dismissed (iiiib), on the grounds that it is not plausible because it attempts to use the studies in the foundation of mathematics as a model for epistemic enquiry. The latter is about how mathematical statements are translated into the language of logic and set theory; they show how we deduce suitably translated mathematical theorems from logical truths and set theoretical axioms. The aim is to enable us assess the justifiedness of our mathematical claims – to what extent we are justified in believing the logical truths and set-theoretical axioms into which we translate our mathematical statements, to the same extent we are justified in believing our mathematical claims. Logical empiricists tried to apply this approach in the justification of our scientific theories, but failed. Observational facts cannot provide logical basis for our epistemic theories because epistemic theories involve generalisations that observations do not cover. In other words, our epistemic theories include unobserved cases. Therefore, a theory of reconstruction as describe in (iiiib) does not provide us with adequate explanation of our epistemic practice. Quine also argued that we cannot translate theoretical statements into purely observational language. To achieve such translations, we must be able to identify the conditions of verification under which observations are conducted for individual theoretical statements. In the “Two Dogmas of Empiricism,” Quine argues that there are no unique conditions of verification for individual theoretical statements.²⁶

The best we can have is to test theoretical statements in larger groups that have observational consequences, which confirm or disconfirm the groups as wholes and not the individual theoretical statements.

According to Wrenn, the implausibility of Quine's assumption of confirmation holism weakens the possibility of reconstructing theoretical vocabulary in observational facts. Thus, Quine concludes that the only method by which we can accurately carry out the project of epistemology is the psychological method. This consists in studying how we translate our sensory input into theoretical output. Based on our sensory simulations, we are able to construct theories about the world. This is a natural process that makes our knowledge inquiry a natural phenomenon. We can scientifically study how our sensory stimulations are connected with our theories about the world; this also enables us understand when, how, and how far, our theories transcend and can transcend our sensory stimulations.²⁷ Not many epistemologists agree with Quine's replacement naturalism. There is, however, a more modest formulation of epistemic naturalism that seems extremely popular, this is cooperative naturalism, which is not the subject of the present paper.

Quine's replacement naturalism focused on only one, out of the three central concerns of TE – formation of justified beliefs, how we acquire our knowledge of the world. The other two concerns – (i) the nature, and (ii) the scope of our knowledge about the world, did not get sufficient coverage from Quine. It seems, according to TE, that for us to adequately and correctly identify the candidates for knowledge, we have to first establish the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge. Such a requirement necessitates an analysis of the nature of knowledge, for if we cannot clearly articulate the nature of knowledge, we cannot stipulate its necessary and sufficient conditions. According to many traditional epistemologists, such an analysis would be conceptual, and therefore, theoretical. It is not an empirical inquiry by natural science. Quine's replacement naturalism invites

traditional epistemologists to abandon this conceptual analysis. Not many epistemological naturalists agree with Quine on this, even though they agree that conceptual analysis is not the duty of natural science, they insist that conceptual analysis should, nonetheless, remain a necessary part of epistemology. The implication herein is that not all parts of epistemic inquiry can be naturalised. This is a representative view of cooperative naturalism that is further expressed in Susan Haack's claim that where it is relevant, we can legitimately use results from the sciences of cognition to resolve traditional epistemological problems.²⁸

Quine's NE focused primarily on the descriptive aspect of epistemic practice, how we base our rich theory of the world on limited sensory evidence. In this way, Quine seems to overlook the question of normativity, namely, how do we modify our beliefs when we encounter new evidence that require a revision of the beliefs? In his opinion the normative project of TE has failed to provide answers to issues of radical scepticism especially the critique of the inductive method by David Hume. If it is the case that we should overlook the question about normativity, it means we should forget how we *ought* to form belief sand focus on how we, in fact, form beliefs. This implies that we forget issues of justification. Again, not many contemporary naturalists agree with Quine on this; while some argue that normative issues can be naturalised, some others think they are not issues that can be considered as part of science.²⁹

Naturalised Epistemology and the Challenges of Circularity and Normativity

The most influential aspect of Quine's NE is the idea that epistemology and natural science, especially psychology, entail each other. He stretched this idea to the limit with the proposal that epistemology be annexed as a chapter in psychology. First of all, the very idea that epistemology is continuous with natural science contradicts the traditional notion that epistemology is the 'queen of the sciences,' because of its role in validating the

foundations of science. If epistemology is annexed as an aspect of psychology, then our scientific theories and beliefs about the world would become part of the subject matter of epistemology. In that case, we cannot claim that either science or epistemology presides over the other because they would be mutually constraining. The project to naturalise epistemology has been criticised by non-naturalistic philosophers; two of these criticisms that are remarkable, and therefore, attractive to the present paper are, the problems of circularity and normativity.

Naturalising epistemology is a project to understand knowledge using the tools of science to analyse the way the mind and the brain works in arriving at knowledge. If this is applied to the epistemic challenge of scepticism, we can get caught up in a circularised argument. This is because scientific theories dependent on sensory experience. For NE to appeal to the same theories to explain perceptual knowledge would be to beg the question. Wrenn provides a lucid explanation of the problem of circularity in NE. According to him, one of epistemology's most important tasks is to establish the truth and certainty of our epistemic claims against the challenges of scepticism. Scepticism, formulated in its Cartesian perspective, is the argument that we cannot rule out the logical possibility that we are deceived about the world by an evil demon who is responsible for the way we perceive the external world or that we are not brains-in-the-vat. If we are not able to eliminate this possibility, we cannot establish with certainty that we know most of what we claim to know. Given that NE "seeks to explain knowledge by applying our best scientific understanding of the mind-brain"³⁰ relationship, it would be viciously circular to apply scientific theories in dealing with the sceptical question. Scientific theories depend on the empirical data of our sensory experiences, we cannot, without begging the question, appeal to these same theories to explain our perceptual knowledge. To advocate replacement naturalism as Quine did, and given that epistemology has the task to validate the foundations of knowledge, natural science inclusive, naturalising

epistemology would be asking that we validate the foundations of the natural sciences using the same theories of the sciences we are validating their foundations. Therefore, Quine's argument to replace TE with natural science is tantamount to validating the natural sciences with the very sciences that we are validating.

Epistemological naturalists tend to dismiss this concern as not serious, they argue that it is misplaced for the sceptic to demand an external validation of science. In other words, they opine that we cannot go outside our conception of the world to evaluate our empirical presuppositions. They also do not consider the circularity involved with appealing to the results of natural science to validate the foundations of science as vicious, because for them, it is not begging the question. In the words of Wrenn, they argue that "there is no guarantee our world view will be self-supporting in the sense that our best scientific understanding of what knowledge is also shows that we do indeed have knowledge of the external world."³¹ To accept this claim is to accept the possibility that we cannot be justified about our scientific theories and our perceptual beliefs. Epistemologists would not find this acceptable because they do not consider it a trivial matter to, at least, be able to validate our epistemic claims either *a priori* or empirically.

It does not seem that Quine's replacement naturalism takes the issue of validating the foundations of knowledge seriously. We can assume that Quine dismissed it as a by-product of TE because his emphasis was on how we understand the link between observation and science. Unfortunately, Quine did not seem to identify how this understanding is to be achieved. One proposal about how to achieve this understanding of the link between observation and science was provided by the cooperative naturalism identifiable in Alvin Goldman's casual reliabilism theory of epistemic practice. Goldman argues that a justified true belief only counts as knowledge if it is the product of a suitably reliable process. A suitably reliable process is one that naturally produces more true beliefs as against false beliefs.³² Even

though Goldman's argument is basically *a priori*, it significantly accommodates the role of empirical science, for instance, how we identify and evaluate our belief-forming processes to determine their reliability and historical antecedents is certainly a role that belongs to psychology. For epistemology to determine that a particular belief is justified and true, and therefore, qualify as knowledge, it needs psychology to determine if the process of forming the particular belief is suitably reliable. Consequently, cooperative naturalism insists that epistemology and natural science are mutually collaborative. It would seem therefore, that cooperative naturalism is more appealing than Quine's replacement naturalism.

Quine's replacement naturalism also seems to take the question of epistemic normativity for granted. For TE, epistemic practice is normative because it provides the paradigmatic framework by which we decide what is right or wrong for a cognitive agent to believe. Science can tell us how people come to believe but it can never tell us how people should believe.³³ Two renowned epistemologists who have addressed this issue are Hilary Putman and Jaegwon Kim. Putman questions the rationality of replacing TE with NE because to do so would be to eliminate the normative that is the hallmark of epistemic practice. According to him, "If one abandons the notions of justification, rational acceptability, warrant assertibility, right assertibility, and the like, completely, then 'true' goes as well, except as a mere device for 'semantic ascent', that is a mere mechanism for switching from one level of language to another."³⁴ What is implied here is that the elimination of the normative is the elimination of truth because there would not be methods to arrive at what is true; the notions that explain truth are only intelligible within the context of normativity. Therefore, to eliminate the normative in epistemic inquiry is to jeopardise the entire project of epistemology because if that is the case, even NE cannot establish the appropriate criteria to evaluate empirical evidence without the notion of normativity. It is mental suicide to eliminate the normative in

epistemology.³⁵

For Kim, “If justification drops out of epistemology, knowledge itself drops out of epistemology. For our concept of knowledge is inseparably tied to that of justification.”³⁶ Justification makes knowledge valuable and normative because outside of justification, we cannot talk about what is true and/or what is false. If we side-track the notion of justification in epistemic inquiry, we would invariably have altered the meaning and goal of epistemology. He argues that the notions of justification and reliability as presuppositions of the normative have dominated contemporary epistemology. If we eliminate the normative in epistemic practice, we would be eliminating the common-sense understanding of epistemology as the study of the theory of knowledge. Kim does not think that Quine’s non-normative NE “has room for the concept of knowledge,” that is why he thinks that Quine, most of the times, in his “Epistemology Naturalised” talks about ‘science,’ ‘theories’ and ‘representations’ instead of ‘knowledge.’ For instance, according to Kim, “Quine would have us investigate how sensory stimulation ‘leads’ to ‘theories’ and ‘representation’ of the world;”³⁷ he (Quine) carefully avoids using ‘knowledge’ of the world instead. Quine’s interest in the relationship between the sensory input and output of the cognitive agent cannot affirm a truth proposition because any statement lacking the normative would only present a descriptive account of what is and not a knowledge of what is. Therefore, Kim concludes that it is difficult to accept Quine’s replacement naturalism within any epistemic theory where truth is the object of knowledge.

Goldman tries to counter the accusation on the problem of normativity by drawing attention to the role of cognitive goals, one of which he identified as ‘true belief’ in normative epistemic evaluations. NE is normative if it provides explanation of the causal connection between our cognitive goals and the processes by which these beliefs are formed. From this perspective, we can consider epistemic justification as a positive property of beliefs, in the sense that, if reliable processes produce justified beliefs, it

means that such reliable processes tend towards promoting the goal of believing what is true against what is false.³⁸ But again, Goldman's version of NE (cooperative naturalism) differs from Quinean replacement epistemology.

Conclusion

The Quinean project to annex epistemology as a chapter in psychology, in the wider picture, is a positive effort to unify science and philosophy. Based on the success of the scientific method in fields of empirical inquiry he assumes that applying the scientific method to the epistemic project of knowledge acquisition, we would have an account of knowledge that is not vulnerable to scepticism. As it panned out, a scientific account of epistemic inquiry requires much more than just an account of knowledge acquisition. The account proposed by Quine, which suggests that we replace epistemology with natural science did not sufficiently and satisfactorily accommodate central interests like the normative character of epistemology. To give an account of knowledge that lacks the normative character is to provide a mere descriptive analysis of how we arrived at knowledge without stipulating how we should arrive at knowledge. Without such paradigms to guide epistemic inquiry, we cannot give a successful explanation of what it means to know. The problems of circularity and normativity present more serious challenges for replacement naturalism than we find in a priori TE. On account of this, Quine's replacement naturalism cannot boast of many supporters because it is considered as a failure. Quine himself, in his later writings agree that replacement naturalism is too strong to follow through as a satisfactory account of epistemic practice.

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Emmanuel Lewis

AFRICAN CLAIMS TO CHRISTIAN ORIGIN

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Introduction

Christianity is a religion that is common and has a wide spread in Africa and especially in Nigeria. There are now a number of denominations of Christians in all major cities of the different countries except in the cases of countries that are predominantly Islamic, especially in the Northern part of the continent. Most of these predominantly Islamic countries used to be very Christian, especially up to the seventh century AD when the forces of Islam ran through Africa. I have asked myself severally: How and when did Christianity actually come into the continent? Who proclaimed or propagated the faith in Africa? Why is it that the same adjective 'Christian' has never been used to suffix the name of the continent Africa? I have heard it said severally about Europe. These musings are the basis behind this paper. It is a bid to trace the origin or source of Christianity in Africa. I hope to discover the places that were Christian and How diffused was the faith in the continent and what were the achievements and influence of the faith in Africa? Things are further complicated by the fact that from the very first few pages of the Bible the names of certain African cities can be found mentioned. One hears the name of Egypt and Ethiopia so frequently in the Jewish Scriptures.

African cities in the Scriptures

I have always loved to try to trace the history of Christianity into Africa because from the very first books of the Bible, the names of some African cities have always been mentioned, such as Egypt and Ethiopia. Egypt is one of the most commonly men-

tioned places in the Bible. The frequency of the name Egypt in the book of Exodus for instance might leave one with the consideration that it was part of the Jewish territories. This is not so, it is actually an enemy territory. The first mention of Egypt in the Bible that I know was in Gen 12:10, when Abram, Lot his cousin and Sarai his wife, because of the famine that had struck the land of Canaan, (they) moved to Egypt. Another significant episode was in Gen 37:25, when the brothers of Joseph looked up and saw the Ishmaelites who were coming from Gilead. The Ishmaelites were heading to Egypt with their products to be sold. It was to these people that the brothers of Joseph sold him for twenty silver pieces (Gen. 37:28). It was the Ismaelites who took Joseph to Egypt. From this point, Egypt will appear in the books of Genesis and Exodus several times. When reference is made to Egypt in the Old Testament it is with the idea of a place of bondage for the chosen people because it was from Egypt that the people of Israel were saved by God through Moses. This notion will change in the New Testament

The name Ethiopia did not appear until later but another name had been used for the same place from the second chapter of the book of Genesis. Genesis 2:13 reads “The second river is named the Gihon and this encircles the whole land of Cush”. Cush was the name that from the very beginning appeared even in the second creation story. The same name was used in 2kg. 19:9. It was in the book of Esther that Ethiopia was first mentioned: “It was in the days of Ahasuerius, the Ahasuerius whose empire stretched from India to Ethiopia” (Es. 1:1). From this point on, Ethiopia appeared severally in the Old Testament. It must be noted that I am not in any way saying that these appearances of the names Egypt and Ethiopia in the books of the Old Testament are indications that they were Christian nations. I have only used these as pointers to the fact that these African nations were linked to the Jews who are the progenitors of the Christians. In the New Testament just like the Old, from the very beginning, there were activities in these African cities. It was to Egypt that

Emmanuel Lewis

the Holy Family fled when King Herod ordered the killing of the infants (Matt. 2:13-23). From this episode – ‘flight into Egypt’, the meaning and notion of Egypt as a place of bondage will be transformed into a place of refuge because the Holy Family took refuge there from Herod and his army who sought to put the child Jesus to death. All this happened at the instruction of the angel of the Lord. The next time Egypt was mentioned is in the Acts of the Apostles, on Pentecost day, among the names of the cities from which people were gathered in Jerusalem: “Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and ... Surely they said all these men speaking are Galileans? ... Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome ...” (Acts 2:5-12). In the passage, some other African cities like Libya and Cyrene were also mentioned. These are pointers to the fact that there has always been communication and rapport between Africa and (‘the West’) the Middle East.

None of the Gospels mentioned anything about Ethiopia. The first mention of this great African city in the New Testament was in the Acts of the Apostles when Philip, one of the seven deacons chosen to assist the Apostles to assist them in the distribution of foods, baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8: 26–40). This happened along the way to Gaza from Jerusalem. These are only indications that these two cities were frequently referred to in the Scriptures but in no way expressed the fact that Christianity ever existed or were propagated in the territories of Egypt and Ethiopia or even any other African territory. Towards the end of the earthly life of Jesus, Cyrene was mentioned. It was from this African city that the man who rendered help to Jesus came from: “As they were leading him away they seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the cross and carry it behind Jesus.” (Lk. 23:26)

Christianity in Africa

The Eunuch was converted to Christianity by Philip but what happened to him thereafter is not known. Most probably he concluded his business in Jerusalem and returned to his home country. Did he practice the faith after then or not? We are not sure. Were other members of his family converted? What about the people who were travelling with him considering his status? Did he become an evangelizer? Did he proclaim the faith to other members of the state on his return? There are more questions than answers. Thus with what happened to the Eunuch afterwards, he wrote:

While every day the saving message spread farther afield, some providence brought from Ethiopia, a country traditionally ruled by a woman, one of the queen's principal officers. The first Gentile to receive from Philip by revelation the mysteries of the divine word, and the first fruits of the faithful throughout the world, he is believed to have been the first to go back to his native land and preach the gospel of the knowledge of the God of the universe and the life giving sojourn of our saviour among men. Through him came the actual fulfillment of the prophecy: Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand to God (Ps. 68:31) HE:2, 1¹

On the issue of how Christianity came into Africa, there exist two main opposing theories. The first proposed that Christianity came into Africa via the East, specifically Egypt and Libya, while the other proposed Rome as the source. The two theories have very sound reasons for their proposal and it has been suggested that most probably, the two theories were mixed.² There are not many indications to buttress this fact, other than two individual sources referring to the two different sources of Christianity in Africa. Regarding Rome, Quasten, a Roman Catholic theologian and scholar of patristic (1900-1987) said that:

According to tradition Africa was evangelized from Rome, though we have no real information about the foundation of its church. It is, however, a fact that the Christians of the province at an early time looked to that city for leadership. Their most frequent communications were with the capital and they were deeply concerned with all that occurred there. Every intellectual movement, every disciplinary, ritual or literary event in Rome found its echo at once in Carthage. The best witness to this intimate relation is the writing of the African author. ³

For Quasten therefore, the issue of Egypt as the source of the faith in Africa does not hold any water. He is also quick to say that much is not known about the foundation of the church in the province but there are evidences, especially in the early writings of authors from the province, that they pretty much dovetail Rome. They were highly involved in the life of the early church. Issues that affected Rome were believed to have also affected the African church.

Eusebius, on the other hand, corroborated the fact that it was through Egypt that the faith found its way into Africa. He stated that in the first century AD, Mark who was a disciple of Peter, the Apostle and the author of the Gospel according to Mark, went to Egypt to proclaim the gospel; he is regarded as the first bishop of the Egyptian (Alexandrian) church, though the title of bishop was never used for him. Eusebius wrote: "Mark is said to have been the first man to set out for Egypt and preached there the gospel which he had himself written down, and the first to establish churches in Alexandria itself"(H.E.: 2,16). Could it be possible that Eusebius is not taking into cognizance the fact that Egypt is in Africa? This I believe is possible, because Eusebius might have taken it for granted since Egypt is part of the Roman Empire, it is part of Rome.

There is, however, a third proposal of how Christianity came into Africa. This is proposed by Decret, a French historian with specialty in the history of North Africa, who said that the African church does not have any link to the apostolic era. His words are: “The opening pages of North African Christianity seem to have no connection to the apostolic period. Nor is there a great episode of a golden legend, a great saint, or an apostle arriving on the African shores to convert the unbelievers. Rather, this history opens through the testimonies of blood.”⁴ He refers to the first written evidence, that is, the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, as the first evidence of the presence of Christianity in Africa (Scilli is a town in Numidia).

Eusebius went on to talk about the size of the community in Alexandria which was also according to him attested to by the great Jewish historian, Philo (c. 20 BC – c. 45 AD) who said that: “The community is to be found in many parts of the world, for it was right that what is perfectly good should be shared by both Greeks and foreign lands. It is very strong in Egypt in each of the nomes, and especially in the Alexandrian area.” Philo went on to talk about the monasteries that also flourished in Alexandria which is also believed to be the birth place of the practice. (H.E.: 2, 17) I will talk more on the catechetical school and the monasteries later.

From the foregoing it is clear that while Quasten was talking about the Latin African Church that has always been known to have followed Rome or the West, this church flourished around Carthage. Eusebius and Philo made reference to the Alexandrian church. However, there is a common element in the two churches, that is, language. Quasten attested to the fact that Greek was the original language even in the Latin Church. He said: “There is reason to believe that in Africa as in Rome, the gospel was in the beginning preached in Greek.”⁵ This fact led him to the conclusion that the church in Africa was bilingual at its early stage with both Greek and Latin been spoken and used in writing. He even confirmed that the African church had adopted

Emmanuel Lewis

Latin as a liturgical language long before Rome. BengtSundkler (a Swedish-Tanzanian Church historian, missiologist, professor and bishop of Bukoba) said that as far back as the *first century BC, the Roman emperors came to North Africa after the Ptolemy (c. 100 – 170 AD) with Latin Language and influence ⁶

The first clear indication of an African church that we possess, other than the flourishing monasteries mentioned by Philo, is traceable to the 2nd century AD. In the “*Passio Perpetuae*,” the martyr is believed to have spoken Greek, she is said to have had a conversation with bishop Optatus and the priest Aspasius. The first available edition of the work appeared in both languages. Tertullian’s early writings “*De spectaculis*,” “*De baptism*”’ “*De virginibus velandis*” and “*De corona militis*” were published in Greek with the Latin edition appearing soon after. ⁷ The Bible was also available in Latin at an early stage of the church in Africa. From July 17th of 180 AD, we have possessed the Acts of Scilli martyrs; these are the oldest documents in the history of Africa. They are also the oldest Christian documents in Latin of North African origin. They contain the records of the trials of eight Christians of Numidia sentenced to death by the proconsul Saturnius. There were also Greek versions of these Acts.⁸ Soon after, the Letters of St. Paul and the entire Bible were available in Latin. By c. 250 AD, Cyprian was said to have had a Latin version of the Bible. As at this time, it was rare but he was claimed to have possessed the complete version of the Bible. Quasten said that: “About 250 AD, however, the church of Africa apparently did have a Latin edition of the entire Scriptures recognized as authentic, as shown by Cyprian’s adherence to it throughout his works.” ⁹

The map of the Roman Empire of the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD indicated that some part of Africa was under the Roman Empire. Places like Mauretania, Carthage, Cyrene and Egypt were said to have been part of the territories that were annexed by Rome. Bokenkotter said that: “After four centuries of the expansion, the Roman Empire by this time completely en-

circled the Mediterranean Sea and stretched from the Euphrates River in Syria to the Thames in Britain, from the Rhine and the Danube to the sands of the Sahara.¹⁰

Acts of Martyrs¹¹

The acts of martyrs are among the most important and valuable sources of information about early Christianity. They are records of the martyrdom of early Christians that were read at liturgical celebrations on the occasion of the anniversaries of the martyrs by the Christian communities. These are divided into three categories:

1. The official report of the court proceedings: These are questions addressed to the martyr and answers provided as recorded by the court secretaries. They are usually placed in the public archives and the Christians sometimes obtain copies of them. These are the real acts of martyrs, *Acta or gestamartyrum*. To this group belonged the earlier mentioned *Acts of the Martyrs of Scilli* in Africa. This is said to be the oldest document in the African Church history and the oldest dated Christian document in Latin of North African origin. It is the official record of the trial of Namphano of Madaura, Miggin, Sanam and six other Christians of Numidia, the death sentence was passed on them by the proconsul Saturninus. They were beheaded on July 17th 180 AD. Both the Latin original text and the Greek version are extant. Also belonging to this category is *The Proconsular Acts of St. Cyprian*. Cyprian the bishop of Carthage was put to death on September 14th 258 AD. The work is based on the records of the three documents that have been put together by a redactor. The documents include: Cyprian's first trial after which he was exiled to Curubis, his arrest and second trial and finally his execution.
2. The second category contains eye witness' report of what happened to the martyrs. They are called passion, *passions or martyria*. The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity (*Passiosanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*) belongs to this category. Three catechumens Saturus, Saturninus and Revocatus with two young

Emmanuel Lewis

women, Vibia Perpetua and her slave girl, Felicitas were martyred on March 7th 202 AD at Carthage. It is said to be one of the most beautiful piece of ancient times. Most of the content (ch. 3-10) is gotten from the diary of Perpetua, while chapters 11-13 were said to have been written by Saturus. Tertullian a contemporary of Perpetua is believed to have authored remaining part of the work. The Latin text seems to be the original but a Greek text is also extant with modified passages.

3. The final consists of legends of the martyrs written long after the martyrdom for the edification of the members of the community. Sometimes they are a mixture of facts and imagination but at other times they are purely fictions.

Councils and Synods¹²

Another source of information alluding to a full-fledged church in African in the first centuries is the councils and synods held in Africa. Councils are formal gatherings of bishops and other dignitaries of the church to deliberate and legislate on ecclesiastical matters. At councils, bishops meet to resolve theological and disciplinary issues. While the ecumenical councils will involve the universal church, the particular councils might involve a province, nation, or it can also be general or plenary. Local councils were called only for the dioceses under Carthage; the provincial council will include the Numidian bishops while the plenary will involve the whole of Africa. Councils were convoked for the natural need of those who have responsibilities for the running of the church to consult on issues and matters pertaining to the faith and doctrine of the church. The functions of the councils include: dogmatic – definition on the truth of the faith, liturgical – regularization of the rites and worship of the church and canonical – organization of church discipline.

The form, frequency and influence that the councils have had varied in importance and effects in the course of the history of the church. The early councils of Africa have manifested the vitality of the church of the golden era, while the national ones attested

to the political and social weight of the church in the lives of the very young countries just converted to the catholic faith.¹³ The early councils of the church were structured after the roman senate. Davis said that:

There is evidence to show that the deliberative procedures of the Roman Senate left their mark on the collective deliberations of the Christian bishops. Bishops adopted for many of the councils the official senatorial formulae of convocation. Like the Senate the council was a deliberative assembly, each bishop having equal rights in the discussions. Like the imperial magistrate who presides over the Senate, the principal bishop first read out a program designed to keep discussion to the point at issue...¹⁴

There were evidences of frequent councils in Africa in the early church. Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200-258 AD) the bishop of Carthage convoked councils for the resolution of the issues arising from the persecution of Christians. New Advent online Journal writing about synods and councils in Africa said that:

There was no general council of the entire Church held at any time in North Africa. There were, however, many national or plenary assemblies of bishops representing the North African Church. These are commonly called African or Carthaginian Synods, and are not to be confounded with the district or provincial assemblies, of which there were also very many in the separate provinces of North Africa. These Roman provinces lay between the Sahara and the Mediterranean and extended from Cyrenaica (Cyrene) on the east to the Atlantic on the west, corresponding roughly to the part of the continent occupied by modern Tripoli, Algeria, and Morocco.¹⁵

Initially, around the third century, there were three provinces, that is, Proconsular Africa, Mauretania and Numidia but by the fourth century during the reign of Emperor Diocletian (284-305 AD), he had rearranged the region into six civil provinces. By the end of the century the church in Africa was already aligned with the civil division into: Proconsular Africa, Tripoli, Numidia Byzacena, Imperial Mauretania and Mauretania Siftifensis. This arrangement lasted till the invasion of the Muslims in the 7th century AD. Carthage had privileged position and rank; she also acted as the Patriarch of the region. It was the bishop of Carthage that convoked synods and council in the region. Most of the synods were held in Carthage except for a few.

During the time of Tertullian, there were no synod was convoked. Cyprian of Carthage mentioned two councils taking place in Africa before his time; that of Agrippinus/Agrippa Jnr (c. 220 AD) who had called together 70 bishops to discuss on the issue of baptism of heretics. There was also another one under Donatus the predecessor of Cyprian. They were quite regular during the reign of Cyprian, they were held almost annually except for persecution. There were seven during the time of Cyprian himself, with the most important being the one of May 251 AD with regards to the issue of those who have apostatized during the persecution of Decius (249-251AD) (Cyprian, *Epp.* 45, 48, 49). At this synod the principles laid down by Cyprian was upheld regarding those who have lapsed (*lapsi*) in their faith and approved the excommunication of his antagonist. All *lapsi* without distinction were to be admitted to penance, and at the point of death be reconciled with the church.¹⁶ The one of September 1st 256 AD on the rebaptism of heretics and schismatists in opposition to the Roman council is the other. At this council there were 87 bishops in attendance and the Acts of the council are preserved (CSEL 3,435ff). The grave problem of Donatism which was predominantly an African problem and the schism generated by the persecution of Diocletian were resolved at a council in 411 AD. Based on the acts of these councils we can trace the geographical

spread of Christianity in Africa. The names of participating bishops were preserved in these acts.

In light of the number of participants, the church councils that took place in the middle of the third century also attest to the significant growth of the African church. In the fall of 255, thirty-one bishops from *proconsularis* gathered for a council in Carthage and, afterwards, they wrote a letter to eighteen of their Numidian colleagues, stating their opinion on the issue of baptizing of heretics. In the spring of 256, seventy-one bishops met for a council. On September 1 of the same year, eighty-seven bishops met. This number did not include those who were absent due to age, illness, distance, or a particular church was without a pastor at that time. Harnack argued that there were about 150 bishops in Africa during this time.¹⁷

About the middle of the 3rd century, there were more than 130 bishops as attested to by Y. Duval (*Loca sanctorum Africae. Le culte des martyrs en Afrique du IV au VI siècle*, Roma 1982-3). At the time of full spread there were about 600 bishops with concentration in the eastern part of Africa.

The Catechetical School

The importance of Alexandria in the history of the early church cannot be over emphasized. This city with Antioch and Athens were three cities of Greek culture and primary centers of philology, philosophy and theology. It was also in Alexandria that the Hebrew culture was blended so well with the Greek culture. Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great in 313 BC. As said above it was evangelized by Mark, disciple of Peter the Apostle with very little historical foundation. However from the time of Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria 188-231 AD, we have more information regarding the area. We also know of

Emmanuel Lewis

the church through the catechetical school which developed in the ambient of Plato's philosophy with Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Didimus the blind as the main protagonists. These have leaning towards the allegorical interpretation of the sacred Scriptures. The method had been used for a long time by Greek philosophers in the interpretation of myths and fables about the gods.¹⁸

Clement was born of pagan parents in 150 AD. He was converted to Christianity and immediately after his conversion, and he travelled widely in search of the most famous Christian teachers of his time. He met Pantaenus, the first known rector of the school. Clement became his student, assistant, colleague and eventually took over from him. He developed the school to a great height. He left Alexandria during the persecution of Septimus Severus (202 AD) for Cappadocia where he took refuge till his death in 215 AD.

Origen, the son of a martyr, succeeded Clement and developed everything into a system. Origen had very good education and had to support himself and his family after his father's death through teaching. He was referred to as *Adamantius*, 'man of steel' by Eusebius because of the rigorous asceticism that he practiced, it is also believed that it was due to this that about the year 202-3 AD Origen emasculated himself in Alexandria. His life as an educator can be divided into two parts. The first part was as the head of the school at Alexandria between 203 and 231 AD. During this time he taught philosophy, theology and Scriptures. He was also a devoted student of Ammonius Saccas, the famous founder of Neo-Platonism, whose influence could be seen in Origen's cosmology, psychology and method. He spent the second part of his life as an educator in Caesarea in Palestine due to the problem that started because it became public that he had castrated himself and so he could not have been ordained. He started a school in Caesarea where he remained for twenty years. He was tortured during the Decian persecution and died at Tyre in 253 AD. Plato's philosophy influenced

his theology greatly which led to very serious dogmatic errors, especially regarding the doctrine of the pre-existence of the human soul.

Monasticism

It was also from the great region of Africa that asceticism and monasticism developed from about the third century AD within the Roman Empire. Monasticism is a religious way of life whereby people reject or renounce material or worldly things for the spiritual. It involves asceticism, that is, the avoidance or limitation of comfort or pleasure. This is said to be an underlining factor in all forms of monasticism. Encyclopedia Britannica defines monasticism in the following terms:

The word monasticism is derived from the Greek term *monachos* (“living alone”), but this etymology highlights only one of the elements of monasticism and is somewhat misleading, because a large proportion of the world’s monastics live in *coenobitic* (common life) communities. The term monasticism implies celibacy, or living alone in the sense of lacking a spouse, which became a socially and historically crucial feature of the monastic life.¹⁹

St Anthony of Egypt (c. 251-356 AD) was the first to have ‘taken flight into the wilderness or the desert’. He is considered to be the founder and father of organized Christian monasticism. He is said to have been moved by the Scriptural text: “If you wish to be perfect, go sell all that you possess and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me” (Matt. 19:21). Moved by this, Anthony settled in complete solitude on the bank of the Nile, he was later followed by others who settled around him to form a large populace of monks in the desert. Some lived in complete solitude (hermit) with a weekly assembly and liturgy while others lived in communities (*coenobium*).

Emmanuel Lewis

Pachomius also an Egyptian (c. 290-346 AD), introduced another form of monasticism, characterized by a high degree of organization: work, study of Scripture and prayer all integrated into the daily schedules of the monks. Monks renounced sex completely while Christians in general had a hostile and suspicious attitude towards it in ancient times. Though both Anthony and Pachomius lived their monastic life outside of the continent, they both are from Africa and are generally considered the fathers of monasticism in the Church.

Donatism

As said above, this is a predominantly African problem but its effect was felt all over Christendom. Donatism is believed to have been a continuation of the Novatian controversy of the third century. Novatus and Felicissimas, priests of the Church of Rome, led the controversy. It was as a result of the persecution of Emperor Decius in 250 AD, during which many Christians apostatized. After the persecution, these people sought to be readmitted into the church but Novatus maintained that those who had lapsed should not be allowed to dispense the sacraments of the church. The Bishop of Rome disagreed with him and offered the opportunity for repentance and reconciliation. Novatus would not budge, so he sees himself as the head of a heretical movement, allying himself with the Montanists. He became a rival of the Bishop of Rome holding a rigorist and uncompromising idea against those who have lapsed.

A similar conflict arose about fifty years later in North Africa. During the persecution of Diocletian 303 AD, many Christians handed Church properties, Sacred Scriptures and other books to their persecutors. These were referred to as *traditores*, that is, traitors or betrayers. In Africa the spirit of Tertullian and Cyprian prevailed, there was no readmission into the sacrament after such sins. Anyone who compromised in this way was seen as corrupt and no longer fit for the office of elder or leader of the Christian community. The sin of betrayal, in the minds of many

Christians was a sign of evil that cannot be overcome. About the same time Christianity in Africa was no longer what it used to be under Cyprian, there were underlining socio-political problems that were expressed even in the church. Decret described the situation in the following words:

Indeed, during the fourth and fifth centuries, African Christianity was characterized by intense turmoil, and social and cultural problems were often expressed, even violently, through religious forms. This was the case despite the fact that Donatism, a catalyst for social tensions in Africa, never attained the status of an official entity.²⁰

In 311 AD, Caecilian was ordained as the bishop of Carthage, replacing Masensurius whose values had already been criticized. One of the ordaining prelates, Felix of Abthugni is said to have earlier handed over copies of the Bible to the Roman authorities to be destroyed. Felix was therefore considered to be unfit for the office of Bishop and his participation at the ordination of another bishop makes the ordination null and void. About 70 bishops were said to have stood in opposition to Felix, these formed a synod where they refused to acknowledge the validity of the ordination of Caecilian. This debate was expanded to include the validity of the sacraments administered by Felix and other traitors. The question in the mind of the Donatists was: How could one who has betrayed the word of God hold a Christian office? For them, the low moral character of the minister nullifies the grace that should accrue from the sacraments.

After the death of Caecilian, Aelius Donatus of CasaeNigrae was appointed the bishop of Carthage. It is from the name of the new bishop that the group (Donatist) got her name. Bishop Donatus continued to advance the opinion that the administration of any sacrament by a traitor or betrayer pollutes the sacrament to the point that it no longer conveys grace. The traitor is not

Emmanuel Lewis

just to be excommunicated, but also those who have anything to do with him or her. The church for him is made up of saints not sinners. The Donatists held themselves as the only authoritative church, therefore separating themselves from all others and began to re-baptize all those who were baptized in other churches. The points raised by Donatists were discussed at various synods and councils including Arles and Nicaea. The position of the Donatists was rejected at all the councils but the Donatists continued to be influential in North Africa until Augustine of Hippo (400-420 AD) wrote books, letters and preached sermons that refuted their ideas. He said that the effect of a sacrament is independent of the moral character of the minister. Donatism as a schism eventually died out with Christianity in the seventh century with the invasion of the Muslims.

Personalities

Apart from the few individuals mentioned in the course of this work, the early African Church had a lot of personalities who represented the continent very well. These include: Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine of Hippo, Aurelius of Carthage, Optatus, Anthony of Egypt, Pachomius, Donatus etc. These were men who lived in their times, they made immense contribution to the development of Church in their time. Of these, Augustine of Hippo is said to be the greatest, Decret described him thus:

Without a doubt, this African was the most illustrious representative of Christianity in antiquity. Augustine was responsible for providing the African church, despite all of its shortcomings and challenges, with the most prominent place in the ecclesiastical world of his day. Without him, the European churches would not have been what they were from the fifth century onward, and the global church would not be what it is today. We are hard pressed

to find another example of a man who demonstrated such a level of intelligence and heart-felt friendship, especially toward his allies. His severity toward his theological opponents has been noted. Augustine also had an incredible capacity for work and maintained an almost sovereign authority in the church. In short, he left his mark on the Christian churches, which, after sixteen centuries, all lay claim to his legacy.²¹

I have decided not to write much about him and the role he played in the development and growth of the African church of his era in this work because he would simply have dominated the whole work. His contribution was not only local (African), he also contributed greatly to the development of the universal church, especially during the issue of Pelagius. It has been said of him that the heresy of Nestorius wouldn't have become an ecumenical problem had Augustine lived beyond his time.

Conclusion

With the Arab invasion of Africa towards the end of the 7th century AD, it is said that Christianity disappeared completely from the area, but the reality is different. By 700 AD Marmarica, Cyrenaica, Carthage, Numidia and Mauretania, all ancient African Christian centres, were conquered. After the complete occupation of Africa around 700, certain African centers survived. The Latin calendar of Sinai with a 10th century AD manuscript is believed to have been of African origin. There are also traces of rapport between Rome and five African bishops around 1192 AD and the name of Carthage is included in the Liber Censuum also referred to as Codex of Cencius of the Roman church. Though Africa might never have the adjective 'Christian' before it, but from the very beginning, Africa has been part of the story of Christianity. Most importantly, the continent has contributed immensely to the growth and development of Christianity. She

Emmanuel Lewis

has contributed in terms of the spread of the faith, the boldness and faithfulness of her adherents, her scholars cannot be pushed aside, the literature that has emanated from the continent has helped in the understanding and appreciation of the church. As in the olden days, the African church today is also very important for the future development of the church.

Endnotes

- ¹Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, London, 1989. It will be referred to as HE, that is, *HistoricaEcclesiastica*.
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- ³Quasten Johannes, *Patrology*, vol. II: *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus*, Indianapolis, p. 243
- ⁴Francois Decret, *Early Christianity in North Africa*, trans by Edward L. Smither, Oregon, 2009, p. 10
- ⁵Quasten Johannes, *op. cit.*, p. 243
- ⁶BengtSundkler, Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 10
- ⁷Quasten Johannes, *op. cit.*, p. 243
- ⁸*Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 178-179
- ⁹*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 244
- ¹⁰Bokenkotter Thomas, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, New York, 2005, p. 23. Cf. Map in White Cynthia, *The Emergence of Christianity: Classical Traditions in Contemporary Perspective*, Connecticut, 2007, pp. 22-23
- ¹¹Quasten Johannes, Vol. I, pp. 176-185.
- ¹²Fevrier P. A. *op. cit.*
- ¹³Ch. Munier, *Concilio*, in NDPAC, *op. cit.*, pp. 1146-1147.
- ¹⁴Davis Leo Donald, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*, Minnesota, 1990, p.23
- ¹⁵<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01199a.htm> viewed on 11/03/2020
- ¹⁶Quasten Johannes, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 342
- ¹⁷Francois Decret, *op. cit.* p. x
- ¹⁸ Quasten Johannes, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3
- ¹⁹<https://www.britannica.com/topic/monasticism>,(viewed 24/03/2020)
- ²⁰Francois Decret, *op. cit.* p. 102
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THE CONSEQUENCES OF A FRAGMENTED HUMANITY.

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Introduction

The world has a global dimension today that defines so many things in the present moment. Humans travel the globe with ease and all other elements related to the person eventually even without a conscious intention move in the same propensity. Notwithstanding, it is very obvious that there are still very significant and visible differences between the industrially developed and the ‘underdeveloped’ or developing parts of the world. I always remember my experience of the disparity between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Territory. A land without any physical barrier but an overwhelming politico-economic differences which is similar to the experience with the African Continent, Europe and America. These are human experiences and they bother on our common humanity. Humanism is one way we can put in perspective all that is happening as heritage of long and probably obscured history. The curious task is that the heritage of ‘humanism’ has not been able to reconcile the differences for the good of humanity. This is a complex task dealing with a clumsy subject.¹ It is anthropological and existential. It goes to the root of being and touches meaning and purpose. This is the task of this paper.

Industrial developments right from the revolutions² have brought along changes with implications and the results of these changes are available to historical analysis. “The Renaissance, which we credit with the birth of modern science, had some curiously contradictory and unheralded consequences.”³ But the message the moment makes clear is that the human person

anywhere in the world is both rich and poor, status and achievements notwithstanding. This would have been more difficult to understand at the beginning of the reign of science.⁴ Today even science realises that there is more to reality than that which can be physically perceived and analysed. “All these ‘metaphysical’ questions, taken broadly—commonly called especially philosophical questions—surpass the world understood as the universe of mere facts”⁵ Science needs to continue to confront itself in philosophical dialectics of purification. “Positivism, in a manner of speaking, decapitates philosophy. Even in the ancient idea of philosophy, as unified in the indivisible unity of all being, implied a meaningful order of being and thus the problems of being.”⁶ Every discipline is a product of human reflection; hence particular inquiries should be seen as opportunity among the many that make up the search for arché. Many parts, along different paths but one truth of reality. It is about harmony.

The extent to which success ought to be measured is the capacity to be all-encompassing. “It should be re-echoed that, as it has been from the cradle of philosophical civilization, the task of philosophy [and indeed any meaningful human inquiry,] is an attempt at resolving and reconciling ambiguities of human experience. It is to this primary state of its dignity that harmony calls philosophical efforts to return.”⁷ This is not an exclusive call to philosophers but to all investigators of reality as a matter of disposition and witness to the integrity of the universe. The benefit “... will help put not only the direction of investigations into perspective, but goes a long way ... in influencing inquiry about the inherent dialectics that reality is imbued with, and help researchers to delve deeper in the task of their investigations.”⁸ This is the vision of this paper, that there is need to recall attention to the integrity of the universe and assign proper places to all in it in the most possible attitude of inclusiveness – including man who is in search. The truth is one, though it comes across in different forms. The approach is synthetic as well as analytic and situated within recent events and trends in philosophical and other investigational activities.

Stating the Problem

One is edified in the 21st century, by the growth and progress of science and its ripples in diverse achievements: from industrial revolutions to technological, cyber and digital foray on nature by the humans. Humans dominate nature and is conquering the earth. There is also a common belief that many of the consequences of the past revolutions have not been to the benefit of the human race; as had earlier been conceived. Experience shows that majority of those who express their views are affirmative about the ill-consequences man reaps from the heritage of the past. “As with Enlightenment humanists’ account of reason, so with their conceptions of ethics and politics there is a strong temptation to reduce an enormous diversity and complexity to simplicity of caricature.”⁹ Being is about simplicity, but contingency is about complexity and failure to contemplate such discredits any inquiry that is rigorous. The past, is the advent of scientific revolution and fretful optimism that attended to human imagination.

We make our beginning with a change which set in at the turn of the past century in general evaluation of the sciences. It concerns not the scientific character of the sciences but rather what they, or what science in general, had meant and could mean for human existence. The exclusiveness with which the total world-view of modern man, in the second half of the nineteenth century, let itself be determine by the positive sciences and blinded by the “prosperity” they produced, meant an indifferent turning-away from the questions which are decisive for a genuine humanity.¹⁰

The problem that was initiated at the renaissance, orchestrated by the Cartesian philosophical earthquake and Hume’s signal by his criticism of causality subsequently led to the rejection of metaphysics.¹¹ **The human person was bifurcated.**¹² Fragmentation in whatever way cannot produce positive result. When things fall apart the centre cannot hold.¹³ Can the developing areas of the

world avoid past errors and render better service to humanity in its involvement? There is need to be deliberate and proactive so as to harness the irrisuous moment for optimum gains to humanity.

It means recognizing the mistakes harmonizing the past and the present and leave a legacy of opportunities to posterity. There are some consequences in the present that this study focuses on for a better understanding of the situation. The human person has been desacralized. His/her capacity fragmented. Transcendence has been compromised and materialism takes precedence over human considerations. These are the result of unguarded rationalism and extreme relativism.

The human person is a being of diverse capacities and limitations. The person experiences two extremes and hence potentially exposed to bliss and doom.¹⁴ Walking the fine line of the mean makes the individual, a dominant actor in an endless game of vicissitudes of certainties and unpredictable consequences. A lot is happening to provoke a rethink and renewal of method. Humanity is advancing in an unpredictable manner and technical capacity is Dionysian. The worry so many rightly nurse is the irregular balance of **intentional-consciousness**¹⁵ to harness the volatile resources that nature bequeaths through human ingenuity. Some of the activities one can point to that cut across philosophy and science are results of the revolution of the modern epoch. Humanism is renewed and the human person compromised. Secularism is achieved and the sacred corrupted. **Pragmatism is upheld and relativism spiral into nihilism that leads to hopelessness.** Yet, it behoves man to take advantage of his capacity of creativity to weave into a project of a new world-order in which there will be a balance between content of the universe and the dynamics of the human mind.¹⁶

This is the heritage of the renaissance; new opportunities arose and inquiry experienced astronomic change and science took centre-stage. There were so many innovations as a result of new discoveries that orchestrated paradigm shift that changed human history.

When an individual scientist can take a paradigm for granted, he need[s] no longer, in his major works, attempt to build his field anew, starting from first principles and justifying the use of each concept introduced. ... And as he does this, his research communiqués will begin to change in ways whose evolution has been too little studied but whose modern end products are obvious to all and oppressive to many.¹⁷

In the same vein,

The making of books and the use of the vernacular inevitably affected the type of writing philosophy in that the sense of liberation implied in these activities led to philosophers to engage more in original formulations rather than in writing commentaries on authoritative thinkers ... the modern philosophers would write their treatises in the language of their own people, ...¹⁸

The consequence of the change that ensued only was an expected outcome of a revolution in different fields of human endeavour. "... , as we shall see, our period was one of radically new departures in some fields of thought ... and of the injection of revolutionary new ideas in others ..."¹⁹ What are these consequences and what impact did they leave to posterity? These and similar issues will be discussed in this paper.

The Issues

Humanism.

One basic and immediate reason as well as effect of the revolutions that ushered in the modern period in philosophy and other investigative areas was the re-birth of humanism. While the ancient dealt with a humanism that was immersed in nature and

manifests its complexity; the humanism that immersed at the revolution distanced the human person from all else and isolated the person from nature in search of freedom. Humans became independent without a history and atheism became its pride.

From the fourteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, humanism mainly meant: ... (2) a commitment to the perspective, interests and centrality of human persons; (3) a belief in reason and autonomy as foundational aspects of human experience; (4) a belief that reason, skepticism and the scientific method are the only appropriate instruments for discovering truth and structuring the human community. ...²⁰

Part of the expected consequences was the questioning of civil authority and religious activities arising from the belief that human existence did not need an architect.²¹ The heritage from the ancient through the medieval periods became obsolete and objectivity became toxic and abandoned.

The Revolutions

The first major revolution took place in philosophical research with the Cartesian revolution. Before Descartes, the human person was a being in the universe. At the dawn of enlightenment, science took centre stage in every possible way in preparation for a new era in human investigations. The traditional ways were seriously questioned and abandoned. Philosophy began to shift from the hitherto wholistic consideration of its subject to the very specific, fragmented, analytic and particularly critical method. Descartes opened this era with his famous philosophical investigation-al “earth quake”. This Cartesian revolution eventually came to its climax in the Kantian Critiques²² and Hegelian absolute Idealism which provided the basis for other alignments afterward.²³ Traditional metaphysics became the focus of every study

and since the attempts in the fast growing and popular empirical science cannot verify metaphysical claims, they were said to be meaningless and of no serious consequences in human inquiry. Hence, for Hume anything that does not follow the pattern of the scientific method is to be thrown into the dust bin of history. Consequently, this led to the revolt against authority and, every institutional structure(s) came under serious attack as a result of the new found autonomy of the human mind. The earlier constitutive approach now gave way to the subjective. Nevertheless, the only thing that substantially changed was the point of emphasis as the problem of philosophy and all human endeavours have always maintained a constituent constancy in history from its earliest times.²⁴ The deductive/metaphysical method now began to give way to the inductive/empirical approach. The modern era in philosophy and in fact life generally, was a period of intellectual confusion mixed with rebellion. With the challenge of authority, both civil and religious and the scientific discoveries, people resorted to sophism and relativism as a result of the nascent scientific epoch. As early as the 13th century, people were already carrying out precise scientific experiments and making far reaching statements about the human world. For instance, "Already Scholastics in England such as Robert Grosseteste and his pupil Roger Bacon [c. 1212 to after 1229] were performing concrete scientific experiments ..., applying the mathematical principles held supreme by the Platonic tradition to the observation of the physical world recommended by Aristotle."²⁵ People like Galileo (1564-1642) and Kepler (1571-1630) had discovered keys to unravel some scientific mysteries, and thus the way the world was conceived dramatically changed. Thus, the dominance of science became consolidated in its self-establishment.²⁶ The result was a mechanistic interpretation of reality which eventually became a useful instrument in the hands of Descartes for his philosophical revolution. Hence, the modern time is only the peak of the brewing of the natural process of human inquiry. In Descartes' bold step, the earthquake occurred and philosophy and in fact, human

endeavours took a new turn entirely in the diversification that followed after him.

The Intellectual Revolution

Latin was the language of communication until the Renaissance that ushered in the revolutions. Once literatures could be printed in local languages scholarship flourished and the status quo could no longer remain as it hitherto had been. “The discovery of ancient Greek and Roman literature had the effect of encouraging a new style of writing, which was less formal than the texts of medieval authors and had its expression increasingly in the vernacular. With the use of the vernacular, literature became more and more the property of the people.”²⁷ Works of ancient philosophers became available to the larger audience and previously held opinions received attention with the method of the new found science. More commentaries became available and questions were asked and researchers sought answers to them. One of the major areas that was affected by such researches and newness of study was the shape of the earth and the movement of the cosmos. “As with the revived attention to Plato, interest in Epicureanism, Stoicism, and even Skepticism was rekindled. A new breed of philosophy also emerged, namely humanism, which emphasized the study of classical authors and the central role of human reason in discovering the truth and structuring the community.”²⁸ The church had interpreted Genesis and adopted the position of Ptolemy and that the earth was taken to be the centre of the universe. With the new scientific methodology, it was discovered that the earth was not the centre of the universe as it was one of the other planetary bodies that revolved round the sun.

By unexpectedly revealing the errors and ignorance of the ancient geographers, the discovery of the explorers gave the modern intellect a new sense of its own competence and even superiority over the previously unsurpassed masters of antiquity – undermin

ing, by implication, all traditional authorities. Among these discredited geographers was Ptolemy, whose status in astronomy was therefore affected as well.²⁹

With these and other discoveries, there were discontent among intellectuals and such discontent led to some intellectual revolutions that changed the direction of history.

Moreover, the spread of the printed word and growing literacy contributed to a new cultural ethos marked by increasingly individual and private, non-communal forms of communication and experience, thereby encouraging the growth of individualism. Silent reading and solitary reflection helped free the individual from traditional ways of thinking, and from collective control of thinking, with individual readers now having private access to a multiplicity of other perspectives and forms of experience.³⁰

With the various revolutions and the growth of science, secularism began to set in and religion had to naturally assume a private status and divine affairs restricted to religious circles. Science needed to grow and the only way it was thought to be possible was to free the human mind from the dogma of religious dictates. "The state itself was seen as something to be comprehended and manipulated by human will and intelligence, a political understanding making the Italian city-states forerunners of the modern state."³¹ The works of authors like Machiavelli culminating in the Nietzschean Superman, became acceptable models for many researchers of the modern epoch. Secularism then prepared the grounds for the maturity of atheistic revolution and Empiricism laid a foundation for subsequent schools in philosophy and in science.

Secularism

The medieval era came to its peak with the works of authorities like Thomas Aquinas and some Islamic scholars. They were not all agreed on the different issues they had to deal with. Even among Church scholars, there were disagreements and all these well-up to fuel the flame of secularism. One can also argue that the seed of secularism was already present in the medieval thought pattern. “Descartes’ natural light of the human reason was the direct half-secularized interior of that medieval conception. It was Aquinas himself who had written in his *Summa Theologica* that ‘authority is the weakest source of proof,’ a dictum central for protagonists of the modern mind’s independence.”³² For instance, there was a great dispute about the use of Aristotle by Aquinas.

Aquinas’s desire for fundamental resolution between the two realms thus found itself opposed not only to the position of traditional Augustinians, who rejected the intrusion of Aristotelian science altogether, but also to the Averroists’ heterodox philosophy, which Aquinas viewed as inimical to an integrated Christian world view and undercutting the potential of genuine Christian interpretation of Aristotle.³³

The difficulty of the scholastic was not restricted to the above, the problem only degenerated with time.

After Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton, that authority had been effectively impugned, and Scholasticism’s reputation never recovered. From then on, science and philosophy could move forward without theological justification, without recourse to a divine light in the human intellect, without the colossal supporting superstructure of scholastic metaphysics and epistemology.³⁴

With this, the stage was set for disintegration of thought and fragmentation of reality. “The quest for the abandonment of the past was to help create a new path to advance in the power of certainty in terms of the conception about nature both in natural things and in the human person to an un-paralleled future.”³⁵ Secularism was only a prelude to the onslaught that objectivity suffered in the transition from a wholistic centered inquiry of reality to its fragmentations. “For Hume, an entirely secular thinker and more unequivocal in his skepticism, the matter was simple: To argue from the problematic evidence of this world to the certain existence of the good and omnipotent God of Christianity was a philosophical absurdity.”³⁶ If God does not exist, man must be the architect of his being. With this the destiny of anthropology changed and man became self-made and nothingness in later existential philosophy.³⁷

Positivism and Pragmatism

The *adaequatio-rei et intellectus* (things out there should correspond to the mind) of the medieval era with its attendant implication to metaphysics was called to question in the modern period.³⁸ The British Empiricists’ position prepared the way for the positivists and pragmatists of later modern philosophical ideology. “In their separate ways, the British empiricists—Locke, Berkeley, and Hume—challenged not only their English predecessors but also the Continental Rationalists, who had launched modern philosophy upon an optimistic view of our rational abilities that the empiricists could not accept.”³⁹ Descartes had elevated the human person above any other creature and was eventually deified and gradually became an absolute.

It would be the nineteenth century that would bring Enlightenment’s secular progression to its logical conclusion ... The Judaeo-Christian God was man’s own creation, and the need for that creation had suc-

cessfully dwindled with man's modern maturation. Human history could be understood as progressing from a mythical and theological stage, through a metaphysical and abstract stage, to its final triumph in science, based on the positive and concrete.⁴⁰

The positivists and subsequently pragmatists brought to realization the efforts of the empiricist. Their interest was positive science and its methodology. The physical world becomes all that we have and experience is experience of something concrete. Anthropology is not spared in this new dialectic as the study of the human person now began to be more practical than ontological.⁴¹ The human person submitted to science and technology and the dream became tall for speculative disciplines and particularly philosophy. The risk is enormous as remarked by G. Canobbio that leaving the human person indifferent or closed to the transcendence will mean leaving him at the hands of that which is only technical.⁴² The consequence of a fragmented humanity can only lead to results like absolute relativism and nihilism – the experience of the present.⁴³

What can be done?

The solution to the problem above will have to begin by asking serious questions about the human person as the place to begin any meaningful study.⁴⁴ This is a common ground one can say from historical trajectories. From the classical reflection on the wholistic approach to being and the most modern of presence⁴⁵ as a concrete focus on the human person who becomes the domain of access to the most obvious but hidden.⁴⁶ Therefore, the following points will be relevant.

First of all, to deal with any topic that concerns the human person and its fragmentations today, one needs to go back to the background. The issue is anthropological. Who is man? What is his origin? What purpose is his being? What is his destiny? These questions and more will be looked into in the next discussions below.

The irrevocability of the anthropological nature of the human person.

The human person is a rational being who engages in dialectics. This character separates humans from other creatures. Reason laden with intentionality makes the human person not just a thinking mechanics,⁴⁷ but a deliberate and purposeful being. Teleology arises here and its combination with the power of unbounded imagination and the experimental limitation of man become a perennial puzzle that calls for solution.⁴⁸ He has origin,⁴⁹ he is made with an intention and he is also alive to intentionality,⁵⁰ the human person is a being whose engagement is teleological as his being also portrays the structure of teleology.⁵¹ Our opinion is that the human person is created and has the seed of its evolution ingrained. Unlike some will believe that the human person is an island unto himself, man is lonely by his contingency but not alienated; and needs not only the physical order to realize himself, but transcendence for fulfilment. Man cannot be alienated from this dualistic principle and much more that he is ontologically fused and bonded in a composite inseparable unity.⁵² This anthropological perspective is one that assigns to the human person that capacity to go beyond himself and reach out to realities that is “other.” In as much as he transcends, he is at the same time limited by his existential particularity. He cannot abandon himself to nature as he needs to organize nature to his good and destiny. In the bid to fulfill this ought, man reaches out to powers beyond him and transcend the earthly order to a place of bliss in his mental capacity. Cut from this integrity with everything else, the project of man will be vitiated. But if the present moment recognizes and hold critical the composite nature of man, the direction of inquiry should change and more attention should be given to man in his totality and simplicity. That leads us to the next point.

The indispensability of human religiosity

The human person is not a bundle of tissues as some would opine. He is a composite being. He is like every other animal in a

way but transcends this animality to a profound transcendence. He reaches out to forces beyond him and strives to find foundation for himself and for his belief. It is that which man longs for in the quest for a higher force than him which creates an emptiness that gives meaning to his existence and assures him of his security and contentment. It is this same emptiness that makes man flee both from himself and from the other. It might be seen as what Gerardus van der Leeuw refers to when he talks about the flight.⁵³ Any attempt to disconnect man from this innate endowment will lead to a dysfunctional personality. Caution should be applied at any rate so that the excesses of this polarity can be avoided and the wealth of human history be properly managed during this century and beyond.⁵⁴ The human person is involved in a triadic relationship: auto-dialectic, in dialogue with the environment and with the divine. The human person cannot be the author and destiny of himself. The problem is as a result of the end of Descartes methodic doubt, which subjected everything to rigorous and complete intentional scepticism, philosophy and science never remained the same. This marked the beginning of a situation of disharmony as later development of such ideas introduced a lot of discordant interpretation of the human capacity to reason. The change was precipitated by a new view of the human intellectual capacity that became absolutely the sole creator, constructor and destroyer of realities and entities. One needs to take a look at the existentialist metaphysics of Jean-Paul Sartre that tends to portray the human person as an unfortunate being in his Being and Nothingness.⁵⁵ The human person is not tied to the transcendent but also to other immanent beings. Here is the next point to discuss.

The irrevocability of intersubjectivity (The importance of virtue and values as cardinals to this relationship.)

The human person is born into the society and sees the self, face-to-face with the other self⁵⁶ who is like him and challenges him to a relationship. He does not have a choice against this presence which confronts him and he beholds. In Husserl, we see

the most organized development of the concept of inter-subjectivity and its crucial importance in the resolution of most of the problem of philosophy. He accepts the Leibnizian concept of monads and transforms it through empathy to an instrument of resolution of many difficulties in philosophy especially in the area of epistemology and social sciences.

We must now deal with one thought that is truly disturbing. If I, the meditating 'I', reduce myself through an epoché to my absolute ego and to that which constitutes itself therein, then, do I not become the solus ipse? Did not then this whole philosophy of self-examination turn out to be pure solipsism, even though a transcendental and phenomenological solipsism?⁵⁷

Husserl re-echoes the Cartesian dilemma and went further to proffer solution in the following words.

Accordingly, they belong in truth to a single universal community, which includes me and comprises unitarily all the monads and groups of monads that can be conceived as co-existent. Actually, therefore, there can exist only a single community of monads, the community of all co-existing monads. Hence there can exist only one objective world, only one objective time, only one objective space, only one objective Nature.⁵⁸

For Mohanty, this process led Husserl to a very important aspect of his philosophy – intersubjectivity. “Radicalization of the epoché and of a transcendental philosophy led to a transcendental solipsism, but Husserl also saw that from within such a transcendental solipsistic stance he should be able to recover the other egos as real others to the reflecting subject.”⁵⁹ Intersubjectivity is underscored and the purpose it serves will be emphasised subsequently.

What will be the use of a project of this importance? This question takes us to the next point.

Benefits and recommendations

The importance of this research will be the relevance it bears to the understanding of the present global circumstance and the lesson it leaves to posterity. Some of the benefits of a concerted world in the wake of the pandemic of Coronavirus, December, 2019 (COVID-19).

Fundamental Intellectual awareness

While the world grapples with how to solve the immediate problem of Covid-19, there should be an intellectual openness to the fact that the world is now a village. Therefore, what affects one part of the globe goes around the circle. With such intellectual understanding, the effort to victory will be dialectic and unbiased. The most important benefit that needs to be drawn above all is theoretical.⁶⁰ Leaders and the led ought to reason together to find a theoretical basis for whatever action should be taken. The world is at a standstill and no one knows what comes next. It is the right time to get together irrespective of race or creed to consider how the new world order should be post-covid-19.

Recommendations and Conclusion

It is the opinion of this paper that after the present COVID-19 experience humanity will not remain the same hence the need to take note:

- There is need for a new humanity that returns to the basis of true authentic investigation.
- The modern revolt brought the fragmentation of the person and the atheistic consequences as shown above that compounded the human mystery and led to nihilism. This paper recommends a re-think and retrace on the value of the person.
- Urgent need for a re-convocation of the United Nations Assembly to evaluate the human rights declaration of 1948, and see how subsequent policies have promoted the dignity of the human

person and the implementation of the principles that gave rise to the UN

- New anthropological interpretation and economic policies will be needed to remedy some if not all erroneous interpretations of the person and its destiny.
- Scientific inquiry should respect the sacredness of the human person. Hence, any technological investment must be within acceptable moral guidelines in pursuance of the destiny of the person who transcends the present moment.
- It is only in being proactive and forestalling future crisis that generations yet unborn will be proud of our legacy and take the universe as a whole with diverse powers.
- The environment needs healing as it is the only home we have and will leave to generations yet unborn. World powers need to come together on climate accords.

Finally, the human person is a being of mystery and cannot be fully unravelled by science and its methods only. Hence, it is important that dealing with this mystery one needs to be open to possibilities that could be unpredictable while making giant strides into nature and recognizing the possibility of surprises. That the world will continue to know progress and have challenges is a fact incontrovertible. The important thing the human race needs to do is to open the horizon of investigation and try to keep all sides in a unity that admits of all possibilities.

End Notes

¹Cf. Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, Urbaniana University Press, Rome, 1985. 19-21.

²Cf. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers*, Random House, New York, 1985. 347.

One can talk about scientific and political revolutions “Already there were signs that modern science would respect no national or confessional boundaries.”

³*Ibid.* 347

⁴*Ibid.* 346 “Even while leaning on Aristotle, Galen urges his reader to be wary of pedantic medicine. ‘If anyone wishes to observe the works of nature, he should put his trust not in books on anatomy but in his own eyes ... or alone by himself industriously practice in dissection; but so long as he only reads, he will be more likely to believe all the earlier anatomists because there are many of them.’ By his own lights Galen was an experimental physician, constantly appealing to experience.”

⁵Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, David Carr, trans., Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1970. 9.

⁶*Ibid*

⁷Peter Egbe, *Harmony: A Philosophical Investigation from Phenomenology to Metaphysics*, Pontificia Università Lateranese, Rome, 2008. 231.

⁸*Ibid*

⁹John C. Luik, “Humanism”, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward Craig. Ed. Vol. 4. Routledge, New York, 2005. 530.

¹⁰Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis.*, 5-6.

¹¹David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1993. It is about the whole discussion of Hume about human nature and the response to criticisms. Nevertheless, it formed the basis of many other reflections later on and many of which are atheistic.

¹²In Cartesian conception, the human person became two inde

pendent substances of mind and body.

¹³Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Pearson Education Limited, 2008. A Novel that reflects the clash of cultures between the Western and African civilizations and shows the consequences of an inquiry that does not take into account the uniqueness of the human person and hence the integrity of the individual person.

¹⁴John Flanerry, *The Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium Et Spes*, 1965. No. 5. The accelerated pace of history is such that one can scarcely keep abreast of it. The destiny of the human race is viewed as a complete whole, no longer as it were, in the particular histories of various people: now it merges into a complete whole. And so mankind substitutes a dynamic and more evolutionary concept of nature for a static one, and the result is an immense series of new problem calling for a new endeavor of analysis and synthesis.

¹⁵Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, ... 103 – 111.

¹⁶Pope Francis, *Lodato Si: Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the Care for our Common Home*, Editrice Vaticana Rome, Kenya, 2015. Nos. 20-22.

¹⁷Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd, University of Chicago Press, 1996. 19-20.

¹⁸Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2003. 192

¹⁹Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, Random House, New York, 1996. 278.

²⁰John C. Luik, *Humanism*, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward Craig. Ed. Vol. 4. New York, 2005. 528 – 532.

²¹It is a known fact with most existentialists among others that human beings and indeed the universe does not need and has no architect or creator. In the works of Heidegger and Sartre, the human person creates and give essence to himself things around him.

²²The three Critiques of Kant, especially the Critique of Pure Reason (p.203) as it concerns epistemology and metaphysics.

See also, Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, ..., 103 – 120.; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Hazel E. Barnes, trans., Philosophical Library Inc., New York, 1956. 133ff/233ff

²³Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* up to Marxist's materialism. The idea that the mind, in dwelling on apparently independent objects, is estranged from itself was later used by Karl Marx, but Marx transposed the idea into material terms using a word that is translated as 'alienation' to expound his theory that under certain conditions, human beings become cut off and estranged from important elements in their own lives.

²⁴Cf. Etienne GILSON, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Charles Scriber's Sons and Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1937-1999.

²⁵Cf. Richard TARNAS, *The Passion of the Western Mind – Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, Random House, New York, 1991, 200.; Frederick COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy* vol. II, ..., cit., 446. "In the sixth part Bacon considers experimental science. Reasoning may guide the mind to the right conclusion, but it is only confirmation by experience which removes doubt."

²⁶Cf. Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser, *Philosophy*, 204 – 206.

²⁷Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2003. 192

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Richard TARNAS, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 226.

³⁰Ibid

³¹Ibid. 227.

³²Ibid. 299

³³Tarnas, 191.

³⁴Ibid 299.

³⁵Peter Egbe, *Harmony*, ... Cf. John LEWIS, *History* op. cit., 89, 94. "Bacon and Descartes championed the rejection of the sustenance of the philosophical tradition by the middle ages by seeing

this period as that of “darkness from which clear thinking that is rational and empirically based will eventually deliver man into the light of truth.”

³⁶Ibid. 309.

³⁷Cf. Jean-Paul SARTRE, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel BARNES, Pocket Books, New York, 1956-1984,45.

³⁸Thomas AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, 1, q. 16, 2. “For this reason, truth is defined by the conformity of intellect and thing; and hence to know this conformity is to know the truth. ...”

³⁹Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, 250.

⁴⁰Richard TARNAS, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 310.

⁴¹Existentialism and existentialist atheistic interpretation of the human person became a natural consequence.

⁴²Andrea Aguti e Luigi Alici, a cura di, in *L’Umanotranatura e cultura: Umanesimo in questione*, Fondazione Apostolicam Actuositatem, Roma, 2015. Back Cover flip. “... Se all’uomosin-egal’aperturaallatranscendenza, sicorreilrischio di lasciarlo in mano allatecnica, cheémenoinnocente di quanto a volte sivoglia far credere”

⁴³Pope Francis, *Lodato Si:Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the Care for our Common Home*, Editrice Vaticana Rome, Kenya, 2015. Nos. 111-121.

⁴⁴Karl Jasper, *Philosophy*, E. B. Ashton, trans. Vol. 3, Chicago University Press, Chicago and London, 1971. 39.

⁴⁵Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1962 – 2002, 415/416.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, Hutchinson’s University Library, London, 1949, 15/16.

⁴⁸Peter Egbe, *Harmony: A Philosophical Investigation from Phenomenology to Metaphysics*, Chapter Three Note 326. Citing, The Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,athttp://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaud-

ium-et-spes_en.html, 28-03-2007, No. 9/10. "Since all these things are so, the modern world shows itself at once powerful and weak, capable of the noblest deeds or the foulest; before it lies the path to freedom or to slavery, to progress or retreat, to brotherhood or hatred. Moreover, man is becoming aware that it is his responsibility to guide aright the forces which he has unleashed and which can enslave him or minister to him. That is why he is putting questions to himself. The truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labors are linked with that more basic imbalance which is rooted in the heart of man. For in man himself many elements wrestle with one another. Thus, on the one hand, as a creature he experiences his limitations in a multitude of ways; on the other he feels himself to be boundless in his desires and summoned to a higher life. Pulled by manifold attractions he is constantly forced to choose among them and renounce some. Indeed, as a weak and sinful being, he often does what he would not, and fails to do what he would ... Hence he suffers from internal divisions, and from these flow so many and such great discords in society. No doubt many whose lives are infected with a practical materialism are blinded against any sharp insight into this kind of dramatic situation; or else, weighed down by unhappiness they are prevented from giving the matter any thought. Thinking they have found serenity in an interpretation of reality everywhere proposed these days, many look forward to a genuine and total emancipation of humanity wrought solely by human effort; they are convinced that the future rule of man over the earth will satisfy every desire of his heart. Nor are there lacking men who despair of any meaning to life and praise the boldness of those who think that human existence is devoid of any inherent significance and strive to confer a total meaning on it by their own ingenuity alone." Art. 9/10.

⁴⁹Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama – The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II*, The Catholic University Press, Washington, 1993, 92ff.

⁵⁰Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis*, op.cit. 70.

⁵¹Andrea Aguti e Luigi Alici, a cura di, in *L'Umanotranatura e cultura: op.cit.* 7-15.

⁵²Gianfranco BASTI, *Filosofia dell'uomo*, Mimeograph, Pontificia Università Lateranese, 2002, 334. "Definendo l'uomo come persona si intende designare il singolo uomo nella sua interezza, concretezza ed unità psicofisica di soggetto metafisico (sostanza) capace di pensiero e libertà e per questo capace di relazionarsi come tale nei confronti di Dio, degli altri uomini e del resto degli enti che compongono l'universo. Per queste sue proprietà la persona umana si caratterizza come unica irriducibile nei confronti di tutte le altre sostanze che compongono l'universo fisico e come tale soggetto di inalienabili diritti e doveri nei confronti della società e dello stato."

⁵³Gerardus van der LEEUW, *Fenomenologia della religione*, traduzione di Virginia VACCA, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1975-2002, 7-31; 464-513. Van der Leeuw shows how the necessity of the religious desire of man is a part of his existence despite of his flight from the idea by those who refuse to realise their religious endowment as human beings. The inability to realise to its fullness the dream of conquering nature and the desire to seek refuge in a higher force becomes a clear sign of the search of man for the infinite. It is here the work of philosophers and other disciplines become a necessity.

⁵⁴Ramon L. LUCAS, *Man Incarnate Spirit: A Philosophy of Man Compendium*, Nikola DERPICH, et.al., Circle Press, Turin, 2005, 3. "The twentieth century is without doubt one of the epochs in which there has been the most talk about man and human rights. Yet it is one of the periods which have experienced the deepest anguish, the systematic violation of the rights, and the loss of what it means to be human."

⁵⁵Cf. Jean-Paul SARTRE, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel BARNES, Pocket Books, New York, 1956-1984, 568ff. In this book one sees a typical atheistic tendency of the existentialist philosophy and the inordinate elevation of the human person beyond himself. The result is nothingness and hopelessness. This

alienation from the self makes man empty and suspended without a defined destiny as there is no origin.

⁵⁶Levinas (*De Dieu qui vient à l'idée*, Paris, 1982) and Buber, (*Ich und Du*). These two have displayed enormous interrelationship between the infinite and finite on the one hand and between the finite on the other hand.

⁵⁷Edmund Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*, Peter Koestenbaum, trans. Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998, 34.

⁵⁸Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, Dorion Cairns trans. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1967 – 1998, 140.

⁵⁹Jitendra MOHANTY, 'The development of Husserl's Thought', in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl.*, 70-71.

⁶⁰Edmund HUSSERL E., *The Paris lectures*, Peter KOESTENBAUM, trans. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1998, 4. First, anyone who seriously considers becoming a philosopher must once in his life withdraw into himself and then, from within attempt to destroy and rebuild all previous learning. ... Once I am thus committed and have accordingly chosen to begin with total poverty and destruction, my first problem is to discover an absolutely secure starting point and rules of procedure, when, in actual fact, I lack any support from the existing disciplines

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**CANONICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EXORCISM AND
THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

By

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The Catholic tradition had long ago acknowledged the power of God over the Devil and the evil spirits or demons. God's power is Supreme over evil. God through Christ has set human beings free from the chain of the Devil. Christ earthly ministry as we will be demonstrating in the sacred scripture reveals his power over the Devil and demons. The diocesan bishop is also entrusted with the task of sanctifying the people entrusted to his care. The ritual of exorcism in the Church is to be understood from the perspective of the sanctification of the human person. This paper is interested in the diocesan bishop's obligation to sanctify the faithful especially those possessed with demons.

**2. CATHOLIC FAITH AND DEMONOLOGY: LESSONS
FROM 1999 RITUAL FOR
EXORCISM:**

The revised Ritual promulgated 26 January 1999¹ was translated by the Catholic Bishops Conference of United States of America into English language. This was meant to help exorcists who may not be familiar with the original Latin text. The full text of the Ritual has never been made available to the general public. "The revised rite of exorcism, which replaces Pope Leo XIII's version of 1614, has been 10 years in the making. The 90-page Latin document will now be given to national bishops'

conferences for translation into local language.”² It is given to exorcists and there are few publications of some sections from the Ritual, especially those that a person who is possessed is expected to pray.³ Crista writing on the new Ritual identified some changes which our paper will expose a few:

In a new Latin text of the exorcism ritual, the Church has reaffirmed that the devil exists and is at work in the world. But driving him away may require a modern approach.

Get Thee Back, Satan!” The devil takes actual demonic “possession” of few souls—and the Vatican’s revised “Rite of Exorcism” stresses caution in distinguishing which these are before performing an exorcism.”

At a Vatican press conference January 26 to present the reformed ritual, Cardinal Jorge Arturo Medina Estevez, Prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, stressed that very few people are actually possessed by demons (Church officials say only one in every 5.000 reported cases is an actual demonic possession)

This number presented by the competent authority on the matter is one that should be taken seriously by everyone evaluating alleged demonic possession. Cardinal Jorge caution against classifying every case as demonic possessions. The content of the new Ritual for exorcism was outlined by the Prefect:

The Ritual we are presenting today contains, first of all, the rite of exorcism properly so-called, to be performed on a possessed person. This is followed by the prayers to be publicly recited by a priest, with the bishop’s permission, when it has been care-

fully determined that there is a satanic influence over places, objects or persons, but which has not reached the point of a true and proper possession. Also, there is a collection of prayers to be recited privately by the faithful whenever they have reason to suspect they are undergoing diabolical influence.⁴

There are two extremes that must be avoided when it comes to exorcism. The first is to doubt the existence of devil and the evil spirits and their power to possess a person. The second, is to ascribe demonic possession to everything illness or behaviour we are not able to explain with reason.

Cardinal Jorge Medina Esteveze discussed the teaching of the Church on the nature of devil and demons:

Exorcism is based on the faith of the Church, which holds that Satan and the other evil spirits exist and that their activity consists in diverting human beings from the way of salvation. Catholic doctrine teaches us that the demons are angels who have fallen because of sin, that they are spiritual beings of great intelligence and power, but I would like to stress that the evil influence of the devil and his followers is usually exercised through deceit and confusion. Just as Jesus is the Truth (cf. Jn 8:44), so the devil is the liar *par excellence*. He deceives human beings by making them believe that happiness is found in money, power or carnal desire. He deceives them into thinking that they do not need God, that grace and salvation are unnecessary. He even deceives them by diminishing the sense of sin or even suppressing it altogether, replacing God's law as the criterion of morality with the habits or conventions of the majority. The Church is certain of Christ's final victory and does not let Herself be

swayed by fear or pessimism. Nevertheless, she is aware of the action of the Evil One, who seeks to discourage us and to sow confusion. “Be of good cheer,” the Lord says, “I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33). Exorcism, an important but not the only expression of the struggle against the devil, should be seen in this context.⁵

Nevertheless, prudent discernment is required to determine authentic demonic possession and those suffering from hysteria and mental illness.⁶ The theological framework from which to understand exorcism was explained as follows:

To understand what exorcism is, we must start with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to announce and inaugurate God’s reign over the world and human beings. He cast out devils so that man could freely respond to God, who wants to give him his Holy Spirit and to direct his steps towards peace and salvation.

The Church is called to follow Jesus Christ and has received from him the power to continue his mission. Therefore, Christ’s action of freeing man from evil is exercised through the Church and her ordained ministers, appointed by the bishop to carry out the sacred rites intended to deliver men and women from possession by the devil. Exorcism is thus an ancient form of prayer, which the Church uses against the power of the devil.⁷

In making the prudent determination of whether a person is truly possessed by demonic spirit, Cardinal Jorge gave some criteria to be used:

The ritual of exorcism indicates signs, which allow us to reach the prudent conviction that we are dealing with diabolical possession and can perform the solemn rite of exorcism. These signs include: speaking many words in unknown languages or understanding them; revealing distant or hidden things; displaying strength beyond one's condition, together with a vehement aversion to God, Our Lady, the saints, the cross and sacred images.⁸

3. THE OFFICE OF SANCTIFICATION OF A DIOCESAN BISHOP IN RELATION TO EXORCISM:

The Church sanctifies the people primarily through sacred liturgy. Through this public worship carried out by persons designated to act in the name of the Church, the entire people are made holy (c. 834). The bishops are in the first place when it comes to sanctification of the people. The bishops are high priests, principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, directors, promoters and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the Church entrusted to their care (cc. 835 & 838).⁹ Priests share this function of sanctification as sharers in the priesthood of Christ, a ministry which they exercise under the authority of the bishops. The Church also carry out the work of sanctification through prayers, works of penance, and charity (c. 839). Diocesan bishops are to ensure that prayers and pious and sacred exercises are fully in line with the norms of the Church (c. 839, §2).

A diocesan bishop is the vicar of Christ in his diocese.¹⁰ He enjoys all the power necessary for the spiritual care of the people entrusted to his care. One of his major function is the sanctification of the people entrusted to him. Canon 383, §1 requires a diocesan bishop to be concerned for all those entrusted to his care irrespective of their condition in life. **Among those expected to be cared for by the diocesan bishop are those truly possessed by demonic spirit.** A diocesan bishop is expected to use suitable and firm means to protect the integrity and unity

of the faith (c. 386, §2). Sacramentals are described as “sacred signs by which effects, especially spiritual effects, are signified in some imitation of the sacraments and are obtained through the intercession of the Church” (c. 1166). It is compulsory to observe the rites and formulas approved for the celebration of the sacramentals. The Apostolic See is the only authority that can establish new sacramentals. (c. 1167).¹¹ The minister of sacramentals is a cleric who has been provided with the required power. Liturgical books in some instances may permit lay faithful to administer sacramentals.

The rite of solemn exorcism is to be understood within this context of sacramentals. Every solemn expulsion of demons is to be performed by a priest who has received the necessary permission from the diocesan bishop (c. 1172). It is therefore, expected that every priest who is to exorcise a possessed person must use this approved ritual. Given the provision of canon 1167, §2 which states: “In confecting or administering sacramentals, the rites and formulas approved by the authority ***are to be observed carefully.***” Sacramentals are important in the Church and the doctrine of the Church has long taught extensively on this matter.

CCC, no. 1673 described exorcism as one of the sacramentals where the person acts in the name of the Church to authoritatively protect or expel the power of the evil one from the person possessed. It cautions the exorcists to ensure that there is true demonic possession before administering the sacramental of exorcism. For the sacramental to be considered an act of exorcism by the Church the person must act publicly, authoritatively, and in the name of Jesus Christ. The action of the person is directed to either protect against evil one or expel the evil spirit. This description identifies two forms of exorcism, protective and expulsion. Many times, people ignore the protective exorcism that is carried out as part of baptismal rite. The Liturgical rite for baptism has empowered the minister to perform the minor and none solemn rite of exorcism. The common situation in the

Church in Nigeria is one that seems to be permeated with unauthorized exorcists among both the lay faithful and clergy. It is important to examine the peculiar situation that seems to require some priests to engage in exorcism without due permission from the diocesan bishop.

4. THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE WITH EXORCISM:

The presumption of the Church is that an authentic solemn exorcist will first of all listen to the person and evaluate to ensure that the manifestation or experiences of the person are not based on psychological illness. It will be a great disservice to the person and to the Church to be exorcising a non-possessed person. On the other hand, pastoral duty moves priests who hear of the extraordinary spiritual experience of a faithful to want to do something. Added to this, is the fact that if the priest does not act or does not have a plan to act, the faithful is likely to seek help from a non-Catholic church. There they are more vulnerable and open to manipulation and exploitation by the too many fake pastor- “exorcists” in many churches that are springing up daily in various communities in Nigeria. Most of these ecclesial communities are led by pastors who have received no special theological training. They are often self-appointed. This possibility of allowing any troubled faithful who brings his or her child and complain of demonic possession to go to such pastors have been a legitimate concern that has generated a response by many priests to the disposition that they have regarding exorcism. The added fact that many dioceses in Nigeria do not have a designated exorcist have further compounded the matter. The vacuum is been filled by priests and lay faithful who feel that they have the obligation to help a loved one who in their judgment is demonically possessed.

The health care for mental illness is very poor in Nigeria. The stigmatization of those with mental illness pushes many people to hide their family members who suffer from mental illness from the public. The superstition that often come from the belief

in African Traditional Religion that mental illness is as a result of the evil committed by the victim further make it difficult to have sympathy for victims of mental illness. A lot of our Nollywood movies promotes this stereotypes that mental illness is caused by the evil committed by the victim. This is what most Nigerian priests and faithful face. Therefore, most priests will consider it a grave pastoral irresponsibility to do nothing in the face of an alleged possessed person. In the light of these situations, many priests have become self-appointed exorcists, praying loudly; ‘come out of him’ or ‘come out of her’. With no ritual to guide their self-identified possessed persons, they have come to adopt the style and content of most of the self-appointed Pentecostal exorcists. Some Catholic priests now learn from these pastors and by using their methods and words for exorcism, many of the faithful are truly confused as to where they are to receive exorcism. For some, God is the same, anywhere you go to receive your deliverance does not really matter.

Another aspect of the exorcism in Nigeria is the fact that some of these pastors do claim to have the power to identify the source of the demonic possession. They point out to the victims who was responsible for their demonic possession. After the alleged deliverance from the demonic possession, there is often a great rift between the victim and the identified person who, to use our local colloquia language, *he or she gave him or her the witch to eat*. It is believed that people can put this demonic force into a person through food, or drink, or through eating in the dream, or through being intimate with a person in a dream. There are so many identified sources of demonic possession by many pastors in Nigeria. The sad commentary to this is the fact that some Catholics are now embracing this belief. Diocesan bishops do have a twofold obligation towards these faithful; firstly, to teach them through pastoral letters and other suitable means the proper meaning of demonic possession; and secondly, to ensure designated priests who are to function as exorcists in the diocese are available for consultation by troubled and worried faithful.

5. EXORCISM IN THE BIBLE:

Exorcism is from the Greek word *εξορκισμός*, *exorkismós* “binding by oath.” Exorcism is the attempted expulsion or the expulsion of an evil spirit from a person or a place. In exorcism, the evil spirit is not destroyed, it is only commanded to come out of the person or the place. Demons are destructive because they are evil spirits.

The public ministry of Jesus as presented by the Evangelist Mark begins by three references to the casting out of demons in Chapter 1. Mark 1:34 recounts how Jesus cast out many demons and did not permit them to speak. Mark 1:39, Jesus went throughout Galilee casting out demons. The prayer of Jesus was to destroy the works of the devil. There are several scriptural texts. In Luke 11:14 Jesus cast out a demon that was mute. Matthew 8:16 says they brought to Jesus many who were possessed of demons and he cast the evil spirits out of them. Luke 4:35, Jesus rebuked him and cast the demon out of the person possessed. Matthew 8:32 Jesus cast out demons from a demoniac and they entered into swine that perished in the waters. Luke 8:29 Jesus commanded unclear spirit to come out of a man. Matthew 12:26 Jesus says if Satan is divided against itself it cannot stand. Satan cannot cast out demons because they are in his constituency. All these texts referenced bear witness to the fact that Satan and demons are real and that Jesus’ power over them is absolute.

6. EXORCISM IN 1917 CODE OF CANON LAW:

Canons 1151 – 1153 dealt with exorcism in the 1917 Code.¹² Canon 1151 stated:

§1 No one, even if endowed with the power of exorcism, can legitimately perform an exorcism over the [possessed] unless he has obtained express and specific authorization from the Ordinary.

§2 This authorization from the Ordinary can be granted only to priests outstanding for piety, pru

dence, and integrity of life; such a one shall not proceed to exorcism unless, after a diligent and prudent investigation, he finds that the one to be exorcised is actually [possessed] by a demon.

In canon 1152 it stated that exorcism can be performed on both the baptised, catechumens and non-baptised person. The ministers of exorcism that occurs at the celebration of the sacrament are those legitimate ministers of the sacrament of baptism. From these canons it clear that only priests were permitted to perform solemn exorcism. Canon 1151, §1 while reserving the exercise of the function of exorcism to only a priest who has received the permission to do so, it nonetheless, seem to acknowledge that some persons may be endowed with the power of exorcism. Is it possible this reference relates to charism-based power of exorcism? In other words, persons who have the natural endowment to cast out demons. The qualities listed for the grant of the permission shows that the Code wanted to protect the abuse of this sacramentals.

7. EXORCISM IN 1983 CODE OF CANON LAW:

Canon 1172 is the only canon in 1983 Code that directly deals with exorcism.¹³

The canon reads:

§1 No one can perform exorcism legitimately upon the possessed unless he has obtained special and express permission from the local ordinary.

§2 The local ordinary is to give this permission only to a presbyter who has piety, knowledge, prudence, and integrity of life.

The word “local” was added to the ordinary. Apart from this addition, the canon basically repeated the previous canons in the 1917 Code. The only omission was canon 1152 that stated

those who can be exorcised to include baptised person, catechumens, and non-baptised person.¹⁴

Maria del Mar Martin in his commentary on canon 1172 made several observations that are worthy of note.¹⁵ It is pertinent to point out that this canon on exorcism presents the sacramental as aimed at removing the devil and evil spirits or demons from some person, object or place. This canonical description “does not take into account an exorcism’s character proper to the sacramentals – sacred signs by which, in a sense as an imitation of the sacraments certain effects, especially spiritual effects, are signified and obtained by the prayers of the Church (c. 1166).”¹⁶

Exorcism as an act of divine worship, a sacramental, the description of exorcism in this canon only talks about expelling demons from the possessed persons. This canonical provision does not exhaust the ecclesial reality of sacramental exorcism because it does not recognise the exorcism of the RCIA, nos. 44 and 156. The practice of the Church that recommends prayers and ascetic actions to remove or prevent the influence of the Evil One, rejects the temptation of the Devil etc., is a piety that should not be discarded.¹⁷ This practice preceded the establishment of the canonical institute of exorcism. Christians are urged to struggle against Satan (Ephesian 6:10-13) who hunts around for a prey to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Martin identified various classification of exorcism in the Church:

Public when administered on behalf of the Church by an authorized person and in accordance to with the established rites otherwise they are private. Solemn exorcism are the public ones prescribed for cases of diabolical possession or obsession; simple ones are those that form part of another rite, such as the catechuminate or baptism.¹⁸

It is therefore important to always keep this distinction in mind when there is an alleged diabolical possession.

Exorcism in the strict sense, that is exorcism intended to avert the diabolical influence either in a baptised person or non-baptised person who is possessed.¹⁹ Solemn exorcism is the type of exorcism referred to in canon 1172. This solemn or major exorcism is regulated by the Ritual of Exorcism of November 1999.²⁰ Exorcism in the broad sense refers more to two types of exorcism: a. Preventive or prophylactic exorcism: Christian devotion to prevent the influence of the devil, rejection of temptation through the use of Christian prayers. This can be done by the individual person.²¹ b. Apotropaic exorcism: This type of exorcism in the broad sense is drawn from the ancient times, where the faithful who were endowed with a particular charisma were asked to cast out the devil by releasing the person with fasting and prayer according to the advice of Jesus (Mathew 17:20-21).

The role of the diocesan bishop in his function of sanctification entails regulating divine worship and the discipline of the sacraments and sacramentals in the diocese. Liturgical and Juridical regulation of exorcism by diocesan bishop should be directly concerned with the exorcism in the strict sense, that is solemn exorcism. As far as the other forms of exorcism is concerned, the local ordinary should only exercise vigilance over the customs and the faith of the people so that they do not adopt superstitious beliefs that are contrary to Catholic faith.²²

8. THE CATHOLIC FAITH AND DEMONOLOGY:

The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship issued an Instruction *Christian Faith and Demonology*, 26 June 1975. This instruction could be seen as an elaborate magisterial teaching on demonology. The instructions identified the contemporary error of glorification of the power of the devil: “Over the centuries, the Church has repeatedly condemned superstition in its various forms, the obsessive preoccupation with Satan and demons, and any form of worship of, or morbid concentration on such spirits.”²³

The magisterial teaching condemned the error that claims that there is no demons and that demonic forces are no longer at work in the world because of the redemption accomplished by Christ.²⁴ Christ performed exorcism and he has entrusted the same power to the Church to set free those who are under demonic possession.²⁵ Satan is always distinct from sin. Sin is a personal human act which leads to the state of blindness that Satan desires for human beings. Saint Paul makes this distinction between Satan and sin when he admitted that sin is in his body (Romans 7:23; Gal 5:17), and also urge that we resist Satan (Eph 6:11-16) and not allow him to rule over us (Eph 4:27; 1 Cor 7:5). Satan is a personal being, a cunning adversary distinct from both us and from our sin which he urges on us.²⁶ Satan is at work in tempting us. "Satan assuredly leads human being to sin but he himself distinct from the evil he leads others to do."²⁷ Given this fact, it means that a sinner is not necessarily in need of exorcism because of the distinction between sin and Satan or evil spirit. Sinners are to be helped through the sacraments to receive forgiveness of sins and not through the sacramental of exorcism. Some parents who have children with lots of vices often conclude that they are possessed. Bad behaviour or poor social skills are not conclusive indication of demonic possession.

9. CONTEMPORARY EVALUATION OF EXORCISM IN NIGERIA:

The lack of designated exorcist as anticipated in Canon 1172 is partly responsible for increasing number of pseudo-exorcists in the Church in Nigeria. The absence of concrete pastoral response to people who are facing challenges that are poorly diagnosed by doctors adds to the complication of the issue of those who feel convinced that they are possessed.

Religious syncretism is also another area that seems to fuel demand for exorcism even for cases that are not true demonic possession. A cursory examination of the content of most Nollywood movies will show the prevalent belief that most prob

lems are spiritually caused and they can only have metaphysical solutions. Some Nigerians are baptised sacramentally but are still with strong African Traditional mindset of ascribing causes of many life events to the forces of the spirit. The recent experiences of looting of items in shops or market that were on fire in Benin City, Edo State speaks to the belief of the people. When it was made public that traditional curse will be placed upon those who looted items from the shops and markets, the quick response of these persons was surprising. Items were returned to the designated places where the owners could claim them. There are hardly cases of people going to steal in traditional shrines, but we do have people stealing in churches even during liturgical celebrations. This scenario points to the fact that lots of the people are more afraid of the “gods” of the African Traditional Religion than they are afraid of the Christian God.

This mindset is also carried to the realm of demonic possession. Illnesses that are poorly treated and with a slow rate of recovery or that result to death are ascribed to be caused by witches and wizards. Therefore, the people are constantly seeking spiritual protection against witches and wizards or evil spirits that some believe are lurking on the road to cause accident so that they can suck the blood of the victims. We often hear all blood sucking demons on the road must be destroyed as we travel. Some persons with anaemic conditions are designated as people with blood sucking demons. Many patients of mental or psychological illnesses are deemed to be possessed by demons. These persons are immediately subjected to exorcism. In fact, in some instances, the epileptic persons are considered possessed by demons. Sadly, in some cases, some medical doctors and other health care practitioners are the ones who even refer patients to priests or pastors. These persons tell the patients that the nature of their illness is not an ordinary one, and that they should consult and seek the prayer of their priest or man of God.

The high level of poverty, illiteracy, and ignorance in modern discovery has made it more difficult to convince people

to seek medical treatment for medical issues rather than seeking deliverance from non-existing demonic possession. There are many treatable illnesses that many people are dying from because of lack of adequate medical facility.

10. A CALL FOR THE PROPER USE OF THE RITUAL OF EXORCISM IN NIGERIA:

The Church in Nigeria should respond to the pastoral needs that confronts her in the area of exorcism. A do-nothing approach creates vacuum upon which error and manipulation of the faithful thrives. Bishops are primarily given the essential duty to prevent abuses creeping into the celebration of sacramentals like the Rite of Exorcism. Many Catholics in Nigeria may not even be aware that there is a proper ritual for exorcism. Many of the faithful are not aware that there is a process for discerning demonic possession. The same is applicable to some priests. Priests who are convinced and have rectitude of intention may petition their diocesan bishop to grant them the permission to perform exorcism either on case by case bases or on a general ground. Such requests may further help to constantly remind the diocesan bishop of the need to fulfil his function of sanctification through establishment of legitimate institution of exorcism for the good of the faithful.

11. CONCLUSION:

In this paper we have attempted to give an exposé on the teaching of the Church on exorcism. Identifying the difference between minor and major exorcism is important. This paper underscores the fact that exorcism include preventive prayers and consecration of a person to Christ at baptism which further strengthens the theological teachings underpinned in the sacrament of baptism. In this sacrament a person is totally incorporated into Christ and therefore prepared to fight against entering of any demon.

Diocesan bishops in Nigeria should identify and grant permission to priests who are to be designated diocesan exorcist. Such a person should receive proper formation regarding the use of the new Ritual. The official English translation should be made available to such priests for exorcism. There should be a serious re-examination of several unauthorized exorcisms going on at various centres and churches in Nigeria. The practice of collective exorcism during prayer session or Eucharistic worship should be prohibited by diocesan bishops. The Ritual of Exorcism presume that the priest who is the designated exorcist has spoken extensively with the suspected possessed individual and has consulted with psychologists and other relevant experts before concluding that a person is possessed of a demon.

Endnotes

¹Congregation for the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *De Exorcismus et Supplicationibus Quibusdam* (“Concerning Exorcisms and Certain Supplications”); 1999. The 1999 Ritual for Exorcism was translated into English and published by the US Bishops, it is only made available to clergy and researchers who have been approved by their Bishops. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5017883/US-bishops-publish-English-translation-exorcism-ritual.html>. However, the Congregation for the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published a *Praenotanda* to the 1999 Ritual, see Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, “Decree, Preface, and *Praenotanda* for the Rite of Exorcism,” 22 November 1998, in Patrick J. Cogan, (editor), *The Canon Law Digest*, Vol. XIV, Washington, DC, Canon Law Society of America, 2012); 1082-1092.

²See CRISTA .K. REISSWITZ, “Exorcism Rites Reformed,” from <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm.recnum.html>, (=Reisswitz, Exorcism Rites Reformed)

³Ibid.

⁴Reisswitz, Exorcism Rites Reformed.

⁵Ibid.

⁶REISSWITZ examined the press conference of the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacrament in his work “Exorcism Rites Reformed.”

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⁹See, Myriam Wijlens, “‘Peter and Paul Seminar,’ A Follow-up by Theologians and Canon Lawyers to the Groupe des Dombes’ publication For the Conversion of the Churches,” in *The Jurist*, 64 (2004); 6-20; Ladislav. Örsy, “A Notion of Collegiality,” in *The Jurist*, 64 (2004); 35-38; George H. Tavard, “Collegiality According to Vatican II,” in *The Jurist*, 64 (2004); 35-38; Eugene Duffy, “Episcopal Conference in the Context of Communion: Some Notes on the American Experience” in *The Jurist*, 64

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¹¹For further study on Sacramentals, see, John Huels, “A Juridical Notion of Sacramentals,” in *Studia canonica*, 38 (2004); 345-368; and John Huels, “The Ministers of the Sacramentals,” in *The Jurist*, 65 (2005); 337-384.

¹²All citations from the 1917 Code are taken from Edward N. Peter (ed.), *The 1917 Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law*, English translation, (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2001).

¹³There have been extensive academic study of canon 1172, for a comprehensive reading on this matter, see, Marek Saj, “Prawno-duszpasterskie aspekty posług egzorcysty (Juridical-pastoral aspects of the office of exorcist),” in *Annales Canonici*, 3 (2007); 217-229; Jim R. Jenkins, “History, Discipline and Ritual in Regard to Major Exorcisms in the Western Church,” in *The Jurist*, 61 (2001); 90-133; Jeffrey Grob, “The Canon Law on the Rite of Major Exorcism,” in *Studia canonica*, 44 (2010); 149-188.

¹⁴See Pontifical Commission for Legislative Text, *Communiqués*, Rome, Editrice Vaticano, vol. 12; 387; vol. 13; 443 and vol. 15; 242-243.

¹⁵Maria M. Martin, “Sacramentals,” vol III/2 in Angel Marzoa, Jorge Miras, and Rafael Rodríguez-ocaña (eds.), and Ernest Carrros (general editor of English translation), *Exegetical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, 5 vols., (Montréal, Wilson & Lafleur Ltée, 2004); 1656 (=Martin, “Sacramental,” in ExComm, vol III/2).

¹⁶Martin, “Sacramental,” in ExComm, vol III/2; 1656.

¹⁷See *ibid.*, 1657.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*

²²See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Epistula Ordinariislocorum: in mentemnormasvigentes de exorcism renovcantur*, in AAS, 77 (1985); 1169-1170.

²³Austin Flannery, (editor), Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, "Christian Faith and Demonology," English translation in *Vatican Council II, Vol 2: More Post-Conciliar Documents*, (New York, Costello Publishing Company, Inc., 1982); 481.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., 485.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

Ntui, Victor Ntui

FEYERABEND'S PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM, IMPLICATION FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: A PHILOSOPHICAL APPRAISAL

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Abstract

In this article, Feyerabend's philosophy of Anarchism, Implications for Africa's Development: A philosophical appraisal, I argue that Africa is the only continent with the lowest development rate in the whole world. The real challenge and problem of this slow and low pace of development can be traced to a myriad of factors ranging from bad leadership, the plight of African mentality, adulation of whatever is brandished white and gross aversion to whatever is labeled black to a dysfunctional system of governance. What the African needs most now is not regret of her past, blame his woes on anyone, but to gradually and meticulously wake up to the task of developing herself. Self-blame or self-pity will not solve any problem for the African. Using the rational-philosophical approach, I examine, this problem of low rate of development against Paul Feyerabend's philosophy of anarchism of method in the context of 'anything goes' in terms of method as a philosophical framework to address this developmental challenge and bad governance. I am of the opinion that Africans are the only ones to solve their own problems. They must do that using their own methods and technologies.

KEYWORDS: Feyerabend's Philosophy Of Anarchism, Implications, Africa's Development, Philosophical Appraisal.

Introduction

The continent of Africa has suffered for ages from both external and internal crises. The most devastating crises are perhaps the debasement, derogation and disparagement of the African and the attendant effect it engenders in his (African) *psyche. This has inadvertently affected also her pace of development. Africa is a rich continent abundantly blessed with huge human and abundant natural resources. But surprisingly, it is the least developed continent on the globe. A number of factors are responsible for the ugly turn of events. These range from imperialism (both political and mental) to lack of faith in her capabilities. Dependence or worship of Western ideologies and the disavowal of whatever is 'home made' and 'home conceived' is also contributive to this slow pace of development. In the light of this, it can be argued that Africa is yet to shake off totally the remnants of this Western influence.

In the light of Feyerabend's Philosophy of anarchism, the article attempts to chart a new course and perspective for development in Africa. The article examines Feyerabend's philosophy of anarchism of method; it also looks at the importance of indigenous science and technology in Africa's development. The article also equally examines why development is rather slow in Africa and what ought to be done as a panacea to fast track the pace of development and so extricate Africa from this development impasse.

We quite agree with Kanu who using Paul Feyerabend's philosophy of anarchism in the context of "anything goes," argues that, "this is why Paul Feyerabend debunks the ideas of rationalization of science. For him, there is no pure way of describing the world independently and this leaves us with the possibility of a variety of conceptual systems among which there is no means adjudication independent of all theoretical assumptions. Therefore, he calls for methodological anarchism in the perspective of 'anything goes'. His theory calls for proliferation of theories which in this writing is the encouragement of cultural relativism in matters, scientific and epistemological."²² This forms the basis of the contention of this paper. Though Kanu seems to have restricted

Ntui, Victor Ntui

his interest to science and epistemology the interest of this paper is wider. It includes the development of an indigenous system of governance for Africa using Africa's experience that is anchored on communalism. This therefore means that science and technology ought to provide an alternative method for solving Africa's problem in the context of not being too rigid with methods and approaches but in being open to complementation in alternatives. According to Rosen Stanley, "Science is an essentially anarchic enterprise. Theoretically anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law and order alternatives."³ What this means is that it is in the nature of human ingenuity to be open to alternatives rather than to stick blindly to rules and norms in addressing human needs in the society. He argues that whoever wants to change the society must be ready to adopt a variety of methodologies of whatever procedures that fit the occasion.

But we would like to add that the concepts of, "anything goes, multiplicity of methods and a variety of methods" should be taken with a grain of salt. It is important to note that, "anything goes" does not really mean anything goes in the sense of 'the end justifies the means', even against rational, legal, and moral principles. But only in the sense of not being too tied to Western methods alone, or being slaves to foreign innovation as it seems to be the case in the African society.

While we pitch our philosophical tent with Feyerabend on multiplicity of method and with Kanu on "anything goes" we cautiously apply the rational and moral scrutinizing instruments to these alternative methods. For as Chukwuokolo argues:

Development means the gradual orderly unfolding of the characteristics of the successive stages of growth involving the emerging and expanding of capacities of the individual to provide the greatest facility in function. It means essential progress towards a goal. It involves change from simplicity and it implies an increasingly progressive maturity of the behavior as well as organization and character⁴

This progress and change I contend must be rooted in the people's systems and experience of life in culture, music, arts and the humanities. What this therefore means is that the principal end of any authentic development is the overall good of the human person. This implies that methods that are inimical and antithetical to human dignity are ipso facto unacceptable. For development to be meaningful and impactful there must be in existence a solid ethical principle upon which every aspect of a nation's development must be founded if it must truly be called development⁵. The point to be made here is that "anything goes" but let it be anchored on the rational, legal and moral prescriptions that define authentic human life. Africa's needs, problems and prospects are not and cannot be the same with Asia's, America's or Europe's. Africa must devise a way of sifting methods that address her own unique and peculiar needs.

EXPLICATION OF TERMS

1. Science

Etymologically, science is from the Latin word "Scientia" meaning, "knowledge." Kanu, adds that, "science is a well-ordered activity, of discovery and explanation of whatever has been discovered"⁶.

However, pure science is different from the applied sciences; pure science deals with the speculative whereas, the applied sciences are concrete. There are basic features that are common to all forms of science, the quest for truth and certainty. Perhaps the difference lies in their content and method⁷. Method can be seen as the process and procedure through which truth/knowledge is arrived at. Different fields of knowledge have their own unique methods peculiar to them. If a consistent, coherent and rigorous procedure is followed in arriving at knowledge, that method can be said to be scientific. With this basic understanding therefore, every field of human knowledge can be said to be science.

2. TECHNOLOGY

Science and technology are terms frequently used in modern language. They are mutually related and equally mutually inter dependent. Kanu argues that, “it is the development of technology which has made the development of science possible... that is to say technology developed before science”⁸. He demarcated between primitive technology (craft technology) and modern technology. Primitive technology lacks theoretical explanation and systematization whereas modern technology is deeply rooted in it. Technology can be defined as the application of science in problem solving. Technology is a problem-solving process developed by a people to control the environment, harness resources and produce goods and services and has as its main goal, the improvement of the quality of human life. Kanu, goes on to add that, “In essence, technology is the utilization of materials, machines, tools, scientific, mathematical and general knowledge in order to solve the practical problems of the people as they arise”⁹ From all these analysis, one thing stands out clearly, every age, culture, people have their problems. All they need to do is to be more conscious of their existence and following Feyerabend’s philosophy of anarchism of method, adopt those approaches that may be in tandem with solving their own problems. They must not necessarily borrow, import, or buy from outside all the time. There is always something valuable in every environment that can yield the desired result if properly channeled and harnessed.

3. DEVELOPMENT

The word development is etymologically derived from a French verb “Veloper” meaning to wrap. In the words of Chukwuokolo, “development means a gradual evolutionary process of covering up, wrapping up, becoming fuller, larger, stronger, better and having more weight”¹⁰. From this definition, it is clear that development means progress and advancement. Development is a steady process of gradual evolution and even through revolution, that brings fundamental changes in the structure or system that are hitherto not there.

Development can be seen as a state of advancement or improvement in the quality of life of a people. It is Steady progress, innovations, engendered by civilization and culture contact in the sociological and anthropological web of human life. It is a stage in which basic amenities, facilities, and infrastructures that make life less burdensome have reached an advanced stage. This cuts across all segments of life. Panandiker, defines development as, “improvement in standard of societal living and participation in matters, economic, social and political”¹¹. He argues that development is not just in terms of economic standard but permeates other segments of human life. There are other philosophers who have seen development as the right moral attitude of the mind and not only the provision of social infrastructure. Right moral attitude of the mind is important for moral rectitude and probity even as Whawo, puts it, “a critical and rational temper of mind”¹². A well-ordered mind is a pre-requisite for a well-ordered body. One who is well formed and well informed will certainly be transformed in the mind, and display good character in interpersonal relationship. “These are people who are also endowed with magnificence and grace, friendly and akin to the truth, justice, courage and temperance”¹³. This is a necessary requirement for mutual and harmonious co-existence, especially in the African environment that is depleted with multi-ethnic conglomeration. Ogar, sees development as an “attitude of the mind, a total change of the mind in its systemic and critical basis”¹⁴. Ogar’s definition sees man as a critical and pivotal element of development. Perhaps, it is to complement this that Uduigwomen adds, “in this sense, development encompasses every aspect of a nation’s life, both human and non-human aspect though it has more to do with the former than the latter.”¹⁵ According to these authors development therefore has to do with progress that empowers the human person to accomplish his potentials and to life his life to the full.

It is science and technology that provide the tools that are needed and necessary for this enterprise. Any method so deployed in development must draw inspiration there from. The task before us now is to appraise Feyerabend’s philosophy of anarchism of

Ntui, Victor Ntui

method and the implication it has for the development of the African society.

PAUL FEYERABEND'S PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM OF METHOD AND AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

Feyerabend is the philosopher who dealt extensively with the whole issue of “anarchism of methods”, or “against method”, arguing that there is no one single unilateral way of solving human problems. According to Rosen, “professional anarchists oppose any kind of restriction and they demand that the individual be permitted to develop freely, unhampered by laws, duties or obligations”¹⁶. The only principle that does not inhibit progress is anything goes. It requires a rejection of rigid tradition. Rosen argues that “anything goes”, is the best approach that opens up new and more dimensions of inquiry. It is a liberal practice that frees man, not making him to be Stereotype and automated as if a machine. According to him it is this kind of break away from conventional norms and thought pattern of his day, that Copernicus, revolutionized human thinking and changed the perspective of human knowledge and understanding. Rosen contends that, “There are always circumstances when it is advisable not only to ignore the rule, but to adopt its opposite”¹⁷. Kanu asserts that, “Feyerabend calls for methodological anarchism in the perspective of “anything goes”¹⁸. His theory calls for proliferation of theories” methodological anarchism in the perspective of “anything goes” His theory calls for proliferation of methods. “Anything goes is not a principle . . . but the terrified exclamation of a rationalist who takes a closer look at history.”¹⁹ His philosophy is all about plurality of method, multiplicity of methods, whatever can work and can solve problems. Method is not a one-way thing

The attempt to increase liberty, to lead a full and rewarding life, and the corresponding attempt to discover the secret of nature and of man, entails, therefore, the rejection of all universal standards and of all rigid traditions. . . professional anarchists oppose any kind of restriction and they demand that the individual be permitted to develop freely, unhampered by laws, duties and obligations.²⁰

There are alternatives and varieties of methods as they are problems. Proliferation of method or theories is beneficial to science while uniformity impairs its critical power. "It becomes clear that there is only one principle that can be defended under all circumstances and in all stages of human development. It is the principle of 'anything goes'"²¹. His argument is against science's claim of objectivity and validity as its peculiar and unique or sole property. This therefore in a way leaves the other disciplines with porous or subjective/relative assumptions. Feyerabend argues against science monopoly of wisdom/knowledge and against modernization theory that holds that only the scientific method approved by the West is authentic and acceptable, that all must necessarily adopt or adapt to it if they must arrive at that objective methods of solving human problem.. Feyerabend argues that this may be tantamount to mental and psychological slavery. To depend blindly on the West for a one-way approach without taking into cognizance our cultural settings and experience is foolhardy. From Feyerabend, we draw the inspiration that rationality and intelligence are not attributes of race but offhumanity. As rational beings therefore, we ought to reflect on our problems using our own science and technology in solving them without necessarily waiting for those solutions to come from the West. In this line of thought, Kwasi Wiredu tags it as conceptual colonization of Africa²². It is indeed a false start in Africa, if Africa is to think that Europeans solutions are the answer to Africa's problems as Ozumba comments:

This is what Africans need to understand. Africans need to re-discover and to redefine themselves in the conscious realization of their worth in the matters that concern them and even others. The time of "boy boy" and "yes sir", or undue reverence and adoration of the White is over and beyond us. Now Africans should re-establish themselves and take their destiny into their hands in all facets of human endeavour.²³

If Africa refuses to do this the outcome would be mental and ideological imperialism and this would be worse than physical slavery. China has done it in the past, through the instrumentality of Chairman Mao and today China is a leading world economic power. Mao Tse-tung revolutionized China's history in all ramifications. Mao argues in the main that their destiny is in their hands and not in foreign powers. He taught the people that they had the legitimate right to revolt against whatever was not in their favour, be it from government or from external forces. His popular maxim is "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun and not on the pen"²⁴. Though China experienced great losses and suffered many deaths, it is what has placed China today in the world map of economic development. Latin America Countries, Cuba and Brazil are also living examples of what internal regeneration and inward reconstruction can offer in the quest for development.

AFRICA AND IMPERIALISM

Africans need to be re-sensitized to know that the development of their continent rests squarely on their own shoulders. They need to shake-off the neo-colonialist and imperialist hold of the West on them. Africa it appears (this is not really that it is the case) is suffering from inferiority complex. Africans do not see themselves as being equal with the Whites and they do not believe in themselves. They seem to be worshipping anything White and despising anything Black that is their own. Africans need to be liberated from this mental and psychological slavery and domination. In the 18th and 19th Centuries, it was physical slavery and colonialism. Today, in the 21st century, it is mental and psychological slavery. Africans have continually allowed the West to enslave them, a situation that impedes Africa's real independence. Ideological dependence is even a more serious form of slavery. Africans need to shake off these dependences in all fronts. Why are Africans denying themselves rationality?²⁵ There is nothing intrinsically wrong in being Africans; Africans are not a mistaken creation or an unfortunate race. They are not sub-human beings. They are not less in any human content. Perhaps, Africans need to think more deeply and more rationally to re-dis-

cover who and what they are in the light of their potentials. This is expedient today more than ever in the realization that the West is selfish, exploitative and capitalistic. They cannot give what they know they wouldn't gain from at the long run. Africa has a lot of resources and talent that if properly harnessed, she may and can become the fastest growing economy in the world. Africa needs good leadership and good governance to tap adequately all her capabilities, resources and potentials. Good leadership and governance will require that Africa develops or remodels her own concept or system of government.

Democracy is alien to African and socialism is a foreign concept. Uduma argues that it is democracy that has sown the seed of disunity in Nigeria²⁶. It is important for the 'thinking Africans' to refashion a unique system of government that is consistent with African way of life. That system of government is communalism. What then is communal democracy or democratic communalism? Democratic communalism is democracy with communal tenets. In Africa, communalism is a way of life. It can become a system of government as well. All that is required is for it to be properly restudied to discard whatever is old and so overtaken by new experience and need so that it can meet the present demand.

Communal democracy or democratic communalism is more apt and more ad rem to the African scene. It is more embrace and inclusive. In it nobody is left out or treated shabbily as if good for nothing. In fact, in African communalism, the less privileged and the physically impaired are the ones who receive the greatest care and attention. African communalism is distributive and not acquisitive²⁷. It is also people and community oriented, not institution – oriented and most importantly it is humanistic and not mechanistic.

African democratic communalism places greater emphasis on 'we', 'us,' "all of us", and not just on a few selected representatives. The entire community has a fair say on how things ought to be, it is not left to a few to decide at their own whims and caprices.

Ntui, Victor Ntui

African democratic communalism creates, “a situation where property is collectively owned, work is done in common and goods are shared out equally.”²⁸ This is understood in the context of not robbing any one of what he deserves and equally not denying any one his due.

5. The Development of Africa

In this section, the article shall concern itself with how Africans can develop themselves without necessarily relying on or waiting for the West to fashion for her the developmental methods she needs. Africans can evolve their own method, (any method) that reflect their own experience, culture and unique situation, and offer them the potentials of solving their problems. In this, Africans must know what to borrow or sift if necessary and what to reject from outside and what to utilize from within that is good.

As a starting point, African studies should be taken seriously at all levels of our educational sector. These studies may include African identity, African pride, African axiology, African symbolic philosophy, African culture, African philosophy, African science, African technology, African Art, African music, African literature etc. Africans need to re-discover themselves in the light of their history and strides. Africans need a system of development that is rooted in their value system with high respect for human life. Amaucheazi notes that, “development that is man-oriented not institution oriented, is what Africans need to move their society forward. In Africa, the human person is valued more than all other possessions. A person even if he were poor and seemingly redundant and incapable of contributing to other’s welfare, was nevertheless accommodated on the basis of his human nature. In facts, it is people like this who were given more care and attention. African development must therefore be person and man centred”²⁹. It must be geared towards the promotion of human life and welfare and whatever is required to secure and sustain this.

African development can draw from her rich natural resources especially as these resources are natural, God-given and

not man-made. These can be utilized to enhance and lubricate the wheel of progress. Africans, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, have rich and fertile soils exceedingly good for agricultural purposes. Agriculture provides us with all the food that we need to be alive and to remain healthy. Africans should utilize these God-given assets as well as build small scale industries for the processing and preservations of these products. Africa can produce enough food that can feed the whole world. When these are exported at various levels and forms (raw food, raw materials, semi-finished products and finished products, Africa would certainly generate enough income for other aspects of development- infrastructure, personnel etc.

In addition to agriculture, Africa has a wide range of ecological and tourist attraction in her natural vegetation, wild life, culture (that is so rich and unique and this includes arts, music, dancing and history), all these can be and should be properly channeled for the growth and development of African. These tourists' attractions and rich cultural heritage should be showcased to the international community. Africans should be trained in tourism management and facilities put in place to make this fast-growing industry in the world to thrive in Africa. It is a thing worthy of praise that tourism, culture, hospitality is now being studied at all levels of learning. It is a step in the right direction. Africa needs to diversify her economy to include other areas that her strength will yield more result and at relatively low cost – to areas of comparative advantage. The tourist or rather tourism or industry is one sure direction upon which this energy can be shifted and unleashed.

Authentic development in Africa must not follow the standard and pattern of Western development. The West should not offer Africa the standard and model of the development that Africa needs. Africa should model her own development based on her own problems and resources. The most important thing in all models of development is the ability to solve people's basic problems and satisfy their essential needs.³⁰ Africa is a continent that is today plagued with hunger, disease and misery. Development in Africa and for Africa must aim at finding not just palliative and remedial solutions to alleviate these problems but most

Ntui, Victor Ntui

importantly, to totally eradicated them. It must be geared towards improving and empowering people.

Science and technology may give us the method (and certainly not the only method) but cannot give us the solution to our problems. The solutions will come from the judicious and rational application of these methods while acknowledging our talents, ingenuity and potentials. There are preliminary things that need to be put in place. Africans will require attitudinal change, and mind purification. A society grows and develops, when a greater portion is attended to, than when a few siphon and appropriate for themselves what is meant for everyone. Africans need to be “other-centered,” being their brother’s keeper and people’s keeper in a true spirit of communalism. This is what Nyerere captions Ujamaa. This is also what ubuntu in Bantu philosophy is and what ndibhi nju and moninyenin Ejagham philosophy also represent. All these may serve as starting points for recreating this renewed communal spirit. Caring for one another is a cherished cultural norm that should be revived in Africa so that in the midst of abundance a majority will not be in want. Already, in nature, African is a blessed continent. African has a lot of natural resources. What is lacking is the organizational expertise. African leaders need to be selfless and channel their leadership towards creating the enabling environment for development to thrive. Africa has for long demonstrated what Kant described as, ‘mere hypocrisy without consistency’ in dealing with the West and indeed all foreign policy and ideology³¹. The time is ripe for the Africans to truly become African in all aspects of their lives. This certainly will include African perspective in addressing African needs and problems.

As Africans, we have our own ways of doing our own things. What is needed now is to take advantage of all we have and have learnt to improve the quality of life of our people. This in my opinion is the “Kpim” of what development in Africa and for Africa should be about.

EVALUATION

The contention of our presentation has been that science and technology like rationality are not the exclusive reserve of

any single race and are not also dependent upon colour but are attributes that are predicates of every human being. The difference may lie at the level of method, application and degree of advancement. So, Africans should not allow the West to dictate to her the direction of her development. Africa has for long demonstrated what Kant described as mere hypocrisy, without consistency in dealing with the West and indeed in all foreign policies and ideologies. The time is ripe for the Africans to truly become Africans in all aspects of their lives. This certainly will include African perspective in addressing African needs and problems. Time has come for Africans to evolve their own approaches to solving their own problem using what is good from other cultures while at the same time not excluding what is good in their own. Western science and technology did not get to where it is now in one way and in one day. Africans need to be ready to make their own mistake even through trial and error, through continuous and consistent application of their knowledge and reason to the creation of the facilities that they need.

There is urgent need to establish companies and industries that can utilize raw materials instead of exporting them. The older generation will recall that during the Nigerian Civil War, all the weapons and ammunitions used by the Biafran soldiers were all manufactured by Biafra in a small town called Nnewi. Where has that technology disappeared to? The truth is that the technology has not disappeared but the environment is no longer conducive for it to thrive. By environment we mean government policies and incentives. The Igbos of Nigeria are a very industrious tribe and also very enterprising. There is hardly any part of the world that one would not find the Igbos. Someone has remarked that if there is any part of the globe an Igbo man cannot survive, then there is no life in that place. There is a lot we can gain from their business acumen and entrepreneurial skills including also their fighting spirit. In Nnewi in Anambra State of Nigeria, in Umuahia in Abia State in Nigeria, in Onitsha, Aba, Kano, Ikot, Ekpene these technical and technological skills are still there untapped. The time has come to look in-ward to support and promote what is our own and to improve on what we

Ntui, Victor Ntui

have. The way forward will require a radical decision to ban the importation and exportation of some vital raw materials, goods, services and commodities that can be provided by our indigenous agencies while we work to improve on their quality and standards. Without this first step we cannot start or complete any journey. Kanu argues that, "...imbibing this culture of technology would not be an over-night affair" and this is true. Nothing good comes easy. It requires the conscious sacrifices of people and their determination to get somewhere, someday. Rodney reminds us that:

A society develops economically as member's increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. This capacity for dealing with environment is dependent on the extent to which they put that understanding into practice by devising tools (technology) and on the manners in which work is organized.³²

This quotation squares up well with the earlier example we gave about the Igbos and the Biafran experience, and the Nnewi and Aba, Kano, Ikot Ekpene situations in Nigeria. In these places the prevalence of indigenous technology is high. The capacity for dealing with the environment, putting into practice our rationalization in devising our tools for our work is the terminus aquo as well as the terminus aquem for development in Nigeria (Africa).

As Africans, we need to re-activate our communalism. Socialism is alien to us. African democratic communalism though may not be scientific as Marxist socialism, but it nevertheless, "remains the African style of government"³³ that can address the Myriad of African developmental problems.

The fulcrum of this article has been the extrication of Africa from the adulation and adoration of 'Westernism' and the aversion of 'Africanism'. This was discussed in the context of the evaluation of Africa's methods for dealing with African problems especially in the context of her development using her

abundant resources and rationality bearing in mind that there are a variety of methods in solving problems and dealings with issues. Africans should not be close-minded to this multiplicity of methods but should utilize any and every method that may be useful in addressing her needs. Kanu, concludes that:

The development of science and technology in Africa is not bound to follow any acclaimed sacrosanct model. African countries with their human resources can come up with innovations and inventions in the area of technology that is tailored to solving their problems.³⁴

In this write up on anarchism of method, mention ought to be made even in passing on Karl Popper's scientific approach against Feyerabend's "anything goes." This is understood in the context of not holding to a stereotype method. But being disposed to apply all methods and every method that may work in solving problems. Popper holds that scientific practice is characterized by its continual effort to test theories against experience and make revisions based on the outcome of these tests.

It is this testing by experience that led him to break methodical rules that imply that we must accept falsification. By this he implies that methodical rules do not have immunity in themselves.³⁵ But, they too are capable making mistakes and so should not be seen as impeccable. There is therefore the need to try other methods that may be available and necessary. This is the position this paper has taken. It is the call for the discovery of indigenous methods for solving African problems.

Endnotes

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Shifting the ‘Goalpost’ on African Ethics?

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Introduction

The question of whether there is African philosophy or not has since become out-dated. However, the same question keeps emerging under varying guises. One of such emerging questions with the potency for an amplified attention has to do with the nature and viability of African ethics. Employing the examples of the two papers to be analysed in this paper, this article is set to respond to a common tendency among scholars of African cultural, social and political philosophy to make observations based on definite or localised aspects or schools of thought in Africa and employ their observations universally and without restraint on all of Africa.

One of the current most contested issues emerging from the unending debates on the existence and intellectual viability of African Philosophy, as rightly noted by Motsamai Molefe¹ relates to whether African ethics is best captured in terms of partiality or impartiality. The African ethics in question emerges from the background of communalism as captured in the various versions such as Ujamaa, negritude, Afrocentricity, with Ubuntu emerging as one of the most debated and intellectually articulated of all, especially in recent time.

By indicating that African scholars have not made it their project to rigorously and extensively reflect on the nature of African ethics in terms either of partiality or impartiality, Molefe is also making a critical suggestion that there is a disproportionate dearth of intellectual materials relating to Africa, African culture

and ethics, and consequently African philosophy. There is, therefore, an urgent necessity to stimulate and propel scholarly attention and debate on the identified aspects. The objective of this paper is to contribute to the emergence of the vitally imperative debate relating to African social philosophy by taking on two recent persuasive contributions.

In this paper I intend to react to Molefe's "African Ethics and Impartiality"², and the "Confucianism and Ubuntu: Reflection on the Dialogue between Chinese and African Traditions" by Daniel Bell and Thaddeus Metz³ published much earlier. My choice of these two papers is based on the fact that Molefe's scholarly thought-provoking paper appreciably supplies a summary of the trend and discussions around the issue while Metz and Bell, from available information, are some of the most recent scholars to make a scholarly comparison of African ethics with other philosophical traditions such as Greek, Western or Chinese in that dimension.

In the analysis of this paper, I will concentrate on the central themes of the two papers namely: the centrality of community, the values of age, and impartiality in African morality. Following the example of Bell and Metz⁴, this critique is done with openness, sympathy, but also with intellectual frankness as necessary and as needed. In this article I will attempt to show that though Africa, by virtue of intercultural relationship with others, will continue to learn from other cultures and enrich herself, the understanding of the three scholars on African systems as described in the two papers to be reviewed do not seem to speak to me as an African philosophy scholar of African descent, therefore they do not accurately capture what it looks like to be an Africa moral agent. In other words, they all have written from the point of view of outsiders or have founded their positions on evidences that do not provide sufficient premises for the conclusions they seem to be inferring.

Summary and Critical Analysis of the Two Articles

Molefe's paper is designed specifically to refute the claims of Kwasi Wiredu in some of his writing such as "Social Philoso-

phy in Post-colonial Africa: Some Preliminaries Concerning Communalism and Communitarianism⁵, and “Moral Foundations of an African Culture⁶” regarding the impartiality status of African communitarian ethics. Based on the normative concept of personhood that is considered to be definitive of African moral thought, the paper claims that impartiality fails to cohere with the moral intuitions and axiological components characteristic of African moral thought. As signified in the theoretical intent of Molefe’s paper to engage Wiredu’s ‘sympathetic impartiality’ as a representative of the entirety of African ethics based on the typical characteristics of African worldview and philosophy, these include; high prize accorded to the family, veneration of ancestors and, the notion of personhood. It is worth noting that Molefe’s paper is lucid in its declaration that it does not investigate the entirety of African philosophy in order to arrive at its conclusion.

It specifically notes that Wiredu’s idea of sympathetic impartiality will be the representative candidate for African ethics⁷. By implication, the whole of African ethics is considered as supporting impartiality if and only if Wiredu’s sympathetic impartiality is able to pass the litmus test, and the entire edifice of African ethics would also collapse in the same respect if Wiredu’s account of African ethics in relation to sympathetic impartiality is unable to pass the acid test of rigorous analysis. According to Molefe’s paper, even in Wiredu’s opinion, an act cannot be morally right if it is not impartial⁸.

Molefe’s paper provides explanations that the custom on which Wiredu discusses is specifically the Akan custom in which the vassals of a king are also killed whenever a king dies believing that the vassals would accompany the king to the afterlife. The scholarly stature of Wiredu and the fact of being an Akan make it appear unnecessary to question some of his conceptions of Akan customs. A story told by Anthony De Mello⁹ could be handy in this respect. Mello told of a guru, who always ordered that his ashram cat be tied up whenever he sat down to pray in the

evening because the cat was fond of getting in the way and distract his worshipping disciples. This practice continued for years and after the death of the guru, the cat continued to be tied during evening devotions. When the cat died, it was replaced by another by the disciples. As the story goes, centuries later learned treatises were written by the guru's disciples on the religious and liturgical significance of the ritual of tying up a cat during devotions. If one is making a critique of the practice of tying the cat, there is the need to specify whether one is referring to it as in the original context in which the pioneer had introduced it or in the context in which it had become a ritual or even an aberration in the hands of the guru's disciples and generations after.

Neither Wiredu nor Molefe has provided any background information on the originality status of the custom. Judgemental pronouncements on the custom without delineations may be theoretically inaccurate. They both fail to explain why, in their opinion, the practice of the custom in question is not an aberration rather than the principle of the culture itself. This theoretical defect is common with scholars sometimes regarded as custodians of information and first-hand sources on cultures and societies. They easily confuse current local practices, with which they have been accustomed from childhood, for they culture without imagining the social and moral values and social principles behind the emergence and practise of the custom.

By the logical implication of the foregoing, Wiredu himself is not in the right position to pass the verdict that the Akan custom in question actually offends the principle of sympathetic impartiality until, and unless, he has critically evaluated the processes involved in the appointment of the vassals. That is, unless he has discovered that the opinion and interest or choice of the vassals were not considered at the point of their appointments or if perhaps, they were elected into the position as minors at tender ages or if by mere stroke of chance the vassal chiefs, at the point of or prior to their enthronement did not know what their fate would be in the event of the death of the king. While one may, in

the light of emerging social, cultural, religious and economic order and evolution advocate a change in the Akan tradition or any similar cultures elsewhere in the world, it would be unfair to the Akan people to imagine that they are culturally inhumane. Until Wiredu has critically considered such moral and legal issues surrounding the phenomenon, his admittance of procedural error in the chieftaincy system of Akan, contrary to the principle of sympathetic impartiality, seems to be merely for scholarly humility.

Molefe's paper regards African bold cultural interest in the family system, ancestral veneration and understanding of personhood as presented by Wiredu, as indications of partiality. In his opinion, emphasis on brotherhood, family ties, consanguinity, family-based ancestral veneration, and the belief that personhood is attainable only within the context of society are explicit indications of the creation of otherness and consequently marks of partiality within the African communalistic culture.

What seems to run through the paper more consistently, albeit implicitly, is the belief that impartiality is unavoidably the theoretical colour of all moral and human actions. Given the tempo of the paper, such acts as feeding to keep myself and my family healthy and alive rather than feeding everyone else in the world is also partial and therefore, morally wrong. It would also be partial to spend once salary to purchase clothing materials for oneself and for one's family at the end of the month. It would be immoral to take your family in your car or to protect yourself in war rather than everyone else. By the standard of impartiality one should at every meal expand our sympathies and provisions beyond the 'I', 'you' and mine¹⁰, my mother or wife or even daughter¹¹ or other special relations as articulated by Jollimore¹² to be able to include foreigners and everyone else universally. This definition of impartiality seems to make a mockery of the concept in the first instance. It only ends up showing the impossibility and the needlessness of being moral.

Molefe has failed to look at the issue holistically. Perhaps, he thinks merely about friendliness. A Common knowledge

of economics tell us that human wants are insatiable. Infact, even real needs and the true sense of needs are now also inexhaustible. Unfortunately, the resources available to satisfy the needs are very limited. As a result, like us, other people, including those with whom we share no consanguinity or close relationship, also have limitless wants and desires, for which by the standard of Molefe's ethical impartiality, we should have obligations to help satisfy those needs and wants of others as those of ourselves and our blood relations. The implication of applying Molefe's principle is to overstretch our limited resources or to deny ourselves and those with whom we share close relationship their needs in order to be moral. Though there are two important strengths in Molefe's thesis. One is that it could help eliminate war. By the standard of such equal treatment to everyone including strangers and foreigners (foreign nations included at the level of international relations and politics), the possibility of war is reduced. Secondly, if the principle becomes universally accepted, then foreigners would not take advantage of the land of their sojourn at the expense and detriment of the local citizens. The question, however is, would such principle ever gain universal applicability? If enforced to ensure universal application, how moral would an enforced morality be?

Another alternative is to say that every good should be shared on the basis of need rather than based on relationship. Even this could mean something else in many cases. It could mean, for instance, that it is partial and therefore immoral to spend your income on your personal needs on the ground that there are others out there in more basic needs than yours. By that standard, it would be wrong to spend your income on vacation, buy a car, cloths or books or even pay electricity bills on the grounds that there are others on the streets who could not afford a breakfast. Therefore, the argument in Molefe's article that mere sympathetic impartiality as represented in Wiredu's philosophy is insufficiently moral is itself inaccurate.

Molefe's paper identifies ancestral veneration as partiality on the grounds that the object of veneration is related to the agent who venerates. In other words, it would have been impartial if an African venerates, say an Indian, an American, a Jewish or an Arabian, or does not venerate anyone at all. This second thesis of Molefe seems to have ignored an important aspect of ancestral veneration. He has failed to remember that it is the moral standard of a person, while alive, that qualifies them to be considered venerable as an ancestor. Perhaps, the paper has deliberately made selective reliance on the testimonies of African scholars with first-hand information on the practice of ancestral veneration.

Secondly, Molefe's second thesis that ancestral veneration (in Africa) is a kind of worship that exclusively involves people of the same blood¹³ is intellectually ahistorical and inaccurate. For instance, Oduduwa is considered the greatest ancestor among the Yoruba people and venerated as such.¹⁴ But Oduduwa was biologically and originally an immigrant.¹⁵ Still within the Yoruba culture, Orunmila (as a historical individual who once lived in the terrestrial world) still remains one of the most venerated ancestors, but the genealogy of Orunmila does not seem important to or in the common knowledge of the adherents of Orunmila veneration and worshippers of Ifa.¹⁶ Therefore, it seems to me that the conception of ancestral worship as a kind of love and adoration involving people with consanguinity to ask for protection¹⁷ has largely ignored an important aspect of the practice as a means of social and moral control¹⁸ for a society that had no elaborate and sophisticated policing system or does not consider it as too important. It aims at motivating the living to maintain and build on their moral standards and contributions to their communities, and consequently reinforcing morality.

In Molefe's paper, therefore, it is difficult to find, in definite terms, how Wiredu's principle of sympathetic impartiality falls short of the requirements of any standard sense of impartiality or how methodologically, Molefe's paper would have suc-

cessfully employed it as a foil to represent the stand point of African philosophy or the entirety of African culture. Aside the phenomenon of the fate of the vassals in the event of the death of a king mentioned, the paper does not show how the ethics of the Akan has run contrary to the views represented in Wiredu's principle of sympathetic impartiality or how the thesis of sympathetic impartiality as represented in Wiredu's idea largely falls short of an appreciable morality. However, it does not seem that Wiredu's analysis can accurately be used as a foil to represent the entire Africa. I leave that to further researches for now.

The second paper under consideration is the "Confucianism and Ubuntu: Reflections on the Dialogue between Chinese and African Traditions" by Daniel Bells and Thaddeus Metz. The paper mainly compares the Chinese (people of a country, regardless of its population and heterogeneity and African (people of a continent with many nations and countries) traditions and the duo against the Western liberal tradition, which it considers to be the ideal standard. It is stated from the onset that my concern is mainly on the African aspect of the paper. In other words, the author of this paper shall refrain largely from reviewing the paper regarding its assumptions and remarks on the Chinese culture and philosophy.

The scholarly attitude of respect for other people's culture in the paper is very indisputable and its openness incontrovertible. It is a minimal requirement for any scholarly significant cross-cultural or inter-cultural comparison. The fact that the paper is one among the few that have taken up the efforts to compare non-Western cultures in recent times is also unassailable. The wish that the two main cultures (Chinese and African) compared in the paper advance in prominence and support for morality in the commonwealth of cultures is incontestably portrayed by its statement that "we hope that our very preliminary reflections can inspire further debate and thinking on the theme – dialogues between long standing and large-scale non-Western traditions- that is bound to increase in social and political importance ... in the search for global ethics"¹⁹.

It is, however, needless that these scholars specify the background that forms and informs their views and perspectives because if the statement of Frederick Nietzsche²⁰ which stipulates that philosophy and scholarly discourses are the personal confessions and some sort of involuntary and unconscious memoirs of their authors is anything to go by, a critical analysis of their paper will necessarily betray the foundation of its conceptual scheme. The interest of the paper notwithstanding, the limitedness of the paper regarding African cultures is unmistakable upon any perfunctory study by an indigenous African scholar. We shall return to this point later. It is however, to the credit of the scholarly article that it admits its limitedness in several ways, at least, by relying on the testimonies of those who have first-hand knowledge and information about African culture. The article, by every standard, differs significantly from those by Afro-pessimistic scholars such as Hegel²¹ who wrote so arrogantly about the Africa they never stepped their feet on nor rely on the testimonies of Africans themselves. Bell and Metz's paper represents a sincere externalist view which, in my opinion, is also very important for the indigenous people to re-evaluate their perception of themselves, at least.

The paper declares, I suppose out of scholarly honesty, that the cultural foundation of its literary perception is North America. The intellectual honesty notwithstanding, the failure of the paper to go beyond careful selection of beliefs, practices and theoretical ideas on Africa and about Ubuntu specifically, suggests its concealed disposition merely to support preconceived conclusions about the African ethics, which in turn appears to confirm the view of Herodotus that:

If anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing, from among all the nations (cultures-sic) in the world the set of beliefs which he thought best, he would inevitably, after careful con

sideration of their relative merits, chose that of his own country. Everyone without exception believes his own native custom and the religion he was brought up in, to be the best, and that being so, it is unlikely anyone but a madman would mock at such thing²² .

It must be declared however, that the paper does not overly or overtly show any attitude that gives the impression that it merely employs the standard of its own North America as a yardstick to evaluate those of the Chinese and the African, or to impose the principles of North American ethics on Africa or China. Semiotically however, it could be clearly felt throughout the pages of the paper that the comparison is not only between two ethical beliefs, but between three, where the third, handled with kid's glove, is offered the opportunity to borrow from numerous traditions such as Christian ethics, Kantianism, consequentialism, situationism, utilitarianism and the rest whenever the need arises.

By also declaring that the Black traditional societies below the Sahara are characteristically small scale in number so that everyone knows everyone else, the article written by Bell and Metz gives the impression that that there are no schools of taught and traditions even within the African Ethics or that Ubuntu as an ethics in the Southern Africa says everything about Ubuntu, Ujaama or the communal lifestyle of the entire Africa. In my view, the size of the continent is not too necessary, even though in Africa, Nigeria alone may be currently larger than California, Arizona and New Mexico combined, with well over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups, and almost every kilometre means a new language or dialect²³ and some of the languages would probably out-number the indigenous English speakers in Britain. The one coat fits all analysis employed on Africa in Bell and Metz's article may therefore require a rethink.

Similar to Molefe's paper, Bell and Metz's article theorises on three main aspects of African Philosophy namely; the centrality of the community, the value of partiality and the value of age. Unlike the first, Wiredu is not the main target of its criticism. It specifically takes Ubuntu as a foil to represent Africa. The weakness of this approach as it affects the paper is that the paper fails to realise that while it is true that the principles of Ubuntu cuts across almost all African societies, the Ubuntu in the literature, sometimes does not capture the entirety of Ubuntu principles in such and oral literature dependent societies and even among scholars of Ubuntu, there are schools of thought that are worlds apart. In addition, African philosophy does not imply one school of thought, tradition or movement.

As the paper also correctly indicates, Africa, South of the Sahara is dominantly an oral culture. It is, therefore, impossible to expect that the limited available literature would have captured everything else that needs to be known. As scholars writing from an externalist perspective that depends solely on the writings of indigenous African scholars, it would have been more strategic to complement some of those few written ideas with alternative further researches to be able to say anything authoritatively, because as a Yoruba adage goes; *oju a fo i fo tan, ija nii da a le* (translation: it is better to be either completely blind or to see clearly, because, to claim authoritative knowledge over what you do not see clearly could bring confusion and contention. Put differently; do not claim to know that which you only perceive faintly under partial blindness, it brings dispute).

The paper by Bell and Metz begins with remarks regarding Ubuntu on the centrality of the community. According to the paper, adherents to Ubuntu have thought of self-realisation being a function of communal relationships with human beings and also spiritual ones such as God, deities and ancestors as well as the sharing of an overall way of life, inspired by the notion of common good. However, the paper assumes that in the Ubuntu, community refers to a single society in which one lives.

To support its view, the paper cites scholars who contend that one is able to discover a sense of self-identity only in reference to the community in which one lives. For instance, the statement of Mluleki Munyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi in that direction does not in any way deny the existence or relevance of other communities aside the one in which one lives in the Ubuntu system. Bell and Metz also attempted to corroborate the view of Mluleki Munyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi employing another statement from Augustine Shutte²⁴ that “one can only do justice to the African conception of community by visualising it as a single person the community has a common mind, a common heart.” The statement of Mluleki Munyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi and that of Shutte are not about the same issue. While Mluleki Munyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi are about the relevance of community in which one lives to the attainment of one’s self identity, Shutte is concerned, not with what the concept community means, but merely describing how the community works.

The authors keep oscillating between Ubuntu as an aspect of African ethics and the entirety of the ethical dispositions of the cultures South of Sahara whenever it appears convenient to do so. In addition, it theorises as though the sub-Saharan Africa is a single community sizeable community²⁵ with a single language, culture and way of living or as though the idea of shared ways of life is completely alien to other people aside Africa. Otherwise, it is not an uncommon phenomenon even from the pre-colonial era to have different types of social relationships beyond the community in which one lives. Limited as those relationships and interactions may have appeared it would seem theoretically inaccurate to deny their existence altogether in a society with well over a thousand ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, clans, societies and traditional associations co-existing for centuries.

One of the usual fallout of discussions of African communal system is the unfounded assumption that the communal system of Africa necessarily infringes on the freedom and consequently the rights of the individual.

While in practice, this might be true, it is not more so than any known alternative social system elsewhere, and such abuses are not necessarily due to communalism or communitarianism. Even if the authors had failed to admit the fact that it does not have first-hand information on Africa, it would still have been so glaring that the Africa of its analysis differs from the one in which I was born and live.

For instance, in many of the communal systems of Africa, each person is assigned specific roles, usually based on gender and age. It is the underlying belief in African psychology that women can endure long hours of monotonous chores than men, and that men are more capable of fatigues with extreme physical exhaustion than women.²⁶ It is also believed that females often exhibit very unpredictable emotional strength during certain periods especially those still of the child bearing age. Young people in the prime of their youthfulness also have their assigned functions in the family and in the age group systems of the communities based on the expected capability of people in such age brackets. The understanding of the psychological and physiological make up of people determines the roles that the individual plays in the family and in the various communities in many African traditional systems. Hence, the statement; *omodegbonagbagbon la fi da ileIfepada* (Ife land was saved from captivity as a result of the wisdom contributions of both the youth and the elders).²⁷ It may also be added here that honour given to aged people in some African communities does not necessarily amount to a belief that younger people have no knowledge to offer as Bell and Metz seem to be insinuating. In Yoruba land for instance, elders humbly take the blame for the misdeeds of younger ones, especially if they have failed in their primary social responsibility to warn them against the consequences of their attitude or intending course of action.

Although there are exceptions to the rule, and some women have very unusual physical fitness and prowess, and exhibiting behaviours that are characteristic of another demographic class and vice versa. In many African systems, people (spec

ially women)with such exceptional physical and/or mental fitness and prowess in Amadiume's opinion are sometimes nicknamed "Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society"²⁸ . In Yoruba, they sometimes are said to be Aje if female and Oso if male (misinterpreted as witch or wizard in English)²⁹. There were numerous powerful women nobles, chiefs and queens in African history than can be rehearsed in this article. They competed favourably with men and unhindered, especially in pre-colonial era.

If such a system is considered as offending the freedom of the individual, it certainly does so not as much as would a capitalist system in which everyone is at war and competing with everyone else, and in which everyone is required, in the name of equality and freedom, to do as much (if not more) of the same thing that everyone else does in the family or community. In reality, it seems that the liberal system has mistaken equality for sameness which is translated in Chinese language as 'tong' meaning uniformity, and which is said in the Chinese expression to be the concern of "petty people"³⁰. Contrary to the assumptions of Bell and Metz, it does not seem to me that people are actually freer in modern state system than in the communal systems of Africa. Even though it is admissible and true that women are often very disadvantaged in many African families and communities, on a larger scale, it does not still seem to me that the existential condition of the woman is in any way better in the liberal or capitalist systems. Rather, it seems obvious to me as an African that the African woman loses the dignity, pride and prestige positionshe had enjoyed in the traditional African societies to the 'modern' oppressive capitalist economic systems that have no regard for the peculiarities of females and people of different age limits in the winner takes all competition that underlines capitalism and its liberalist foundation. There may even have been more female kings in the history of African traditional systems than those of Northern America. The female in question were usually women with exceptional mental and physical fitness

comparable to those of their male counterparts and who had equal rights to the throne as those of their male siblings.³¹ Child labour and child soldiers also seem to be products of capitalism. I also leave these to further sociological researches to judge.

Furthermore, the paper discusses the values of partiality and impartiality in relation to Africa. It is difficult here to rehearse all the encomiums the article poured on African sense of fairness, especially based on the system of Ubuntu. However, it concludes that, in comparison to some Western ideals such as Platonism, Aristotelianism, Kantianism, the African Ubuntu system promotes some sort of partiality, because it tends to support the course of the stranger based on mere sympathy rather than as an obligations. The article claims that the approach of the Kantian deontological ethics to hospitality would largely be a matter of respecting another's right from a resolutely impartial perspective³². The paper however fails to underscore how the people in the Kantian society have implemented this ideal ethical norm. In other words, the article examines Ubuntu from the perspective of how Africans generally implement the Ubuntu principles by according the first and highest consideration to people with whom one shares close consanguinity before considering anyone else.

Still on the value of partiality, the paper obviously would have commanded and attracted more theoretical attention had it included further information than it has done. In the case of the earlier paper considered, it already specifies its limit to the purview of specific Wiredu's text except for the fact that it intermittently exceeds this set limit. Bell and Metz's paper similarly creates the impression that it will employ the Ubuntu ethics as a foil to cover the entire normative domain of African ethics. However, as a work in critical philosophy rather than emperio-centric sociological observation, one expects that since African ethics is wider than Ubuntu, the paper would employ a little theoretical caution in making inferences from the branch to cover the whole or universalising its inferences from Ubuntu African-wide. Though it could be true that the Ubuntu lifestyle and ethics is

common to many African communities, this does not still justify the method of construing the numerous traditions as one approach, one method and one school of thought. It is on this note that the paper would have fared better, at least from the perspective of an African philosophy, if it had sought further information on at least a few other cultures in Africa.

For the benefit of readers who are inquisitive about Africa, a few cursory notes might be necessary here that though practices might be quite similar, there are traditions and schools of thought in virtually all the practices no less than one can find idealism in Germany as different from idealism in America or the Christian ethics as different or even in opposition between the Spanish Catholics, the Kantian Christians, the Pentecostals or the traditional Irish society. When scholars such as Gyekye,³³ Menkiti,³⁴ Teffo,³⁵ Oruka,³⁶ Sogolo³⁷ or Bujo³⁸ talk about African culture, they very much have these variations in mind. It is therefore, theoretically inaccurate to justify one's criticism of Ubuntu as Uhunhu in Ndebele with a quotation by Nyerere on Ubuntu as a communitarian practice of Ujamaa in Tanzania or Ubuntu as an African communal ethics in the teachings or traditions of Orunmila in West Africa. Doing so compares theoretically to shifting the goalpost at convenience when the game has already started and may appear logically defective and theoretically deceptive. Moreso, Wiredu does not specifically reflect on Ubuntu. His focus is on the communitarian system of Akan people. Even if one may admit the possibility that Ubuntu, Uhunhu, Ujamaa and the communitarian system of the Akan are one and the same, further theoretical modesty would still have required these scholars who unpretentiously declare their limitedness to rely on the literary testimony of scholars with first-hand knowledge of African thought systems to draw the theoretical lines.

Contrary to the impression created by the paper by Bell and Metz that one African is a representative of all Africans and that whatever one African does is done the same way throughout Africa, south of Sahara is a conglomeration of over a thousand

cultures and each with schools of thoughts that sometimes are worlds apart. The fact that they share certain or even many ways of life in common and seem to believe in certain philosophies in common does not presuppose unanimity or sameness in cultures, tradition or even practices. In the opinion of many including Morrison Mitchell and Paden³⁹, Africa is heterogeneous to such an extent that sometimes you find more than five kings and six dialects that are indigenous to people within a town of less than seven square kilometres. There are also places where men speak a language that differs from one spoken by women within the same community. While it might be true that partiality may in some ways be partially harboured within the kernels of African ethics and practices, the belief that Kantianism absolutely abhors impartiality may also not be very accurate, especially when considered from its background of categorical imperative. One discovers that the belief that certain things could be done purely for the sake of doing them is ultimately to protect one's self interest, considering one's fate in the event that such action becomes a universal norm or practice.

The statement, as attributed to Ali Mazrui, that Africans have short memories for ills and hate, is really not a new discovery⁴⁰. It had earlier been observed by Harry Johnston that the African slaves lived more independently and could care less about racial affinity; does not suffer from home-sickness to the overbearing extent that afflicts other people forcibly torn from their homes; has little or no race-fellowship, living independently of any race affinities and, has very short memories for hate or cruelty⁴¹. Eulogising the African person for his short memories for hate does not in any way make him to mentally forget the past cruelty that the stranger had once inflicted on his forefathers. It may be stated that if Africans had initially merely accommodated strangers strictly on the strength of even a grossly weak impartiality as the paper seems to be insinuating, neither the slave trade nor the colonialist exploits would have held sway in the first instance. Even with its culture of "sympathetic impartiality"

Bell and Metz still makes the sociological observation that Africa is, today, still ahead of most people and cultures regarding hospitality and treatment of others. That notwithstanding, scholarly sensitisation of Africa through rigorous and unbiased intellectual debates in order to do more in the treatment of strangers and foreigners, is never wrongheaded. Scholarly humility also require the unaffected admittance of the fact that the scholarly bases of cultural practices in Africa require constant critical evaluation to ensure that it continues to provide suitable and adequate direction for African culture in practice with an open window to learn and borrow from other cultures where appropriate.

Conclusion

It remains largely a merit in favour of the two papers analysed, and especially Bell and Metz's paper, that they have largely restrained themselves theoretically as true representatives of the discipline of philosophy's critical reasoning, from being insensitive or blatantly affront the intelligence and sensitivity of the Africans of their analyses and their scholars who for most part have not fully recovered from the past pains and experiences of trusting foreigners without limit.

In sum, this paper is a response to the common tendencies among scholars, who in their approaches to African philosophy, make observations in certain aspects or schools of thought and employ those observations without caution and universally on all aspects of Africa as exemplified in the proposals of the two articles analysed. In sum, this paper agrees in its entirety with the assumptions of the two papers that African morality and its underlying philosophies constantly and urgently requires scholarly evaluation and re-evaluation. It carefully noted overtly Euro-centrism of the two articles, which claimed to elucidate cultural concerns, especially in Africa while retaining their western, 'first world' cultural supremacy lenses firmly unquestioned. Nevertheless, it rejects the logic of the two texts and its underlying sweeping generalisations, which based on few observations and

Agora: Journal of Philosophical & Theological Studies

highly selective applications of texts on Africa studies, arrived at their conclusions that African ethics necessarily harbours partiality.

End Notes

¹M. Molefe. "African Ethics and Impartiality." *Phronimon: Journal of the South African Society for Greek Philosophy and the Humanities*, Special Edition 17:2, 2016, 1-19.

²Ibid

³D. Bell, and T. Metz, "Confucianism and Ubuntu: Reflections on a Dialogue between Chinese and African Traditions" *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 38:51, 2011, 78-95.

⁴Ibid, 79

⁵K. Wiredu, "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa: Some Preliminaries Concerning Communalism and Communitarianism." *South African Journal of Philosophy* 27: 2008, 332 -339.

⁶K. Wiredu, "Moral Foundations of an African Culture." In K. Wiredu and K. Gyekye (Eds). *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies*, 1. (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), 192 - 206.

⁷Molefe. "African Ethics and Impartiality". *Phronimon*, 2.

⁸Molefe, 9.

⁹A. de Mello, *A Song of the Bird*. (New York: Image, 1984).

¹⁰G. Warnock, *The Object of Morality*. (London: Methuen, 1971), 26, and P. Singer, *Practical Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 11.

¹¹W. Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, (New York: Alfred A Knolf, 1973), 41-42.

¹²T. Jollimore, "Impartiality" *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2014.

¹³Molefe. "African Ethics and Impartiality". *Phronimon*, 12

¹⁴B. Agbaje-Williams, "Yoruba Urbanism: The Archaeology and Historical Ethnography of Ile-Ife and Old Oyo". In Akinwumi Ogundiran (ed). *Precolonial Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Toyin Falola*. (Asmara: Africa World Press Inc, 2005), 215-240.

¹⁵H. A. Gailey, *History of Africa: from the earliest time to 1800*, (Huntington: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1981).

¹⁶W.R. Bascom, *Ifa divination: Communication between gods and men*

in West Africa. London, Indiana University Press, 1969. For most part, the genealogical root of Orunmila, like that of Socrates in the ancient Greek philosophy is hardly ever known (See S.B. Oluwole, *Socrates and Orunmila: Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy*, (Lagos: Ark-Publishers, 2014) and A. D. Alade, “Stories of Migration and the State Formation in Yoruba land: a reassessment of Yoruba myth and legend of creation”. *Rosetta*, 17 2015, 1-23.

¹⁷L. Kagabo, “Alexis Kagame (1912–1981): Life and Thought.” In K. Wiredu (Ed). *Companion to African Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 231-242.

¹⁸M. Ramose, *African democratic tradition: oneness, consensus and openness: a reply to Wamba-diaWamba*. *Quest* 6, 1992, 62-83.

¹⁹D. Bell, and T. Metz, “Confucianism and Ubuntu, 80.

²⁰F. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, (R.J. Hollingdale, trans.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²¹G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

²²Herodotus as used in A. Emmanuel, *OdunIfa*, (Lagos: West African Book Publishers Limited, 2000), 14.

²³T. A. Balogun, “An Endangered Nigerian Indigenous Language: The Case of Yorùbá Language.”

African Nebula, 6, 2013, 70-82.

²⁴Augustine Shutte, 2009 as used in D. Bell, and T. Metz, “Confucianism and Ubuntu, 83.

²⁵D. Bell, and T. Metz, “Confucianism and Ubuntu, 79 and 83.

²⁶See M. Opole, *Women’s Indigenous Knowledge Base in Translation of Nutritional and Medicinal Values of Edible Local plants in Western Kenya*.” In KwesiKwaPrah (ed)., *Culture, Gender and Technology in Africa*, (Windhoek, Harp Publications, 1999), 81-96, E. Uchendu, “Women Power and Political Institution in Igboland.” In Akinwumi-Ogundiran (ed). *Precolonial Nigeria: essay in honour of Toyin Falola*, (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2005), 203-214 and K.R. Smythe, *Africa’s Past, Our Future*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 121-130.

²⁷J.A.I. Bewaji, “Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief and the Theistic

Problem of Evil.” *African Studies Quarterly*, 2:1, 1998, 1-69.

²⁸I. Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. (London: Zed Books, 1987).

²⁹E. G. Parrinder, “African Ideas of Witchcraft” *Folklore* 67: 3, 1956, 142-150.

³⁰D. Bell, and T. Metz, “Confucianism and Ubuntu, 86.

³¹Example of such could be found in many community histories in Africa including Benin (Edo) which remains one of the most prominent monarchical systems in Africa (A. Adeeko, “Gender in Translation: EfunsetanAniwura”. In OyeronkeOyewumi (ed). *Gender Epistemology in Africa: Gender Traditions, Spaces, Social Institutions, and Identities*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), and J.U. Egharevba, *A Short History of Benin* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1953).

³²D. Bell, and T. Metz, “Confucianism and Ubuntu, 89.

³³K. Gyekye, “Person and Community in African Thought.” In K. Gyekye, & K. Wiredu, *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies*, 1. (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), 101 - 122.

³⁴I. Menkiti, “On the Normative Conception of a Person.” In K. Wiredu (Ed) *Companion to African Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 324 - 331.

³⁵J. Teffo, *Democracy, Kingship and Consensus: a South African perspective.* In K. Wiredu (ed.),

A Companion to African Philosophy. (Maiden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), 443-449, and “Monarchy and Democracy: towards a cultural renaissance.” *Journal of African Philosophy* 1:1, 2002, 18.

³⁶H. O. Oruka, “Sage Philosophy.” In P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux (eds.), *Philosophy from Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 99-108.

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Company, 2001), 1-15.

³⁹D. G. Morrison, R. C. Mitchell, and J.N. Paden, *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook*. (London: Macmillan Reference, 1989).

⁴⁰A. Mazrui, *Afro-Arab Crossfire: Between the Flames of Terrorism and the Force of Pax Americana.*” Paper presented at a special seminar sponsored by the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, (December 5),2001.

⁴¹H. A. Johnston, *A History of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 151-152.