
In 1972-73 Ayer gave the Gifford Lectures at University of St Andrews, later published as The Central Questions of Philosophy. He still believed in the viewpoint he shared with the logical positivists: that large parts of what was traditionally called "philosophy" - including the whole of metaphysics, theology, and aesthetics - were not matters that could be judged as being true or false and that it was thus meaningless to discuss them. Unsurprisingly, this made him unpopular with several other philosophy departments in Britain and his name is still reviled by many British professors to this day.

In "The Concept of a Person and Other Essays" (1963), Ayer made several striking criticisms of Wittgenstein's private language theory.

Ayer's sense-data theory in Foundations of Empirical Knowledge was famously criticised by fellow Oxonian J. L. Austin in Sense and Sensibilia, a landmark 1950s work of common language philosophy. Ayer responded to this in the essay "Has Austin Refuted the Sense-data Theory?", which can be found in his Metaphysics and Common Sense (1969).

NOTE AND REFERENCES

1. He believed that religious language was unverifiable and as such literally nonsense. Consequently "There is no God" was for Ayer as meaningless and metaphysically an utterance as "God exists." Though Ayer could not give assent to the declaration "There is no God," he was an atheist in the sense that he withheld assent from affirmation's of God's existence. However, in "Language, Truth and Logic" he distinguishes himself from both agnostics and atheists by saying that both these stances take the statement "God exists" as a meaningful hypothesis, which Ayer himself does not. That stance of a person who believes "God" denotes no verifiable hypothesis is sometimes referred to as igeism (defined in Paul Kurtz, The New Skepticism: Inquiry and Reliable Knowledge, ISBN 0-87975-766-3, page 194)

2. Rogers (1999), page 344.

SECTION F

AN INTRODUCTION TO THEMES AND METHODS OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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CONTENTS

A. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

B. IN SEARCH OF MEANING AND SCOPE OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY
   i. The problem of Definition
   ii. "What is African Philosophy"?
   iii. Some Orientations in African Philosophy
   iv. Some Truths About African Philosophy
   v. What Then is Philosophy?
   vi. Some Definitions of Philosophy.

C. HISTORY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY
   i. An Overview of The History of African Philosophy
   ii. Ancient African Philosophy
   iii. Medieval African Philosophy
   iv. Modern & Contemporary African Philosophy

D. THE GREAT DEBATES ON AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY
   i. Introduction.
   ii. What Qualifies All Materials in African Philosophy As Real Text in African philosophy?
   iii. Who Really Qualifies to be Called An African Philosopher
   iv. The Existence and Non Existence of African philosophy
   v. African Philosophy is Made up of Either Myths and Ideological Slogans
   vi. Do We Really Have an African Philosophy?

E. BRANCHES OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY
   i. Metaphysics
   ii. Logic
   iii. Epistemology
   iv. Ethics
   v. Cosmology
   vi. Socio-political

F. METHODS OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY
   i. Introduction.
   ii. Metaphysical Orientations
A. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

"In the past three decades, philosophers -- especially African-born who are trained in Western philosophy -- have engaged in a metaphilosophical debate over whether there exists an African philosophy and, if so, what its nature is. These debates regarding the nature and existence of African philosophy has culminated in two camps, which I shall call the Universalists and the Particularists. Wiredu characterizes the latter as the anti-universalists or the nationalists. The former camp, represented by the works of Bodunrin, Wiredu, Appiah, and Hountondji, among others, argues that the concept of 'philosophy', in terms of the methodology and subject matter of the discipline, should be the same in both the Western and African senses. The latter camp, as seen in the works of Ayoade, Gyekye, Sodipo, and Onwunibe, among others, argues that different cultures have different ways of explaining reality; hence Africans must have a philosophy that is essentially different from other philosophies.

Perhaps it is along this line of trying to articulate the essential nature of 'African philosophy', Sadoso Kwame argues, that the metaphilosophical approach of the Western analytic tradition is not African, and as such, it is not and should not be a legitimate approach in African philosophy. Some of the people in this camp have thus questioned the use of the scenario characterized by African philosophers as African philosophy, and three of these have been criticized by the universalists as unphilosophical. The universalists argue that, compared to their paradigm view of the nature of philosophy - that is, the contemporary analytic tradition of Western philosophy - African philosophy does not have the requisite features of a tradition of writing and a rigorous and critical analytical approach to debates over universal conceptual and abstract issues that are engaged in by individuals. However, it is my view that there are both Universalist and Particularist elements in African philosophy. In other words, although there are culturally determined philosophical ways of constructing meaning, these ways are not incommensurable. As such, we can use the 'known' universal philosophical concepts and methods of one 'culture' to analyze and make understandable the philosophical beliefs and worldviews of another culture that may 'appear' arcane - and this, in my view, is what many of the particularists have tried to do with African worldviews.

This does not imply, as the Universalists have claimed, that the beliefs and worldviews of one culture (Western) are comparatively superior to another philosophically, to the extent of denigrating one (African) as unphilosophical or denying its existence as a philosophical system."

This section of the work therefore hopes to consider all the recent contemporary arguments that have been offered for and against the existence and none existence of African Philosophy. This it with the view to avail the student and the
B. IN SEARCH OF A MEANING AND SCOPE OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

i. The Problem Of Definition

For centuries, non-Africans have dominated discourses on Africa. Many reasons account for this state of affairs, and none the least, is the unjustified violence of neo-colonization. Since colonization, Africans have had almost infinity of spokes persons. They claimed the rights to speak on behalf of the Africans and to define the meaning of their experience, existence and thinking for them due solely to the factor of colonialism.

The question of African Philosophy, although seeming to lead to no consensus at present, has nevertheless been intellectually rewarding to African philosophers and none African philosophers alike. When the question of the existence of African philosophy is posed to a non-academic, but politically minded African, the answer to be expected is obvious. “What any other race possess, we as Africans possess; otherwise we are less than humans”. The existence of African philosophy has to be, in part, our total package of liberation from the apron strings of western intellectual colonialization.” Now, such an answer is an ideologically leading as any other issue that has to do with the place of Africa in world politics. [4]

But still one cannot be too pedantic about the distinctions between ideological issues and intellectual matters, admittedly, there is a distinction but such a distinction can only be stressed on a simplistic assumption that the ideologists in never academicals or that the academic is never politically committed. The subtle blend between this is such that it is always easy to extract elements of the one from the other; for instance, the simile ideological position about the non-existence of African philosophy, implies that Africans are less than humans. This can be argued for only on un-intellectual grounds.

To be human it is said, is to be rational, that is to possess the ability of creative and reflective thinking. The possession of these qualities raises man above other animals but philosophy as an activity is a manifestation of their human qualities and its absence therefore implies the non-existence of the individual man. Assuming that the major premise on which this argument rests is not faced with the charge of arbitrariness (i.e. assuming that the given qualities are essential to be human) what appears to be an un-argued assertion surely has taken an academic cover.

In this way issues concerning African philosophy are by implication, about the intellectual endowment of Africans, of a member of the human race/species and of the intellectual content of his culture and belief system. And since most Africans are yet to leave behind these beliefs and mode of thought, a search for their intellectual content entails a search for their human embodiment.

However, the question about African philosophy cannot be solved under an ideological cover. Unfortunately, like many other issues, discussions on the matter has reached a high level of absurdity in which most disputants will say, “After all, it all depends on what you think contribute to African Philosophy. Do it your way and I will do it my way”. Surely this is an irrevocable end to a question whose answer depends more on definition than on substance. Indeed, questions such as: “What is African philosophy?” “Does African philosophy exists?” are themselves philosophical questions that allow no definite answer. But is this really the case for the question of African philosophy?

In the past those interested in the study of African thought systems had one pattern of thinking when it came to capturing their opinions about the events and happenings in the African world view. The pattern most predominant was the method similar to that which Greek thinkers used in capturing their thought, a method that allowed the study of everything to be classified under Philosophy. As such we had earlier writers on the African thought system and world view, categorize everything they wrote and packaged them as African philosophy. We find this evident in the works of Placid Temple's Bantu Philosophy, John Mbiti wrote: African Religions And Philosophy, R. A. Wrigh wrote African Philosophy. Kwame Nkrumah; Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology, etc

Some thinkers in the likes of Kwasi Wiredu in some of his contemporary writings have called for caution on what people write and label as African philosophy. He in the various articles written in journals such as Second Order (vol. 1, no. 2, 1972) titled; “On an Orientation in African Philosophy” wrote about the need to focus more on emphasizing on the activity called philosophy than on the content or the material and tools used during the investigation. Basically he called the
attention of contemporary writers to a rethinking on all that has been going on in the name of African philosophy. All the study done during this period highlighted the many dilemmas that faced the study of African Philosophy.

It is important to note that the problem at this point is not that of assessing the importance of the works that have been written by past writers or what is presently been written on the same subject by present writers. No doubt all these works remain important in one way or the other, considering the fact that they have been written from various perspectives: Mythology, Ethnology, History of ideas, Cultural anthropology, etc. the real problem as presented by Sogolo is:

...that whether they reflect the character of a philosophic tradition, the issue arises because the available materials in African thought system are submerged in a cloud of unreflective and dogmatic magico - religious claims which nevertheless contain ample evidence of philosophic elements that can be extracted and systematized into a body of knowledge.

ii. Some Orientations in African Thought

So far, two broad orientations in African philosophy seem to be sprouting, each of which suffers from a defect of a similar kind. The first, which appears backward looking, is the attempt by some contemporary philosophers in Africa to extract from traditional African thoughts ingredients believed to be of philosophical relevance. Hallen and Sodipo for instance are together in thinking that they can, through a process of dialogue, draw on such thoughts of some African sages, reconstruct and systematize such ideas on the foundations of African philosophy.

The second orientation is that which seek to cloth western philosophy in African robes, what is now referred to as the domestication of the philosophies of other lands. Led by Wiredu, this orientation attempts to examine from an African viewpoint familiar problems in the western tradition of philosophy. Generally, the process here involves the process of juxtaposing African categories of thought with those of the west. This approach no doubt appears recondite in purpose and lacking in substance.

An emerging African philosophical tradition therefore needs to be rooted in and also to be nourished within the context of the African culture, history, and experiences of the people. In fact, the raw material of any tradition of philosophy is to be found in the totality of the practitioners' own culture and life experience. For this reason, the search for an African philosophy has in Sogolo's own words, "must be home based and conducted within the African experience".

The impression often given that contemporary philosophers in Africa have blank slate on which to start is grossly mistaken. So much has been written about African mode of thought at least, since social anthropologist and other scholars of comparative cultures ventured beyond their normal empirical study of primitive social institutions, customs, myths, folklore, religions, laws, etc into thinking about the structure of the minds of their subjects. What has been written is therefore important to the question of an emerging African philosophy. Though some of it may be wrong, well, if so, it is important to find out why for instance the ranging dispute about whether or not available materials in African thought are amenable to critical reflections, as has been shown to be the result of early anthropological speculations in which the mind of the African was portrayed as structured differently from that of the western man. That this is incorrect is no longer an issue or matter of dispute.

To say that man is a rational being is to imply that mankind as a whole share a common but certain features. Where these features are found wanting in any community, it raises the question whether such a group is human or not by definition. One dominant feature or characteristics that are pre-dominant among humans is the ability for self reflection and rational thought governed essentially by certain principles of reasoning. It is important that we add here that this special human quality, as found in any area or setting has its distinctive colours and special mode of manifesting itself. This of course is subject to the various contingencies that are inherent within each culture and community. It is therefore important to note that in some parts of the world (the west) for instance, the rules of reasoning have long been systematized and well formulated as regards certain principle of reasoning that must be applied during such activities. On the other hand, we also wasn't to note that in other areas of the world such as Africa and other parts of the world that is still under-developed and pre-literate, the same rule of reasoning abound and are applicable. The only difference here is that the mode of thought may not be as systematically formulated or articulated by the individuals in these areas in question.

The point we are trying to emphasize here is that the structure of thought and thinking is basically and essentially the same for all humans in all cultures all over the world. There is however some cultural conditions and factors that influences the form in which these reasoning is manifested. That these peculiarities exist cannot therefore amount to a deficiency nor should it be regarded as any mark of irrationality on the part of the group in question; in this case, the Africans. It is also important to add here that it is evident from the point of view of practical life that human beings all over the world are constantly engaging and applying rules and principles which most times do not qualify as thought patterns that could be consciously grouped into the class of rational thoughts. It will therefore be mistaken, unfair and wrong to condemn the Africans for not engaging himself in a continued flow of reflection, especially from the stand point of the west. There is no culture in the world that is found constantly engaged in this act. Not where the issues at hand does not require such exercise.
iii. Some Truths About African Philosophy & Philosophy

So far, two broad orientations in African philosophy seem to be sprouting, each of which suffers from a defect of a similar kind. The first, which appears backward looking, is the attempt by some contemporary philosophers in Africa to extract from traditional African thoughts ingredients believed to be of philosophical relevance. Hallen and Sodipo for instance are together in thinking that they can, through a process of dialogue, draw on such thoughts of some African sages, reconstruct and systematize such ideas on the foundations of African philosophy.

The second orientation is that which seek to clothe western philosophy in African robes, what is now referred to as the domestication of the philosophies of other lands. Led by Wiredu, this orientation attempts to examine from an African viewpoint familiar problems in the western tradition of philosophy. Generally, the process here involves the process of juxtaposing African categories of thought with those of the west. This approach no doubt appears recondite in purpose and lacking in substance.

With a Universalistic conception of philosophy, African thinkers would not entertain any sense of artificiality in pursuing, to their hearts content, any familiar philosophical problem that has no link with the American experience. Paul Huntuji expresses this view in its extreme form when he says that, “African philosophical works concerning problems that are not specially related to African experience...are an integral part of African philosophy.”

The point Huntuji and others are making is that African philosophy should be conceived as philosophy produced by Africans no matter the content. This is clearly reflected in P.O. Bodunrin’s summary of the position:

African philosophy is the philosophy done by African philosophers whether it be in the area of logic, ethics or history of philosophy...thus if African philosophers were to engage in debates in Plato’s epistemology, or on theoretical identities, their works would qualify as African philosophy.[7]

With Hountondji on this universalistic conception of African philosophy is Kwesi Wiredu, Odera Oruka. Wiredu however, would argue that, for the kind of work described by Bodunrin to qualify as African philosophy, they must be nourished within the African tradition. Nevertheless, he does not argue with Hountondji’s analogy that, “just as the anthropological study of African societies by western scholars belonged to western scientific literature.” “So must the philosophical enquiries of western thoughts by Africans be regarded as belonging to African philosophy” such works can only be part of African philosophy, argues Wiredu, if they are organically woven into an African, tradition, where this is not so, African Philosophy cannot be said to exist.

Oruka in his ‘Four trends in current African philosophy categorize the works of African thinkers into ‘ethno-philosophy’, ‘philosophic sagacity’, nationalist philosophy and ‘professional philosophy’. The last of the four, says Oruka, reflects an acceptable conception of philosophy. Hopefully we shall be talking about this subject later.

The attempt to distinguish between traditional African philosophy and contemporary African philosophy has arisen from the belief by some African thinkers that most of the works that have been produced in the name of African philosophy do not qualify for that label for historical reasons mentioned earlier. This is because a great deal of this works were carried out by western trained anthropologies, sociologies and ethnographers whose main interest was to study what they regarded as peculiarities of African thought systems. Typical instances of these works include: A. Kagame’s "La Philosophie Bantuwandaise de l’etre" (1956), "Bantu philosophy" by Placid Temples (1959), "African Religions and Philosophy" by John Mbiti. (1970), "The mind of African" by William Abraham., Julius Nyerere’s Ujamaa; The Basis of African Socialism (1968), kwame Nkrumah’s Consciencism (1964) etc.

It is true that these works have come to be regarded as the main corpus of standard literature for students of African philosophy. But critics will say this has become so much for the philosophical contents of the works as, for their connections with African experience. Hountondji would refer to them as ethnophillosophy. For the reason that they merely present the collective worldviews, myths and the folk wisdom of African peoples.

On the question of what constitutes a proper philosophy both in content and methodology, the answer might simply be, "what any philosopher thinks it is". This is because the subject matter of philosophy is relative, depending on where and when it is practiced. The same maybe said of this methodology and as Bodunrin rightly observes, there is no one method, which is the method of philosophy today.

iv. What Then Is Philosophy?

The Question, "What is Philosophy?" is itself, a philosophical question for which a universally acceptable answers is difficult to find. Indeed it is easier to do philosophy than to talk about philosophy, easier still to talk about it in some other ways than to produce its definition. Yet philosophers do all this and in line with the spirit of their profession, they are prepared to say anything that can be said whether or not it leads to any final conclusion. It is in this light that A.L. Herman defines philosophy as "an intellectual discipline which looks rationally and critically at judgments and pronouncements that are made about the world, man and life."[8]
An Introduction To The Themes And Methods Of African Philosophy

It seems obvious, therefore that as long as every dispute on the question of African philosophy is allowed to supply its own definitions of what constitutes philosophy, the issue at stake will remain that of mere disagreement in definition, and it is difficult to say which definition is right and which is wrong. But perhaps a picture of the matter will be revealed if, as H.S. Stainland suggests in Soglo's book; “Foundations of African Philosophy”, the question, “what is philosophy?” is generally meant by those who take it to be a family of questions which includes:

1. What sort of person is properly called a Philosopher?
2. What sort of activity is properly called Philosophizing?
3. What sort of tradition is properly called a tradition of Philosophizing?
4. What sort of thought system is properly called a Philosophical system?
5. What sort of items on the world literature (written or oral) is properly called “Works of Philosophy”?
6. What sort of place is there for philosophy as an autonomous discipline in modern Universities?
7. What sort of things does a degree in Philosophy from a University qualify a person to do? [18]

v. Some Definitions Of Philosophy

Each of these questions is a demand for some specific information, which although may be an incomplete answer to the nature of philosophical enterprise, nevertheless, throws an important light on it (the question “What is philosophy?”).

All said and done, it is not easy to give a precise definition of Philosophy, but an attempt could be made to spell out what ideas and attitude that could be formed or regarded as Philosophy from the numerous questions set above. To this end, Philosophy may mean a world-view, that is, the basic which a people have or a person has about the origin, nature, and the end of the Universe, life or existence, whether the ideas are explicitly stated or implied in action.

Stated in another way, it could be the basic ideas and beliefs which expresses a people or a persons’ outlook in life. By this Philosophy could mean a way of life with definite ideas and conception of what life and existence means.

Philosophy may also mean that attitude of life which is characteristic of all genuine Philosophers; that is, one of the curiosity to know, maintain a critical attitude of life, openness of mind to all issues and a lack of dogmatic assertions or stand but an attitude of tolerance and readiness to examine everything without prejudice or preconceived notions. Such an attitude to life when it is coupled with reasonable knowledge of the greater issues of life, may give rise to a type of serenity, stoicism, lack of undue excitement and indifference to inevitable difficulties. [19]

Philosophy may also mean a critical and conscious effort to understand the universe, its origin, nature and purpose. This is the philosophy that is dedicated
to western intellectual tradition, at the 6th century B.C. It was a time when men refused to take things for granted and asked questions (and sought answers) about the nature of the Universe, man, society and values.

The concept Philosophy is also used to cover the attempt to examine the nature of the various disciplines or branches of knowledge and to analyze the concepts they employ in order to lay by their hidden assumptions. Thus philosophy of law (Jurisprudence), seeks to establish the origin of law, its nature and the end which law serves in human society.

Philosophy also tries to synthesize human knowledge and to bring together the results from various human knowledge with the view to finding a coherent picture of the universe that could be established.

Philosophy has gone beyond seeing itself as an attempt to understand the nature of the Universe and of man's place within it, it is now more the ever before conceived as a weapon of evolutionary social change, based on the knowledge of the historical forces that shape reality.

No doubt views of philosophers are as well as the body of intellectual ideas do influence our social and political action.

**C. HISTORY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY**

1. **An Overview Of The History Of African Philosophy**

In order to indicate the range of some of the kinds of material that must be included in a discussion of philosophy in Africa, it is well to begin by recalling some of the history of Western philosophy. It is something of an irony that Socrates, the first major philosopher in the western tradition, is known to us entirely for oral arguments imparted to him by his student Plato. For the western philosophical tradition is above all else, a tradition of texts. While there are some important ancient philosophers like Socrates, who is largely known to us through the reports of others, the tradition has developed increasingly as one which pays careful attention to written arguments. However, many of those arguments - in ethics and politics, metaphysics and epistemology, aesthetics and the whole host of other major subdivisions of the subject - concern questions about how many people in many cultures have talked and many, although substantially fewer, have written outside of the broad tradition of Western philosophy. The result is that while those methods of philosophy that have developed in the West through thoughtful analysis of texts are not found everywhere, we are likely to find in every human culture opinions about some of the major questions of Western philosophy. On these important questions there have been discussions in most cultures since the earliest human societies. These constitute what has sometimes been called a 'folk-philosophy'. It is hard to say much about those opinions and discussions in places where they have not been written down. However, we are able to find some evidence of the character of these views in such areas as parts of sub-Saharan Africa where writing was introduced into oral cultures over the last few centuries.

As a result, discussions of African philosophy should include both material on some oral cultures and rather more on the philosophical work that has been done in literate traditions on the African continent, including those that have developed since the introduction of Western philosophical training there.

2. **Oral Cultures**

Two areas of folk-philosophy have been the object of extended scholarly investigation in the late twentieth century: the philosophical psychology of people who speak the Akan languages of the West African littoral (now Ghana) and the epistemological thought of Yoruba-speaking people of western Nigeria. In both cases the folk ideas of the tradition have been addressed by contemporary speakers of the language with Western philosophical training. This is probably the most philosophically sophisticated work that has been carried out in the general field of the philosophical study of folk-philosophy in Africa. It also offers some insight into ways of thinking about both the mind and human cognition that are different from those that are most familiar within the Western tradition. One can also learn a great deal by looking more generally at ethical and aesthetic thought, since in all parts of the continent, philosophical issues concerning evaluation were discussed and views developed before writing Philosophical work on ethics is more developed than in aesthetics and some of the most interesting recent work in African aesthetics also focuses on Yoruba concepts which have been explored in some detail by Western philosophers. The discussion of the status of such work has largely proceeded under the rubric of the debate about ethnophysics, a term intended to cover philosophical work that aims to explore folk philosophies in a systematic manner. Finally, there has also been an important philosophical debate about the character of traditional religious thought in Africa.

2. **Older Literate Traditions**

Although these oral traditions represent old forms of thought, the actual traditions under discussion are not as old as the remaining African literate traditions. The earliest of these is in the writings associated with the ancient civilizations of Egypt, which substantially predate the pre-Socratic philosophers who inhabit the earliest official history of Western philosophy (see Egyptian cosmology, ancient). The relationship between these Egyptian traditions and the beginnings
French Antilles, but later became an Algerian. He was a very important figure in the development of political philosophy in Africa (and much of the Third World). Among the most important political thinkers influenced by philosophy are Kwame Nkrumah, Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere. Out of all the intellectual movements in Africa in this century, the two most important ones of philosophical interest have been Négritude and Pan-Africanism. Philosophy in Africa has changed greatly in the decades since the Second World War and, even more, as African states have gained their independence. Given the significance of the colonial legacy in shaping modern philosophical education in Africa, it is not surprising that there have been serious debates about the proper understanding of what it is for a philosophy to be African. These lively debates in K. A. Appiah’s Opinion, [44] are prevalent in the areas of African epistemology, ethics and aesthetics, are found in both Francophone and Anglophone philosophy.

ii. Ancient African Philosophy

The background study we have giving to the study of African philosophy gives us room to be able to x-ray the different epochs of African philosophy. The ancient, The medieval and The modern.

Ancient African Philosophy is the philosophy developed in Egypt and Alexandria arising from the reality that confronted the thinkers; their natural speculations about the universe, life and death, man and his destiny. The inquiry done here predates those of the Greek philosophical thinkers.

Ancient African philosophers of this period include: Pta-hotep, the first known philosopher in history (2800 BC); some hundreds of years before Greek Thales of (700BC); Imhotep, a black Egyptian who was called the “god of medicine” by the Greeks lived 2000 years before Hippocrates; Hypatia is the first known woman philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician who lived in Alexandria (370-415 AD).

Not only did these Ancient African thinkers predate Greek philosophical thinking, the influence of the former on the later is also evidenced by many. Ancient Greeks like Homer, Herodotus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle acknowledge the Egyptian origin as their birthplace having excelled in the field of mathematics philosophy etc.

The reason for the Egyptian attraction is evident: Egypt was the cradle of civilization, the most developed and influential part of the ancient world. The most revered people at that age were the Egyptians.

a. African Philosophical Texts

It is important to note that some philosophical texts were prevalent at that time; they include the systematized Menphite philosophy, the Egyptian mystery system, the Corpus Hermeticum, the Rand Papyrus, and the Edwin Papyrus.

3. Recent Reports on African Philosophy

Most work in African philosophy in the twentieth century has been carried out by African intellectuals (often interacting with scholars outside Africa) under the influence of philosophical traditions from the European countries that colonized Africa and created her modern system of education. As the colonial systems of education were different, it is helpful to think of this work as belonging to two broadly differentiated traditions, one Francophone and the other Anglophone. While it is true that philosophers in the areas influenced by French (and Francophone-Belgian) colonization developed separately from those areas under British colonial control, a comparison of their work reveals that there has been a substantial cross-flow between them (as there generally has been between philosophy in the French- and English-speaking worlds). The other important colonial power in Africa was Portugal whose commitment to colonial education was less developed.

The sole Portuguese-speaking African intellectual who made a significant philosophical contribution is Amilcar Cabral, whose leadership in the independence movement of Guinea Bissau and the Cape Verde islands was guided by philosophical training influenced by Portuguese Marxism. Cabral’s influence has not been as great as that of Frantz Fanon. He was born in the
The corpus Hermeticum was to be, in the renaissance period accepted as an authentic philosophical text emanating from a formally existing person Hermes Trismegistus, to which authorities like St. Augustine and Lactantius gave credence and evidence.

The corpus is a depositum of Egyptian philosophy in thirty six books. It gives a metaphorical interpretation of Egyptian cosmology in a complimentary fashion. While these forms of writing/language/documentation are difficult to date with precision, the texts of the Corpus were likely redacted between the first and third centuries AD. During the Renaissance, these texts were believed to be of ancient Egyptian origin, and even today some readers believe them to date from Pharaonic Egypt. However, by studying the vocabulary of the texts, the classical scholar Isaac Casaubon showed in 1614 that some of the texts, mainly those dealing with philosophy, betrayed a vocabulary too recent to be so old. More recent research, while affirming the late dating in a period of syncretic cultural ferment in Roman Egypt, suggests more continuity with the culture of Pharaonic Egypt than had previously been believed.

It is on record that the concept of Monotheism, of a unique God, was first expounded by Pharaoh Akkathont (1375-1358) himself a teacher of Moses, a black Egyptian through whom the monotheistic doctrine arrived in the western world.

Ancient Philosophical schools predating all others include the schools at Hermopolis and Heliopolis, (adjacent to Materia where the infant Jesus took refuge in 4. B.C. when he was threatened by Herod's persecution). Others are the schools of Thebes and Memphis. It is important for us to note that the Memphis school was one of the most successful and prosperous schools which ultimately went ahead to form the basis of most Greek Philosophical thought. The British museum has today the inscription of Memphite Philosophy of Ancient origin.

iii. Medieval African Philosophy

The duration here is from the 6th century to the 18th century. Thinkers of this period include Origen, called Windebrand the founder of Christian theology. St Augustine's Christian theology, after his earlier Manichean beliefs, is an important example of the African thought in revolution from tradition to Christianity. Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), a black Muslim, was the first to give a systematic account of the history of science among which philosophy has an important status. The dominance and spread of Islam at this epoch made that religion's theology an integral part of those that came under its conquest, especially North Africa and many countries in the sub-Saharan Africa. The Arabic language became the vehicle of much of the thought of that period, though this thought was the original patrimony of the ancient Egyptian thinkers. Now in contrast with the Greek world.

Other thinkers of this era include the Ghanaian philosopher, William Amo who lived and lectured in Germany in the 18th century, having been trained in the German ideologies and thought system. He was nevertheless known to have preoccupied himself with studies on the nature of African philosophy.

iv. Modern And Contemporary African Philosophy

In our century the earliest works of philosophy were the works of Father Placid Temple, Alexis Kegame, John S Mbiti, Bolaji Idowu, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Nnamdi Azikiwe, etc.

Temple's work on "La Philosophie Bantu" appeared 1945 and was acclaimed a major breakthrough in black African scholarship, being a pioneer work it became one of the basic text for African University students in the Humanities and in Philosophy both in Africa and beyond. Some African Philosophers like C.B. Okolo regarded his work as the Historical beginning of formal African Philosophy. Temple's study of the Bantu's goes through what he analyzes as Bantu Ontology (motion of Being), criteriology, (Bantu Wisdom), Bantu Psychology, (the Human person), Ethics (Moral life). No wonder the drastic criticisms that their work had to face latter on by recent contemporary thinkers on African Philosophy.

J. S. Mbiti published his African Religions and Philosophy in 1969. In this work we find a close knit liaison between religion and all other aspects of the life and traditions of the African man, from where he deduced that the "African is notoriously religious".

After Mbiti's works came those of Idowu, Henri Maurier. Etc who have in some way also contributed to the materials on religion, culture and philosophy as a result of certain researches that was conducted along these lines.

W.E Abraham's The Mind of Africa, Julious Nyerere's Socialism, and Consciencism where some of the thinkers that championed socio political thought ideas and Philosophies in Africa. Their ideas and thought form the foundation for some of the discussions that have taken place in conferences in African and all over the world among Africans and none African scholars today.
D. GREAT DEBATES ON AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

i. Introduction
It already seem so long ago when the debate was raging first in Europe, then in Africa and America, over the existence and non-existence of African philosophy. Whatever one may say of placid Temples, one has to admit that it was his works on Bantu Philosophy that started this debate. Along with the question of the existence and non-existence of African philosophy, philosopher also argued about the nature, the method and the content of African philosophy as well as about the nature and identity of the African. Not surprisingly, the debate was carried on with passion, also because of the historical circumstances of the time.

It is a little more than a decade since the heat of the debate was doused by the establishment of courses in African philosophy in many universities and colleges in Africa, Europe and America, yet it already seem so long ago. Fortunately, the debate is not yet over. It has only changed its form. Philosophers in Africa certainly know that philosophy has not yet finished its job of self-definition. African Philosophers today who ask philosophical question about the African condition as well as those who search the cultural heritage of Africa for a philosophical understanding of the human Being and the world are, in effect, carrying on the debate. So are those who are now returning to the assertions of the pioneers of African Philosophical revival in order to think some of their thoughts through to their ultimate logical conclusions, to question some of their assumptions or to reveal some of their limitations.

More significantly is the fact that some of these pioneer thinkers themselves have had significant opportunity to modify their earlier positions, adding flesh to some of their earlier skeletal thoughts and answering some of their critics. Since many of them are teachers of philosophy in the academies, they have also had the opportunity to further influence, stimulate fresh reflections amongst their students and discussants during their lectures. As a result of these their intellectual influence has gone beyond what is usually read in their publications. This is what I intend to do in this section of this book.

I want to consider most of the arguments that have made headlines and reconsider their positions in the light of the current trends and counter arguments that have been offered by various other corners over the past decade in the study of African philosophy.

ii. What Qualifies All Materials In African Philosophy As Real Texts In African Philosophy?
No author has to my knowledge declared that there can be no African philosophy. One of the main issues at state is: "Is the bulk of materials called African philosophy by their authors, readers and researchers genuinely qualify to be called African philosophy?" Such materials include those of Placid Temples, A. Kegame, J. S Mbiti, and other tradition based works that was done in the period in question. Added to the subjects discussed where the political ideologies of Nkrumah, Nyerere, Senghor etc.

Obviously the authors of these materials meant them to be African Philosophy in the sense of portraying the fundamental thought pattern and rational of the lives and actions of the people in question. These intentions notwithstanding, Contemporary thinkers have challenged and questioned their philosophical status from which they have written and argued their opinions. Authors in this category include Paul Houtonji, A. T. Okera, W. A. J. Heart, J. E. Waidu, Peter, Bodurin and Odera Oruka. I shall in this book give only a resume of the arguments that have been offered on the issues at hand.

Okere argues that philosophy is individual thinking on a specific issue with culture as the background for this reflection. That culture and its content cannot be the philosophy itself as all people have their individual cultures- then their philosophies rising from these. Not only then that these text are not African philosophy but also that they are not philosophy based on these criteria.

For Hountondji, a text is African only if (A) its author is African, (B) that the Author describes his work as Philosopher, (C) that the work must be a written text. To this end therefore what Temples and Kegame presented to us may be termed Philosophy but it can't be accepted as African because the authors are not Africans. In fact he added "it is their own philosophy that they have succeeded in presenting to us and not that of the Bantus'.

Hountondji further argues that philosophy is a scientific inquiry based on formal logic and rational argumentation and systematic methodology; these features are drastically lacking in the traditional African philosophies that they presented to us in their works.

For Kwasi Wadu, he contrasted these traditional thought patterns with the western philosophical texts and concluded that African traditional philosophies are at best folk Philosophies. This is because he believes that "without arguments and rational clarifications, we can't say we are practicing philosophy."

For P. Bodurin, he finds the works of Kegame, Temples and Mbiti philosophically unsatisfactory because they are devoid of philosophical justifications of the belief of the people in question.

From Odera Ouka point of view, he is of the opinion that the rejectionary attitude of the writers distinguishes four strands of works done on African thought: Ethnomethodology, Philosophical sagacity, Nationalist Ideological Philosophy, And Professional Philosophy. He crowns only the last with success as philosophy.
to highlight the point that philosophy goes a little far beyond the mere reflection or thinning at an point in time. Take beliefs for instance, in examining our own and other people's beliefs, we must ask, are their beliefs justified? What reasons do we have to suppose that they are true? What evidence count against them. Thus, "while everybody can think at one point in time, philosophy takes us even a step further to ascertain the justification of their beliefs by the application of rational thinking and analysis."

Accepted that everybody at some point in time can think and reflect about certain issues of life that may befall man from time to time, we will want to note here that, not to accept that the African man can partake in this simple act of reflection can amount to dehumanizing such a person. This idea is therefore not acceptable; every African can therefore participate in the activity called philosophy. The real problem here is that of identifying who really qualifies to be called an African since most of the literatures written as African philosophy text have been rejected on account that the authors were not Africans by birth and nationality.

iv. The Existence and Non Existence of African Philosophy
The basic proposition here is that 'Africans Do not have a Philosophy'.
In the last 2 studies, we highlighted the major premise on which the arguments we are about to advance here evolved from. The consequent arguments that have been raised in this regard, is captured by the proposition above. No doubt, these arguments are hinged on an individual's understanding of what philosophy is. It is clear how the argument progressed significantly depending on answers and conclusions that we are willing to deduce from them. The presentation I want to make here is as captured and presented in Sogolo's book, "Foundations of African Philosophy". [22] There in the text he made reference to an argument presented by E A Ruch. He stated one of the commonest arguments in this form:

"There are no African Philosophers, as such; there can be no African Philosophy."

By the above claim we perceive that E. A. Ruch understands his claim to mean that what is generally referred to as African philosophy is a body of community thoughts not traceable to any set of identifiable individual thinker. By this, Ruch is asking us to produce our African equivalents of Aristotle, Socrates or Plato, Kant, Hegel or Descartes. For this will be the major premise on which philosophy is, can be founded. In response, any African present will immediately be tempted to site names such as J. S. Mbiti, J. Nyerere, K. Nkrumah, L. Senghor, Awolowo, Azikiwe, Odum, etc. But the critics have been known to retort by arguing that the works of these philosophers are nothing more than mere collections, interpretations and disseminations of African world views in western clothing's and as such, do not qualify as philosophy. More importantly, they go further to say that these works do not in method and intellectual depth
Analysis of the above Argument.
Let us consider the above positions more closely. It may appear true that for there to be philosophy, there must be philosophers. More so, if we go by the history of Western philosophy in which most known philosophical doctrines are credited to specific thinkers or group of thinkers. However, for several reasons, the ideas of individual authors may either outlive them or may not simply be associated with their names. The most easily conceivable situation is when a thinker nurses some original idea which he is unable to articulate clearly, and which he leaves behind haphazardly stated due to some contingencies such as death. It is possible for another thinker to inherit this idea, assimilate it, and put it into a well systematized philosophical doctrine. Here is a philosophical doctrine we may say, but it is difficult to say whose doctrine it is, that of the original thinker or that of the man who does the embellishments.

It may be thought at this point that the point has been missed since whoever gets it will have the doctrine credited to him as an individual author. But our main argument here is that "there is hardly any philosophical doctrine that is wholly the product of one individual thinker". This is because, every philosophical thesis is crystallized from a synthesis of concepts, ideas, arguments, and sometimes, of half-naked formulations which the author gathers both from identifiable sources and from sources which completely elude his consciousness. In cases such as these I do not see why the authenticity of a fully materialized idea should be questioned solely because a specified starting point or finishing point or better still, a name to which this philosophy can be tied to, or pinpointed. Let us note that intellectual transition will become impossible if ideas do not flow from one point to another.

We then agreed that there could be pools of ideas familiar to all practicing philosophers but whose original sources nobody bothers to think about, these pull of ideas are often referred to as "Community or Schools of Thoughts". What you may call philosophies without philosophers. But it is important that their anonymity does not in any way affect the authenticity of the thought itself. Therefore the claim that there cannot be African philosophy because there are no African philosophers as it were, is indeed wrong, unfounded, baseless and as such, not acceptable.

Myths, proverbs, fables, etc which are examples of community products but not traceable to any individual author, apart from seeing it as floating thoughts which cannot be tied to any known authors, does not reduce the fact that they constitute of thoughts that are a deep and are a rich source of knowledge and inspiration in the African context. Inspirations that are typical alone to Africans.
not because it is illogical but because it is not in accordance with reality. It is not factually correct.

The reason Levy-Bruhl gave for describing traditional thoughts as prelogical is that the actions and beliefs involved failed to display a clear link between cause and effect. In other words these positions are often divided between appearance and reality but the fact remains that reality is something that can be measured independently. The motion of what is real and what is unreal varies from culture to culture. This is what Peter Winch means by saying that we can not apply the motion of reality held in scientific cultures as standard for assessing the thought of a non-scientific culture. It is what Nadle seems to do when he judges the rationality of magical activities in terms of the appropriateness between means and end.

Ikwa-ala. For instance an Igbo ritual culture has its basic philosophy tied around a kind of reconciliation that becomes very necessary when effort is made to restore to the status quo, by offerings of special sacrifice to the god of the land, some specific sacrifices to the gods of the land. This is done with the view to make reparations for a crime “Uru-ala” by certain individuals or the entire community in some extreme situations.

No doubt, Ikwa-ala is a communal religious philosophy thought out by somebody and now universalized among the Igbo’s. This communal philosophy started as a personal philosophy which enunciates that moral principles are best described by the categorical imperative. It is our contention therefore that both communal and individual reflections and critical thinking towards solutions to our problems are valid and must be given a chance.

That you do not know about a particular Proverb, Myth, culture, or Tradition of certain peoples or where it was originated from, does not debase them from being Philosophy. To even call these works philosophy in a debased sense is to be guilty of the ignorance of the full meaning of philosophy as an inquiry and a reflective activity, be it by an individual or by a whole community.

We all therefore agree that we need to bend down and do more serious questioning on the African mystery. But to deny the reality of what is already is to deny ones origin and starting point.

vi. Do We Really Have An African Philosophy?
Let me start by saying that the Tempelsian sense (traditional, communal or cultural) is in fact more authentic and relevant to African as starting point of reflection on the African reality than the new breed of professional philosophies that claims the title of African Philosophy. An example is K. Wiredu’s contribution to African Philosophy.
E. BRANCHES OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Just as we are able to identify some specific branches of philosophy in western philosophy, thinkers who study African philosophy have from their various studies been able to identify some of the basic branches of philosophy that exist in the African context. These branches have been known as channels through which the thought systems, value systems and some other basic methodologies that constitute the life and practice that have been known to be typical of the African people, the mode through which any seeking to study Africa will easily gain a quick knowledge about the people and culture of the African.

Branches that have been identified by contemporary studies in African philosophy include, Metaphysics, Logic, Epistemology, Ethics, Cosmology, Anthropology, Socio-Political Philosophy, Axiology, Aesthetics, Psychology, Hermeneutic / linguistic philosophy. We shall be focusing on a few of the above-mentioned branches of African philosophy in this book.

i. Metaphysics

This branch is most central to the study of African philosophy. This is not because it only addresses the most fundamental questions and issues of reality, existence and interactions, but also because the African concept of particular beings is intricately tied up to that of the Supreme Being. As a result of this some writers have argued that the way of life and method of the African is one that is best described as Metaphysical.

ii. Logic

In Western Philosophy, logic is conceived basically as the science of reasoning, the kind of reasoning which either falls into the class of inductive or deductive reasoning, the kind of reasoning that is directed to providing conclusions and deductions that are perceived to be valid. Where the reasoning is proven to be invalid, the structure of the premises reveals this evidently to all the parties involved.

In African Philosophy though, the laws of thought are not entirely different. In the African context, there seem to exist not just one but various mode of thought or reasoning among various people. The factors that influence these variances in the mode of reasoning include the point of departure, background of the group or culture in question, the mentalities and values of the given people. Where 2+2 is perceived as 4 in a given context, the result may be more or less than 4 in another given context. For instance where two cows equal to the bride price of one woman, in another community, the reasoning that may be acceptable is may just be 2 Pennies equal the bride price of a woman.

The reasoning behind this thought pattern is that Logic in the African context must address certain conceptual African frame work that is different from those of the western culture.

iii. Epistemology

While western philosophy considers epistemology as the theory of Knowledge, African philosophy has been known to attach so great importance to the power of intelligence and the process of acquiring this knowledge Amamihie in the Igbo world view; The things that form its thought pattern.

The thought pattern of the Igbo refers to the manners and process of forming ideas, concepts and judgments and hence the process of arriving at beliefs and holding various opinions as regards the truth or nature of anything which ultimately constitute his knowledge.

Among Africans, it is generally believed that the wiser an individual gets, the better one is more qualified for living out his/her full potentials as a being in the world. There are thus rules that govern what an individual is permitted to know at a certain time of his life. This is because of the strong belief that there is a special time allotted to acquiring certain knowledge about the realities of life.

Where an individual ventures into a field of knowledge that is not within his/her jurisdiction, the consequences are usually sever. In most cases, the consequences could be fatal. As such the saying goes in the Igbo philosophy, Nwata namgi ihe chowa ihe gburu Nnaya, ihe gburu Nnaya egbui ya. This when interpreted literally means (a foolish child who persistently seek to uncover the knowledge) or thing that killed his father, eventually will suffer the same fate as his father). This Igbo proverb Ilu is a form of caution that is directed at bringing into full view the place and value of knowledge among the African people and the category of knowledge that is at the disposal of certain individuals at certain points in time.

iv. Ethics

Ethics as conceived in the African setting is slightly different from what is obtained in the Western setting. Ethics from the African perspective is a harmonization of aspects of metaphysics epistemology and even religion, even though certain corners have argued that ethics from the African perspective is independent of religion. To this present claims, some contemporary thinkers in the likes of Pantaleon Iroegbu as captured by Omorogbe, gives a Yes and a No answer to the above suppositions.

For Omogbe, he opines that while the consciousness of God does not directly determine all moral norms, the fear of God makes the realization of certain norms effective. On the other hand, a God fearing Person is a morally up right person. One who does not fear God is equally morally abominable.
v. Cosmology
The concept of the universe (Uwa) remains one that has eluded the African for some time now as a matter of fact, Africans have wondered if the African will ever come to terms with the realities and ambiguities that surround the African cosmology.

In Igbo thought Uwa (World) is a universalizing concept, comparable according to T. I. Okere and other thinkers, to the Western conception of being. In the Igbo world view, Uwa evokes totality, it also evokes destiny whether good or bad. No doubt, Africa traditional cosmology remains a wealthy research ground for African philosophers.

vi. Socio-Political
At this point it's become important to note that so many attempts has been made to capture the thought of the African as regards his orientation and world views when it comes to matters of governance and leadership. The truth is that nearly all that has been captured in these literatures so far, to a large extent, is a misrepresentation of the African Socio-Political thought pattern.

One of such enduring thoughts that have been a direct misrepresentation of the African Socio-political thought system is the saying "Igbo enwegi Eze" which when interpreted literally means (the Igbo people are a people without the need of kingship). The implications of this representation about the Igbo man has for a long time, painted the wrong image about the African and the Igbo man in particular.

African writers have tried to correct these wrong impressions by the series of literatures that have been published in recent times. Some of the titles published which have tried to capture the true Africa socio-political thought include, Consciencism, Ujama Ujam, Negritude, to mention but a few. In all these writings, we see revealed, a different but yet more correct socio-political ideology of the African person. Some writers who sort one word with which to capture the socio-political thought of the African man have chosen a socio political theory called Communism.

F. METHODS OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

i. Introductions
Established that Africans have a philosophy or that they do not have a philosophy as argued by Wiredu and others who share his thoughts: "that African traditional philosophy is yet to exist", one thing is clear and distinct which is that Africans have in time, been known to have a method that distinguished them from every tribe, tongue, race, and cultures in the world.

From the way the African person salutes his neighbour to the way he dresses during ordinary and special occasions, to the kind of dance and tradition that are typical of special ceremonies such as wedding rights, burial ceremonies, Initiation rites, and during special Masquerades dances, the African man evidently has distinguished himself so well to go unnoticed. A study of the African methodology therefore is an attempt to capture wholistically, the entire worldview of the African person.

The aim of our study here is to expose the students of African philosophy and Human Development to the various methodes of thought which are typical to the African alone and by implication distinguish them from every other race of people on planet earth. The student by the end of the study is expected to be able to identify and state critically how these methods have aided the development of African philosophy.

ii. Metaphysical Orientations
One of the main features of traditional African thought is its Metaphysical Orientation. In content therefore, one may use the supernatural or spiritistic nature of traditional African philosophy as its model of distinction from modern African philosophy. Let us note that there is a difference between the two traditional African philosophies. One is largely speculative and admittedly, lacks the analytic flavors that characterize modern approaches to philosophy. But perhaps, the most significant difference, one that is often overstressed by critics, is that traditional African philosophy is communalistic, that it is a body of thought attributed to the community rather to individuals. To some, this amounts to a philosophy without philosophers, in contrast to modern philosophy which is authored by certain individuals.

As for methodology, the persistent age-long controversy between speculative and analytic philosophers has persisted. It is evident that neither of the approaches has claim to superiority and it will be an error to regard communal thoughts as unsystematic as and therefore less philosophical than the thoughts of individuals.
iii. Metaphysical Thinking In African Philosophy

This thinking broadly is the method that is typical of traditional African philosophy. Here when questions such as, why does lighting kill innocent people and destroy properties, why are some people successful whereas others are not, despite their efforts, they still fail to make ends meet. Why do innocent people become ill and die? These and other similar questions shows human beings need to understand the world he is living in, to make sense of the kind of reality they find themselves in.

People differ about the validity of these questions. In some communities, they are seriously asked and answered. In others, they are rejected as non-questions, and as such meaningless. The stories that go with these tales, are that they are just myths and as such do not, in some sort of way, portray reality. The reason for this is mainly because people have different conceptions of reality, that in reality hangs together because of certain claims. There are therefore no blind happenings but only planned happenings. Those who reject these questions as meaningless think of reality in mechanical terms, in terms of mechanical causation. "Such thinking about reality, that is, such attempt to fathom what is real and what is not and what the ultimate nature of reality is, is what we in philosophy call Metaphysical thinking. Metaphysics is that branch of philosophy which is concerned with the most fundamental questions about existence, essence, space and time, the nature of the universe cause and effect, etc.

In truth, for every extraordinary event, most westerners are likely to speculate about unknown scientific principles than to test their minds on chance. It is true that they normally explain events by scientific principles but what is more true is that when these principles fail in the explanation of a particular event, the criterion embraces a different explanation category, for which he comes close to the traditional African.

An extraordinary event is inexplicable to the westerner only in the sense that it has nonscientific explanation. He does not consider it inexplicable beyond science (for he also thinks beyond science) and he believes that there are inexplicable powers "that explains" the inexplicable. By definition, the nature of the Christian God presupposes that He alone can perform that which is empirically or even logically impossible. He alone can account for the extraordinary events as in miracles, which is an integral part of Christian doctrine.

The cause of rain

Let us consider the scientific explanation of rain as presented by the western thought. Before rain can fall to the earth, certain distinctive processes are involved. This include: the intense heating and cooling of the earth's surface and atmosphere during the day time by the heat from the sun. This intense heating brings about what is called laps rate, the process that cause water vapor to rise from the sea and rivers in the coastal lands to the earth's atmosphere. On-shore winds now blows this moisture laden winds into the continental areas where the fall back again to the earth as rain when the relative humidity exceeds 80% percent.

But for the typical African man, the process that ensures that rain falls to the earth's surface is quite different. In the African society, rain is regarded as great blessing, thus whenever it rains people rejoice, except when it rains in excesses and thereby cause untold damage on the crops, lands and on the people of the land. It is believed by certain corners that when the rains begin to come down, it is because the gods have taken in too much drink and as a result must pass out water which falls down to the earth as rain. It therefore makes sense to have certain persons (Rain Makers) who can influence the gods to drink so much wine so as to ensure that they constantly pass them out as rain to the earth. The rain makers are able to influence the gods to drink wine and make water through certain specific rituals and sacrifices which only they can perform. This general belief about the cause of rain is very common among most parts of the African people and culture. Illogical as these belief of the African man may sound, they strongly believe in it and these practices have been known to work for them over time.

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iv. Witchcraft: An Issue In African Metaphysics

From the point of science, phenomena such as miracles, magic, witchcraft and many others not susceptible to direct empirical observations are considered unreal. Although the arguments for their rejection vary from one phenomenon to another, the converging point is that these phenomena are unreal because they have no communicable explanation or means, one that accords with the laws of nature and is verifiable by the methods of science. Some of these phenomena, for example, miracles, witchcraft presupposes the existence of
supernatural agents, gods spirits, etc., by whose powers certain acts are performed which, to beg the question for moment, violates the laws of nature. These acts and belief systems constitute a mode of thought that is adopted as a method in the African world view.

As a metaphysical phenomenon, the ontological status of witchcraft is not within the bounds of human reasoning. In other words whether witches exist in reality or not, is not a question that can be settled by exercise of the human intellect. Also by conception, witches as metaphysical entities that are not subject to any kind of scientific investigation. Speculations in this direction are therefore unlikely to be helpful. It will be absurd for somebody to demand to see a witch since witches are by definition not visible entities.

While anthropologist and sociologists use the term “Witch” and witchcraft, we will find that some African societies do not hold this belief. It would also actually mean that some witches do not realize that they are witches and this makes witchcraft an infectious or hereditary tendency. Some women suspect themselves to be witches while in fact, they are not.

By Definition, Witchcraft is a term used more popularly and broadly to describe all sort of evil employment of mystical powers. Generally in a secret fashion, African societies do not often draw this rather academic distinction between witches, sorcery, someone or his belongings. Generally the same word is used for all these English terms and the same person is accused or suspected of employing one or more of these ways of hunting members of his community.

In popular usage, the term “Witchcraft” is employed to designate the harmful employment of mystical powers in all its different manifestations. I am inclined to use this term witch or witchcraft in this broader sense and here theologians may wish to Part Company with anthropologists. In any case it is easier to say “bewitched” than evil “maximize” or sorceries, in describing the use of this power to harm another person. Whatever terminology that wins at the end, one thing is certain, and that is that African people believe that there are individuals who have access to mystical powers which they employ for destructive purposes. In a non-scientific environment, beliefs of this type cannot be far from fear, falsehood, exaggeration, suspicion, friction and irrationality. Whatever reality there is concerning witchcraft in the broad and popular sense of the term, the belief in it is there in every African village, and that belief affects everyone for worse. It is a part of the religious corpus of belief.

A.  “The Ju-Ju in my life”
To further drive the message home on our study of mystical powers often known as witch craft of sorcery, we want to make reference to a write up by J. H. Neal. The writer gives an account of his experience with mystical powers in Ghana where for ten years he was the chief investigation officer. Neal was an Englishman who saw, met tasted and fought against these powers until he finally had to take refuge under the same powers, something that few Europeans ever experienced or could believe could ever happen to them in Africa.

During the construction of a new modern Harbor at Tema, near Accra Ghana, building materials and equipment began to be stolen mysteriously. Reports reached Neal who went there to investigate. In investigation, Neal advised the supervisor of the camp site on the best way to beef up security measures against theft in the site. As he was about to leave, his supervisor complained to him that there was a tree giving them a headache. Neal went over to see the tree which he found standing alone in the center of a large compound where all other trees and shrubs had been cleared. It was a small tree. The supervisor told Neal that all the mechanical equipment they had in the site had failed to uproot the tree. An African foreman in the sight reported that it was a magic tree and which could be removed only if and when the spirits living in it agree to forsake the tree and go to another tree.

Instructions were given to send for a traditional medicine man (Priest) who on arrival and after making certain consultations with the forces (Spirits) that lived in the tree, he requested a sacrifice of three sheep and an offering of three bottles of gin for the spirits and £100 as payments for the rituals. When the sheep had been slaughtered and the bottles of gin emptied at the base of the tree, the diviner communed with the spirits persuading them to leave that tree for another bigger and better tree.

When the rites was over, the European who had all this while watched in amusements, now gave orders to use the biggest bulldozers to uproot the tree, but the diviner told him that it won't be necessary any more. He told them that all they now needed was a couple of laborers to pull the tree out of the ground with mere spades and shovels. It turned out to be so for in about an hour later the tree came down to the amazement of the European and the satisfaction of the African onlookers.

B.  Witchcraft in African Philosophy
In another encounter Bloomhill in a book “Witchcraft in Africa” tells the story of a European farmer in Rhodesia who lived next door to another European farmer. Both were unmarried and seem to match each other. The man proposed to the woman and was accepted. She unexpectedly visited him one evening and was infuriated to discover that he was having love affair with the African maid. She burst out in fury and calling the maid a “filthy black bitch”, broke off the engagement, never wishing to see him again. The next day the woman saw a black bitch and a white ram on her farm, and a few moments later her dog was dead, as if beaten by a snake. Two days later, a black bitch and a white ram entered the cattle kraal; and a few moments later her finest Jersey was dying with the front legs broken off.
An Introduction To The Themes And Methods Of African Philosophy

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A. “The Ju-Ju in my life”
To further drive the message home on our study of mystical powers often known as witch craft of sorcery, we want to make reference to a write up by J. H. Neal. He gives an account of his experience with mystical powers in Ghana where for ten years he was the chief investigation officer. Neal was an Englishman who saw, met, tasted and fought against these powers until he finally had to take refuge under the same powers, something that few Europeans ever experienced or could believe could ever happen to them in Africa.

During the construction of a new modern Harbor at Tema, near Accra Ghana, building materials and equipment began to be stolen mysteriously. Reports reached Neal who went there to investigate. In investigation, Neal advised the supervisor of the camp site on the best way to beef up security measures against theft in the site. As he was about to leave, his supervisor complained to him that there was a tree giving them a headache. Neal went over to see the tree which he found standing alone in the center of a large compound where all other trees and shrubs had been cleared. It was a small tree. The supervisor told Neal that all the mechanical equipment they had in the site had failed to uproot the tree. An African foreman in the sight reported that it was a magic tree and which could be removed only if and when the spirits living in it agree to forsake the tree and go to another tree.

Instructions were given to send for a traditional medicine man (Priest) who on arrival and after making certain consultations with the forces (Spirits) that lived in the tree, he requested a sacrifice of three sheep and an offering of three bottles of gin for the spirits and £100 as payments for the rituals. When the sheep had been slaughtered and the bottles of gin emptied at the base of the tree, the diviner communed with the spirits persuading them to leave that tree for another bigger and better tree.

When the rites were over, the European who had all this while watched in amusements, now gave orders to use the biggest bulldozers to uproot the tree, but the diviner told him that it won’t be necessary any more. He told them that all they now needed was a couple of laborers to pull the tree out of the ground with mere spades and shovels. It turned out to be so for in about an hour later the tree came down to the amazement of the European and the satisfaction of the African onlookers.

B. Witchcraft in African Philosophy
In another encounter Bloomhill in a book “Witchcraft in Africa” tells the story of a European farmer in Rhodesia who lived next door to another European farmer. Both were unmarried and seem to match each other. The man proposed to the woman and was accepted. She unexpectedly visited him one evening and was infuriated to discover that he was having love affair with the African maid. She burst out in fury and calling the maid a “filthy black bitch”, broke off the engagement, never wishing to see him again. The next day the woman saw a black bitch and a white ram on her farm, and a few moments later her dog was dead, as if beaten by a snake. Two days later, a black bitch and a white ram entered the cattle kraal; and a few moments later her finest Jersey was dying with the front legs broken off.
Disaster after disaster came upon this woman, and every time it occurred after she had seen the black bitch and the white ram. Finally she sent for an expert African medicine man (Witchdoctor). He prepared the right medicine, and taking her with him secretly, they followed the two animals the next afternoon. The animals dived into a river nearby and emerged and went to the home of the European farmer. The woman and the medicine man followed them there and found them dripping water. But they were no longer animals, they were now the farmer himself and the African maid. The medicine man gave them his medicine (Ju-Ju) from a horn and cured them from the power to change into animals. This action ended the disasters of the woman farmer.

These stories presented here about the use of mystical powers, magic, witchcrafts, and sorcery is presented with an attempt to capture and add credence to the subject in question (Metaphysical Thinking in African Philosophy) this mode of thought is indeed one method of thinking and behaviour that cuts across virtually all African cultures and traditions.

G. STYLISTICS / TOOLS IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

i. Introduction.

Africa is known to be traversed by many languages that have evolved over time to facilitate communication among its people. This notwithstanding, studies have shown that each clan, tribe, and culture seem to have certain mediums through which further communication is driven home. Popular mediums among the African cultures include the use of Myths, Proverbs, folk laws and Oral Traditions to mention but a few. In the next pages that shall follow, we shall consider some studies that have been done in these mediums that have in the recent times been used as tools that enhance the understanding of the African mode of thought.

ii. African Myths

The word Myth as captured by Encarta Dictionary defines myth in the following ways:

1. Idealized conception: a set of often idealized or glamorized ideas and stories surrounding a particular phenomenon, concept, or famous person.

2. Ancient story: a traditional story about heroes or supernatural beings, often attempting to explain the origins of natural phenomena or aspects of human behavior.

Of all these various definitions of myths, the last definition tends to capture the sense in which we want to discuss the subject as a tool in African Philosophy.

Thoughts and ideas in traditional Igbo thought as is the case in some other African languages are expressed mainly through myths, proverbs, idioms, and other archetypal images. It is thus described as "MYTHOLOGIC", That is when the claim of reasoning and argument can be seen to be wrapped up with myths or where information is passed via this medium, when such takes place, we say that the tool used here is highly mythical.

Myths abound in stories, proverbs, idioms and songs describing the origin and nature of the universe, their various community deities, origin of all created beings, life in remote past, etc. These myths may not contain the true or actual stories (on their face value) of the original state of affairs but yet they embody certain central ideas and beliefs as ideological forces which influence the action and life of the people in question while providing the intellectual and normal climate in which the people think and act.

After a series of studies on this subject, we had reasons to wonder why certain tribes and cultures attach so much importance to myths and all such sayings and beliefs that fall in this category. Our findings revealed that the use of myths for certain cultures of the people in Nigeria, forms part of their life style or method through which they express themselves.

The Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria for instance have this strong tale about how they are of the descendants of Oduduwa. A god who they believe came down from heaven with a chicken in his hand. The story has it that it was the scratchy activity of the chicken in search of food on the earth's surface, which gave birth to the other Yoruba states in the south western part of Nigeria: Osun, Oyo, and Ondo. A people or culture so taken by this ideology and beliefs; Western philosophy argues, can't help but promote a lot of falsehood.

Africa thus has a style of making use of myths to explain phenomena they don't seem to have immediate and direct explanations to (The Odudua's story) for example. To this end, Africans and indeed Nigerians have been known to practice methods known as metaphysical in nature. As a result of this, her people are very spiritual (the very strong belief in the existence and influence of spirit forces in the daily lives of men) in their beliefs and practice. "Unfortunately, this is one very factor that cannot be rubbed off the African man. It is what defines him, it is his way of life".

It is on this note that we want to observe that when it comes to myths, arguments proceeds by the use of standards as well as imaginary images and stories and idioms designed to whip up the emotions necessary to drive accent to a desired conclusion. Often the images are mystical, often plain common-sense. This however, does not exhaust the realm of traditional thought and method as empirical facts are generally admitted in the realm of factual arguments. In most cases the empirical facts rise to the conclusions. All that the argument does is to
try to evoke accent. For example in the story above, the fact of literacy and its consequences to the illiterate and the fact that other towns have literate representatives are empirical facts on which the story is based.

iii. African Speeches & Proverbs

a. Speech

Another tool of communicating thoughts, ideas and feelings that is quite common among Africans is the 'Speech Pattern' ('inhwe Nkwu wa okwu'). Speech (Okwu) therefore is one of the most expensive and most crucial elements in relationship among traditional Africans. It is the nucleus of language. In one's own speech is discovered one heart, mind, soul, one person. (28)

A good person for the Africans is defined as a person with good words; (Okwu Oma). While a bad person is one with bad or evil words (Okwu Ojo). The words that are uttered by an individual define the stance and position that the person belongs to i.e. the moral, social and ontological state of the speaker.

b. Language

A Person's Language (Asusu) is the heritage that distinguishes a people, a tradition, it is a form of identity, a mark of the people. Thus language puts people in relationship with one another. It is thus creative; it marks, makes and defines the community. A good language builds a community while bad language does the opposite. (29) Asusu language makes the young grow in traditional wisdom. While the aged is known for his mastery and use of rich words (Okwu) in the Language in expressing himself, the right words okwu in a particular language, spoken in the right time have been known to heal the wounds of a community while it further unifies and strengthens their goal and objectives towards life.

We must also add here that there are mystical powers in Okwu words', especially those of a senior person to a junior one, in terms of age, social status, office or position. The words of Parents for instance, carries "Power" when spoken to the children, they bring about good fortune. Such words have been known to evoke success, peace, sorrows or blessings, especially when spoken in the moments of crisis. The words of the medicine-man works through the medicine that he gives and it is this (Okwu) words perhaps that carries more power than the herb that is often administered with the intention of curing or preventing harm and misfortune from taking place. Therefore formal, "curse" (Akwukwu) and "blessings" (Njoozi) are extremely potent. This is why people may travel extremely long distances to receive these formal blessings. In the same vein, all African persons are extremely careful to avoid any action that may attract such formal curses from parents or medicine man. The spiritualist / medicine-man / Witch or Native Doctor who we discussed in the previous section has much mystical powers by virtue of his office and profession. This is because he has over time, by virtue of certain gifts, often and most times inherited powers by birth. They have mastered the use of the forces of nature unlike the ordinary man who does not have such dispositions, at disposal. This subject we will discuss in another section later.

The above paragraphs have prepared us for the advanced mode of speech (Okwu or Asusu) this kind of Okwu, (Ifu) Proverbs is an exclusive reserved of a certain class of people in the society.

PROVERBS (Ifu) constitute the core of speech in African societies. A proverb tends to give speech it's weight. It hinders it from derailing. It posits it into objectivity of human and cultural experiences. "Achebe in one of his writings, captures proverbs as the oil with which the yam of speech is eaten". (Ifu bu Nmanu aneji ere Okwu). They both hide and reveal the content, meaning and significance of ideas. In themselves, they can be variously interpreted but in content of their use, their meaning becomes clear. This is why often for every proverbs, there is a contextual dictum that needs deeper insight to understand their full implications. They are a greater force in formal African communication but they need mastery and assiduity to employ them well.(30)

iv. African Oral Traditions

The Igbo language as we have shown in the previous passages is rich in idioms, proverbs and myths, a distinguishing character which is typical of African languages. Thus it is said that "Ifu bu manu eji ere Okwu" (Proverbs are oil with which words are eaten). Any speaker or user of the language Asusu, who does not know how to apply proverbs, idioms and myths is said to be a learner or novice to the language in question. (Ona-amu ikwu Okwu amu). Any speech made without them is regarded as dried and as such the speaker is said to be eating his words (O na-ata okwu ata). These proverbs come into play more, when matters of great importance are to be decided upon, as such, this mode of communication has been known to be a form of democratic discussion where a collective decision is often reached using these arguments that are written with rich and mystical force. For example, the under listed ensured during an argument in a typical Igbo community, an argument between two communities.

a. "Ewi adighi agba so ehhie nefu" (the giant rat does not run in the afternoon without a cause). The previous proverb stresses the urgency, importance and emergency of the situation for which an event is taking place. In this case, there is more to the sudden gathering of these dignitaries from these two communities. Something serious must be amiss.

b. "Ikpe Agwo ka nma na ulo Eke", (The best place to settle all matters of dispute concerning snakes is at the king Cobra's chamber). This was to show why the town square was chosen as the venue for meeting and not the chief's
house as might otherwise be the case where certain persons might feel victimized by virtue of the location of the trial at hand.

c. “Madu adighi Emecha ihe Oma Ewere ihu ogo Kouaya Ugwo” (It is bad to return evil to a man who has done you good). Here, we see a natural note is made of the notion of justice which prohibits repaying a good action with an evil deed. One good turn therefore deserves another.

d. “Anagi ahucha onu Nwanunu, ewere juba ebe osi eri inri” (it is not proper to ask where the bird feeds from, after clearly seeing its mouth.) By this, the speaker implies that the choice or reasons for which the argument ensued was obviously clear and not in any way hidden to the naked eyes. It becomes wrong for one to pretend not to know the reason for which the meeting was called for.

e. “Onye anagbara aja, Ya were. Nti ya Nuru”. This is the biblical equivalent of the saying “He who has an ear, let him hear”. The implication of this statement is that the parties concerned in the dispute should take advantage of the resolutions made and therefore abide by them for their own good and in the interest of peace.

This stylistics applied here in the above passages is indicative of the various vehicles that aid communication in a typical African setting. In this case, the scenario described here is exclusive to the advanced citizens of a community. One often has to be matured in age and in wisdom before he is inducted into the class of persons who can understand and make use of the various styles discussed so far in this section. Where an armature finds his way into this group, he would most certainly find it very difficult to understand and respond when communicated to. In such a case, where an individual fails to understand the deeper and not the literal meaning of the proverb told him, he is often told that “Ego ejiri Luo Nnegi furu ukporo” (The bride-prize or dowry that was paid on your mother’s head was entirely a waist). [27]

v. African Folk Laws
These folk laws are often captured in folk stories. These abound in the Igbo culture and in most parts of the African literature and culture. They range from the explanations of the origin of the world, Man, Animals, water, etc. to the explanation of why certain things are what and how they are, (for example there are folk stories to explain why the earth and the sky is separated from each other, there are also stories why God went to live on high and Men remained here on the earth. There are also stories why there is death in the world and not life ad-infinendum. Etc.

Besides these there are also numerous stories about the activities of the gods, certain Heroes that have lived among men. There are also stories about animals especially the tortoise who is the hero of most Igbo folk stories.

It is important to mention at this point that from these folk stories, an insight into a number of basic beliefs of the people in question is gained. Besides, the fables and stories play a didactic role, by this we mean that they are used to instruct and teach certain vital lessons while amusing the listeners at the same time.

The traditional story telling method was very instrumental and effective in bringing up and socializing the children into the cultural and belief system of the people. On a general note we also want to observe that the stories have a moral undertone stressing one virtue or the other. The stress the content of traditional customs and hence are very important means of ensuring that Omenala (culture and sacred traditions) are passed on from one generation to the other.[28] It is nevertheless sad to note that these age-long tradition is gradually being eroded by the western incursion of religion, technology and globalisation.

A. SOME MAJOR ISSUES IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

i. Introduction
In this section, we want to take a step further into the study of the major world views that constitute the way of life of the African in his society. The issues we are about to discuss here constitute the major challenge that gives the African man a reason to reflect and ponder on the dilemma he is often faced with. One, in most situation, discovers he can't really do anything about his faith by reason of inheritance, tribal affiliations, social status, cultural rites etc. Most of these for the African have constituted a reason for concern. It is for this reason that our study of the African peoples and their culture shall focus on. These numerous issues that thong the way of life of the African, we shall only consider the under-listed: Causality, Destiny, Freewill & Determinism, Fatalism, the Good Person (Ezigbo Nmadu) and Ndu Oma (The Good Life)

ii. Causality
Some background to the study on Causality
Our experience of reality both in its generality and specificities confirms the physical theory that nature abhors vacuum. At the causal level, it is the relationship of things. To the traditional Igbo man, every event has a cause and the cause is always an agent with will and purpose. [29] All these notwithstanding, the Igbo recognize the purely material cause of certain phenomena although the latter are subordinated, in the final analysis to the spiritual in their quest for ultimate explanation. The spiritual at this point is evoked mainly in unexceptional situations such as when the unusual happens or where community or individual life is threatened.
Thus if the branch of a tree falls, the Igbo will ask the question: "what Man or Animal has cut this branch", "is it the work of insects in the body of the tree"? Or "was this cause by the violent wind that blew last night"?. But where the branch of the tree falls and kills a man at the village square, when the members of the community have gathered to discuss certain issues, then something unusual has happened and the purpose for such an event must be sought out and known. It is true that they admit that the wind blew down the branch of the tree, but the question is "why must it happen on a day and time such as this claiming a life in the process"?

At this point, of our discussion, it becomes very important to begin to pose very definitive questions, and offer where necessary, definitions that will enhance our understanding of some of the issues that the African have had to grapple with every now and then.

**a. What is Causality?**
The act of bringing into reality what was not a reality. It is a universal phenomenon. It is universal in the sense of its being the fate of all created reality, and in the sense of it being an explanation (a causal one) to all events (persons, things and situations).

The claim of causality is both empirical and rational. At the Empirical level, there's nothing that we observe that is self-explanatory in origin, continuity and end. All are seen to have a beginning, a ground outside them that accounts for their existence and functioning.

Causality asks dual but complimentary questions.

1. *Maka gini?* (For what?)
2. *Nitori kini?* (For what reason)
3. *Don-may yafaru?* (Why did it happen)
4. *Gini kpatara?* (What cause it and why?)

These four questions are actually one question posed from four different ends i.e. the end point (for what) and the starting point (why). The importance of the causality question, the "why" sharpens in contrast to the "how" question. The "how" question requires a description of the process, event or reality the way it has come about be, the reality it is. This is a purely empirical question, the domain of the experimental science.

The "why" question on the contrary, seeks the "deep down", all-around and ontological response as to the reason, explanation and justification of reality. Not just the way it came about or happened, but the reason why it came to happen that way. This question is concerned about the ultimate, the last ground of explanation.

The Igbo life experiences gives us the following expression of the reality of causality.

*"Ihe Nakpata ihe,* (Something is caused by something),
*"A nasi ahu dike n'ehiehie n'efu"* (You cannot see the rabbit in the afternoon in vain)

This is the Igbo proverbial expression of the Latin: *Ex nihilo ni hil fit.* (From nothing, nothing comes) and the English common phrase: No smoke, No fire. Applied to reality, these statements do not yet tell us the cause of things, but directly and firmly announce that causality is real and universal.

Let us consider another Igbo dictum:

*"O digi ihe gbara aka mee,* (Nothing happens without a reason).

*Nwata no nuzo na-agba egwu, Odi Nwa Nnunu na aguruya egwu N'ohia* (A child who is dancing on the road side, there is a bird singing for it in the bush)

This dictum as you can see above captures the picture we are trying to present. Not only that it positively asserts that there is a reason for all things, it goes on to graphically locate the areas of the grounds. Though the child is dancing here on the road, the cause or pushing ground of that dance is elsewhere: in the bush. This means that if the child heard no musician (bird in the bush), she would probably have continued in her errand. But, because of an ontological, or functional, or existential or even an ordinary social intervention, the child does something else. Something happens here on the road because something else happened in the bush.

In the African sense, you can be sure that if the music (cause) continues in the bush, many more children passing through that bush path would join in the dance (effect). This brings our study to the stage where we need to understand what "effects" are.

**b. What is / are effect(s)**
We shall regard as effect, all reality outside the Supreme Being, who himself is never caused by another, for He is the supreme cause of all else including the gods and the spirits. Let us note that these effects can be concurrently or separately caused by other things. In this case, they may be regarded as both cause and effects in different perspectives.

**Effects nevertheless can be grouped into three:**

1. "Things" (Including spirits, persons and material beings).
2. "Events" (Occurrences, general or particular e.g. feast, markets, deaths, births).
3. "Situations", (Things that are the way things are. E.g. night and day, seasons, weather).
The general argument is that all things i.e. all these entities have causes that explain them. To properly account for all cause in the globe; we want to propose the following causal theory based on our life as Africans. Therefore, the two major causes used are:

1. The Ontological (efficient) cause.
2. The Functional cause.

The Ontological Cause
This is the factor that explains the very being or coming into existence of these effects. If the effects, "A", is what gives "A" its reality as "A", it produces the being "A" and posits into existence the effects. The ontological cause of "A" is such that without it, "A" would not be at all. There are basically two kinds of ontological causes:

1. Mediate cause
2. Immediate cause

Ontological cause can be mediate if the cause produces effects indirectly that later are in the final cause or the production of the effect. In this sense, God is the mediate cause (mediate indirect ontological cause), of all that is produced by man. The table in which this book lies was created by man, from the tree God first created.

God mediate cause of tree
Man immediate cause of table

iii. Destiny (Ori / Kadera / Akarakar)
African philosophy is concerned with the here and now. There is no distinction between the physical world and the spiritual world, the afterlife is regarded as simply a continuation of life on earth. With a few exceptions, most African religions do not posit judgment or punishment in the hereafter. There is no heaven or hell, and no desire for a closer contact or union with God. Belief in life after death is not associated with the hope for a better future or the idea of salvation. Death is regarded as part of man's destiny, a departure in which the physical body decays but the spirit moves on to another state of existence.

The "birth" of a person is regarded as a long process which is not complete until puberty, adolescence, and in some groups, even until marriage and the birth of a first child. Only then is a man or woman considered a "complete" person. To some cultures in the African context, it is at this point that the individual's Destiny comes to life and is at the verge of coming to fulfillment.

An important aspect of the African conception of the Human person is his / her Destiny. In this stance we ask the question "whose choice or imposition" predetermines for the person what he or she is going to be in life. This thought is so because among the Africans, a person's destiny determines his / her success or failure, his / her personality, luck or ill-luck. The available literature on this subject varies as to how an individual's destiny is allotted, whether it is a result of the person's own choice or through an imposition by the gods. The story seems to differ from culture to culture: the Yoruba's, the Igbo's and the Hausa's etc.

Whichever tribe it may be, the possibility that destiny could be the outcome of a person's own choice raises a fundamental problem. To be able to make a choice one must have adequate information as well as preference for the rational. All these certainly makes it most unlikely that a person will opt for a destiny that is undesirable. On the other hand, if a person's destiny is an imposition, it will have very serious implications in matters of morality. In other words, if a person is not responsible for his destiny, why should he be held morally responsible for an action he / her commits, especially where we are sure he / her has no hand or choice in making his / her personality or character.

a. The Concept of Destiny In The Yoruba culture
For the Yoruba culture as we have indicated above, the belief in predestination is expressed in the concept Ori which literally means "head". This concept in the Yoruba culture seems to suggest that the Yoruba seem to have an anxiety about the human helplessness in certain situations as expressed above. However, this fear and belief also expresses the people's conviction that human existence has meaning. This belief also suggests for instance, that human beings are not on a purposeless mission in the world; that they have a mission to fulfill, a message to deliver- which is the meaning of their existence- and that this mission has been fully endorsed by the creator. This indeed, is the idea that the concept Ori expresses.

Let us at this point note that there are a lot of cultural and philosophical puzzles that seem to be connected with this concept Ori which has been used to capture the destiny of man. First the relationship between Ori and the concept of destiny has been variously conceived. It is thus important for us to make clear the sense in which we are using the term here.

Ori literally means head as has been mentioned above. Ordinarily, the physical head, in addition to its other functions is used to carry things. But more importantly, the head is the location of important parts of the body. The eyes regarded by the Yoruba as "Oba Ara" (king of the body) are located there, so is the brain which controls intelligence and sanity. Perhaps the special nature of the physical head suggests to the Yoruba that it must also have a spiritual dimension. Thus the physical head is said to symbolize or represent an inner head which is the bearer of a person's destiny and which therefore is the remote controller of one's endeavor in the world. It is this inner head which is referred to as Ori-inu or simply Ori. Therefore Ori is not identical with destiny, though it is the bearer.
DESTINY from the Yoruba perspective refers to the preordained portion of life world wound and sealed up in an Ori. Human beings have an allotment of this destiny which then determines what they will be in life- whether a success or a failure. Destiny in this sense determines the general cause of life, and since Ori is the receptacle and bearer of destiny, it is regarded as its controller. Hence the idea of appealing to once Ori to lead one aright.

b. The Problem with this Conception of Ori as Destiny
A greater conceptual problem arise from the alterability or otherwise of personal destiny. If indeed the cause of our actions have been preordained such that what will be will be, then why do we make efforts to alter pending misfortune? One possible explanation has been that destiny does not amount to fatalism, in which the person in question resigns him / herself to fate with respect to future situations. Among the Yoruba for instance, it is believed that under a certain condition, a person's destiny can be altered here on earth, either for good or for bad. This sounds contradictory but the main point of emphasis is on a person's moral character in the sense that destiny co- exist with freedom, morality and responsibility.

In Africa for instance, the poverty of a lazy man is not blamed on his destiny or is an offender speared punishment on account of his / her destiny. Some in fact argue that destiny among the Yoruba is a mere potentiality who's actualization depends on a person's human qualities. Others claim that a person's destiny merely determines the broad outline of his / her life and not the minute details. It becomes the individual's responsibility to make the best out of what he / she has. To this extent the concept of destiny may be understood as a version of soft determinism.

badegesin (1991:360-368) discusses all these problems in connection with, and also with the possible interpretation of the idea of destiny. He concludes that destiny has two aspects, the individual character and the influence of society, but in the end it is the influence and the demand of the society that are really at stake: Persons are what they are in virtue of what they want to be, their character and communal influences..... A person whose existence and personality is dependent on the community is expected in turn to contribute to the continued existence of the community ....the meaning of one's life is measured by one's commitment to social ideals and communal existence. [36]

iv. Free Will & Determinism
Determinism is the theory that all human action is caused entirely by preceding events, and not by the exercise of the Will. In philosophy, the theory is based on the metaphysical principle that an uncaused event is impossible. The success of scientists in discovering causes of certain behavior and in some cases affecting its control tends to support this principle.

In other words, the view that every event has a cause and that everything in the universe is absolutely dependent on and governed by causal laws. Since determinists believe that all events, including human actions, are predetermined, determinism is typically thought to be incompatible with free will.

a. Background to the Study of Determinism
Disagreement exists about the proper formulation of determinism - a central issue in philosophy that never ceases to be controversial. Physical determinism, which has its origin in the Atomism of Democritus and Lucretius, is the theory that human interaction can be reduced to relationships between biological, chemical, or physical entities; this formulation is fundamental to modern Sociobiology and neuropsychology. The historical determinism of Karl Marx, on the other hand, is transpersonal and primarily economic. In contrast to these two formulations, psychological determinism - the philosophical basis of psychoanalysis - is the theory that the purposes, needs, and desires of individuals are central to an explanation of human behavior. The recent behavioral determinism of B F Skinner is a modification of this view, in that Skinner reduces all internal psychological states to publicly observable behavior. His stimulus-response account also uses modern statistical and probabilistic analyses of causation.

Jean Paul Sartre and other contemporary philosophers have argued that determinism is controverted by introspection, which reveals actions to be the result of our own choices and not necessitated by previous events or external factors. Determinists respond that such experiences of freedom are illusions and that introspection is an unreliable and unscientific method for understanding human behavior.

This view has been modified within the scientific community, however, with the enunciation of the Uncertainty Principle by the physicist Werner Heisenberg. Ramifications of his work in quantum mechanics led Heisenberg to assert that the scientist, as much a participant as an observer, interferes with the neutrality and very nature of the object in question. His work also questions whether it is possible to determine an objective framework through which one can distinguish cause from effect, and whether one can know an objective effect if one is always a part of its cause.

Determinism is sometimes confused with Predestination and Fatalism, but as such it asserts neither that human affairs have been prearranged by a being outside the causal order nor that a person has an unavoidable fate. [39]

b. Background to the Study of Free Will
The theory that human beings have freedom of choice or self-determination; that is, that given a situation, a person could have done other than what he did. Philosophers have argued that Free Will is incompatible with determinism. See also indeterminism.
In philosophical discussion, Will is usually paired with reason as one of two complementary activities of the mind. The will is considered the faculty of choice and decision, whereas the reason is that of deliberation and argument. Thus a rational act would be an exercise of the will performed after due deliberation.

The will has figured prominently in the thought of many philosophers, among them the 19th century thinkers Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. Historically, debate has centered on the issue of the will's freedom, a question of prime importance for the analysis of human action and moral responsibility.

Philosophers have often thought that persons are responsible only for those actions that they have the option either to do or not to do or to will or not to will. If all acts, including acts of will, are predetermined, then this option does not appear to exist.

In the philosophy of mind, the question is whether reasons in the mind are identical with or reducible to events in the brain and, if so, whether physical events determine choices, decisions, and acts. A wide variety of answers has been proposed, including ones derived from Freudian psychoanalysis and the various forms of behaviorism. Some philosophers in the analytic tradition have argued that Determinism is a matter of causes and decisions a matter of reasons and that the two are mutually exclusive. The issue remains controversial.

In all, there are three basic positions concerning man's choices: Determinism, Indeterminism, and Self Determinism. Determinism is the belief that all of man's actions are the result of antecedent factors or causes. Naturalistic determinists, such as Thomas Hobbes and B. F. Skinner, argue that man's behavior can be fully explained in terms of natural causes. Theistic determinists, such as Martin Luther and Jonathan Edwards, trace man's actions back to God's controlling hand. The opposite position to determinism is indeterminism. On this view there are no causes for man's actions, antecedent or otherwise. The final position is self determinism, or free will. This is the belief that man determines his own behavior freely, and that no causal antecedents can sufficiently account for his actions.

c. Free Will & Determinism in African Philosophy

From the introduction that we have offered so far, it is clear that the age long question that thinkers have for so long grappled with on the subject in question, is "Where lies human freedom, spontaneity and initiative, if all have a cause that determines them." Obviously the African man in his world view have not been left out of this same predicament for he too have had to ponder on these issues as it affects his fate.

Consequent upon this reflection, the African believes that Causality does not eliminate freedom but explains it. Man is free to choose one cause of action or another. Even after the free choice, he is able, if he knows how, to manipulate the forces of nature, to utilize the good spirits aid, to implore the assistance of his ancestors and to work out in consort with fellow human beings in his community in discovering the path of good and progress, which ultimately gives him the freedom to act as a free being who merits a crown.

The African understands that he is free though with limitations. He can succeed if he calculates well and if he works hard. The theory of causality propounded here explains the reason behind those who succeed as well as the reason behind those who fail or experience failure. Fundamentally, man is free but, up to a point, his actions are determined. Still, he is free to do or not to do, to choose or reject, to succeed or to fail.

When at the end of all inferences, man yet seeks a cause, we have found him resolved to resort to the ultimate explanation of all causes, e.g. in the case of death, wars, disasters, grave illnesses, the African Man has at such hard times and perplexing cases inferred God, as the ultimate cause of these phenomenon which for many is a mystery.

In such cases, the material, natural and human space of causality are not denied even though there are not enough explanations as we may want to accept. Yet the truth is that things have an inner side, a mystical invisible, divine and spiritual explanatory zone for both worlds are closely interconnected especially when it has to do with the instances mentioned above.

It is important that we highlight this point here that the ultimate explanation is neither fatalism nor a result of the lack of searching further. It is simply an acknowledgement of the limitations of the human mind, for in such cases only the true omniscient God knows all the ways.

d. Man is Free But Everywhere is in Chains.

To the traditional Igbo man, every event has a cause and the cause is always an agent with "Will" and "Purpose". All these notwithstanding, the Igbo recognize the purely material cause of certain phenomena although the later are subordinate, in the final analysis, to the spiritual in their quest for ultimate explanation. The spiritual is always invoked mainly in exceptional situations, such as when the unusual happens where individual life or community is threatened or in danger. As such times, reference is made only to God as the cause of such actions. [46]

In the Christendom, the problem of free will assumed quite a new character with the advent of the Christian religion. The doctrine that God has created man, has commanded him to obey the moral law, and has promised to reward or punish him for observance or violation of this laws, made the reality of moral
liberty an issue of transcendent importance. Unless man is really free, he cannot be justly held responsible for his actions, any more than for the date of his birth or the colour of his eyes. All alike are inexorably predetermined for him. Again, the difficulty of the question was augmented still further by the Christian dogma of the fall of man and his redemption by grace. St. Paul, especially in his Epistle to the Romans, is the great source of the Catholic theology of grace.  

e. Who Is To Be Punished?
On the question of whether man should be punished for an action which is believed not to be entirely his responsibility, opinions seem to differ on this matter. This question has to some extent posed so many difficulties for the African Man, for since he believes strongly that nearly all his actions are determined by the gods and the spirits of his forefathers. He is inclined to wonder why often; the African Man who is facing a jury, is shown no mercy or any form of consideration when punitive measures are taken against him on account of certain actions he is believed to have committed.

v. Fatalism
The belief that “what will be will be,” since all past, present, and future events have already been predetermined by God or another all-powerful force. In religion, this view may be called predestination; it holds that whether our souls go to Heaven or Hell is determined before we are born and is independent of our own deeds or actions.

From the foregoing, it appears that there is an element of fatalism involved in the conception of creation. That is, it appears that man is let at the mercy of fate and that there is nothing he can do to alter his destiny. Well, in the Igbo culture, this is not entirely the case. As has often been emphasized, the traditional Igbo has a way of escaping from this apparent fatalism by another basic principle which is based on the power and the efficiency of the human will. Hence the saying “Onye kwe Chi ya ekwe” (If a man will it, so then his chi will endorse the will of the individual). They also have the saying: “if a man is at peace with his gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad depending on the strength of his arm” what is implied here in this saying is that “the efficacy of the human will depend on a sound moral life because that is the only way he can be at peace with his gods and his ancestors. The Chi here represented is the destiny, a type of personal guide which pilots a man’s prospects and determines his fortune.

The Igbo thus believe that the force of fatalism can be broken when an individual makes an extra-ordinary effort to be at peace with his ancestors, gods and a personal commitment to his Chi. Thus if a man has been fated to die an evil death, he may be able to avert this cause of action, for it can only come to pass in his life when he wills or accepts what has been fate to happen onto him. This will be possible when he resigns himself to his Chi. But where he makes a personal effort to avert the evil coming his way, his Chi ensure that his rejection of the evil directed towards him will fail to come to pass in his life. Here lies the essence of the saying “Onye kwe Chi ya ekwe” (if a man wills or accepts that has been directed in his paths, then his chi will endorse the will of the individual. Then and only then can the evil come to pass in his life)

vi. The Igbo Concept Of A Good Person “Ezigbo Nmadu”

Madu (Human Being)
Both human beings, (the living and those about to be born) and other created things (besides the disembodied spirits) is of the visible real of nature- the universe (Uwa) but human beings are the centre of the creation. They are the main act in the drama of the existence and life. Their actions evoke reactions from the gods and have deep implications for the lower beings and forces, which may have to be manipulated to satisfy the needs of the human beings.

In the drama of life man is the actor while the pure spirits are the moderators and the lower forces and beings are the agents (and hence victims as well). Viewed from another angle, if life’s drama is a game of chess, man becomes the chess player. The disembodied spirits of the rank of deities and ancestors are the referees, while the animals, birds, and other inanimate and animate beings (including the abstract forces) are the pawns.

Man here is not only regarded as the most important aspect of creation, he is also regarded as the being superior in natural intelligence to other beings, even to the spirits’ (except Chukwu Himself who knows everything)  

The evolutionary theory of Darwin in biology does not seem to have application to the Igbo conception of the origin of Man. However some legendary accounts indicate a belief in certain unconnected and reversed evolutionary process. For example animals of the ape and monkey family are regarded as having human ancestors. Such ancestors are those who were banished into the woods for some crimes committed. But this is only a legend, although it shows that the traditional Igbo recognize some common features and characteristics between man and this class of animals.

a. Man as Spirit
The traditional Igbo believe that man is both spirit and none spirit. Thus man posses’ two main parts Mmuo (the spirit) and Ahu (Body). Mmuo is the spirit part of man and it incorporates the elements of spirit, intelligence, feeling emotion, consciousness. Mmuo is also associated with the Nkuruobi (Soul), which is located in the heart. The spirit of man in this context is said to be without any particular form of shape, as such, it could be compared with the air or the breath of the individual. There is also an occasional association of spirit with shadows, since it is believed that a man can be harmed through his shadows. Mmuo is