

PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES

SITUATING DECONSTRUCTIONISM AND RECONSTRUCTIONISM IN AFRICA: TOWARDS A SYNERGY OF UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract

The idea of African philosophy has been debated by both African and non-African orientations as an impossible academic enterprise and the debate seem to favour the Afrocentric scholars.¹ Although, the effort is aimed at proving the existence of African Philosophy and whether it has achieved its desired objectives. However, the problem that contemporary African philosophers grapples with inter alia, borders on the question of methods and critical approaches to doing an authentic African Philosophy. This expectedly has led to the polemics oscillating among excavationist, deconstructionist, reconstructionist, and conversationist approaches. A critical probe on the basic thesis and nature of these approaches reveals that they maintain divergent dispositions toward each other. This of course, constitutes retardation to the general quest to establishing authenticity significant to African Philosophy and culture one that is relevant in contemporary era of science and technology. This paper comparatively engages deconstructionist and reconstructionist as critical approaches fundamentally aims at seeking a synergy between these two apparently opposing orientations. The work argues that, owing to the peculiarity of cultures and the universality in the nature of man, there cannot be entirely cultural peculiarity or universality in Philosophy. Therefore, given the African experience, Africa Philosophy should be situated consciously in a synthesis between the particularists and the universalists views.

Keywords: Deconstructionist, Reconstructionist, Particularist, Universalist, African Philosophy, and, Synergy

Introduction

It is germane to state that what we today call African philosophy is the brainchild of historical necessity. The infamous historical experiences of slavery, colonialism and racism in the African continent inadvertently led African scholars to activate their intellectual prowess in self-retrospection, in search of identity, self-assertion and affirmation. The fact is rightly described by Kwasi Wiredu thus “These ugly episodes of slavery, colonialism and racialism not only shaped the world’s perception of Africa; they also instigated a form of intellectual revolt from the African intelligentsias. The frustration with the colonial order eventually led to angry questions and reactions out of which African philosophy emerged, first in the form of nationalisms and then in the form ideological theorizations. But the frustration was borne out of colonial caricature of Africa as culturally naïve, intellectually docile and rationally inept”.² In other words, “A principal driving force in post-colonial African philosophy has been the quest for self-definition”³ and to remedy the already battered African self-concept and image. It could be argued that while the pre-colonial African philosophy began with wonder and curiosity, the postcolonial philosophy was inspired by frustration which was the necessary implication of

the prejudicial representation of Africans by the west. Moreover, the contemporary African philosophy like any other philosophies subtly inspired by factors curiosity and frustration but most fundamentally is propelled by the question of relevance and the expediency for African philosophy to cope with western imperialists and hegemony in the guise of globalization. Wiredu further opine that:

This search is part of a general postcolonial soul-searching in Africa. Because the colonialists and related personnel perceived African culture as inferior in at least some important respects, colonialism included a systematic program of de-Africanization. The most unmistakable example, perhaps, of this pattern of activity was in the sphere of religion, where mighty efforts were made by the missionaries to save African souls perceived to be caught up in the darkness of “paganism.” But, at least, it did seem to them that Africans had something somewhat similar to religion, and some of them actually wrote books on African religion and even, in some cases, mentioned that subject in their university teaching.⁴

Besides, the three historical antecedence mentioned earlier, some African scholars were inadvertently influenced by even the disparaging ostentatious

¹ Valentine Ehiechioya Obinyan, The Rubrics of African Philosophy http://www.academia.edu/31569578/THE_RUBRIC_OF_AFRICAN_PHILOSOPHY Retrieved 2017.

² Kwasi Wiredu, Introduction: African Philosophy, in Kwasi Wiredu ed. “Our Time, in A Companion to African Philosophy”, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 1

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

dispositions of Western scholars who denied Africans the capacity of rigorous and analytic thoughts system. The polemic became precarious owing to the fact that man as a rational being is by his rationality endowed with the potentials for critical thoughts and articulation. Hence, one can safely describe this western intention as intellectual conspiracy. Enumerating some of the infamous western scholars involved in this despicable intellectual caricature. According to Jonathan Chimakonam :

This caricature was created by European scholars such as Kant, Hegel and, much later, Levy-Bruhl to name just a few. It was the reaction to this caricature that led some African scholars returning from the West into the type of philosophizing one may describe as systematic beginning with the identity of the African people, their place in history, and their contributions to civilization. To dethrone the colonially-built episteme became a ready attraction for African scholars' vexed frustrations. Thus began the history of systematic African philosophy with the likes of Aime Cisaire, Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, William Abraham, John Mbiti and expatriates such as Placid Tempels, Janheinz Jahn and George James, to name a few.⁵

Consequent upon these formidable historical antecedence, African have undertaken the herculean task to establish African philosophy. They have individually and collectively articulated worldviews saturated with indisputable layers of sagacity contrary to the western perception, caricature and intellectual conspiracies. As a result, Chimakonam sees African philosophy thus:

The development of African philosophy through the periods yields two vital conceptions for African philosophy, namely that African philosophy is a critical engagement of tradition and individual thinkers on one hand, and on the other hand it is also a critical construction of futurity. When individual African philosophers engage tradition critically in order to ascertain its logical coherency and universal validity, they are doing African philosophy. And when they employ the tools of logic in doing this, they are doing African philosophy. On the second conception, when African philosophers engage in critical conversations with one another and in construction of new thoughts in matters that concern Africa but which are nonetheless universal and projected from African native thought systems, they are doing African philosophy. So, the authentic African philosophy is not just a future project, it can also continue from the past.⁶

However, despite the appreciable feat in recent times in the development of African philosophy, many questions are still begging for answers in the areas of methodological approach and whether African Philosophy are not critical in outlook except when it is veered towards westernization. Given the universal feature of Philosophy, are Africans and her scholars immune to this universal character since sometimes philosophical

enterprise strives from particular lived experience before they are universalized. It is for this reason Chimakonam continue to harp on dialogical approach when he says "must African philosophy be tailored to the pattern of Western Philosophy, even in less definitive issues? If African Philosophy is found to be different in approach from Western Philosophy, so what? Are logical issues likely to play any major roles in the structure and future of African Philosophy? What is the future direction of African philosophy? Is the problem of the language of African Philosophy pregnant? Would conversations in contemporary African Philosophy totally eschew perverse dialogue? What shall be the rules of engagement in African philosophy?" These questions are likely to shape the next lines of thought in African philosophy.⁷

In an attempt to resolve the above questions, African philosophers have been involved in polemics which have eventually given rise to few critical approaches to the study of African philosophy. These approaches include; excavationism, Afro-Constructionism/Afro-Deconstructionism, Critical Reconstructionism/Afro-Eclecticism and Conversationalism. The work examines the deconstructionist and reconstructionist approaches in order to investigate how possible it is to marry these two critical approaches in order to improve African situation. Generally, "the re-constructionists have the belief that there is an ultimate truth out there and if we look in the archives we will discover it. Whereas, the deconstructionists believe that ultimate truth does not exist; it can never be obtainable no matter how many sources one looks at because each source has an inherent human bias in its sheer existence".⁸ The thrust of this argument is to interrogate the deconstructionist and reconstructionist approaches towards creating a synergy between these two critical perspectives, however, to understand these approaches there is the compelling need to first of all present the excavationist approach.

The Excavationist Approach

The Excavationists seek to advance the cause of African philosophy by systematizing the African cultural world-views. Some of them aimed at retrieving and reconstructing presumably lost African identity from the raw materials of African culture, while others sought to develop compatible political ideologies for Africa from the native political systems of African peoples.⁹ Members of this movement have all been grouped under the school known as ethnophilosophy, and they thrived in the early period of African philosophy. Their concern was to build and demonstrate unique African identity in various forms. A few of them include Placid Tempels, Julius Nyerere, John Mbiti, Alexis Kagame, Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah and Aime Cesaire.¹⁰

The general nature of the excavationists or ethnophilosophers is the notion of going back to the basis to exhume ossified African values, folklores, sagacious ideals and other elements of African antiquity and immaterial culture that epitomizes African wisdom and

⁵ Jonathan O. Chimakonam, History of African Philosophy in Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/afri-hi/>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Shannon Nutt, p. 1.

⁹ Chimakonam, p. 4

¹⁰ Ibid, p.5.

critical perception of reality. Their general philosophy resides with the belief that an authentic African philosophy is that devoid of any form of infiltration of any form of western ideals, concepts and paradigm. In this way, the excavationists' critical perception holds that African identity is unique and therefore an authentic African Philosophy must be one that is culturally rooted.

Afro-Constructionism/Afro-Deconstructionism

The concept, "deconstructionism", was developed by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, has been applied to religion by various thinkers. Derrida has provided many definitions of deconstruction. But three definitions are classical. The *first* is early, being found in the 1971 interview "Positions" and in the 1972 Preface to *Dissemination*: deconstruction consists in "two phases".¹¹ At this stage of his career Derrida famously (or infamously) speaks of "metaphysics" as if the Western philosophical tradition was monolithic and homogeneous. At times he also speaks of "Platonism," as Nietzsche did. Simply, deconstruction is a criticism of Platonism, which is defined by the belief that existence is structured in terms of oppositions (separate substances or forms) and that the oppositions are hierarchical, with one side of the opposition being more valuable than the other. The *first phase* of deconstruction attacks this belief by *reversing* the Platonistic hierarchies: the hierarchies between the invisible or intelligible and the visible or sensible; between essence and appearance; between the soul and body; between living memory and rote memory; between *mnēmē* and *hypomnēsis*; between voice and writing; between finally good and evil.¹²

This concept developed by Derrida was adopted by some African philosophers in an attempt to disparage the excavationists approach to the study of African philosophy. The Afro-deconstructionists sometimes called the Modernists or the Universalists are those who sought to demonstrate a kind of non-alliance with the excavationist on the ground that their raw materials as embedded in culture are substandard cultural paraphernalia. They are opposed to the idea of unique African identity or culturally-bounded philosophy to a philosophy that will integrate African identity with the identity of all other races.¹³ Perhaps, the basic foundation of the deconstructionist approach is Africans share in the essence of humanity as does other races, therefore, an authentic African philosophy should reflect the universality of human essence and identity. In other words, even while African philosophy must reflect the unique cultural perspective of Africa, it should nevertheless incorporate what Africans share in commonality with other races.

Some members of this orientation include Paulin Hountondji, Kwasi Wiredu, Peter Bodunrin, Macien Towa, Fabien Eboussi Boulaga, Richard Wright and Henri Maurier. Their opponents are the Afro-constructionists, sometimes called the Traditionalists or Particularists who sought to add rigor and promote the works

of the Excavators as true African philosophy. Some prominent actors in this movement include Innocent Onyewuenyi, Henry Olela, Lansana Keita, C. S. Momoh, Joseph Omoregbe, Janheinz Jahn, George James, Sophie Oluwole and, in some ways, Kwame Gyekye. Members of this twin-movement have variously been grouped under ethnophilosophy, philosophic sagacity, professional, hermeneutical and literary schools and they thrived in the middle period of African philosophy. This is also known as the period of the Great Debate.¹⁴

Reconstructionism/ Afro-Eclectics

A few Afro-deconstructionists of the middle period evolved into Critical Reconstructionists hoping to reconstruct from the scratch an authentic African philosophy that would be critical, individualistic and universal. They hold that the edifice of ethnophilosophy, which they had demolished in the middle period, contained no critical rigor. Some of the members of this movement include, Kwasi Wiredu, Olusegun Oladipo, V. Y. Mudimbe, D. A. Masolo, Odera Oruka and, in some ways, Barry Hallen and J. O. Sodipo. Their opponents are the Afro-Eclectics who evolved from Afro-constructionism of the middle period. Unable to sustain this advocacy about the structure of ethno-philosophy they had argued, accounts, saying "Maybe we can combine meaningfully, some of the non-conflicting concerns of the Traditionalists and the Modernists."¹⁵ According to Chimakonam the basic thesis of the Afro-eclectic school can be summed from three different outlooks, first, African traditional Philosophy is not rigorous enough as claimed by the Modernists then, that deconstructionist program of the Modernists did not offer and is incapable of offering an alternative episteme is also a fact; and lastly maybe the rigor of the Modernists can be applied on the usable and relevant elements produced by the Traditionalists to produce the much elusive, authentic African philosophy.¹⁶

The Imperative for a Synergy

African Philosophy for these scholars becomes a reflection of the outcome of synthesis resulting in the application of tools of critical reasoning on the relevant traditions of African life-world. This proponents played a vital reconciliatory role, the importance of which was not fully realized in African philosophy. Most importantly, they found a way out and laid the foundation for the emergence of Conversationalism. Members of this twin-movement thrived in the later period of African philosophy. Chimakonam is of the opinion that:

Beyond this modest line, no other reconstructionist crusader of the time actually went beyond deconstruction and problem identification. Almost spontaneously, Afro-reconstructionism evolved into Afro-eclecticism in the early 1990's when the emerging Critical Reconstructionism ran into a brick wall of inactivity. The argument seems to say, "If it is not philosophically permissible to employ alternative logic different from the one in the West or methods, perhaps we can make do with the merger of the approaches we have identified in African philosophy following the deconstructions."

¹¹ Positions, pp. 41-42, Dissemination, pp.4-6

¹² Leonard Lawlor, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/>

¹³ Chimakonam, p. 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid.

These approaches are the various schools of thought from ethnophilosophy, philosophic sagacity, ideological school, universal, literary to hermeneutic schools which were deconstructed into two broad approaches namely: The traditionalist school and the modernist school also called the particularist and the universalist schools.¹⁷

The Eclectics are those who think that the effective integration or complementation of the African native system and the Western system could produce a viable synthesis that is first African and then modern.¹⁸ A. Uduigwomen, could be regarded as the founder of this school in African philosophy. In his 1995 work *"Philosophy and the Place of African Philosophy,"* he gave official birth to the Afro-eclecticism. Identifying the Traditionalist and Modernist schools as the Particularist and Universalist schools, he created the eclectic school by carefully unifying their goals from the ruins of the deconstructed past.

Uduigwomen states that, the eclectic school holds that an intellectual romance between the Universalist conception and the Particularist conception will give rise to an authentic African philosophy. The Universalist approach will provide the necessary analytic and conceptual framework for the Particularist school. Since, according to Uduigwomen, this framework cannot thrive in a vacuum, the Particularist approach will in turn supply the raw materials or indigenous data needed by the Universalist approach. From the submission of Uduigwomen above, one easily detects that Eclecticism for him entails employing western categories in analyzing African cultural paraphernalia. If this is what he implies, I do not totally agree with him, western logic or methodological approach cannot be the paradigm for an authentic African philosophy. Calling for cross-breeding of ideas should not imply jettisoning African logical method of reasoning and analysis in place of western thought system

However, Afro-Eclecticism is not without its inherent problems. The first problem though, is that it does not supply the yardstick for determining what is to be admitted and what must be left out of the corpus of African tradition. Everything cannot meet the standard of genuine philosophy, nor should the philosophical selection be arbitrary. Hountondji, a chronic critic of traditional efforts once called Tempels' Bantu philosophy a sham. For him, it was not African or Bantu philosophy but Tempels' Philosophy with African colouration. This could be extended to the vision of Afro-eclecticism. On the contrary, it could be argued that if Hountondji agrees that the synthesis contains as little as African paraphernalia, then it is something new and in this respect can claim the tag of African philosophy. However, it leaves to be proven how philosophical that little African paraphernalia is. Hence, this lacuna in Afro-Eclectics of not stating what aspects or material from the African tradition and materials from western philosophy to be fused would be taken care of by the hermeneutics who suggested that the ossified (archaic

and unproductive) African cultural philosophies must be discarded; while the pragmatic elements of African past would be fused with only elements of western thought that are relevant to the general African interest.

Towards a Synergy

Without disputing the fact that every philosophy is a cultural philosophy and that the philosophy of a people essentially reflects their unique historical experience, perspective on reality and their outlook on the world generally in the context of their cultural periscope; yet scholars must not lose sight of the basic fact that irrespective of the cultural peculiarity and unique experiences of peoples, yet all men from across the globe are united in their unique experience and ontological statues of humanity. Hence, African philosophy like the philosophies of other cultures of the world must reflect this universality of philosophy. Implicit in this assertion is the fact that authentic African Philosophy must have a unique African value and tradition as well as embodying aspects of the universal culture of man especially as typified in the globalized world. Yet, even while responding to the globalized nature of the world, African philosophy as a matter of expediency must not be wary of the fundamental demand for originality, creativity, innovation, peer-criticism and cross-pollination of ideas in prescribing and evaluating their ideas. This is a fundamental demand curiously at the fulcrum of a synergy between the deconstructionist and reconstructionist tensions. This is clearly articulated by V. Obinyan thus:

It should be borne in mind that African philosophy is a deep reflection on the African episteme, experience, his/her personality and the world. Hence, its interest to seek relevant solution to the problem in today's world. But this cannot be if the African do not understanding the rubrics of his/her philosophy. However, the African must understand that he/she is always in a world that is fast globalizing. The African must open his/her mind to the fact that in this process, there is a constant interaction of cultures and this interaction will open him/her to even more problem regarding his/her personality world-view and existence or continuity. Therefore, bearing in mind the essence or objective of his/her value system, the beauty of his/her history and the validity of his her world-view, the African have a veritable tool for a complimentary existence in the contemporary world and with the rubrics of African philosophy, the African can do African philosophy with the singular objective of contributing meaningfully to human and infrastructural development of himself/herself and the world.¹⁹

Sequel to this, one may propose a dialogue between the conversionists and hermeneutical methods encapsulating a formidable synergy between deconstructionism which rejects cultural Philosophy as against purely universal tenets and the reconstructionist which on the other hand proposes jettisoning the thesis of the deconstructionist orientation hence a proposal for a Philosophy that is entirely laden in universal ideals.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Valentine Ehiechioya Obinyan, The Rubrics of African Philosophy http://www.acedemia.edu/31569578/THE_RUBRIC_OF_AFRICAN_PHILOSOPHY Retrieved 2017.

The fusion as canvased by the eclectic scholars can best be achieved through the hermeneutical approach. Before going further to the attempt towards establishing a synergy, we wish to state without mincing words that, there cannot be a purely universal philosophy, devoid of local contents. As a result, the interconnectedness of the conversationist and hermeneutical approaches lies not only in the synergy between the deconstructionist and reconstructionist, but also in an authentic African Philosophy, an African philosophy that is relevant to the philosophic needs of the contemporary man. And the needs of the contemporary man, whether as an African or a man anywhere in the world is not just about episteme or attaining true wisdom about reality, rather it includes the necessary advancement in science and technology and improved global peace and cooperation amongst all peoples.

The Conversationists are those who seek to create an enduring corpus in African philosophy by engaging elements of tradition and individual thinkers in critical conversations. They emphasize originality, creativity, innovation, peer-criticism and cross-pollination of ideas in prescribing and evaluating their own ideas. They hold that new episteme in African philosophy can only be created by individual African philosophers who make use of the "usable past" and the depth of individual originality in finding solutions to contemporary demands. They do not lay emphasis on analysis alone but also on critical rigor and what is now called "arumaristics", a creative reshuffling of thesis and anti-thesis that spins out new concepts and thoughts. Members of this movement thrive in this contemporary period and their school can be called the conversational school. Some of the philosophers that have demonstrated this trait include Pantaleon Iroegbu, Innocent Asouzu, Bruce Janz, Jonathan Chimakonam, Ada Agada, Jennifer Lisa Vest, and so forth.

In examining hermeneutical approach, Philosophy takes lived experience as its starting point, and the lived experience of most Africans revolves around a struggle to cope with the omnipresent effect of cultural and economic imperialism of Europe. As a result, the principal objective for African philosophy for hermeneutists should be how to achieve liberation from injuries imposed by European hegemony. In his book, "The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy" Tsenay Serequeberhan makes use of the work of Hans Gadamer and Martin Heidegger to approach African philosophy with a point of view of what he considered to be the central dilemma of postcolonial situation. This aids at resolving the tension between the continuing hegemony of Europe in the guise of its neo-colonial puppets and the continuing influence of pre-colonial traditions, especially on the rural masses. Serequeberhan's aim is to provide a means whereby African can be reasserted as the subjects rather than the mere objects in the historical transformation of human kind.

Serequeberhan posits that both ethno-philosophers and western trained professional philosophers have imposed on Africa paradigms that have their primary origin in European social development. According to him, both portray European vision of Africa. Specifically, he views ethno-philosophers such as Senghor and Tempels as merely appreciating the taxonomy of racial differences developed by Europe, and constructing as positive the same characteristics devised by Europeans as evidence of African's inferiority²⁰. I seem to agree with Serequeberhan on this point; as I have already shown above. Furthermore, Claude Wauthier, affirmed the above position, "modern African thought in both imaginative ideological manifestation, has been largely conditioned by the violent historical encounter of Africa with the west. Western imperialism justified its incursion into Africa by devaluation of the black race. This ideological devaluation of the black race ascribed an inferior quality to African culture as well as promoted the idea that African people manifested a child-like or pre-logical mentality"²¹. As for professional philosophers, Serequeberhan's attitude was equally disparaging, he accused the likes of Nkrumah and Hountondji as merely replacing the capitalist yoke with a communist one as Serequeberhan maintain, it is a form of colonialism in the guise of theory²².

As an antidote to this globalization of European civilization, he recommends the works of liberationists like, Aime Césaire, Franz Fanon and Emile Caba, who argue that European's violent conquest of Africa is to be opposed by an equally violent expulsion²³. Now, concerning how work is relevant towards creating a synergy between deconstructionism and reconstructionism, Serequeberhan proposed that in the noble task of exhuming the neo-colonial remnant of European domination, westernized urban Africans must fuse their talents and concerns with the neo-westernized masses of rural Africa. In the fusion of these two fractured worlds, Serequeberhan writes, the possibility of African freedom is concretised.²⁴ It is in this return to the source where urbanized Africans put their knowledge to the service of the rural masses, that Serequeberhan locates the key to true African liberation. In this fusion, both the ossified tradition of the past and the imposed tradition of the colonizer are transformed, and the modern Africa emerges as a new hybrid capable of acting rather than being merely acted upon.

Of course, this return to the source, (going back to critically access our traditional African philosophy bequeathed to us by our forebears) which I consider to be a fundamental key to the discovery of a true African identity, is not the uncritical and romantic adoption of traditional beliefs and practices for their intrinsic values, rather both the weaknesses and strengths of traditional African philosophy is exposed to critical review and the stunted potential of afro-cultural development is released. Also, materials from western philosophy

²⁰ Serequeberhan, T., 1994, *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy: Horizon and Discourse*, New York: Routledge. p 362

²¹ Claude Wauthier, *The Literature, and Thought of Modern African Thought*, London: HEB, 1978, P. 184

²² Serequeberhan, quoted in Chukwu Julius, *Issues in African Philosophy*, London: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 346.

²³ Serequeberhan, T. *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy: Horizon and Discourse*, New York: Routledge. 1994

²⁴ *Ibid*, 353

whether in the form of ideas or methods are also scrutinized. Subsequently, whatever passes this stringent scrutiny is fused with what has been adjudged pragmatic in African traditional philosophy to give rise to an authentic African philosophy that has both the particular and universal nature. Particular in the sense that it possesses original elements of African culture; and universal because it reflects the universal nature of humanity, especially in a globalized world.

Conclusion

The work examined the deconstructionist and reconstructionist critical arguments on the assessment of African philosophy. It crystallized the fact that the extreme positions taken by these two orientations are detrimental to achieving authentic African philosophy if not reconciled. This understanding is against the basic fact that given the peculiarity of cultures and the ironic globalized nature of the world coupled with the fact of the universal nature of philosophy; there can neither be a purely cultural philosophy nor a purely universal philosophy. Therefore, erecting a synergy between the deconstructionist perspective and reconstructionist approach becomes compellingly categorical.

Pursuant to the fact established above, I argue that it is only when African scholars have properly and intelligently fused African philosophy with the important elements from the West and has diligently quarantined the philosophy in question with Wiredu's conceptual decolonization will it qualify as African philosophy. What I advocate therefore, is a harmonization of Orika, Wiredu, Nkrumah and Serqueberhan's thoughts and apply them to the existing branches of the existing philosophies called 'African Philosophy, the end product would be an authentic African philosophy. I call for a harmonization after a strict or stringent scrutiny, because no one theory is all encompassing. The philosopher must bear in mind that what we today call medieval philosophy is nothing but a polygamous marriage between four traditions- Greek philosophy in its Greco-Roman version, Christian tradition, Arab Islamic tradition and Jewish tradition. This of course leveraged the robustness and richness of medieval western philosophy. Moreover, worthy of mention is the conventional belief among African thinkers that pioneers of western philosophy relied on materials and ideas from the ancient Egypt civilization.

It suffices to conclude this seminar paper in agreement with A. F. Uduigwomen, 'our view however remains that African philosophy embraces all thoughts of Africans that have been carried out on along the method

of philosophy, be they in ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, politics, science etc. we share Wiredu's position that for a philosophy to be seen as African, we must not necessarily originate it, but to appropriate, internalised and apply it in the peculiar existential reality of Africa.²⁵ In this light, the works of Martin Luther, Placide Tempels and a host of other foreign philosophers whose philosophies embody or articulate the African collective yearnings and aspiration, and African's perception and interpretation of reality are considered authentic African philosophy.

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²⁵ A. F. Uduigwomen, *Footmarks on African Philosophy*, (ed), Lagos: Obiorah and Ogbinaka Publishers Ltd, 1995, p. 134