

*Review*

## **Rethinking the comparison between African and Western Philosophies**

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The major focus of this paper is to make a comparative analysis between African and Western Philosophies with a view to unravel some of the hidden truths in them as well as establishing that African philosophy is capable of being recognised as philosophy with its distinct nature, scope and contents. The paper equally emphasises that the distinctive elements in African philosophy such as proverbs, folktales and others are capable of being studied like its sister philosophies such as oriented and Western philosophies. The paper posits that African philosophy is not culture-bound as it is being studied in other continents of the world. It (the paper) construes that Africans must jettison any thought of cultural insularity and focus attention on becoming a part of the cultural interdependence that marks the global community today. It is imperative for African scholars not to seek after a romantic glorification of the African 'unanalytic cast of mind' or anything that locks the African into the archival past, but rather there should be a conscious and critical appropriation of the relevant aspects of other cultures that are of great significance for modern living. The method of analysis was employed in developing this paper. The paper concludes that there should be a genuine and mutually symbiotic cultural interaction and exchange between the west and African given the reality of the globalisation phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Western philosophy, Rethinking, African philosophy

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The major thrust of this paper is not to talk about which of the two philosophies is superior or which one is inferior but rather to use both philosophies to resolve the myriads of problems bedeviling the world as well as alleviating the suffering of the people. It is important to note that the only thing that differentiates both of them is periodisation i.e Western philosophy came before African Philosophy. However, there is no basis for arguing in favour of

western philosophy because of its documentation advantage. We want to argue that both Western and African philosophies started with mythology. The origin of whichever philosophy started from experience. For instance, to philosophize is to reflect on human experience in search of answers to some fundamental questions. A man takes a reflective look at himself or the world around him, he is filled with "wonder", and some

fundamental questions arise in his mind. Like African philosophy which derived its origin from myths, folktales, proverbs, western philosophy began with wonders. No philosophy began with any documents.

Different perspectives exist on what is regarded as philosophy. Some see it as a cultural enterprise while others see it as an individual enterprise. There are arguments for and against each of these views.

Philosophers who claim that philosophy is a cultural enterprise believe that there are identifiable criteria which can be used to classify the subject into different cultural traditions. In this way, we can speak of Western Philosophy, Oriental Philosophy and African philosophy. The main objective of embarking on this research on comparative philosophy is to look at the justification for labelling a kind of philosophy as Western, oriental and African. Furthermore, we want to ascertain whether, given the fact that each tradition has its own distinctive conceptual framework, there can still be a cross-cultural comparison of the main thoughts of each tradition in the area of Logic, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Ethics, Medicine, Religion etc. The relevant question here is how is cross-cultural philosophical comparison possible? *The current spirit in comparative philosophy is akin to the current trend in African philosophy where the issues being addressed are no longer the question of its existence or non-existence, rather the bulk has been taken by the horn to embark on substantive work in the subject.*<sup>1</sup> The professional philosophy trend has as its members the professionally trained philosophers who have imbibed the Western orientation of practising philosophy. At the centre of this trend are the first generation of academic philosophers in Africa, namely: Kwasi Wiredu of Ghana; Peter Bodunrin of Nigeria; Paulin Hountondji of Benin Republic and Henry Odera Oruka of Kenya. These philosophers have been accused of denying the existence of African philosophy, simply because they disagreed with the presentation of folk beliefs as African philosophy by the ethno-philosophers. The fundamental contribution of this orientation to the enterprise of African philosophy is that they purified the discipline by ensuring that the debase form of philosophy is not adopted as African philosophy. African philosophy like Western philosophy has been a strict rigorous and critical discipline. It should not be seen in the popular sense of the idea as the totality of world-view of the African people.<sup>2</sup>

However, Western philosophy grew out of religion and mythology in Greece about 600B.C. This does not mean that before 600 B.C the Greeks were not asking themselves fundamental questions about reality, about man or about the cosmos. They certainly did, but they sought answers to these questions through religious and mythology, and therefore offered religions and mythological explanations of reality, man and the universe.<sup>3</sup>

Western philosophy began with “wonder” and curiosity about the nature of the universe. The early Greek philosophers were struck by two factors as they observed the universe: first they observed that although there were changes everywhere, that things changed from one form to another, nevertheless there was a continuity in the midst of the changes, there was always something which did not change but remained permanent and persisted through the changes. Secondly, these early philosophers also observed that there was a fundamental unity underlying the diversity of things. They came to the conclusion that there must be an original, primary stuff of which all things are made, and which explains the continuity in changes and the underlying unity in the plurality of things. But they differed as to what precisely this original stuff, this primary element of all things was. Philosophy in the west began with Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, Empedocles, Anaxogoras, Democritus, the sophists, and in the Golden Age of Greek philosophy and philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The cynics and the cyrenaics, stoics, Epicureans also belong to the group of philosophers in the west.<sup>4</sup>

### Philosophy Defined

Ever since the emergence of man on earth, he has been an enigma of some sort, having failed to understand himself or the vast and seemingly unfathomable universe he finds himself in. But at no time has he ceased trying to unravel the mysteries that surround him. Men everywhere have sought and still seek to understand themselves and the world they live in. Their efforts sedimented into philosophy.

And now, what do we mean by philosophy? It is not correct to say that there is no definition of philosophy that philosophers everywhere will acquiesce to as the correct definition. What is philosophy, is for Azenabor ‘the most provocative question any philosopher can ask’<sup>5</sup>. But let us not beg the question by assuming that philosophy is indefinable. If anything, the plethora of definitions of the subject-matter is at the heart of the problem of acceptance.

Essentially, philosophy has to do with our conception of the world; our conscious relationship to it; our world outlook that imbues our lives with meaning. Philosophy is, as George Bernard Shaw puts it, “the assumption upon which we habitually act.” Its absence is unthinkable, for no human society can long exist without it. As Whitehead wrote in his *Adventures of Ideas*,

Man can flourish in the lower stages of life with merely barbaric flashes of thought. But when civilization culminates, the absence of a co-ordinating philosophy of life, spread throughout

he community, spells decadence, boredom and the slackening of effort.<sup>6</sup>

It is the various forms that reality has taken, the impact that experience has made on a people, the fruit of their reflective inquiry, and ultimately, their shared meaning, aspiration, dream, fear, with people of their immediate environment that have come to constitute for them a philosophy. While learning to know how to live, and then to live the life that he knows, man had deduced from the regularity of nature some basic laws with which he had to make sense out of maze of complexity, uncertainty and temporality that are the inseparable companions of human life. Thus, philosophy, it seems, is electable from the whole process of trying to resolve the problems that man and nature pose to man, satisfy the curiosity that men's finitude engenders, and the vast and infinite universe reinforces, make meaning out of the conflictual and contradictory nature of quotidian life, demystify the conundrumic nature of the unknown, the supra-sensible and the beyond. Man, the lever at which reflection turns, does so with a tool that is impeccable universal reason. Until recently, philosophy as an academic discipline has not made any significant impact on modern Africa. This is so because philosophy was not initially included in most African Universities programmes. Until 1973 in Nigeria, there was no department of philosophy. Even when philosophy became part of universities programmes and students began to enrol for its course, philosophy was viewed as a discipline that is abstract, theoretical and too technical. This negative perception did not allow the general public to see the relevance of philosophy to the achievement of sustainable development in Africa. Etymologically, the word "philosophy" came from two Greek words, *philos* meaning 'love' and *sophia* meaning wisdom. Therefore philosophy from the Greek perspective means the love of wisdom.

However, the question 'what is philosophy' is one of the most difficult questions in philosophy. It is just not easy to give a precise definition of what we do in philosophy. However, since it is imperative in a work of this nature to define philosophy, one will attempt to do what one may call fishing in troubled water by giving a definition. Most importantly, we need a definition –framework–that would assist in employing the services of culture to achieve a stable social order. It is instructive to point out that philosophy is generally used in two senses. First, philosophy in the loose sense or general view– which in a way underlines what people do–and philosophy in the strict or technical sense–which demands rigor and criticism.<sup>7</sup>

If you ask ten different philosophers what philosophy is you are likely to get ten different answers. The simple question "what is philosophy?" is very difficult to answer. A person who for the first time tries to find out what philosophy is, is often disappointed to learn that there is

no universally accepted definition of philosophy. Philosophers themselves disagree on what philosophy is or how it should be defined. It seems strange that professional philosophers themselves do not agree on the nature, scope and definition of their discipline. Philosophy has been conceived, described or defined in various ways by different philosophers. Plato described the philosopher as a man whose passion is to seek the truth, a man "whose heart is fixed on reality; According to Aristotle," philosophy is rightly called the knowledge of the truth; Epicurus described philosophy as "an activity which secures the happy life by means of discussion and argument; John Dewey described philosophy as "thinking which has become conscious of itself; the aim of philosophy according to Wittgenstein is "the logical clarification of thought".<sup>8</sup>

### **Philosophy and Culture: A Symbiotic Relationship**

According to Fasoro in his article titled "The 'Culture' in Philosophy: A Comparative Analysis of Cultural Influence on the Evolution and Growth of African and Western Philosophies" man's philosophical thinking as well as outlook cannot but be influenced by what operates in his culture. The point we are reiterating here is that, no philosophy can ever exist without having an undertone of culture i.e without evolving from a particular culture.<sup>9</sup> In comparing African philosophy with Western philosophy, it must be agreed at the outset that certain factors worked against the development of philosophical ideas among traditional Africans. The fact that, in traditional Africa, people were not expected (even allowed) to arrogate radical and novel ideas to themselves, though this might be seen as part of their culture, did not promote the evolution and growth of philosophy that might be regarded as African. In the same way, the absence of writing and documentation of facts was another factor that did not help the early growth of African philosophy. However, it will be wrong to believe that the so-called western civilization was never influenced by certain events from elsewhere. For instance, there seems to be a consensus among historians of philosophy that Thales visited Egypt several times and these journeys took place by travelling on the seas.<sup>10</sup>

The challenge to traditional culture in Africa and the west came from our exposure to the beliefs and practices of other peoples. Colonialism, capitalism and the current wave of globalisation have presented us with reasons for comparison. All these cultural interminglings present us with reasons for reflection and cause for projection on how our culture can sustain the society and cope with challenges of the future. The fundamental problem that African society faces today is that of how to produce a cultural system that will sustain the community.<sup>11</sup>

At this junction, culture, generally, it must be pointed

out is at the heart of human civilisation and development. The reason is that any meaningful human development takes place in a cultural milieu and to a very large extent, the degree of development in any society is a function of the degree of dynamism of the culture of that society. It is pertinent to point out that not a few people believe that the word 'culture' refers only to artifacts, mode of dressing, how marriages and naming ceremonies are conducted. It is more than this.<sup>12</sup> For L.A. Thompson, Culture can be defined as the way of life of a given society or the universe of values and artifacts in which a given people live or standardized and expected behaviour within the framework of a given system of social organisation.<sup>13</sup>

To broaden our knowledge of the meaning of culture, let us take a look at another definition. Culture has been conceived as 'the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment which gives meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organisation thus distinguishing them from their neighbours.'<sup>14</sup>

Moreso, the primacy of culture to human existence in society cannot be over-emphasised. Indeed many social scholars and philosophers have argued that our interpretation of reality is culture-bound. This is of course explains why G.S. Sogolo conceives culture as the means through which people interpret reality. According to Sogolo "Reality itself does not change". But its conception is mirrored through the medium of language which itself is culture-determined.<sup>15</sup>

Also, the role of culture as a vital instrument for the control and sustenance of human society was beautifully articulated by Ali A. Mazrui in one of his works – "Cultural Forces in World Politics".<sup>16</sup>

In this book Mazrui identifies seven functions of culture in the society. They are:

- (i) It helps to provide lenses of perception and cognition
- (ii) Culture provides motives for human behaviour and thus serves as an instrument for control of change in society
- (iii) It serves as a criterion of evaluation.
- (iv) It serves as a basis of identity.
- (v) Culture is a mode of communication
- (vi) The role of culture as a basis for stratification
- (vii) Culture functions as a system of production and consumption.<sup>17</sup>

Philosophy has a functional role to play in the development of human society. Every society with culture has an underlying philosophy. Philosophy is a human understanding in which people have been engaged since their creation. Jack Ale Aigbodioh believes that "philosophy as an academic inquiry does not bake bread

nor it builds bridges".<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Bertrand Russell argues that under the influence of science or of practical affairs, there are doubts whether philosophy is anything better than innocent controversies on matters concerning which knowledge is impossible.<sup>19</sup>

To this end, philosophy distinguishes one culture from the other. It (philosophy) gives every culture its uniqueness of purpose and also gives it (every culture) structure and sets goals. The nature of a culture is determined by the philosophy underlying it.

### African Philosophy Described

The Berlin conference of 1885 gave official sanction to colonialism in African. Africa was divided among European countries for the purpose of exploitation, subjugation and domination. European countries became "masters" of African nations and "owners" of everything in Africa which was of any value. African nations were subjected to foreign domination and exploitation. The reins of government were forcefully seized from African rulers by the new rulers and self-appointed masters. Those who dared to resist were ruthlessly slaughtered. Having overpowered the African nations, the colonial masters began to humiliate, to rule and to exploit them. They began to remove to their own countries, everything they found in Africa which was of any value, and thus began the underdevelopment of Africa by the Europeans who exploited Africa to develop Europe. Everything good in Africa was removed and used to develop Europe. Africa began to be drained, impoverished and underdeveloped. African culture was frowned at, and attempts were made to suppress it completely. However, this situation was destined to come to an end, for it is impossible to continue indefinitely to deprive any people of their fundamental human rights. The first half of this century saw the rise of nationalism in Africa. Men like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, having acquired higher education abroad came back home and began nationalist movements aimed at putting an end to colonialism in Africa. This was the beginning of the end of colonial exploitation and domination in Africa. The heads that were forcefully bowed down began to rise again, and African culture which the colonial masters had tried to suppress began to be revived. African thinkers began to focus their thoughts on political freedom. At present, most African states are independent. But has colonialism ceased? Or has it only been transformed into neo-colonialism? This is the setting of contemporary African philosophy. Among the leading contemporary African philosophers are Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold S. Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Kwasi Wiredu, Azikiwe and Awolowo.<sup>20</sup> The question still remains that who, as at present among the leaders in Africa, can be said to be turning around the fortunes of the continent? This and other very important

questions are begging for answers.

Though this session aims at carrying out a descriptive analysis of African philosophy but we want to posit that various methods for resolving western problems such as analytic, critical, expository dialectical methods exist in western philosophy. It is worthy of note that African philosophy also has its own various methods of resolving problems in Africa namely field work method, discussion method, consultation method (e.g consulting Ifa). To us, the best method by which various socio-political and economic problems of the African continent can be resolved is by applying collaborative method. Collaborative method is the type of method that requires the participation of all and sundry in the governance of the affairs of the African continent. For Africa to move forward, various leaders of from different spheres have to collaboratively work together and deliberate on what can be done in order to revitalise the continent.

At this junction, philosophy is sometimes conceived as the critical reflection of human beings on the problem of their existence and essence. African philosophy is not different. The idea of philosophy as an academic enterprise is recent in Africa. It is an off-shoot of Africa's contact with European culture. Nevertheless, that does not imply that, prior to this time Africans never gave attention to philosophical issues, at least in an informal manner. African philosophy, as we have it today, is an amalgam of the various ideas and problems of traditional African thought and modern philosophical culture; employing the methodology of the Western philosophical tradition.<sup>21</sup>

An African student of philosophy who takes a course in African philosophy for the first time may be shocked by the fact that an extensive portion of the literature on African philosophy is devoted to the polemic surrounding the issue of the existence and essence of African philosophy. But the shock ought to abate if he recalls that Western philosophy throughout its history is constantly questioning its own existence and essence. The fact that African philosophy is essentially metaphysical confirms its status as genuinely philosophical.

However, the series of questions generated by the African philosophical enterprise are these:

- (i) What is African philosophy? Do we have an African philosophy the way we talk of European philosophy or Eastern philosophy? What are the features of African philosophy? What makes a philosophical enterprise African?
- (ii) Do we have African philosophy that is unique and distinct from Western philosophy? How is this enterprise different from its Western counterpart? Do we have an African identity distinct from the Western one?
- (iii) Can African philosophy influence the development of the African society? Should African

philosophy be relevant to African society? How can the African philosophical project contribute to the overall transformation of the African society?<sup>22</sup> The three clusters of questions identified have become the three fundamental subjects of African philosophy.

The ethno-philosophy trend gives an insight into the orientation in African philosophy that subscribes to the approach employed by placid Tempels in presenting the communal beliefs of the Bantu people as an example of what and how African philosophy should be. Majority of the scholars categorised as members of this orientation are theologians such as J.S. Mbiti and Bolaji Idowu, anthropologists like Mercel Griaule, Alexis Kagame and Robin Horton. It has been said that these scholars are interested in African thought for two major reasons : (i) to debunk the ethnocentric assertion made by first generation of European Africanists that African people are incapable of rational and rigorous reflection and analysis, (ii) to make the African mentality or cultural matrix comprehensible to the Western mind, especially for the purpose of the civilizing or colonizing project.<sup>23</sup>

However, African philosophy should not be construed or understood as the philosophy of the people of Africa rather it should be seen as a course that is existing independently of the existence of either Eastern or Western philosophies. It is (African philosophy) not culture-bound but rather a course that has its distinctive features like other philosophies which is studied not only in African but other continents of the world.

Moreso, given the serious intellectual efforts wasted on the controversy on the existence of African philosophy, the issues, it seems to us, is not whether African philosophy exists or not but that there is a confusion as to what constitutes African philosophy, traditional or contemporary. Under the auspices of traditional African philosophy as it being used here refers to the indigenous ways by which Africans from time immemorial, before the advent of colonialism, have been reflecting on their daily experiences as individuals or groups. The mode of reflection could be theoretical or practical as the situations dictate. Perhaps, like any other human race, Africans in their unwritten literature (and yet written in the minds of their descendants from generation to generation and who remain as the custodians of this brand of knowledge) would have intuitively grappled with the questions of human existence, social relations, supreme being, divinities, ancestors etc.

Contemporary African philosophy is however, a child of circumstance. It grew out of the negative perceptions of colonial masters, their scholars, intellectuals and missionaries. As far as these people were concerned, Africans were considered primitive and therefore incapable of rational enterprise. Prominent among the scholars who held this opinion were Hegel, Hume and Lucien, Levy-Bruhl.

More so, there is no gainsaying the fact that there is a

close connection between theoretical concerns in philosophy and practical issues in human life. This implies that there is need to make philosophy relevant to human needs. Any discourse of African philosophy today ought to devote attention to the issue of what the discipline can contribute to the challenge of social transformation facing the continent.<sup>24</sup>

### **Western Philosophy Described.**

Men of thought have argued that a man or woman who will never reason is a bigot and the one who cannot is a fool, while the one who dare not is a slave. Obviously, such argument is a statement of the fact of primacy of the art of reasoning in all human endeavours. Western Philosophy encompasses the philosophies of the founders of philosophy namely: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the cynics and a host of others. Philosophy in the West began with wonders. Philosophy began in the Western world among the Greeks. The great founders of Western philosophy (especially Plato and Aristotle) had a much deeper and more comprehensive concept of philosophy. They saw philosophy as a reflection on human experience, that is, man's experiences of himself and of objective reality (the starry sky, the immensity of the universe, the natural phenomena, the marvels of the human being, the shortness of human life, birth, growth, death and decay man's joy and miseries on earth etc). Man's experience of these fills him with 'wonder' and this 'wonder' gives rise to some fundamental questions. This is the beginning of philosophy. The great founders of Western philosophy tell us that men now begin and originally began to philosophize say, Aristotle. It is obvious then that it cannot be the Western world alone that philosophizes; it cannot be in the Western world alone that philosophy exists since it is not only in the Western world that people reflect on human experience. Philosophy must therefore be world-wide.

Western philosophies believe that philosophy is a search, a continuous search for meaning, for intelligibility and for answers. It is a search that never ends, for by its very nature, philosophy is always on the way and never arrives at its destination. It is a continuous search for answers to questions, but it accepts no dogmatic answers. As Plato (in the Republic) tells us that 'there is no other beginning of philosophy than this 'wonder. Thus the first-step in the philosophical activity is this 'wonder' that accompanies man's experiential contact with himself or the world around him. This wonder gives rise to some fundamental questions, and this is the second step. The third step is taken when man begins to reflect on these fundamental questions in search of answers. At this stage, the man in question is philosophizing and if he puts down his reflections in writing he has written a

philosophical book. As it has been already mentioned, philosophy can also start from the human person. Indeed, man has within himself a richer source of philosophy than the physical universe. There is no part of the world where men never reflect on such basic questions about the human person or about the physical universe. In other words there is no part of the world where men do not philosophize. The tendency to reflect on such fundamental philosophic questions is part of human nature; it is rooted in man's natural instinct of curiosity – the instinct to know.<sup>25</sup> Western philosophy is pronounced and recognised as a result of the efforts of the founders in documenting what they experienced in the course of engaging themselves with reflection or as a result of having contact with the physical universe through reflection. Documentation via writing was the means by which the Western Philosophers recorded their beliefs, ideas, thoughts, sculptures, some loaded verses etc. This was what affected African philosophy which eventually delayed its emergence as a recognised discipline. Some of the ideas, thoughts, taboos of the African people suffered defects as a result of not being documented by their forefathers.

### **A Comparative Analysis between African and Western Philosophies**

In comparing African philosophy with Western philosophy, it must be agreed at the outset that certain factors worked against the development of philosophical ideas among traditional Africans. The fact that, in traditional Africa, people were not expected (or even allowed) to arrogate radical and novel ideas to themselves, though this might be seen as part of their culture, did not promote the evolution and growth of philosophy that might be regarded as African. In the same way, the absence of writing and documentation of facts was another factor that did not help the early growth of African philosophy. Rather than arguing that writing is not essential to philosophizing (Oruka, for instance, has argued that philosophy is thinking and that thinking precedes writing), or that philosophy is wholly a body of written corpus (Hountondji) it is our view in this paper that even though it may be argued that philosophy (folk philosophy) was not new to ancient Africans, yet their inability to document and systematize their ideas and views did not argue well for the kind of 'critical' or 'scientific' philosophy of the west. Contrary to the views expressed by such philosophers and writers as Anyanwu, Tempels, Senghor and Sodipo, the distinctive Africanness of African philosophy is not to be seen in its mythical nature. Rather, the preponderance of mythical elements in 'philosophy' is to be traced to its formative i.e. speculative, stage and not necessarily because it is the philosophy of a particular culture.<sup>26</sup>

It will be wrong to believe that the so-called Western civilisation was never influenced by certain events from elsewhere. For instance, there seems to be a consensus among historians of philosophy that Thales visited Egypt several times and these journeys took place by travelling on the seas. Thales must have marvelled at seeing large expanses of water while travelling on the seas.

Many writers and commentators on African philosophy must often fall into the mistake of comparing today's academic (western) philosophy with traditional African (religious) thought thereby concluding that there is no African philosophy in the real sense of that word.

Here then is the difference. At a time when attention was shifted from agriculture to commerce, fertility rites would no longer be required for neither the sun nor the rain, gold was now needed for commercial activities to a large extent-except indirectly. This ought to serve as a lesson to some commentators on the existence or non-existence of African philosophy. Some of these commentators argue as if one is to believe that Africans were (and perhaps are) not capable of philosophizing. The traditional African practices and thoughts that have always been the focus of most western scholars ought not be compared with modern philosophy. Rather, such a comparison should be done in relation to periods preceding the birth of philosophy in Ionia. This is not to say that traces of superstitions could still not be found in the philosophical speculations of the Ionian philosophers. Guthrie warns that it would be an exaggeration to draw this distinction too sharply.

From the above, it would be clear to us that what appears like a monumental scientific achievement to one age, may be nothing more than rudimentary speculation to the next generation. The point we are making here is that it would be wrong for any one to compare the level of philosophical development of one historical epoch with that of another epoch with the sole aim of determining which of the two is in actual 'critical' or scientific'.<sup>27</sup>

To this end, if care is not taken, there is no doubt that prejudices may result in intellectual business on the part of some scholars who embark on a study of cultures other than their own.

While it is not contended in this work that Africans must glorify their non-critical past, we are of the conviction that it western scholars have not come with 'what philosophy really is or ought to be' and 'how philosophy ought to be done', they would have benefitted immensely from what they take to be the 'mythical beliefs' of the Africans.<sup>28</sup>

The above quotation implies that African philosophy is richer in contents contrary to the views of the western philosophers.

## CONCLUSION

Having juxtaposed the symbiotic relationship between

Western philosophy and African philosophy, one could see that African philosophy is capable of moving the world like its sister philosophies in terms of contribution to knowledge and in the course of intellectual business. The paper opines that if scholars could explore some of the hidden truths in African philosophy, value would be added to knowledge and the gap between knowledge and ignorance would be bridged. If African philosophy is given a pride of place in the scheme of knowledge, the frontiers of human ignorance would be pushed back. The paper does not relegate any of these philosophies to the ground but rather strengthen the cordial and symbiotic relationship/nexus between African philosophy and other philosophies. It emphasises that if African philosophy is studied, there would be growth of knowledge and it would be an added advantage to knowledge. Once again, African philosophy is not culture-bound, as earlier said, as it is studied in other continents of the world.

To this end, to properly compare, one needs to integrate sensibilities. The paradigms of evaluation of what counts as knowledge cannot be used in one culture to explain what transpires in another culture. The paper concludes by advancing further the study of African philosophy as a reinforcer and complement to western and oriental philosophies. The whole nature of philosophy would not be complete if African philosophy is not properly given a pride of place in the scheme of knowledge.

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