

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES: THE CRITICAL NEXUS

Mmoneke, Samuel Ifeanyi (PhD)

Department of Philosophy, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu

University Igbariam Campus

Email: si.mmoneke@coou.edu.ng

Abstract

African philosophy is the way of life and thought pattern of the African people. These African lives and thought pattern could extent to the African worldview, African culture and tradition. They were all derived, defined and expressed in the African indigenous languages. As such, African indigenous language goes a long way in promoting and unveiling the secrets of African philosophical worldview, extending to the African culture and tradition. In the light of these, a critic of the nexus of African philosophy and African indigenous languages, became necessary, so as to discover the relevance of African indigenous languages in the changing society. Comparative analytic method was adopted for a proper examination. The study discovers that no meaningful understanding will be made of African philosophy and worldview without the peoples' indigenous language. The paper also determines that the problem of interpretation of African philosophy and worldview lay most on the inadequate use of African indigenous languages. Based on this, the paper opines that African indigenous languages should be given its proper place in the interpretation of African philosophy, African cultural, traditional activities and African worldview. As such, the paper recommends that scholars should be thought their indigenous languages. Africans must be more interested in their indigenous languages so as to be properly guided in the interpretation of not only African philosophy but also African culture, tradition and worldview.

Key words: African Philosophy; Indigenous Languages; Critical; Nexus; Worldview

Introduction

The emergence of African Philosophy as an academic discipline is an important development in African intellectual history. Africans' have suffered so much humiliation and violation in the hands of the racist western powers. These powers dominated, distorted and devastated African lives, cultures and identities for centuries. The African philosophical discipline provides Africans with a frame work to explore and explode those western framed myths, misconception and misrepresentation of African personality. Some of these prejudices include the notion that Africans are inferior in thought, and therefore lack the capacity of rational thinking or philosophy.

However, time and events since 1990s has taken over the question of the existence and nonexistence of African philosophy. Since then, African philosophy has gone beyond folklores and myths otherwise referred to as ethno-philosophy. African philosophy has accomplished numerous works in the political, social and economic areas of Africans. As we appreciate the debate on the existence and nonexistence of African philosophy, it was particularly in the case of a discipline that is seeking for recognition or relevance. African philosophers, haven't moved beyond debates on the idea itself into actual philosophizing, should acknowledge that indigenous languages remain the best option for the interpretation of African philosophy, culture, tradition and worldview. Especially at this juncture that much of what we are seeing now are real philosophizing in the African context. Africans are naturally communalistic and as such should instill a new interpretation into African philosophy by moving away from imitational Western individual philosophizing to "group philosophizing" or hard thinking ethnic, tribal or traditional philosophizing, which is purely communalistic. Otherwise the problem of interpretation occasioned by the application of foreign language into African philosophy will persist.

The deficiency in African philosophy as a result of inadequate grasp of African indigenous languages usually occur each moment foreign language is preferred to indigenous language in interpretation of African philosophy. Scholars still view African philosophy with the eye of Western philosophy and as such fail to present African philosophy as "group philosophy", not even minding the communal affiliation that enable us refer to it as African philosophy. African philosophical thoughts are often presented in the form of personal or subjective philosophy as a result of the language application. The mode of philosophizing remains stagnating and inhibitive of the needed individual, in order to be part of communal decision in a critical perspective on wide range of issues. Therefore, there is the need to liberate African philosophy from the slavery of western philosophical thought. Such liberation that will instill indigenous African spirit into the discipline. This can only be achieved through proper use of indigenous language.

Furthermore, African philosophy will experience a new lease if African scholars can get rid of certain stereotypes and mental blocks that undermine genuine philosophizing like the idea-of presenting or insisting that everything African philosophy is to be based on religion or on one god or spirit or the other. Most Africans in the course of their lives, history and upbringing come under diverse religious influences or non-religious, theistic, atheistic, naturalistic, and super-naturalistic. These serve as raw data for philosophical enterprise. It is on these raw data that this, work hope to base its critical nexus. So there is need for a new conception of African philosophy that recognizes,

admits and acknowledges the diverse philosophical experiences of African people in their diverse indigenous languages.

Conceptual Analysis (African Philosophy)

A number of vital concepts will at this point be briefly define for a better understanding of the topic under discussion. These concepts include: Philosophy, Africa/African, Indigenous Language, Critical, Nexus and Worldview. Onyibor Marcel among numerous philosophers saw philosophy as, “some form of rational activity, a critical examination of all reality, of all areas of human experience including man himself”, (2003, p,94).Philosophy in most philosophical discuss usually asks the question ‘why’. The ‘Why’ of philosophy remains the ultimate philosophical question and preoccupies itself with the nature, meaning and essence of all that is in the past, present and future and of all that can be said to be in one way or the other. This is both in their particularities (as beings), in their relationships to one another and in their totality (as being). There is a natural quest in man to discover the inner reality of things both in themselves and as they confront reality. This natural quest is a universal phenomenon. It is found in all cultures, in various manners and at all times. The African participates in this search for meaning and coherence and only by the application of their indigenous language can these be attained.

On the part of African as a concept, Iroegbu opines that the true Africans must include the African geo-political and socio-cultural entity englobed by the continent of Africa. It should also include the old Afro-Islamic Egypt, sub-Saharan black central as well as White South African in this geo-political definition. Equally included are the historically Afro-African originators. Although they no longer leave in African continent, yet they are tied by history, language and origins to Africa. They are part and parcel of African reality, (1994, p.121).Other Africans involved and those who can do African philosophy are those who, though not Africans by geo-political delineation but are sufficiently informed, versed and interested to reflect on the African mystery just as some non-westerners do reflect on the western reality. With the above “As” African” Iroegbu actually told us who really African philosophers are.

African philosophy on the one hand, according to Iroegbu, is a reflective inquiry into the marvels and problems that confront one in the African world, in view of producing systematic explanation and sustained responses to them, (1994, p.116).On the other hand, it is a critical investigation into the ultimate cause of reality in the African world; the way through, which Africans both pre-modern and contemporary look at the problems in their world and finding solutions to them. K. C. Anyanwu in Okolo (1993, p.12) saw African philosophy as that “which concern itself with the way in which African

peoples of the past and the present make sense of their existence, of their destiny and of the world in which they live". Okolo, (1993), saw it as "a path to a systematic, coherent, discovery and disclosure of the African as a being in the African world. Though this knowledge and disclosure of himself and his world by critical reflection, Okolo continued, the African grasp reality, that is to say, attains the truth about man and the cosmos in its entirety", (p. 8). As a creative rational inquiry, African philosophy seeks to understand, clarify and explain every aspect of African experience. It was Kwame Gyekye in Okolo (1993) who maintained that African philosophy held the view that "philosophy of some kind is behind the thought and action of every people. It constitutes the intellectual anchor of the life in its totality. African philosophy in this context was then referred to as ethno-philosophy, folk-philosophy, traditional thought of the African peoples', mythical folklores", (p.8).

As it were, no meaningful explanation would have been given to any system of a people without their language. Those philosophical ideas must be expressed in the peoples' indigenous Language to enhance meaningful understanding. Again Iroegbu, (1994, Pp.118-121) insisted that these inquiries must be of two aspects, philosophical and African. As philosophy, here referred to it as a *philosophia*, meaning a quest for (African) wisdom. It is the reflective and systematic investigation into the fundamental questions that touch on African reality as a whole, empirical and meta-empirical. Those include questions concerning the universe, humanity, the neighbor, the self, life and supernatural beings, such as God, the spirits and the afterlife and only by the application of the peoples' indigenous languages can the answers to these fundamental questions be found.

In summary, African philosophy remains a critical inquiry into the being of the African people, their culture and tradition as well as their experience of reality. It "is philosophy done in African context such as; Mythico-Religious, Historio-Political-moral, Ethnic-linguistic, existential, phenomenon, logical pragmatic, etc contexts", (p.121), Iroegbu added.

Indigenous Languages

Every people have something that is theirs, that which is indigenous to them: their Worldview, their philosophy, their culture and tradition. The only means through which to express these indigenous principles to the people is with the peoples' indigenous language. Indigenous language is therefore that language that is generally used and understood by the people. That which is theirs and can freely be applied in the interpretation of any indigenous concept. It could be spoken language signs and symbols. It becomes indigenous if and only if it is understood by the people who make use of such language. It is used in reaching out to the people, in communicating to the people as well as passing any form information to the people. It is therefore proper to use the peoples'

language in reaching out to the people and as far as African philosophy, is concerned African indigenous language is the most suitable in the expression, communication and interpretation.

Critical

Advance Learners Dictionary*, saw a critic as one who expresses opinion about the good and bad qualities of an establishment. It could be a book, a theory, a culture or tradition. This expression could also be an approval or disapproval of such establishment.

Critic is a noun form of the adjective, Critical, which could be defined as the expression of disapproval of something or somebody and saying what one think is bad about them, in other words, disapproving an established fact and stating the reasons for the disapproval. Critical could also be seen from the point of extreme importance meaning, the subject is extremely important because a future situation will be affected. Critical could mean serious, uncertain and possibly dangerous, thus a critical moment in the history of Country or Community, as is the case with Nigeria since 27th February, 2020 with coronavirus pandemic. Critical could also mean a situation involving making fair, careful judgement about the good and bad qualities of somebody or something. As such African philosophy and indigenous language require such a fair and careful judgement, to avoid accepting opinions without questioning. They should be given unprejudiced, dispassionate and unbiased critical attention so as to buttress the huge importance of indigenous language in the interpretation of African philosophy.

Nexus

African philosophy is vast. It cuts across every aspect of African life and events, which cuts across their social, political, religious and economic conduct rooted in the African culture and tradition. As such a complicated series of connections between these ideologies become very necessary in the treatment of African philosophy. To make it truly African, it has to be in her indigenous language. Nexus simply put is a complicated series of connections between different things. It is therefore our aim in this paper to critically connect African philosophy and African indigenous language to the above aspects of African life and events.

African World-view

Like every other conceptual definition as was above, African worldview will be defined in two parts: “world – view” and “African world view”. World-view according to Onuoha is “a conceptualization of the Universe providing a structural and unified picture of the cosmos and defining man’s place and role in it. It comprises a set of values, perception and interpretation of facts and

events”, (1987, p.11). Ikenga Metuh on his part saw world-view as “the complex of people’s beliefs and attitudes concerning the origin, the nature, structure of organization and interaction of being in the universe with particular reference to man”, (1998, p.50). In all, world-view has to do with the idea of man and the universe, the picture of cosmos and man’s place in it.

African world-view is therefore seen as “something natural coeval and peculiar to pre-modern African man. It comprises of their beliefs, origin, nature, structure of organization and interaction in the world handed down as the sum total of assumptions entertained from one generation to another”, (Mbaegbu, 2004, p.129). Following the assertion of Mbaegbu, African world is not to be seen as a global world but the world around them. It could be a family or a community, village, town, thus their worldview could be handed down from one generation to another. It is the world conceived as contemplated, perceived by people who live in it especially within the ambit of human environment. He also maintains that it is a body of beliefs about the universe which are common among the members of any society and existentially demonstrated in their value systems, such as their philosophy of life, social conduct and morality, folklores, myths, rites and rituals, norms, rules, ideas, cognitive mappings, theologies etc., (2004, p.129).

Worldview is said to be the blue print upon which a people’s activities are based. It contains the totality of all the things that give sense of direction and purpose to the peoples’ lives, which enable them to act purposefully in, and exercise a measure of control over their environment. It is our sub-conscious guide through life.

Furthermore, the worldview is said to be the blue print which a people’s activities are based because it contains the complex of people’s beliefs and attitude concerning the origin, the nature, the structure, organization and interaction of beings in the universe with particular reference to man. It is upon this worldview that the peoples’ philosophy depends. A people’s philosophy is actually that which makes them who they are. It is the about the people. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate a people’s worldview from their philosophy. Thus the peoples’ worldview could also be their philosophy and as such seriously require the peoples’ indigenous language

Cradle of African Philosophy and African Indigenous Language (Thought)

Africa as a continent were never acknowledged as a people by the European. For them Africa had no history. Instead of appreciating and recognizing Africa as the cradle of world’s civilization, Eneh, remarked that Africa was rather labelled as a dark continent influenced by hot weather, infested with hunger, mosquitoes, diseases, superstition and stagnation, (1999:1-2). That the

Western world found it difficult to acknowledge Africans as a people, did not put to doubt the existence of Africa. As a people that they are, they are ways of life and philosophy.

African philosophy had been defined as the way and method of African's thinking about issues that concern their culture and tradition. These ways and methods were seen and described by African philosophers as ethno-philosophy, philosophical sagacity, nationalist ideological philosophy and professional philosophical thought. It should be noted that most of these African thoughts or philosophies before now were not written in any papyrus or paper. It is in-fact oral thought/philosophy that was embedded in oral literature, myths, rituals, proverbs, name, socio-cultural and religious institutions. These thoughts were just moved from hand to hand orally until the recent past when they were documented in papers and today they have moved from being analogue to being digitalized, yet nothing African was removed.

African philosophy began as a myth, just as every other thing that is, has a beginning. Anowai, (2014:4), is of the opinion that, "the pre-philosophical thought can be characterized as 'mythopeic', 'mythopetic' or 'mythic' thought. Mythopeic, taken from its root, means *making*, (poien, from which the word *poet* is derived)". Anowai, (4), went on to say that "Myths are stories about persons, who may be gods, heroes or ordinary people".

Mythology before the digital era in history was the only means through which African philosophy could better be expressed to the African people, of course in their native language. It was with this mythology that the various African beliefs, traditions and cultures were being expressed. With mythology their philosophical thoughts were being expressed as proverbs, folktales and even in the derivation of African names etc. To understand the African philosophical thoughts therefore one need to also understand African mythological stories.

The nuances of definitions above showed that what we generally designate as the African world-view evolved from a particular situation. That a world-view, in each case, is as a result of the effort of a people and a community to understand the world, or the reality around them. Thus its outcome is always context-dependent and that explains the wide variations and the narrower nuances that are comparative features of different world-views. The effort at interpretation that gives rise to a worldview is characterized by a primordial attempt to react to the uncontrollability of nature. In the interpretation of peoples' world-view, what differentiate one from another is the application of the people's language. According to William Abraham;

The primordial reaction to this reality is two-fold: on the theoretical level there is a projection of origin in which the situation was much different, a sort of paradise that was lost. This is usually represented in idyllic myths of origin. On the practical level, there is ritual, which tries to project man beyond here and now on the ideal Original situation, to symbolically bring him in contact with a world that was more predictable. Such conceptualization and ritual projection are therefore primarily aimed at survival, (1985, p.19).

The theoretical explanation for the difficulties of nature or life contains explanation, which at the same time reveals the finitude of man in finding answers. Worldview represents the sedimentation of a people's conception of the way things are and how they should be.

More specifically, the African worldview emerged from a situation of relative poverty and development. It is a worldview marked by survival, which is an outcrop of relative poverty with some characteristics. Among these is coalescence of the divine and the human, the supernatural and the natural. The division between heaven and earth becomes less and less clear, so is the separation between dead and living, and those yet to be born. Life becomes a huge circle in which each of these dimensions is strongly linked with the other. A possible explanation of these coalescence is the factor of interdependence. This is in turn born of the vision engendered by life threatening situation, which has been described as precarious vision. In turn such a vision gives rise to the quest from all conceivable sources, divine and human. This presupposes a conception of the sources of trouble, which can also be taken to be both terrestrial (human) and supra-terrestrial (spiritual). It is thus not surprising that the traditional African religious world is the one peopled by a number of deities detailed to take care of specific aspects of life. These also serve as counter forces against other spiritual beings that are considered to be life threatening. There is usually the Supreme Being and also the cosmic forces, the numerous lesser spirits or deities, as well as the ancestors. Working in opposition to all these are countless evil spirits. Even lower beings, animals and plants are not use in the struggle for survival and well-being. They are usually imbued with power or influence, and the rational being can manipulate these powers to influence the life of another rational being. Only indigenous language is capable of driving home all the African worldview had to offer.

Such a vision also gives human beings certain clout and independence. The deities and the ancestors to a certain extent are dependent on them for their “well-being” and continued relevance in the affairs of men. Humans can turn their attention to ineffective deities and ancestors. These are mainly relevant because of their ability to provide protection for the living. It means that worship is not primarily aimed at spiritual beings. It is not for the ultimate aim of praising them that the votary takes his pain, but to obtain his needs and be liberated from his numerous problems. That is why the deities could be discarded or even punished. Thus interdependent of deferent spheres of reality entails that each sphere has its function, and it is on account of that function that it is recognized in the life of humans.

The background of this attitude is the readiness to believe untested explanations. Let us name it credulity for want of better word. Credulity results from the failure or inability to investigate in any modern scientific conception of the world. It involves complete trust on the powers and effectiveness of experts like the diviner and the medicine men who are ready to attach unnatural cause to unwanted phenomena, occurrences and situation. The unwanted is usually due to wicked ancestors, angry gods, jealous or envious neighbors, colleagues or cheer evil men. This in turn overflows to the confidence in the power of the deities to purvey the only possible solace before the enormity of life-problems. It is possible to interpret some of the practical effects, this belief on the level of psychological satisfaction, nevertheless what underlies such satisfaction of the confidence in the power of the deities. Such powers are often viewed in a magical way, depending on the manipulation of certain physical objects, accompanied by incantations by experts to bring the desired effects. But this is not always so. In many cases, prayer to the divinity in question accompanies the offering of the votary, with the promise of even better sacrifice in future if the supplication is heeded. This touches on the question of the difference between magic, which in subjection to the will of the absolute is implicit. What is notable, is the view of the supernatural as intervening, directly and constantly, to make determinant difference in the day-to-day lot of man.

Finally, such feature we mention above are the coalescence of the divine act, human inter dependency of all realities, the central position of man, the functionality of all levels of being, divine and human, the disinclination to seek for natural causes, the attribution of these cause to magico-religious beings which tend to stop all scientific inquiries, the belief in the efficacy of the spiritual beings and also in the manipulation of these lower creatures to effect harm on rational beings, inclination to believe in the presence of uncanny inferences in native without sustained search for attentive possible cause. The interpretations and better understanding of all these must be done

only in African local languages otherwise, the philosophical thought behind the African world view will not receive the desired treatment.

African Philosophy and Indigenous Languages: The Critical Nexus

African philosophy in the various definitions we had already concerned itself with who the Africans are, their practices, what realities are for them and the interpretation of the world around them. The African worldview cuts across the ambient of the African culture, tradition, religious practices, belief system, social contact and morality. Language, according to Ozumba is defined as “a means of communicating ideas and thought”, (2004, p.18). As such, African language can be defined as a means of communicating African ideas and thoughts. Moreover, language is an essential tool in the constitution, transformation, and expression of people and cultures. The most distinguishing mark of any ethnic group is its language or dialect. Following the communicational role of language some go to the extent of identifying language with the essence of a people or of a person. In fact, some think that the most universal element in all humanity is the power to communicate through language. It is through language that all the ambient of African life could be transmitted to the Africans

However, different African languages, belong to different language family, within each family. There are many language groups in Africa and each have a language through which they can be reached. The Niger-Congo family for instance has such language group as Benue-Congo, Mande, Kwa etc and each are identified with a particular language group. Each of the African languages belong to one of the language family group. Interestingly, the African languages that belong to a particular language group exhibit some characteristic features in their phonology, morphology, and/or syntax that are glaringly similar. This fact makes one confident to generalize, and with a high degree of precision too that certain findings in an African language indicate that others that belong to the same language group possess the same language characteristic features.

Interestingly, African ethnic groups numerous as they are and African languages and dialects as various and varied as they are, constitute according to Iroegbu, “very fundamental philosophical point-de-depart for African philosophy”, (1994, p.120)⁷. But one unfortunate handicap that persists in this area according to H. Odimegwu in his inaugural lecture is “the use of foreign languages to undo African philosophy. Until this handicap is overcome, African philosophy will not actualize its originality

Rationale behind the Centrality of African Indigenous Language in African Philosophy

Haven seen philosophy as a critical enquiry into nature or realities, through their ultimate causes, African philosophy on the other hand remains a “relative inquiry in to the marvels and problems that confront the African world in view of sustained responses to man”, Iroegbu, (1994, p.116). Again language is a symbol through which ideas and thoughts are communicated. Indeed, through African philosophy ideas and thoughts must be communicated by mean of African languages to the African man. This is because one cannot possibly comprehend ideas or philosophical thoughts if they are not communicated through language, be it sign language or any other form of language that can be used to relate the ideas to the audience or people that are around.

The rationale behind the centrality of African Indigenous Language in African Philosophy will be based from what is said so far. That the relationship between African philosophy and language lie in the communication skill applied. This means that the person who is philosophizing can apply those communication skills to relate the ideas and thoughts such that one can easily understand the views being communicated. Until every philosophical thoughts and ideas are properly related or communicated, such ideas or thoughts do not qualify to be called a peoples’ philosophy and no meaningful philosophy could be communicated without a language which may be oral, written or through signs or symbols.

However, it will be salient to know that this relationship between African philosophy and language as we mentioned above is not peculiar to African philosophy alone rather it is general to every philosophy and African philosophy being part of the general philosophy has the same relationship with African language. As such every philosophy needs to be communicated before people can understand its content so as to appraise or criticize it or accept or reject it. Language is the only means through which the above exercise could be attained.

However, the fact that African philosophy is being done in foreign language, is a very big problem, which African philosophy is having in relation with language today. Here, we should note that the linguistic expression of a people is definitions of their essential being and action. Language is therefore the soul of culture, the heart of the environment and the spirit that motivates and directs a people’s life. Thus, Iroegbu remarked that, “The dynamism of the German language and emotivism of the Italian portray, remains the being and character of the two people. African philosophical thought in a foreign language is not fully African thought. African philosophy done in a foreign language is not yet authentically African philosophy”, (1994, p.116). Makinde in his final remark, stated that until philosophy is written and taught in an

African Languages African philosophy may turn out to be nothing but Western Philosophy in African guise, (1988, p.56). We must therefore learn to appreciate our language for that is our identity and bases of our African culture.

African Philosophy without Indigenous Languages

Like Makinde posited, African philosophy will definitely turn to western philosophy if the African indigenous language is not acknowledged in its interpretation. It is obvious that a people's language interprets their philosophy and to lose one's language is as good as losing not just the philosophy but also the identity. In the definition of African worldview, a number of issues were mentioned as contained in the worldview, things like African social conduct and morality, the folklores, myths, rites and rituals, norms, rules, ideas, cognitive mappings, theologies as well as African metaphysics, epistemology. These issues can only be properly expressed and communicated in African language.

To teach, express and communicate the above African issues as may be found in the African worldview in a foreign language is to make African philosophy appear as a foreign or western philosophy. It will also be difficult to comprehend. The true philosophy behind each concept will be lost. It will lose the true African meaning behind each of the concepts. Africans will begin lose interest in the whole concept and as such the basic African values found therein will be lost. These will amount to a complete loss of African philosophy. Indeed, we cannot afford to discuss African Philosophy without the indigenous African Languages. It is African identity, it is African philosophy and it is the reason why Africa is called and are referred to as Africa.

The Philosophical base of the Argument

Philosophy being a critical inquiry into reality involves a critical thought before one is said to be philosophizing. Indeed, every philosophy involves some thinking and African philosophy being part of the universal is not an exception. No matter the mode, way and style of thought used to portray the philosophy of a people, philosophical thought or thinking must be involved in the philosophizing, in the case of African philosophy and indigenous language.

Again among the problems of African philosophy is that the thoughts or the philosophy of pre-modern African man was not documented but were embedded in oral literatures, myths, rituals, proverbs, names, socio-cultural, religious, institutions and maxims. We must note here that most oral messages have no concrete evidence unless they are documented. It was as a result of this problem of African philosophy that most non-African and some

African philosophers' got involved in the debate on the existence or non-existence of African Philosophy.

However, the debate on existence or non-existence of African Philosophy, remains that African Philosophy like all other world philosophies exists, and the ways it is being portrayed through all the above mentioned means and modes, which stipulated what really is African philosophy is not lacking. This is to show that there is no race so backward, in advance, so primitive or illogical as not to have some conception/thought or philosophy of the universe and its wonders. African philosophy was being transmitted from one generation to another through oral representation thereby encouraging and sustaining African philosophy not lose its originality, following the modification of some vital facts as it moves from one generation to another. This is the reason behind Hountondji's assertion that, 'a text is African philosophy only if ... (it is) a written text' and unless that is done, it does not qualify to be philosophy and what is not philosophy can never be African philosophy, (1974, p.1).

The philosophical base of our argument as it concerns world-view, lay mainly on the fact that it has been described as people's complex beliefs and attitudes concerning the origin, the nature, structure, organization, and interaction of being in the universe with particular reference to man. A world-view seeks to answer fundamental questions about the place and relationship of man with the universe. Answers to these fundamental problems provide man with the blueprint for controlling his environment and for establishing his social and political institutions. Conversely, knowledge of a people's world-view is a key to the understanding of their social, political and even psychological problems.

On the other hand, a people's worldviews are not only the multiplicity of beings, concepts, beliefs, and attitudes which they share, but also the underlying thought-link (Philosophy) or logic which holds them together. So an adequate view of people's worldview can only be obtained by description of their whole life especially in its social context. As such, whatever is done by a people is based on their world-view.

Again, considering African philosophy and worldview, our argument is that philosophy must have its originality from the people's worldview i.e. it must originate from the peoples' opinion or view of the cosmos. Like all other Philosophies, African Philosophy originates from the African Worldview, which remains the way Africans perceive reality and everything around them.

The interpretation African philosophy is not just by how one perceives reality but a hungry man's philosophy is never sound as a result of his worldview.

Above all, African philosophy is based on the African worldview. We must recall that Africa was at a time in history besieged by hunger, hardship, poverty and under-development; it will not be surprising to note that African worldview cum philosophy then could have emerged from a situation of relative poverty and under-development. Hence, the quest for survival was what occupied the African mind rather than philosophical thoughts or worldview. It has also been observed that a worldview and philosophy that is marked by the quest for survival is in most cases an outcrop of relative poverty and it has some unique characteristics. Among the characteristics is the readiness to believe untested explanations. It could be referred to as credulity since credulity is as a result of failure or inability to investigate in any modern scientific concept an idea before putting it into action.

In all African Philosophy according to Bodunrinhas what may be called “Magico-religions conception of the world”, (1991, p,158) and the philosophy that arises from such worldview has some negative practical effects that puts an end to further inquiry into things, which is the function of philosophy. Many phenomena that are otherwise explicable by deeper knowledge of the operation of nature are attributed to the machination of super-natural causes. The continuous presence of water in a spring or river, crop failure, famine and other natural disasters such as cyclone, flooding, and storm, death of young people; problem in conception or childbearing, lack of males offering and failure in business, inability to find a suitable husband or wife, family quarrels, in more modern times, failure in examination, difficulty in bagging a job, dismissal from a job already bagged, etc, are all attributable to machination of one of the numerous inhabitants or the creatures, animals and plants in the form of charms.

It has become clearer now that all beings known to Africans are based on their worldview. The being could be visible world or the invisible world. The visible world, ‘terra firma’ (solid earth) is populated by men and all material surrounding man, such as sky, earth, rivers, forest, mountains and so on are things that are familiar to man. The invisible world on the other hand, consist of the heavenly realm and is said to be the home place of the creators and deities which is thought to be located somewhere in the sky; and the ‘Spirit land’, is the home place of the ancestors, the spirits, disembodied spirits, located somewhere inside the ground. Interestingly, Africans see no wall of demarcation between the two worlds. The two realms shade into each other. Still the thinness of the dividing line between the two world of humans and that of the spirit does not mean that there is a clear explanation of the later. The Spirit world is always inscrutable, near as it may be. Though, at some important stage of one’s life, the will of its inhabitants is required to be ascertained through divinations like Afa, Ifa, and Oracles. These mediate the intentions and the designs of the world. The importance of these means of

knowledge is dependent on certain factors, where scientific knowledge is comparatively very limited, many incomprehensible things are attributed to the subra-natural. It is upon the above that the philosophical argument on African philosophy and indigenous language based its critical nexus.

Evaluation and Conclusion

It is obvious that there is a continent called Africa. It is also a fact people live in this African continent. Those who live in this continent, have a way of life. As such they have a philosophy they call their own. It is in this their philosophy, the African philosophy, that they live and hold their being. No amount of debate by philosophers can deny Africans their philosophy. The relations among African Philosophy, language, thought and worldview has been identified as something that is not so easy to detect except for analysis of this kind. This is because all of the concepts involved intermingle with one another and carry one another along.

Our conceptual considerations were aimed at helping us to easily see the various differences among these concepts since it has been observed that whatever must be related must have difference between them and it is only by identifying the differences that a better relation could be easily attained in order to get a positive result.

Finally, it has become clearer that no meaningful analysis could be achieved in the interpretation of any peoples' philosophical thought and worldview outside the peoples' language. As such we must appreciate and promote African indigenous languages not just by speaking it but also by applying them where necessary in those areas of need, especially as it affect issues concerning the African culture, tradition as well as social, political and economic life of the African people.

Even in the areas of philosophizing or any form of intellectual exercise without letting people know in a clear language what one is philosophizing on or about either through sign, oral or written language so that there will be a clearer understanding of what is being communicated, the philosophizing is simply a waste of mental activity. That which one attempts philosophizing on or communicating is thoughts and worldviews of those individuals he is philosophizing to and what is being philosophized is the people's philosophy. As such, it must be based on their views about the universe, which is their worldview. These relationships to the thought, language and worldview are not only peculiar to African philosophy but all other philosophies of the world experience a similar relationship. No wonder African philosophy being a part of the world's philosophy is also considered in relation to its indigenous language, thought and world-view. We are therefore being encouraged to take

more seriously our language, which incidentally is our identity, in our social, political and cultural activities. We must finally note that a people without a language are no people.

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