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Revisiting the Seeming Unanimous Verdict on the Great Debate on African Philosophy

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Abstract

The great debate on African Philosophy refers to the debate as to whether African Philosophy does exist or not. The debate aroused great interest among Philosophy scholars who were predominantly polarized into two opposing positions - those who denied the existence of African Philosophy and those who insisted on the existence of African Philosophy. The basic questions in the debate include: What constitutes the 'African' in African Philosophy? What body of knowledge qualifies as the proper content of the 'Philosophy' in African philosophy? The debate raged in the early nineteen seventies and, in fact, throughout the rest of the 20th century. In recent times, a few writers have assumed the arbiter position and, in their writings, passed judgment in favour of the debaters who held that there is African philosophy. Such writers hinge their judgments predominantly on the fact that African philosophy is recently studied in the Philosophy departments of some universities. True as this may seem, the problems are: One, what percentage of African universities study African philosophy? Two, in those Philosophy departments where African philosophy is studied, how many African philosophy courses are studied? Three, at the postgraduate level where

sometimes provision is made for students to study African Philosophy as a major course in the programme, what is the ratio of African philosophy courses to other philosophy courses in the curricula of the departments in question. Using the hermeneutic method, this paper takes a critical look at the above-mentioned problems *vis a vis* finding out whether the acclaimed correct verdict about the great debate on African philosophy actually stands. At a cursory glance, the work may seem a contraction but the crux of the matter is that for Africans to claim to do African philosophy, much more needs to be done in order to sustain the verdict that African Philosophy exists.

General Introduction

The great debate on African Philosophy is one which has, over the years, aroused a great deal of interest among philosophers, some of who are of African origin and some others non-Africans who took interest in African issues. The debaters constituted of two major opposing groups - those who denied the existence of African Philosophy and those who maintained that there is African Philosophy. The basic questions in the debate include the following: What constitutes the “African” in African Philosophy? What body of knowledge qualifies as the proper content of the ‘philosophy’ in African Philosophy?

The debate raged in the early nineteen seventies and, in fact, throughout the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties. In recent times, a few writers have assumed the arbiter position and in their writings, passed judgment in favour of the debaters who held that there is African Philosophy. Such writers hinge their judgments on the premise that these days African Philosophy is studied in the Philosophy departments of some universities. True as this may seem, certain questions are evoked: How many universities in the world (African and non-African) study African Philosophy? How many African universities study African philosophy? To what extent do philosophy departments in African universities study African Philosophy? In other words, in those philosophy departments where African Philosophy is studied, how many African Philosophy courses are studied? Again, at the postgraduate level where sometimes provision is made for African Philosophy to be studied as a major area of specialization, what is the ratio of African Philosophy courses to other Philosophy courses in the curricula of the departments in question? Using the hermeneutic method, this paper takes a close look at the above-mentioned problems *vis a vis* finding out whether the seeming unanimous verdict on the great debate on African Philosophy can actually be said to stand. The work commences with an elaborate and analytic presentation of the great debate, including the dynamics involved therein. Towards the end of the presentation of the great debate, the work tilts towards supporting the verdict that African Philosophy exists. But suddenly, it once more raises doubts about the acceptability of the certainty of such a claim, considering the unimpressive

performance of African Philosophy so far. The work continues with a presentation of the internet survey of the situation of African Philosophy in some African universities.

My findings include that only a comparative few universities in the world study African Philosophy. Also and more worrisome, not enough number of African universities study African Philosophy and that even in many Philosophy departments of African universities where it is studied, only few courses are offered in African Philosophy at the undergraduate level.

It is also the finding of this paper that only few African universities have provision for African Philosophy to be studied as a major area of specialization in their postgraduate studies, and that even in those few where this provision is made, the ratio of pure African Philosophy courses to other Philosophy courses in the curricula in question is very low. In some cases, only one or two 'pure' African Philosophy courses are studied while the curriculum is complemented with courses in other aspects of Philosophy, including of courses, Western Philosophy.

The paper recommended that a lot more universities, especially African Universities have to introduce the study of African Philosophy in their Philosophy departments and that many more courses in African Philosophy should be introduced in the Philosophy departments of universities where African Philosophy is studied. It is also the recommendation of this paper that in the Philosophy departments where African Philosophy is studied as a major area of specialization at the postgraduate level, that many more courses in African Philosophy be introduced such that the bulk of what postgraduate students of African Philosophy study will actually be African Philosophy. It is also recommended that effort should be made to ensure that African Philosophy becomes a consistent feature in the Philosophy curricula of most of the Universities in the world, just as is the case with Western Philosophy.

It is the conclusion of this paper that it is only when these issues raised here are seriously addressed and the recommendations made here properly considered and executed that African Philosophy can have its full weight and its existence fully accepted. It is only then that African Philosophy will merit its name and then the verdict in favour of its existence accepted as appropriate.

An Analytic Presentation of the Great Debate on African Philosophy

A mere mention of the phrase, "African Philosophy" is reminiscent of the controversial debate associated with the question of what constitutes African philosophy, if it exists. From the early seventies, the debate on African philosophy aroused such great interest among philosophy scholars that it became known as the great debate on African philosophy. The debate which aroused interest from within and outside Africa is on the existence, nature and scope of African philosophy. The great

question has been: Is there any body of knowledge which is qualified to be referred to as African philosophy? If yes, what is it?

The great debate kicked off in the early seventies at the philosophy department of the University of Ife under the leadership of Professor J.O. Sodipo. As the debate raged, some early participants missed the point of the argument. This is exemplified in the manner W.A. Hart posed the question. For him, the debate had to do with:

...the question of whether African thought as it exists in Africa is the same sort of thing with thought as understood by the Western Philosopher and we Europeans or educated Africans who share his culture (Nwala 1992, p. 19)

Based on this presentation of the question, it is not surprising that Hart answers in the negative to the question. Naturally, no one would expect African thought to be exactly the same sort of thing as European thought. Naturally African thought differs from European culture. Hart's presentation betrays the erroneous impression that the debate on African philosophy is meant to address the question of whether or not African thought is exactly the same sort of thing as European thought. By so doing, Hart presents and answers to the wrong point which amounts to the fallacy of irrelevant conclusion (*Ignoratio elenchi*).

However, the main issue in the debate concerns whether or not the bulk of materials referred to as African philosophy by their authors and readers actually qualify to be so-called. The works in question include *Bantu Philosophy* by Placid Tempel and A Kagame; John Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy*; *Yoruba Epistemology* by J.O. Sodipo and B. Hallen; *The mind of Africa* by W.E. Abraham, and *Igbo Philosophy* by T.U. Nwala. Also included are the political works of Leopold Sedar Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Nnamdi Azikiwe.

In the course of the debate, Philosophy scholars were polarized. One group views philosophy as a universal academic discipline with distinct methodology and specific branches. Those in this group would not tolerate as philosophy any work which does not fit into this tight-set. Those included in this group are such scholars as Paulin Houtondji, T.I. Okere, Henry Maurier, W.A. Hart, Peter Bodunrin, J.E. Wiredu and Odera Oruka. The other group is made up of Philosophy scholars who see philosophy as any organized system of knowledge, written or not, which portrays the fundamental thought-pattern of a people and which addresses fundamental issues about the existence of the people. This group includes such scholars as Kwame Gyekye, K.C. Anyanwu, Akin Makinde, Molefi Kete Asante, Robin Horton, Henry Olela, Innocent Onyewuenyi, C.S. Momoh, Joseph Omoregbe and T.U. Nwala.

Based on these two conceptions of philosophy, scholars differed on what qualifies to be called African philosophy and what does not qualify to be so-called. Members of the former group are sometimes referred to as universalists, owing to their universalist view of philosophy. They refuse to acknowledge “Ethno-philosophy” and the “Nationalist-ideological Philosophy” as authentic African Philosophy. Contrarily, the latter group of Philosophy scholars (sometimes referred to as traditionalists) maintain that works classed under “Ethno-philosophy” and ‘Nationalist-ideological Philosophy’ constitute what can be properly called African philosophy. To make clearer the distinction between these two groups, a brief presentation of the positions of some members of both groups will be done here. Already, it has been mentioned that W.A. Hart appeared to miss the point of the argument in his contribution. Hart might have been influenced by E.A. Ruch who first raised the question, “Is there an African philosophy?”, and answered: ‘What goes on under the name ‘African Philosophy’ is nothing than cultural anthropology’ (Nwala, 1992, p. 3).

T.I. Okere is of the opinion that philosophy is individual thinking on a specific issue with culture forming the background for this reflection. He argues that culture and its contents cannot be the philosophy itself as all people have their varying cultures - then their philosophies arising from these cultures. So for Okere, texts on Ethno-philosophy do not constitute philosophy and cannot be appropriately regarded as African philosophy solely on their own. However, he maintains that African culture provides the background from which African philosophy could arise through hermeneutics.

On his own part, Hountondji expresses the opinion that philosophy is a scientific inquiry based on formal logic, rational argumentation and systematic method. And since these, according to him, are absent in traditional African philosophy, traditional African philosophy is, in Hountondji’s words, ‘a myth and not a reality’. According to him, for any material to qualify as African philosophy, the following conditions must be met:

- (a) the author of the text must be African;
- (b) that author must describe his work as philosophic;
- (c) the work must be a written text.

Going by this, Hountonji claims that the work presented in Bantu Philosophy by Tempel and Kagame may be philosophy, but not ‘African’ because they are non-Africans themselves. Hountonji thus concludes that African Philosophy is yet to come, that it is before us and not behind us. Hountonji shares this view with Henry Maurier who, in the early seventies put the question in his own way, “Do we have an African

philosophy?” and gave a resounding “No, not yet” as his answer (Maurier, 1977, p. 25). In his own submission on the debate, Kwasi Wiredu writes:

In my opinion the agenda for contemporary African philosophy must include the critical and reconstructive treatment of the oral tradition and the exploitation of the literary and scientific resources of the modern world in pursuit of a synthesis....If in this process of synthesis, contemporary African philosophers take critical cognizance of all these strands of the African experience, the resulting tradition of modern African Philosophy should be rich in its variety and vital in its relevance to contemporary existences. (Oladipo, 1996, p.14)

Wiredu distinguished between “African philosophy as folk thought preserved in oral traditions, and African philosophy as critical, individual reflection, using modern logical and conceptual techniques”. (Oladipo, 1996, p.14) Wiredu feels that African philosophy should not be equated with traditional African philosophy or African thought (what Odera Oruka classed under the ‘trend’ of Ethno-philosophy) as this will retard the growth of contemporary African Philosophy. This is so, he argues, because African Philosophy will then be seen as a mere process of narrating the ideas Africans lived by in the past. He goes on:

If African philosophy means traditional African philosophy, as surprisingly many people seem to think, then we can forget any pretence of modern philosophizing. In most parts of Africa, we would have, in that case, to abstain from such disciplines as symbolic logic and its philosophical interpretation, the Philosophy of Mathematics and of the Natural and Social sciences, the theory of knowledge associated with the foregoing disciplines and the moral, political and social philosophy which has arisen as a response to the needs of modern times. We would have to regard all such disciplines as ‘unAfrican’ and content ourselves with repeating the proverbs and folk conceptions of our forefathers. Or should we be moved by some quirk of the spirit to dabble in those modern disciplines we would have to represent ourselves as venturing into unAfrican domain. (Oladipo 1996, p.15)

On the whole, Wiredu made a distinction between traditional thought-pattern and Western philosophical texts and came to the conclusion that African traditional philosophies are, at best, folk philosophies. He summarized the position of the analytic school of philosophy thus: ‘without argument and clarification, there is strictly no philosophy’ (Wiredu 1980, p.47).

Bodunrin, like Wiredu and Hountondji, maintained that African philosophy is still in the making. To the question of whether there is African philosophy, Bodunrin answers in the affirmative but refused to accept as African philosophy certain specimens.

Members of the group discussed above see philosophy as a critical activity. They see philosophy as a discipline with distinct problems and methodology such as Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology. However, members in the second group of the definition of philosophy reject this strict academic definition of Philosophy. These scholars (sometimes referred to as traditionalists) insist instead that philosophy is essentially a reflective activity and therefore, any organized body of knowledge which is a product of human reflective activity on fundamental issues about man or the universe of which he constitutes an integral part, qualifies to be philosophy. Then goes the argument that since traditional African world-views are products of this sort of reflective activity, they constitute African Philosophy. Thus writing under the caption, "Is there an African philosophy?", Onyewuenyi (1976) stated "My contention is that the philosophy of a people has little or nothing to do with the academic exponents of that philosophy. Philosophy is a universal experience. Every culture has its own world-view" (p. 521).

In his own opinion, Momoh (1998) defined African Philosophy as "the study of African doctrines of the universe, its creator and the things and elements in it" (p. 23). Building his defences on the position of a renowned anthropologist, Paul Radin, in his *Study of Primitive Peoples*, Momoh maintained that in traditional and ancient African societies, that in every cultural group, no matter how "primitive", there were always people who played roles that were in line with those played by scholars and philosophers in modern societies. He enumerated these as, "Medicine men, priests, rulers, military leaders and sagacious elders, whose position in the groups corresponds roughly to the position occupied by the scholars and thinkers in modern societies" (Momoh, Diogenes, p. 75).

Omeregbe (1990), in support of the Ethno-philosophic view-point, argued:

As 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. When he reflects on these fundamental questions in search of answers, he is philosophizing (p. 4).

Based on this premise, Omeregbe (1990) claimed that: "... Africa too has its own philosophers, its own Socrates, its own Plato, its own Aristotle" (p. 9). In fact, in his contribution in *Philosophy in Africa*, writing under the caption, 'African philosophers, Yesterday and Today', Omeregbe gave a final answer to those opposed to Ethno-

philosophy in these words: “Wherever there is reflection on the fundamental questions about man, or about the universe (whatever form this reflection may take) there is philosophy” (Omoregbe, 1985, p. 5).

What Is African Philosophy?

From the foregoing, it is clear that the definition of philosophy favoured by the participating philosophy-scholars in the debate on African philosophy, plays a major role in what they accept or reject as authentic African philosophy. The second major criterion for the determination of the side to be favoured in the debate in question bothers on the definition of ‘African’ in the context of African philosophy. Therefore, to tackle this problem, we can start by asking: What is philosophy? It is a truism in philosophical circles that no one definition of philosophy is universally accepted as the sole definition of philosophy. Every definition is either too restricted or too all-embracing, depending on view point. It was, perhaps, in recognition of the futility in the exercise of presenting a single universally accepted definition of philosophy that Fredrick Copleston, in his book, *Philosophies and Cultures*, writes:

It may seem an evasive action, but for present purpose let us understand by ‘philosophy’ all that can be understood as philosophy without contravention of ordinary linguistic usage. To put the matter another way, let us understand by philosophy all that is customarily counted as such in the histories of Philosophy. (Oladipo 1992, p. 27)

In any case, Philosophy can be seen as an organized system of reflective thought directed towards the fundamental questions of human life. Therefore, whoever is engaged in such an activity is a philosopher, whether or not the output of such reflective thought is written. Hountonji’s criterion that the author of a philosophical work must describe his work as being philosophical, does not seem convincing. Also, Hountonji’s third criterion that a piece of work must be written, to qualify as philosophy, is not plausible. One’s thought needs not be written to be philosophical. Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers in western philosophical history, was not the writer of the philosophical works attributed to him. Yet, this did not deny him his place in the history of Philosophy in particular and the history of the world in general. His philosophy was documented by Plato, his pupil. However, it was not the fact that his works were documented that qualified him as a philosopher, rather he was a philosopher whose works were documented by another. After all, written philosophy is the child of oral philosophy. Philosophy is a mental activity which does not necessarily require the physical activity of writing as a complement. It is the reflective and systematic nature of one’s thought that actually makes one a philosopher and not whether or not one’s thoughts are documented in print.

What Is the 'African' in African Philosophy?

The question of what constitutes the 'African' in African philosophy is the second major criterion for the determination of the issue in question. Here again, a line of demarcation is seen between the two opposing groups of philosophy-scholars in the great debate on African philosophy. For P.O. Bodunrin, Paulin Hountonji and some others, if a piece of work is philosophical and it is a product of an African, then it qualifies to be African philosophy, no matter its content and the origin of its problematic.

However, the correctness of the above position is arguable. Momoh, Onyewuenyi and some others viewed philosophy as a theory about fundamental questions that concern human experience. This experience in philosophy has much to do with the culture of its domain. Therefore, it seems logical to say that, for any piece of work to qualify as African Philosophy; its content has to be on fundamental issues about Africa. We have defined philosophy here as an organized system of reflective thought directed towards fundamental questions of human life. If the 'reflective thought' has western content and method, then it is western philosophy; if it has African content and method, then it is African philosophy. Therefore, it is plausible that for a work to be addressed as African philosophy, it has to be based on issues that concern Africans, whether or not the author of such a work is of African origin. After all, some key contributors to Western Philosophy are non-Westerners.

Based on the above analysis, one can say that African philosophy does exist and that it includes all works (not necessarily, written) which reflect the thought-pattern of Africans and which aid to address certain fundamental issues in the life of Africans, whether or not such works are done by indigenous African scholars.

If one agrees with the above position, then one may not agree any less with some scholars who have, in recent times, given the impression that the great debate on African Philosophy has ended in favour of those who claim that it exists. This includes Moses Akin Makinde of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Another example is Chukwudum Barnabas Okolo of the University of Nigeria, who said that the debate has ended and that what is left is to do it (i.e., African philosophy). These and other scholars who share this view often hinge their judgment predominantly on the premise that African Philosophy is now studied in the philosophy departments of some universities.

But if we may ask, to what extent does this verdict stand? At a cursory look, the doubt cast by this question may seem contradictory to the already presumed agreement that African philosophy exists. But the point is that for us to give a resounding 'yes' to the so-called existence of African philosophy, there has to be a

more critical look at the level of performance in African philosophy. Existence must transcend the level of just 'being there'. After all, in a certain sense, that is, from a very loose perspective; the mere mention of a thing presupposes the existence of the thing. But that is not the sense in which the 'existence' is meant in this second consideration of the question about the existence of African philosophy. In this case, we mean a productive existence. Let me borrow from Soren Kierkegaard and call it 'authentic existence'.

Therefore, the whole question of whether there is African philosophy or not will depend on the result of a survey of the study of African Philosophy in some randomly-selected universities.

Findings in the Philosophy Programmes of Selected African Universities (As at August 31, 2015)

A. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

1. University of Ghana, Accra, Greater Accra, Ghana

- Undergraduate Programme (4 years)

- Total number of courses = 46.
- 100L: No African philosophy oriented course taught.
- 200L Nil, except a general University compulsory course titled: UGRC 220/238 Introduction to African Studies.
- 300L: 4 core Philosophy Courses, non are African Philosophy oriented; 12 electives, only one is African Philosophy oriented, titled: PHL 310 African Philosophy.
- 400L: 4 core Philosophy courses, non are African Philosophy oriented; 20 electives plus long essay, only 2 are African Philosophy oriented, titled:
 - ❖ PHL 410 Further Studies in African Philosophy.
 - ❖ Philosophical Thought of Kwame Nkrumah.

Note!

- i. The department is known as Department of Philosophy and Classic, offering courses under classics which includes amongst others: Reading Greek and Latin 1/2; No African Language.
- ii. There are some courses dedicated or committed to western personalities such as Plato and Aristotle but only one course is dedicated to an African personality in the person of Kwame Nkrumah.
- iii. Students are expected to offer all courses in philosophy and classics, then major in either of them when they get to 300 and 400L.
- iv. School website: www.ug.edu.gh.

2. University of Cape Coast, Ghana

- Undergraduate Program (4 years)

- Total number of courses = 20.
- 100L: No African Philosophy oriented courses taught.
- 200L: No African Philosophy oriented courses taught.
- 300L: Only one African Philosophy oriented course, PHL 305: African Social and Political Thought.
- 400L Only one African Philosophy oriented course, PHL 407: African Philosophy.

Note!

- i. The department is known as department of Classics and Philosophy.
 - ii. In 100 level, LAR 105 Classical Philosophy is a core course and CLA 207 Greek Philosophical Writing is a core course in 200 level.
- Website: www.ucc.edu.gh.

3. University of South Africa, Pretoria, Gautang South Africa

- Undergraduate Programme (4 years)

- Total number of Modules = 15 Modules
- 100L: Two modules used, one of which is African Philosophy oriented.
- 200L: Three (3) modules used, one of which is African Philosophy oriented.
- 300L: Five (5) Modules used, only one of which is African Philosophy oriented.
- 400L: Five (5) Modules used, one of which is purely African Philosophy oriented, and another, partially African Philosophy oriented.

Note!

- (a) 100L uses “NQF level-5 modules”; 200L- “NOF level 6 Modules”; 300L- “NOF level-7 modules.
 - (b) The NQF module level for 400L was not stated.
 - (c) The full meaning of NQF not stated.
 - (d) Module is used to refer to an aggregate of courses.
- Website: www.unisa.ac.za
 - The department is known as department of philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology.
 - One is expected to major in one of the following disciplines.
 - Discipline of Philosophy.
 - Discipline of Practical Theology.

- Discipline of Systematic Theology.
- Discipline of Theological ethics.

4. University of Cape Town, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa

- Undergraduate Programme (3 years)

- Total no of courses = 14.
- Only one African philosophy oriented course taught within 3 years:

Note!

- i. The Department is known as Department of Philosophy.
- ii. The department also runs a programme known as PPE, which is a combined degree of philosophy, Politics and economics. Of note, the seven (7) philosophy courses in PPE for the 3 years the programme is supposed to last, non is African Philosophy.
- iii. Website: www.uct.ac.za

5. University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, Gautang, South Africa (3 years)

- Undergraduate Programme

- i. Total number of modules used = 10
- ii. Non are African Philosophy oriented.
- iii. The department is known as African Philosophy.
- iv. Website: www.uj.ac.za

6. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa (3 years)

- Undergraduate

- Total number of modules used = 10
- Non are African Philosophy oriented courses/Modules.

7. University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya.

- Undergraduate (3 years)

- Total number of courses = 27.

- Only one African Philosophy oriented course is taught in 200L, second semester.

Note!

- i. Department is known as department of Philosophy and Religious Studies Thematic Areas.
- ii. Website: www.uonbi.ac.ke

8. University of Lagos Nigeria (4 years)

- Undergraduate

- Total number of courses in 4 years = 86.
- Only 11 courses are African Philosophy oriented;
 - i. Ancient African Philosophy
 - ii. African Metaphysics
 - iii. African Epistemology
 - iv. African Ethics
 - v. Modern Theories in African Philosophy
 - vi. Contemporary African Philosophy
 - vii. Recent African Political Philosophy
 - viii. Philosophy and African Identity
 - ix. Problems of African Philosophy
 - x. African worldview and Womanhood
 - xi. Contemporary African Political Philosophy.

Note!

- i. Name of Department: Department of Philosophy.
- ii. Website: www.unilag.edu.ng

9. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria (4 years)

- Undergraduate

Total number of courses in 4 years = only one course is African Philosophy oriented: PhL 251 African Philosophy (taken in second year).

Note!

- i. Department is known as the department of Philosophy.

- ii. Website: www.unizik.edu.ng

B. POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

a. University of Cape Coast, Ghana

- Postgraduate Programme (MA/MPhil)

- Total number of courses taught in 1 year = 10 (to do six courses, three for each semester).
- Only one African Philosophy oriented course: PHL 811: Issues in African Philosophy.
- Could not access the PHD courses.
- Website: www.ucc.edu.gh.

2. University of South Africa, Pretoria, Gautang South Africa

- Postgraduate Programme (MA and PhD is completed by research only)

- Website: www.unisa.ac.za

3. University of Cape Town, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa

- Postgraduate Programme

- Courses are taken by M.A. (not research based M.A. and PhD), but none of these courses are African Philosophy oriented.
- Website: www.uct.ac.za

4. University of Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa

- Postgraduate Programme

- i. Total number of 4 modules are used. None of which are African Philosophy oriented.
- ii. Website: www.up.ac.za.

5. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

- Postgraduate Programme

Here African Philosophy is studied as one of the areas of specialization. Those who choose it in their M.A. study the following courses:

- i. PhL 501 African Philosophy
- ii. PhL 502 African Metaphysics
- iii. PhL 503 African Social Philosophy
- iv. PhL 504 Problems of African Philosophy
- v. PhL 505 Contemporary African Philosophy I
- vi. PhL 506 Contemporary African Philosophy II
- vii. PhL 591 Master's Research/Seminar/Project

At the PhD Level, the following African Philosophy oriented courses are available, among other courses:

- i. PhL 602 Traditional/African Ethics
- ii. PhL 603 Marxian-African Ethics
- iii. PhL 604 African Values System
- iv. PhL 611 African Philosophy
- v. PhL 622 African theory of Knowledge
- vi. PhL 623 African Meaning and Understanding
- vii. PhL 624 African thought

Observations

The findings as reflected above show that only a comparatively few universities in the world study African Philosophy. Also and more worrisome, not enough number of African universities study African Philosophy and that even in many Philosophy departments of African universities where it is studied, only few courses are offered in African Philosophy at the undergraduate level.

It is also my finding that only few African universities have provision for African Philosophy to be studied as a major area of specialization in their postgraduate studies, and that even in those few where this provision is made, the ratio of pure African Philosophy courses to other Philosophy courses in the curricula in question is

very low. In some cases, only one or two 'pure' African Philosophy course(s) are studied while the curriculum is complemented with courses in other aspects of Philosophy, including of courses, Western Philosophy.

Recommendations

This paper recommends that a lot more African Universities have to introduce the study of African Philosophy in their Philosophy departments and that many more courses in African Philosophy have to be introduced in the Philosophy departments of universities where African Philosophy is studied. It is also the recommendation of this paper that, in the Philosophy departments where African Philosophy is studied as a major area of specialization at the postgraduate level, that many more courses in African Philosophy be introduced such that the bulk of what postgraduate students of African Philosophy study will actually be African Philosophy. It is also recommended that efforts should be made to ensure that African Philosophy becomes a consistent feature in the Philosophy curricula of all the Universities where Philosophy is studied, just as is the case with Western Philosophy.

Conclusion

It is the conclusion of this paper that it is only when these issues raised here are appropriately addressed and the recommendations made here seriously considered and executed that African Philosophy will have its full weight and its existence fully accepted. That is when it can be said to have productive existence. It is only then that African Philosophy will merit its name and then the verdict in favour of its existence accepted as unanimous.

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