

## **African Ontology as a Cultural Datum in the Light of Intercultural Realities in Africa: A Philosophical Reflection**

**DR GREG EKEH**

[g.ekeh@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:g.ekeh@unizik.edu.ng)

08030533141

**Department of Educational Foundations Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka**

**&**

**DR. ADAOMA IGWEDIBIA**

[ae.igwedibia@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:ae.igwedibia@unizik.edu.ng)

08036915201

**Department of English Language and Literature  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka**

### **Abstract**

This paper is a philosophical reflection on African ontology as a cultural datum in the light of intercultural realities in contemporary Africa. The aim of the paper was to establish the truth of African ontology as authentically rooted in the African culture, and the need for it to be open to inter-culturalism in a positive way, without losing its core values and identity. Methods of analysis of concepts, contextual interpretation and critical analysis were used. Concept of ontology and its characteristics were explored. African ontology, intercultural realities, multicultural education, as well as intercultural communication training, the meeting points of all cultures, implications of intercultural realities for African ontology were critically and objectively investigated and ascertained. The findings of the study showed that African ontology is truly a cultural datum, without any admixture of borrowing from external cultures or as a result of intellectual gymnastics. It was also discovered that intercultural reality has gained global attention and acceptance as a veritable

factor for mutual understanding and respect among various world cultures, and that there is the possibility of African ontology remaining impervious or losing itself to it. Based on the findings, the paper concluded that though a cultural datum, African ontology should expand its world-view and refuse to be left behind in positive changes of inter-culturalism that would bring about mutual understanding and progress among all cultures. It was then suggested that more attention should be given to those things that are similar and connective to all cultures than those which separate them.

**Keywords:** Ontology, Culture, Africa, Inter-culturalism, Philosophy

### **Introduction**

Different groups of people or societies have always been identified with one form of culture or another. In other words, culture serves as the principal identifier of a people or society. Society in this sense can be taken at the continental level, national level, regional level, ethnic nationality level, or community level. Hence people talk of African culture, European culture, Western culture, Eastern culture, Igbo culture, Yoruba culture, Enugu-Ezike culture, Awka culture, and so on. Culture is generally referred to as a people's way of life. Within each society, there are certain practices common to all its members, but often at variance with outsiders, thus fact of cultural specifics. It is within these cultural specifics that each people's ontology emanates and makes meaning. People's ontology is therefore culture-bound, and it forms the basis of their being, world-views, interactions among themselves, with their environments, and in relation to others outside their cultural enclave. In philosophical perspective, ontology has to do with the reality of human beings or existing objects (Homework.com, 2023).

Before the advent of civilization, scientific and technological breakthroughs, most cultures were closed in on themselves, with rigid tenacity on their primitive rituals and social practices, both positive and negative ones (for example, communalism in Africa, individualism in Europe, the killing of twins in Igbo land, slavery, widowhood practices, and lots more), some of which persist till today in some remote areas. Among the Maasai people of Kenya and Northern Tanzania for instance, spitting is viewed as a mark of respect, and so is used to say goodbye to friends, seal a bargain or wish someone good luck (Marchant, 2018).

However, with the advent of civilization, colonialism, science and technology, cultural contacts have become the order of the day, to the extent that intercultural reality is now taking the centre-stage at various levels of human encounters across the globe. With the world now a global family, no culture, no matter how superior or ancient it feels, can boast of remaining the same or aloof, and African culture is not an exception. To dig into and explore African ontology as a cultural datum in the light of this reality is deemed an idea whose time has come. African ontology is deeply rooted in the heart of African cultural tenet and perception about the being of human person. “In traditional Africa, the individual exists corporately – communally. They depend, for existence, on the community, which includes past, present and future generations” (Shimiyu 45).

Against the above backdrop, the purpose of this paper is to investigate and present African ontology as a cultural datum (given), inherent in African culture, in the face of intercultural realities sweeping through the contemporary Africa and the world at large. Specifically, the study focuses on conceptualizing ontology and its characteristics such as particulars and universals, abstracts and concretes, dependence and independence, and identity. This is followed by African ontology and its

understanding as a cultural datum. Next will be intercultural realities, the meeting points in intercultural realities, implications of intercultural realities to African identity, and a critical appraisal. Philosophical methods of concept analysis and meaning, contextual interpretation and critical reflection will be employed throughout the discourse. In the course of doing this, references will be made to relevant literature. The aim of the paper is to contribute to the growth of literature and knowledge about African culture and its peculiar characteristics and values. The paper also aims to underscore the need for African ontology to be open to positive changes as a result of inter-culturalism, but at the same time retain its cherished particular core values, so as to maintain its identity rather than be bamboozled in its interaction with other cultures, or lost in the maze of intercultural realities, which has become the feature of the contemporary era.

### **Ontology**

Ontology is a branch of metaphysics that studies the origins, nature, and mode of human existence and operations. It also studies being as being, as well as other related concepts such as existence and reality. It is a philosophical study of beings which is interested in the categorization of entities and their fundamental levels of existence. Thus ontology can discuss beings in terms of humans, substances, properties, states of affairs, spirits, relations and events. Ontological concepts such as particularity and universality, contingency and necessity, abstractness and concreteness, are characteristically applied to such entities to determine their dependent or independent existence at their most fundamental levels. Over the years, debates have been going on as to whether entities within a certain category do have their independent existence, and if they have, then what are their relationships to other entities (Hofweber). Ontology is also understood as the science of being in general, or the study of being alive and existing (Vocabulary.com Dictionary).

### Particulars and Universals

The problem of particulars and universals has been a persisting one in philosophy. There has always been a contrast between the particulars and universals (Ted). The term “particular” refers to the individual, with its peculiar characteristics or attributes, which the individual does not share with other entities. “Universal”, on the other hand, refers to features that are manifested by various different particulars (MacLeod). In the case of a black colour, for instance, a charcoal and black-stone manifest the universal blackness. This means that universals can be manifested in various places at the same time, while the particulars cannot. The problem is how to come to terms with different things having the same feature, and whether the universal can exist on its own without being exemplified by something (*ante res*), or must be exemplified in things (*in rebus*).

In cultural context, this implies that there are particular as well as universal characteristics of all cultures. For instance, valuing life, dancing, marriage, and farming, among others, are universal to every culture. That is to say that every culture cherishes life, engages in dancing, marriage and farming. However, the ways these are done vary from culture to culture. Mode of dressing, types of food and world-views, for instance, are not the same in every culture. Even in the midst of cultural contacts, people are always conscious of their own world-views, especially as they concern their idea of being in their various dimensions. Understanding and appreciating these similarities and differences are essential factors that bring about mutual respect, harmony, peaceful coexistence and progress.

### Abstract and Concrete

Another important issue in ontology is that of abstract and concrete. Philosophers are in accord regarding the existence of these concepts and the differences between them. This is also

reflected in every culture. In general, all the visible entities are said to be concrete, while the invisible ones are regarded as abstract. Human beings, animals, and trees are examples of concrete entities, while spirits, thoughts, souls, propositions, and numbers are examples of abstract entities. In spite of these outstanding features, based on the visibility and invisibility of the concrete versus abstract, it is difficult to arrive at an agreement regarding the essential marks that differentiate the concrete from the abstract.

However, most of the differentiations are made on the basis of spatiotemporal existence of the concrete and non-spatiotemporal of the abstract, or that the concrete has causes and effects while the abstract has not, or on the basis of contingency and necessity on the parts of concrete and abstract respectively. In every culture, these differentiations are witnessed in one way or another. In the African culture, there is always a belief in the existence of the abstract and the concrete, the former being assigned to the invisible and the latter to the visible. One is believed to be in the realm of the spirit, and the other in the realm of the physical universe.

### Ontological Independence and Dependence

Independence and dependence are two opposing concepts that have been major areas of discussion in philosophy. It is clear from human experience that some beings cannot exist on their own without the existence of another. These kinds of beings are referred to as dependent beings. Where the opposite is the case, the beings are referred to as independent. For instance, a branch of a mango tree cannot exist on its own without the mango tree itself. As a consequence, it can be said that the branch is ontologically dependent on the tree. All the entities that exist as properties or characteristics (such as the shell of an egg, or the peel of bananas) in their basic entities are categorized as dependent. Ontological dependence as explained above, is different from

causal dependence. In ontological dependence, there is an inseparable attachment between the dependent and independent entities, while in causal dependence there is a separation between the being of the dependent entity and that of the independent. For instance, fire can cause a smoke, which has its own separate being from the fire. This is not the case with regard to a ball of orange and its peel. According to (Tahko and Lowe), ontological dependence is of two types: rigid and generic. As explained by (Eric) rigid dependence refers to a dependence on one specific entity, such as the surface of an apple on its specific apple, while generic dependence involves a weaker form of dependence, merely on a certain type of entity. An example of this, according to (Tahko and Lowe) is the electricity which depends on charged particles, but not on any specific or specified charged particle.

African ontology is very much characterized by this idea of relational dependence and independence of beings. In the African cultural setting, it is believed that the independent beings are superior to the dependent ones and vice versa; hence there is a hierarchy of beings in the African world. Individuals depend on the community, the community depends on the larger society, and so it goes till the apex is reached, which is the Supreme Being.

### **Ontological Identity**

Identity is at the root of being and existence. According to Erikson and Agerfalk (2021), identity is fundamental to ontology since it addresses the very existence of objects and conceptual systems as a whole. Identity is one of the three basic laws of thought. The other two are the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle. These three laws are believed to have originated from Aristotle, who argued that they are necessary for rational thinking, and that without them rational thinking would not take place. (Williams). The law of identity states that each existing thing is made up of its own particular characteristics that are part

of what it is in itself (Williams). In other words, each entity or being is identical with itself.

The problem of identity has been an enduring one in philosophy. Sometimes it is confused with unity. However, (Guarino and Welty 2) state that

strictly speaking, identity is related to the problem of distinguishing a specific instance of a certain class from other instances by means of a *characteristic property*, which is unique for *it* (that *whole* instance). Unity, on the other hand, is related to the problem of distinguishing the *parts* of an instance from the rest of the world by means of a *unifying relation* that binds them together (not involving anything else).

The above view indicates that identity is an indicative of a thing's wholeness devoid of fragmentation or constituting of parts that augment to make it what it is. The identity of anything resides in its own unique quality and character. In other words, a thing is what it is, and on that basis it should be identified. However, identity can be approached from multiple perspectives, since it is one of the contested constructs in the light of other variables (Moghadam). Identity, therefore, is classified into certain categories by scholars. Such categories include individual identity (Ericson), social identity (Tajfel), collective identity (Melluci), philosophical identity (Derrida), and cultural identity (Norton). Cultural identity is the focus in the context of this paper.

Culture refers to the beliefs, values, norms, behaviours and attitudes that are considered acceptable by and within a group of people (Wilson). Cultural identity depicts the unique interaction between the individual or group and the components of culture, embracing nationality, language, history, ethnicity, geographical location and religion (Moghadam). (Vygotsky) states that culture is a significant factor in the formulation of the individuals' identity.

This is because, from their childhood, they had been learning from multi-dimensional interactions with the more experienced and elderly people and other environmental elements around them, and this plays a vital role in shaping their mindset and cognitive growth.

Cultural identity involves sharing of characteristics by a group of people who are recognized by exhibiting such characteristics. Such characteristics include birth-place, language, religion, social behaviour, art, literature, music, dressing, cuisine, and marriage rites, among others. These characteristics are often cherished as values by the people of the culture, and they form the basis of their interactions among themselves as well as their relationship with people of other cultures. People form their cultural identity by subconsciously imbibing, interpreting, incorporating, assimilating and practicing values and signals from the people and events around them into their own pattern of life, without questioning or critical reflection on their objective validity or implications in life.

### **African Ontology**

African ontology is the African metaphysical perspective on being and life in general, and particularly the being of humans, their living and interaction with others and their environments, both as individuals and as communities. African ontology is the African's understanding of all beings as being in their hierarchical order. In African ontology, God is at the apex of beings, followed by the spirits, human beings, animals, plants and inanimate objects, with the human person at the centre, however (Kanu). It is worthy of note that in the African world, there are various categories of being, having their specific roles and yet in constant interaction among themselves in various dimensions. This belief is at the heart of African culture and informs the African worldview – a comprehensive view of life, humanity and the

world. According to (Ekeh 89), “African ontology refers to the traditional African metaphysical convictions about the nature of beings that inhabit the African world”. “African world” in this context is not to be understood in a geographical sense, but in a conceptual sense, that is, the way the Africans conceptualize, understand and attach meaning to the world and its events, especially with regard to beings and their interactions.

Although all beings are seen as beings, the African believes that God is the Creator and owner of every other thing that exists, both visible and invisible, especially in their socio-economic politico-religious activities. This is not only in relation to the living, but also the yet-to-be-born and the ancestors, who are in continuous interaction among themselves. According to (Ukwamedua and Omokpo 272), “there are three worlds in the African worldview, namely the ancestral world, the world of the yet unborn and the world of the living, and they are interconnected”. The ancestral world belongs to the world of the spirit, which includes deities and other spirits. These spirits are God's agents and messengers. While the living pray to and honour the spirits, including the ancestors, the spirits and ancestors offer them protection and intercede for them in the presence of God, the Supreme Being. With their own efforts and the assistance of the spirits and God's benevolence, the living are able to see to their own welfare and that of the future generation. This world-view is rooted in the African culture, the elements of which they see as inherent components of their lives. Such components include cuisine, religious beliefs, socio-economic activities, and politics, among others.

All these various aspects of life are viewed as a unity. There is no severance of one being from another in African ontology, even though all beings are not the same. For the African, every being is relevant in one way or another. With the exception

of the Supreme Being whose existence is absolute, necessary and independent, all other beings are inter-dependent. The way the African sees beings, their nature, their interactions and impacts on the affairs of the world is apparently original to them. It is borne out of lived experience in their cultural settings. It is not as a result of intellectual dictates, book learning, research or external influence.

### **African Ontology as a Cultural Datum**

In the African context, ontology is a foundational fact of African culture. It is a basis from which conclusions may be reached or drawn. It is not as a result of studies, investigations or cultural contacts. It is deeply imbedded in the cultural fabrics of Africa. It is the root that gives germination, growth, fruit, meaning and sustainability to all the aspects of African beliefs and practices, life and activities. What is inferred from this is that African ontology is indigenous to Africa and the Africans, rooted, as it is, in the African indigenous culture. In other words, African ontology is a given by the culture and from the culture of the people. It was not borrowed; it was not imported; it was not taken over from other people. According to (Agbo 53), "African ontology envisages a hierarchical ordering of beings and forces in their categories in order of primogeniture with God at the apex".

In African culture, "the content or subject matter of Afrocentric ontology emanates from the physical, human/social, and spiritual situations of indigenous African societies" (Tchombe and Wirdze 63). These are the spiritual, physical and human dimensions of being, and the three are inseparable. They are so connected that the idea of one existing without the others is alien to the African. These different dimensions of being or reality are held fast by a spiritual power known as a "vital force", which itself underlies all the dimensions. It is hardly arguable that a people's world-view is informed by their culture. Now, a people's

perspective on being is fundamental and basic to every other perspective.

As has been noted, African ontology is the African's metaphysical perspective on being and life in general. There is no other basic way this could have emanated save from African way of life, otherwise known as culture. It implies that African ontology is a cultural datum. It is a product of African culture, that is. Some of the African core cultural values include sacredness of human life, respect for elders, communal living, socialization, oral communication, sense of belonging, kinship identity, collaboration, filial love, responsibility, hospitality, harmonious living, empathy and common good of all.

Having got thus far, it is worthy of note that attentions of scholars are now being so drawn with rapidity to the truth of cultural realities globally that it can perhaps be argued that a melting pot for all cultures is in the offing. Apparently, there is no longer any hiding place for any culture, whether considered as superior or inferior. Yet, there is this undeniable yearning, coupled with effort making, by every society, to uphold their core cultural particularities and stand out authentically even in the midst of these intercultural realities. In other words, every society would want to maintain its cultural identity, in spite of all the mix. This being the case, one would wonder what would become of African ontology, which stands Africa out culturally amid other cultures, in this sweeping era of intercultural realities.

### **Intercultural Realities**

The world in which we are living is increasingly becoming interconnected in virtually every aspect of human life. The era of "we are here; they are there" is speedily phasing out. With technological and scientific advancement, most of the factors that held people apart in the past, such as distance, lack of fast means of transportation, easy means of communication, language barriers,

to name but a few, have almost completely collapsed. Intercultural reality is a result of increased migration across the globe, technological development, social interactions and widespread communication systems among various societies and cultures, so that there is interconnectedness everywhere.

Intercultural reality, according to (Bekemans 2), refers to a situation in society

where people from different cultures, nationalities and ethnic and religious groups live in the same area, but are not necessarily in contact with one another. What we see in intercultural societies is that the mutual differences are often the basis for discrimination, where minorities may be tolerated, but are seldom accepted or appreciated. Even the law is not applied equally to everyone, despite the fact that legal rights exist to counteract these practices.

From the above view, it follows that intercultural reality, while it brings people together, can also a cause of discrimination among people. However, it is worthy of note that the essence of inter-culturalism is not to lump all cultures into one, or for the so-called superior cultures to swallow up or overshadow the so-called inferior ones. Actually, there can never be a one-culture-world, due to differences that are inherent in human nature and culture, nor can one culture be truly superior to another, since every culture has its odds and evens in various aspects. The essence of inter-culturalism rather “involves moving beyond mere passive acceptance of multiple cultures existing in a society and instead promote dialogue and interaction between cultures” (Penas and Saenz 15).

Inter-culturalism is now stepping beyond its often use to

describe relationships between the indigenous and Western cultural ideals on the basis of mutual respect. Arising as a response to the criticisms of policies of multiculturalism which has failed to address the issue of inclusiveness of different cultures in the society, inter-culturalism is based on the recognition of both differences and similarities between cultures (Ewijk). This calls for in-depth studies of multiculturalism as well as various cultures in their similarities to, and differences from, one another, and the implications they may have on social interactions and human relations. What is at stake, therefore, is for people to learn how they should go about their differences with mutual understanding and respect.

### **Multicultural Education**

The need for multicultural education is more urgent in this era than ever before. According to (Smagorinsky 2), “multicultural education is oriented to including people of all forms of socialization, bodily makeup, and other factors of differentiation as respected members of society”. Smagorinsky's view is very apt to the current situation of things where people invariably do not care about others' needs for honour, respect and entitlement to decent treatment in scheme of things. For effective education in multiculturalism to occur, people need to learn to be empathetic to one another and make deliberate efforts to understand the peculiar conditions of one another, be it on the individual, group, community, national or international level. The aim of multicultural education is to get people well informed on the inevitability of the differences that exist, and will continue to exist, among cultures; to be more sensitive to the needs of the people of other cultures; and to learn the practice of social inclusion rather than discrimination.

This multicultural education has opened a vista of knowledge about different cultures in the society at various levels:

community, local and international, both one's culture and other cultures. People are learning that difference does not mean or imply contradiction or enmity, and that they can learn a lot from the perceived differences; hence the intercultural reality that is gaining wider attention and acceptance world-wide, not only among scholars and writers, but also among individuals, groups, businesses, institutions, nations and international communities. There is now a step forward from conceiving different cultures as independent (multiculturalism) to different cultures as interactional and empathetic (inter-culturalism). There is now a shift to an intercultural society where people of different cultures coexist, interact, share ideas and experiences, and learn from each other and one another, and thus grow in mutual understanding and progress.

### **Intercultural Communication Training**

With multicultural education leading to inter-culturalism, there is need for training in intercultural communication. In intercultural communication, information, ideas and experiences are shared among people across board: different cultures, individuals, groups, social settings, religions, ethnic groups, as well as educational, social and economic backgrounds. By so doing, differences in world-views are understood and utilized for the mutual benefit of all. More beneficial still is the knowledge and understanding of the similarities and connectedness that exist among different cultures. Thus intercultural training enhances the practical aspects of intercultural reality.

### **The Meeting Points**

From studies on multiculturalism, most of the differences and similarities between and among cultures have come to the fore. It has become obvious that there is a higher level of connectedness among various cultures than was thought of before. There are so many things that are similar among world different

cultures. (Leanne) has a list of such things to include marriage, dancing, singing, story-telling, personal names, class systems, and standards of beauty. Apart from these, there are other things such farming, cooking, legal systems, funeral rites, child upbringing and trade. There can be more others. Although the way these things are done may differ from culture to culture, the fact remains that they are obtained in every culture. There is no culture that is alien to marriage, farming, dancing, story-telling, and those other things as mentioned above.

Focusing on these similarities brings people closer than focusing on the differences. Molinsky and (Jang) argue that in approaching a person, people usually do not think about the potential differences that could exist between them, but rather focus on finding the meeting points, that is, the things they have in common. This gives a better and positive ground for establishing relationships. This is to say that focusing on similarities among cultures enhances cultural connections, whether at the individual or group level. This does not however cancel the need to know the differences. Knowing the differences helps in adjustment and adaptation. It is advisable to respect the differences, while enhancing the similarities. In the presence of similarities, differences are transcended or made insignificant.

### **Implications of Intercultural Realities to African Ontology**

Intercultural practice is a necessity in this era of technological and scientific advancements. These advancements have made the entire world a family of a kind, with virtually no barriers between and among people of different climes and cultures. To expect some implications of this truth for African ontology is not out of place. Thus the following implications can be drawn:

1. African ontology is communal, compared to the Western ontology, which is individualistic (Ekanem, 2012). In this

case, the tendency is for African ontology to perceive itself or be perceived as a contradiction of the Western ontology. This should be avoided. Rather, efforts should be made to learn from this difference, by asking and seeking answers to such questions as “what are the positive aspects of being communal and being individualistic, respectively?” “What are the negative aspects?”

2. Sticking to African culture alone is now a challenge to be overcome by African ontology. It should no longer restrict itself to the triad of the ancestral world, the world of the yet unborn and the world of the living. It should be more open to dialogue with views of reality as found in other cultures. This is of particular challenge to African philosophers and scholars, since “there has been attempt by scholars and philosophers from different cultures or traditions to systematically and actively engage one another in dialogue” (Amadi 35).
3. African ontology has the duty of liberating itself from self-insulation, through intercultural education, and leave behind the encumbrances imposed by bias as a result of many years of colonial domination.
4. While it must maintain its identity and particularity, African ontology should not shy away from borrowing ideas from other cultures and transforming and adapting them to the suitability of the African indigenous needs.
5. African ontology is also challenged to stand its ground in the face of criticisms of its peculiarly cherished core cultural values, such sacredness of human life, respect for elders, cuisine, dressing, respect for the dead, communality, sense of kinship, songs, dances, games, agriculture, story-telling, proverbs, riddles, and languages, among others.
6. Even in Africa, there are different cultures, and the scenario goes on even within a particular country, state, or local government. So, overemphasis on “Africanness”, as if Africa is simply a mono-cultural entity, should be avoided. Rather, there

should a continuous dialogue, interaction and openness among cultures, within and outside Africa.

7. African ontology is informed by the sense of religion or sense of the sacred. This can expose it to attacks or oppositions from various quarters in this era of extensive secularism. There is need, therefore, to guard this sense of the sacred jealously, for it is one of the foundations of the authenticity of African world-view. It is the ground on which African moral values thrive and have meaning for the Africans. This ontological inclination to religion plays significant roles in the lives and activities of the African people.

### **A Critical Appraisal**

Following from the discourses so far, a clear picture of African ontology can be discerned. In this, one can see both sides of the coin. Objectively viewed, African ontology can be said to be authentic in that it has its root in African culture. It is not a borrowed ideology or a product of intellectual gymnastics, rather it is part and parcel of the people's existence. It is a good thing to know that African ontology is original to the people of Africa. A lot of good things are experienced from African ontology that are of vital importance to humanity. Such values as human life, sense of the sacred, sense of the divine, communalism, extended family, intergenerational concern and many more, are very important for people to live in peace and progress. African culture can offer these to other cultures to emulate.

However, a deep look at the African ontology will also reveal some shortfalls. For instance, it has been argued that African ontology is primitive and incoherent (Munda), and that it is overly influenced by Western ontology, which is individualistic (Okolie and Ogbonnaya). African ontology is, therefore, deemed to have fallen short dynamism and open-minded approach to issues. This has brought a drawback to Africa's engagement in the

global competitiveness at various areas such as education, research, science, technology, economy, politics, business, and general international relations.

In the light of the above appraisal, it is expected that African ontology continue to hold its own, but at the same time make efforts for proper adjustments for positive gains in this era of intercultural emancipation. To do this, greater emphasis should be placed on the similarities and interconnections of different cultures than on the differences and independence.

### Conclusion

There has been an extensive discourse on intercultural realities in the context of African ontology as a cultural datum in this paper. From the various areas that have been looked into, it is the conclusion of this paper that African ontology is in reality a cultural datum. As such, it should not be allowed to be swallowed up or overshadowed by the reality of inter-culturalism sweeping across the globe. At the same time, African ontology should open itself up to the ongoing globalization of culture by embracing those inputs coming from other cultures, especially the inputs of science and technology, and integrate them into the African context. In other words, African ontology, while remaining authentically African, should expand its world-view and refuse to be isolated or left behind in positive changes and globalization trends that would bring about mutual understanding and progress among all cultures.

To achieve this, more attention should be given to those things that are similar and connective to all cultures than those which differentiate and separate them. It is necessary to key into this because inter-culturalism is a welcome reality that is becoming globally embraced for its capacity to bring various cultures into harmony and mutual respect, while maintaining their unique differences.

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