

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND MEDIA FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Jude I. Onebunne

Department of Philosophy
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
juno.anyi@gmail.com

Abstract

African Philosophy being part of the world philosophical heritage and as the hermeneutics of African culture *is a philo-sophia, a quest for African wisdom*. Hence, African philosophy is philosophy done with an African perspective for global contextualization. Being a human enterprise, African philosophy needs a functional tool for proper communication and interaction that will guarantee effective development that is African oriented. The researchers applying the method of historico-critical analysis discover that continental African structured within the global divide, having been plundered for many years amidst slavery still suffers the vicious circle of a developing nation. Therefore, there is great need for a communicable African philosophy of Development.

Introduction

Philosophy is a popular science that deals correct thinking and love of wisdom. When attached to Africa as a term called African Philosophy, it dwells more on the interpretation of tradition and cultural realities of the Africans by Africans. With the move in trends and as many countries strive to obtain development on different level the media which is an institution for publishing and broadcasting information has been and still is playing an active role in keeping us abreast with the happenings within and outside the countries.

African continent is perceived by many (both Africans and non Africans) as an unfortunate country. Due to numerous factors that unavoidably includes the colour of her skin and the slow pace of its development even as a cradle for ancient civilization. Africans are not unfortunate. In fact, Africa is one of the most richly blessed continents but is delimited in development due to a gap that exist between its philosophy and its development.

The media is the tool for the much talked about development in Africa. The media helps to reshape and redefine the African man's interpretation of tradition and culture to accommodate changes from contemporary countries in the world. What makes one

different from the other is the knowledge possessed, it is not enough then that Africans stays within the fences of its own thinking (philosophy), rather for a progressive development the gap between African philosophy and the quest for development should be bridged using the media as an effect tool. The pressing question now becomes, as we are already making efforts to keep alive the interaction with other continents are they also willingly to do that? Seeing as interaction is an act that needs to be reciprocated.

I conclude that the globalization of Western value systems through the Western-controlled mass media communications systems and outlets is not development, but underdevelopment. I suggest an African philosophy of development influenced and determined by what and who Africans think of themselves in their local and traditional ways, as evident in representative African proverbs.

African Philosophy

African Philosophy traditionally is knowledge of Africa realities and African realisms. Recently, I have tried to define African Philosophy primarily a discipline and secondarily a *movement*. And in the a very large sense African Philosophy is fundamentally a *disciplinary movement*. As a disciplinary movement, African Philosophy, springing from immemorial African philosophical tradition, tries to rediscover itself within the world philosophical heritage. In a very strict sense, African Philosophy is African and Philosophical within the limits of *Africanity* and *Philosophicality* or *Africanness* and *Philosophicalness*. Iroegbu, P. was very *premier* in giving this succinct definition as a *philo-sophia, a quest for African wisdom*. In line with the classical definition of philosophy, African Philosophy, therefore, is *scientia rerum per ultima causas* within African realities. It is the search for the unaided authentic human knowledge that is philosophical and African. It is the habit of every wise and reasonable African man to seek and appreciate knowledge. Therefore, African Philosophy searches for the authentic knowledge that is Philosophy and African within and or *outside* the African cultural world-view. Therefore, a definitive-thoughtful interpretation and critical analysis of the symbols of African cultures would be African philosophy *qua tale*. More so, a reflection with profound application of criticality, analyticity and originality on African thoughts and cultures *will* give credence to Philosophy and rightly put, African Philosophy.

African Philosophy is philosophy as it is done in and for Africa and others. It is a by-product of human enterprise on people's world-view. African Philosophy is the critical and universalizing interpretation of the culture and the world-view of African people by philosophers within and outside African continent. It is philosophy done within African philosophical tradition designating the *corpus* of African philosophical

writings. However, African Philosophy like other philosophical traditions has an historical development along the path of human consciousness, critically encountering their realities. African Philosophy, therefore, has a share in the mainstream of philosophical traditions growing as a human enterprise as a result of critical interpretation of tradition and cultural realities. Okere, T., asserts that “all philosophy is essentially an historical and time bound interpretation of being”. Amidst all sorts of bizarre and false ideas on the capability of African man to philosophize, questioning the depth of their philosophy, one can boast of African philosophical scholarship as well as African authorship. However, Iroegbu, P., an optimistic contemporary philosopher was very apt in defining African philosophy as: “the reflective inquiry into the marvels and problematiques that confront one in African world, in view of producing systematic explanation and sustained responses to them. It is an inquiry with two aspects: *philosophical* and *African*”.

However, Iroegbu, P., was academically astute enough to reiterate that “African philosophy is philosophy done in an African context...the different aspects and complexities of existence that challenge him as an African person. In this respect, every philosophy is contextual philosophy”. For Iroegbu, P, therefore, these philosophical concepts alone “are what we generally call the African philosophical *philosophemena*: raw materials for philosophical reflection, questioning, responses, analysis and eventual synthesis”. In this statement of fact, Iroegbu, P. continue to echo his teacher Okere Theophilus who had earlier conceived the idea of *philosophemes* as deposit of conceptual data or realities for philosophical enterprise.

Appreciation of Media

Medium is an English word which generally implies a channel or route. That is to say, medium is a means through which people communicate and also receive information. These medium can also be called tools or materials that enhances communication and information sharing. Things like newspapers, radios, televisions, telephones are media (the plural form of medium). The idea of media as that which deals with “mass”(many) has grown over the years to form a twin term known as “mass media”. This is a popular concept that encompasses channels of communication that involves transmitting information in various, forms, ways or shape to a large number of people at the same time but not necessarily in the same place.

The definition and explanation of media as enumerated above have not done justice to the current state of media in a fast changing world. The mass media has long grown from the including just; books, television, films and similar materials. The existing media or mass media per- say, has grown to not just include one-to-many communication and one-to- one communication, but rather has enhanced to develop

mediums that covers the both aspects of communication that is; one-to-many(mass) and one-to- one(interpersonal).

The evolution and rapid growth of the media industry has effected legible changes on the way we relate, socially, economically and politically. In 2007, for example, a joint venture between the 24-hour news network CNN and the video-sharing site YouTube allowed voters to pose questions directly to presidential candidates in two televised debates. Voters could record their questions and upload them to YouTube, and a selection of these videos were then chosen by the debate moderators and played directly to the presidential candidates. This new format opened up the presidential debates to a much wider array of people, allowing for greater voter participation than has been possible in the past, where questions were posed solely by journalists or a few carefully chosen audience members.

Many countries since year 2010 have an uninterrupted access to 24-hour news broadcast about happenings around the world. Today even developing countries such as Nigeria has a 24hour accessible media systems provides 24-hour news channels as well as music videos, nature documentaries, and reality shows about everything from hoarders to fashion models. That's not to mention movies available on demand from cable providers or television and video available online for streaming or downloading. The media in developed countries has upgraded tremendously over the years. Half of U.S. households receive a daily newspaper, and the average person holds 1.9 magazine subscriptions (State of the Media, 2004) (Bilton, 2007). A University of California, San Diego study claimed that U.S. households consumed a total of approximately 3.6 zettabytes of information in 2008—the digital equivalent of a 7-foot high stack of books covering the entire United States—a 350 percent increase since 1980 (Ramsey,2009). Media is the driving force by which the earth moves. The difference between two persons intellectually, is what one person knows that the other person does not know, media is the fastest medium through which one is exposed to vast knowledge about other. In fact, the role of media cannot be over emphasized as it is the engine house of all over the world relationships.

On Development and Philosophy of Development

Development in our world today is associated basically with the innovative ideas and fast moving trends of the West and the so called developed countries. The issue of development in the underdeveloped countries especially countries under continental Africa, is that it views modernity and development as Westernisation. Present-day Africa is a continent where the Muslim religion has been well established since the nineteenth Century and thus, the issues of modernity and development are unavoidably linked to the Islamic culture.

Scholars has long deliberated on the belief of what development and modernization should be and it has been deduced that modernization and development are co-existing factors, which occurs when traditional values, beliefs, and ways of doing things metamorphosis and grows to adapt new innovative views and methods. To say that development is brought about by the increase of innovative capacity, is to tactfully shift the blame for Africa's failure to brace up in development from holding onto retarded tradition to the activities of the colonialists.

Prah, K. K. (2011) in addressing the nature of the current African problems regarding development as progress towards a viable modernity, said that it is necessary to identify the conceptual dimensions that created the predicament in the first place. Indeed, it is necessary to define its historical origins if we are to find solutions to it. Part of the problem of not being able to locate appropriate solutions is that we do not always address the predicament in ways that are broad or comprehensive enough. In agreement with Prah it is actually the activities of the colonialist who colonised and are still indirectly colonising Africans that kept them in a situation of under development. The fact that Africans were never actually entirely free from the shackles of the whites till date has deterred its development up till this moment. The greedy intentions of the westerners to exploit Africans and rip it off its natural endowment is the fight many developed countries today are facing. This has in no small measures affected the development of Africans economically.

'Development' is the most important among the key terms of the above title as it is the aim that both 'Philosophy' and 'Media' are brought in to achieve. Talking about development, it is necessary also to consider the preconditions of development in general, irrespective of the entity whose development is in question. Tangwa, G. B. (2011), opined that in general, we can consider development as purposive (teleological) growth. Mere evolution in time and space cannot properly be described as development. Left on its own, anything whatsoever will evolve in some way or other in time and space. Development is therefore an intentional action towards growth. In Africa the effort channelled towards economic growth is barely enough. Africans still struggle with personal human and educational development, without development in these two areas the idea of economic growth would be a lily-livered one. The fact that till today, African are still ensnared by the out come of an experience they broke off from decades ago is a serious set back on the development of African countries and should be looked into seriously. The toll of debts incurred by the leaders of African countries is enough to enslave Africans, bring about neo slavery and this would be disastrous. Every master prays that his apprentice grows to be better than he is, but the case of Africans are different from other colonised countries in other continents. The

British till today leach on Africans natural resources every little opportunity they have. Africa get worse by the day and the only help offered by the developed countries are mere disguised strategies to get hold of Africans rich natural ecology. The western world are not interested in the crises going on in African countries. At this point even the media has failed to bring Africans the much needed save they longed for. Ymele, J.-P. (2011). One of the major phenomena of modern times is undoubtedly the intensification of information flows, capital transfers, company relocations around the world which are induced by growth and the excess capital generated in industrialised countries. As a solution to the crisis-stricken economies of Africans which, is the aftermath of bad governance and the intended ploy have a piece of Africans rich ecology through loans, a thorough analysis of Africans debt should be made by Africans and a strategy be employed to effectively manage Africans natural resources within Africa as well pay up these accumulated debts and ensure more debts are not incurred only then can Africa grow economically.

Media in Favour of Development (Global divide (the north and south divide)

Information is a vital asset that gives one an edge over another. a country cannot grow without first, having a strong medium of communication and information dissemination. The media is therefore a strong instrument that harnesses development. And a vital instrument at that. The media, though very important has also regrettably provided a plat form that enables for global inequality through the global divide. This divide, geographically divided the world into two; the northern and southern divide. This division has brought a social class inequality amongst the countries round the world. Despite the significant gain of the media towards development, which has provided a plat form of different audio businesses that has raised many people out of absolute poverty. There is an obvious rise in the inequality between the world's richest and poorest countries. Records has it that in 1820 western Europe's per capital income was three times bigger than Africa's but by 2000it was thirteen times as big. In addition, in 2013, Oxfam reported that the richest 85 people in the world owned the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world's population.

In recent times many countries has grown massively economically and socially. The inequality within and between countries has also been growing and some media commentators and economic analyst talk of a Global North and a Global South, using it to categorise richer and poorer countries. This inequality caused by the wealth possessed by individuals and countries at large exists both within and between countries, countries like Indian and Philipians are said to house the largest descends of poor people within a particular nation. These countries also has a sumptuous number of middle class and rich elites.

Some causes of these inequality can be outlined as;

- Over exploitation and unavailability of natural resources. Also on the contrary mismanagement of available natural resources can also contribute to this.
- Under development in the personal and educational aspect of a country, thereby causing a difference in the educational levels of citizens in a country.
- The level of a country's economy and industrial development is another factor that contributes to this inequality.
- International trading opportunities and guiding policies can make or mar a country's economy. Africa for example tends to import a lot but export little or nothing in return and this has told a lot on their deteriorating economic system. Its implication becomes such that they engage in a one way foreign trade, where they enhance the economic strength of other countries without offering anything to the market to be bought in other to enhance theirs.
- The leadership strength of a country and its international relationship is another factor that promotes inequality. Some leaders are so incompetent to the extent of running its country's economy down to a pitiable condition. Also some countries have an international relationship that is bent on exploiting its weaknesses other than helping them strengthen it.
- Some countries today cannot measure up to others economically and socially because of its vulnerability to natural hazards such as; earthquakes, thunder storm etc.

In the 1980s, the Brandt Line was developed as a way of showing how the world was geographically split into relatively richer and poorer nations. According to this model: Richer countries are almost all located in the Northern Hemisphere, with the exception of Australia and New Zealand. Poorer countries are mostly located in tropical regions and in the Southern Hemisphere. However over time it was realised that this view was too simplistic. Countries such as Argentina, Malaysia and Botswana all have above global average GDP (PPP) per capita, yet still appear in the 'Global South'. Conversely, countries such as Ukraine appear to be now amongst a poorer set of countries by the same measure. The Brandt line, proposed by Willy Brandt (the German Chancellor) in 1980, created a partition between the 'developed' North and 'developing' South. Brandt came to the conclusion that more cooperation between countries could 'build a world in which sharing, justice, freedom and peace might prevail' (Willy Brandt, 2016).

The Brandt report shows recommended that north of the global divide were more developed as they have been able to communicate effectively with others (effective media), which in turn boosted their quality of living, education and economy as well. It is therefore a communicational fault that brings about the underdevelopment in the

global south divide. The mode and level of interactions and relations amongst countries is the greatest channel that leads to development of a country. The fact that the developmental communication between Africans and the western world is based on a motive to over ride Africans and take possession of it wealth, the relational communication that exist between the colonist of African countries and Africans has done more harm than good, the agenda of neo colonisation has been a fast realizing one and the media hub which has been a tool for relaying opinion has been played down on. In the actual sense of it, the African news receive little or no reactions at all even when they do it is for the negative reasons. These impediments notwithstanding, there are several positive examples that show how the media could contribute to the implementation of national development visions, such as:

African philosophical development as a concept for Continental African

Several researchers have argued for the existence of such a concept as African Philosophy (Gyekye, 1995; Oruka, 1990; Mbiti, 1970). Countervailing views have also argued against any foundations for an African Philosophy (Appiah, 1992; Bodunrin, 1985, 1981). A great many other writers, philosophers and anthropologists and Africanists have taken more eclectic views (Hountondji, 1983 & Forde, 1954). So long as there are people's views of who they are, there are ways of cognitively and expressively making those beliefs known. Philosophy therefore becomes a way of making sense of one's world of becoming, being, existence, and seeing, relating, interacting, and interpreting the world in which one lives.

Develop in the light of this paper denotes evolution, improvement and growth in a nations emotional, physical, social and political aspects. When seen in this light, it is viewed as not limited to infrastructural development and industrialization. Rather, it is aligned to a process of maturation, which encompasses both individual and community efforts. African philosophy of development tends to pose questions which when answered defines the African entity and can only be answered after a cross examination of the African society during the pre-colonial and post colonial eras. The need for a well defined and understandable african philosophy of development becomes apparent. African philosophy of development should be strongly rooted in african ethics and norms including languages and Africans rich expressive proverbs. The media houses from the westerners and the big infracstructural ideas which has driven Africans today into indeptedness are not the african development philosophy needed for african development, in so far as those media contents are not grounded on the myths of the African societies, and do not facilitiate a two-way exchange of meanings, messages, images and symbols between African and non-African cultures and values. I argue that communication is a function of a people cultures and value systems. When those value systems are not validated and integrated in any communication interchange, a sense of

alienation results. in an open-ended referentiality (Ben-Amos, 1977 & Ong, 1967/1970, 1970, 1982;), the African engages himself/herself, the community, and thereby create knowledge and meanings pertinent to his lifeworld. When such thinking and perceptions of the African selves, cultures, and personalities are shared with other ethnic, national and racial entities across the globe, development would follow **Colonialism**, christianization, commercialization, and islamization have all combined to erode pieces of Africa's past. Yet, these outside elements have also enriched Africans' experiences and experiments in self-preservation and cultural conservatism (Nkrumah's Consciencism, 1970; Nyerere's Ujama, 1968). We can not over look the fact that colonization opened Africa to whole new life and light of civilization but the effect of this token of civilization still lingers on. Africa was never freed from colonialism and imperialism. Instead, local and traditional 'imperialism' replaced foreign rule so also the debt burden on african countries is an avenue for a neo-colonialism.

Debt burden; a neo-colonialism scheme

The debt crisis continues to hover mostly in developed countries such as Africa, due to the continuing burden of servicing external debts at a very high cost as well as the additional high burden brought about by the depreciated currency value of less developed countries like Nigeria. African countries have been noted to be of special interest because of their low per capital incomes and their general dependency mainly on one or only a few primary commodities for export earning. This much talked about crisis arises when the external indebtedness of a country becomes unbearable that it imposes intolerable constraints on the economy and on the development efforts of the authorities. In such circumstances the bulk of servicing the foreign exchange earnings in earmarked for servicing the debt and at times, at worse still drawings on new loans may be needed to service existing debt. Debt burden crises is fostered by loans gotten to finance recurrent expenditure, that is, when a loan is gotten for consumption purposes and not generate profit, loans gotten to service unproductive investments, the high level of corruption, fraud and shady deals, etc. and this prominent causes of debt crisis are very evident in African societies, and as such kept them at the particular spot the creditor nation wants them.

The fact remains that our creditor nations would not want to see Nigeria pose as an economic and political giant in Africa, which is their major market outlet. Hence, the gross and blatant irrelevance and inadequacy of most of the received and imposed economic policies emanating from these creditor nations and their allies-the IMF, the World Bank, ADB etc. these policies cannot rescue Africa from the present economic/political quagmire which they (Western nations) have helped in no small measure to plunge her into. This is what Prof. E. J. Nwosu, one of the Africa's

developmental economist and a crusader of Africa's liberation from poverty and imperialism, calls the double standards of Western nations in his book, "the challenge of poverty in Africa." According to him the interest of these nations are always uppermost in all that they compel Africans to do and much of the prosperity of the rich countries flows from the poor countries, through exploitative and unequal trade and other economic relations (Nwosu, 2000, p.4). more it is important cornerstone of their total growth strategy to perpetuate this despicable an unquitous status quo. Thus, it will be unimaginable to think that these big creditor nations would allow Africa to come out of this debt trap from which they are feeding. Prof. Nwosu goes further to say: "the creditor countries and the international financial organs they manipulate, place little or no value on the life, good health and good living of Africans, to the extent that the adjustment plan they have for us is, among other things, for the purpose of removing all subsidies and subventions, not only on agriculture and industrial product, but also on the social services to our people the majority of whom are living in abject poverty". A situation where millions of dollars meant for development are channelled to servicing of debts thereby impoverishing people through economic strangulation is evil, cruel and in fact a new wave of enslavement (Nwosu, 2000).

Watkins (1997) reiterated that in the poorest countries, the debt burden has remained a serious problem, diverting resources needed for investment in social and economic recovery, undermining investment and contributing to financial instability. Each of the consequences has had damaging implications for trade development and poverty alleviation prospects.

The debt burden has disrupted economic development and has created serious socio-economic problems. Iyaiya (2002) is of the view that the magnitude of the debt and the mounting debt service payment has imposed severe hardships on the economy of the country. The consequences of this increase in addition include the under utilization of productive capacity and the scaling down in domestic investment and development projects, which could have been used to improve the living standard of the people.

The media as a tool for a communicable African philosophical development

The African philosophical development is development as envisioned by Africans. The media has always and will still continue to be an effective tool for communicating African philosophical development. Warnock (2002) had already suggested an analogous approach, arguing that, instead of providing citizens with information, communication platforms should serve as a "dialogue" that empowers individuals and furthers development. it is important that plat forms for a more effective communication be created, (Warnock, 2002) enumerated that the government of Uganda has established such platforms for communication, through a dynamic policy

of issuing licenses for FM stations in key locations. These FM channels broadcast popular programmes, and feature a spectrum of issues for public discussion and debate. The media should be a tool for portraying the African philosophical development ideology, by allowing the African idea of development have a voice through the media. It is not enough that the Africans are able to get information from all parts of the country, its rather important that an avenue be created to portray Africans to other nations at such enhance its developmental chances. How Africans are presented, everything that has to do with our relationship with the outside world is an image created by we Africans through the media.

Conclusion

Most African countries thought following the model of gigantic infrastructures would translate to development. This on the contrary, did not happen. enormous infrastructural structures do not commune development if there are no equivalent standards of protection, safety, management and avoidance; love of oneself and what one has made, and the collective determination or wish to conserve such for subsequent generations. These principles are entrenched in African folklores and other language and symbol forms. It is about time that the character, content and descriptive characteristics of these unique African linguistic forms and experiences be included into the new communication and information systems imported from abroad. Many African nations today can hardly sustain their administrations, nor can they disburse the wages of their workforce, due to the entanglements of international debts. African nations were advised that roads and railways and airports were vital for development. They lent monies from foreign banks to put up these infrastructures. They could not sustain them to productivity because Africans require a preservation culture. The airports today are non-functioning. The expressways are dead traps. The values that support self-dignity, integrity, responsibility, accountability, hard work, self-determination and not toleration to the point of obedience and contentment or to the point of self-annihilation, should be integrated into the new communication and information technologies in which Africans are investing their monies.

The language of globalism and world telecommunication flow is predetermined. It is an either/or statement from the western industrialized complex, spelling doom for the non-western societies that do not adopt and abide by the western dicta for development. The basic attitude in the globalist perspective is that Africans must be helped and liberated by western norms of progress and advancement. But this on the contrary is not so. African should push towards a self development strategy by initiating and establishing is own philosophy of development as they strive to fight the battle for development from within. Africans shouldn't incur debt based on the believe that

development should be based on the western norms and policies. By so doing African can rise again.

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