

AFRICAN TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT: THE IDEAL FOR CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This treatise is a qualitative research in philosophy aimed at asserting the pertinence of African contemporary philosophy to African tech development. The study is anchored on the hypothetical thesis that no society can develop or advance without thinkers, as science has no basis without philosophy. The problem of the study is the search for new paradigm for African cotemporary philosophy. Against this backdrop it behoves to ask, as far as the global race for tech advancement is concerned, where does Africa stand? Of what relevance is African philosophy to African's quest for tech development? Based on the findings of this critical analysis, the treatise argues that since philosophy plays an indispensable role in the advancement, sophistication and utility of technology, the African philosophy have a pivotal and crucial role to play. Consequently, the ideal object and teleology of the contemporary African philosophy ought to be the

postulation of pragmatic ideologies that are germane towards advancing Africa's sustainable development of science and technology. The study therefore recommends that contemporary African philosophy has no business with abstract and baseless speculations for the latter is a liability not an asset. However, contemporary African philosophy should be fundamentally concerned with churning out cutting edge and fecund ideas that would stimulate the invention of home-grown African-techs. The analytic and normative methods were adopted in this study.

Keywords: *Contemporary African Philosophy, Technological Development*

Preamble

In every time and in every place, there exist in every human being a distinctive characteristic and an element that places humans in the pride of place (transcendental pedestal) they occupies. This nature endowed character has been responsible for their uncommon or unique ability and capability to subdue their environment. Humans are able to attempt answers and solutions to the overwhelming and ultimate questions that inevitably impose themselves on them from their natural or physical environment through this exclusive character. This distinguishing characteristic called "reason" or "rationality" been the exclusive preserve of humanity is the springboard for human and societal development. Consequently, in everywhere and in every time, the existence of humanity presupposes the existence of philosophy. This presupposition is predicated on the understanding that philosophy is man's rational quest for meaningful living; man's critical reflection on the existential problems and ultimate questions of life; and man's critical rational attempt towards understanding his immaterial, physical and social environments through the use of speculative and practical reasoning.

All over the globe, the existence of ground breaking achievements, mind-burgling inventions and discoveries, in all facets of human endeavour are all clear indications of the

dominance of the engagement in philosophical thinking by mankind. This undeniably has been the basis of scientific and technological development and advancement. Of course, it has also been the focal origin of human civilization and sustained continual societal development. "Since humans started living in the society, science and technology has been the cornerstone of human and societal evolution and development".¹⁸² It is incisive to observe here that it is one thing to posse reason or rationality, to put the same into a critical and pragmatic use is another ball game. If that is the case, one can plausibly argue that in every human culture there exists pragmatic philosophy and as a result, such philosophy is considered to have been a *conditio sine qua non*. Little wonder it is said that no society can develop or advance without thinkers as science have no basis without philosophy. As Egbucha, convincingly assert that "every culture all over the world has in one time or the other wise men that reflected on the fundamental questions about human life or about the universe".¹⁸³ And as well, these men and women are very visible and relevant in Africa and advancing her course, just for the very example of relevance. Based on this Bodunrin, confidently asserts; "men of the western world were not the only people blessed with rationality, with intelligence, with thought, with the instinct of curiosity".¹⁸⁴ These are all characteristics of human nature and to be found among all peoples all over the globe. All civilizations, all people, have their own philosophers-their own Plato, their own Descartes, their own Hegel, etc. Similarly, Africa not been an exception has the likes of: Nyerere, Awolowo, Azikiwe, Iroegbu, Omoregbe and a host of others living and dead thinkers whose thought were remarkably incisive and pragmatic. It is basically on this fact that the African Philosophy is considered an implicit philosophy, that is to say, a philosophy implicit in life, thought, and talks of the traditional

182 M. M. Uzomah, *History and philosophy of science*. Kaduna: Eizy Print+Publishing, 2022, p 19.

183 G. C. Egbucha, "Diversification of science and technology: A call for revisitation of Igbo culture of science and technology." *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies*. 9(1). 2006. P. 72.

184 P.O. Bodunrin, *Africa: Trends and perspective*. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press, 1985, p. 45.

African people. The main sources of which are the religion, proverbs, oral traditions, ethics, and morals of the society concerned.¹⁸⁵

This paper aims at asserting the relevance of African philosophy for the integral development of the African society with particular reference to technology, against the backdrop of the unprecedented technological development and advancement of the western countries. In the light of this tokenism, it behoves to ask, of what relevance is the African philosopher to African's quest for technological development? How may mother Africa liberate and assert herself in the global village driven by science and technology through her sons and daughters' intellectual ingenuity? Must Africa accept western paradigm as the only option for technological development? These are the issues that would occupy our mind as we reflect on this paper. In view of these concerns, the paper argues that science and technology has the incredible potential of catalysing radical transformation of societies. In this era of digitalization no country can afford to display indifferent attitude to the development of science and technology. It further postulates that African philosophy would only be relevant in this contemporary dispensation only if it generates sagacious, fecund and pragmatic ideologies that would make Africa technologically viable. Abstract and baseless philosophy is a liability rather than an asset. The cotemporary African philosopher must be poised for the constructive critique of African culture and ideologies in order to meet the practical needs of our contemporary society.

Based on the findings of this critical analysis, the treatise argues that since philosophy plays an indispensable role in the advancement, sophistication and utility of technology, the African philosophy have a pivotal and crucial role to play. Consequently, the ideal object and teleology of the contemporary African philosophy ought to be the postulation of pragmatic

185 I. Oraegbulem, "Relevance of African philosophy to African integral development".
West African Journal of Philosophical Studies (WAJOPS). Vol.10, Dec. 2007, p. 77.

ideologies that are germane towards advancing Africa's sustainable development of science and technology. The study therefore recommends that contemporary African philosophy has no business with abstract and baseless speculations for the latter is a liability not an asset. However, contemporary African philosophy should be fundamentally concerned with churning out cutting edge and fecund ideas that would stimulate the invention of home-grown African-techs. The analytic and normative methods were adopted in this study.

Development

It is pertinent to state that, by the very nature of the concept development, it is all encompassing, because it exclusively involves every facet and dimensions of human existence and experience at every level of the society. Development also concerns the state of man's physical environment in relation to his social status and living conditions in the society.¹⁸⁶ In other words, it has to do with social transformation and the transformation of man's physical environment for the continual well-being and comfort of humanity. In lieu of this, issues pertaining to developmental studies reflect on how certain appreciable successes, advancements and improvements in an entity, organization, or society advances the quality and living standards of people. It becomes imperative to state here that the epicenter of development; whether of social (people) development or of the physical environment is the human mind. The human mind being the most fundamental of all human resources is the seat and root of development. Development begins and ends in the human mind and humans, being the catalysts of development are invariably the end of development. It is also noteworthy to observe that technology is a critical tool through and by which man drives development. In view of this, technological development is one of the essential indexes and factors for measuring the development of a country as far as the contemporary digital world is concerned. This is why the

186 M. M. Uzomah, *Theories and philosophies of development*. Kafanchan:De-Young Printing Press, 2018, p. 26.

industrialized societies whose technological revolutions in information technology have revolutionized their societies to digital societies are considered developed countries.¹⁸⁷ Technology itself is the creative work of human ingenuity and the creative use of technology which midwifes development is the exclusive prerogative of humans. This justifies the claim that man is at the centre of development; he initiates development, he is responsible for development and he is the core beneficiary of development. Therefore, a good definition of development must unavoidably take into account the fact that man is the true measure of development.

It is germane also to assert that most recently the world is not just concerned about mere development, but more essentially concerned about sustainable development. Sustainable development means a development that is integral and eco-friendly so as to meet the current and future needs of people and of the environment both in quality and quantity; and to preserve the same for posterity.¹⁸⁸ This is against the side-line that man's developmental activities and drives through technology seems to inadvertently threaten the balance of the eco-system thereby jeopardizing the existence of humanity both those living now and those to live in the future.

The concept development is a broad concept that embraces virtually all aspect of man. The term development has been misconstrued or conceived in terms of material, spiritual, moral and social aspects. So, when employed by scholars, they define it according to the perspective or interest they choose. It is important to note that development have a negative and positive sides. And there is nothing in the analysis of the term development which points only to the positive direction. The term development connotes both progressive and retrogressive novelty. In this paper however, development is construed only in the progressive sense which aids to the progress of totality of

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

the person which involves the “noema-noetic, psycho-somatic, socio-cultural, individual-collective, rational-emotional, human-divine integrated being”.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, development as applicable in this paper means the human being progressing in these various aspects. Further, the sense by which this paper wishes to understand development is aptly captured by Okadigbo thus:

Movement from bad or good to better, from better to best, from primitivity to civilization, from stone age to machine age, from slavery to freedom, from feudalism to capitalism, from illiteracy to literacy, from ignorance to wisdom, from abject poverty to relative riches, from colonialism to political independence, from political independence to economic development, from tribalism to nationalism, from nationalism to pan Africanism, etc.¹⁹⁰

This implies progress of man and his use of tool from the crude primitive society to a better life of the use of machine. This sense portrays the enhancement of technology to create the needed improvement of his physical and social environment. We are concerned with man's application of his nature given rationality and ingenuity to initiate pragmatic ideologies that would better the lot of man in Africa in particular and the planet earth in general.

Technology

Like development, the concept technology is also a broad concept, its roots extend as far as our arboreal ancestors. Nevertheless, its systematic study is relatively recent. Technology precedes science. Science arose due to the curiosity of our ancestors when they observed the behaviour of their tools. The most elementary and yet most fundamental relationship between science and technology is that technology is the practical and specific application of scientific knowledge to meet

189 P. Iroegbu, *Enwisdomization and African philosophy*, Owerri: International University Press, 1994, 81.

190 C. Okadigbo, cited in M. M. Uzomah, *Theories and philosophies of development*. Kafanchan: De-Young Printing Press, 2018, 100.

the essential needs of man to ease and improve human existence and experience on earth. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines technology as “the use of science in industry, engineering, etc. to invent useful things or to solve problems”. Also, it sees technology as “a machine, piece of equipment, method, etc. that is created by technology”. Without technology, the whole effort, time and resources invested in scientific enquiries amount to waste; and without science, technology is impossible. The concept technology encapsulates any invention or innovation man creates either in the form of contrivance, tools, mechanism or ad hoc modalities to fend for his basic and non-basic needs, improve his social relations and connection with significant others, make his immediate and external environment conducive for his survival and flourishing within the confines of the knowledge available to him at the material time through scientific and non-scientific enquiries, discoveries and inventions.¹⁹¹ The art, act and science of technological development is as old as the history of human survival on earth. Ever since humans started living in societies, they have always created and invented modalities for human conveniences starting from the use of stone to the present day digitalization.

Technology is one human element that transforms or progresses as man engage his brain critically on the practical problems of the society. If technology gets more sophisticated with increase in reasoning and brilliance, it therefore implies that critical reasoning (dialectical reasoning in philosophy) is key or the mainstay in the advancement of science and technology. It also calls for a kind of philosophy that reflects on existential issues and pragmatic ideologies and theories that, if applied, would engender the needed transformation. We know from world history that good ideologies are the bedrock of all forms of development, technology inclusive. Ideologies in turn are necessarily determined or influenced by the culture of the

191 Uzomah, *Theories and philosophies of development*, p. 26..

people. Hence, for there to be good ideologies, which in turn would necessitate technological advancement, African philosophy must be a critique of African culture.

Capital Technology and Development

In conceptualizing the concept of development, the crucial role and place of capital technology and technological development is given emphatic attention. The Western world as far back as one hundred and fifty years ago realized that: "Relentless faith in science and technology as the answer to mankind's foes going by different names- poverty, disease, hunger, inequality, corruptions, natural disasters, gender imbalance, demographic disequilibrium, urban violence, countryside privation, insecurity, weak government institutions, general systematic failures, etc."¹⁹² Analyzing the nature of economic situation as regards per capital income and the modes of production in the third world countries, especially in Africa, Stathukis and Vaggi in Uzomah asserts that in the underdeveloped countries, the missing elements are capital and technology. Land, no matter whether it produces crops for the internal or external market is incapable of raising productivity due to abundance of labour. Industrialization is crucial for any break with underdevelopment. Western conceptualization of development sees industrialization driven by science and technology as the linchpin of development.¹⁹³ In other words, in the typical Western mind industrialization and modernization are definitive of development. It is noteworthy to stress that technology is fundamentally fundamental to development. Countries that are today advanced and whose advancement continues to impact positively on the quality and living standard of their peoples attained such enviable height through creative and innovative use of technology. The First World countries, the super (G8) countries run technology-driven economies. For instance, their political, social, religious, economic, cultural, military, etc. are technologically engineered. Of course, the most

¹⁹² B. Ojewale, "Robbing technology to play politics". *The Nation News Paper, Thursday, October, 2019, p. 19*

¹⁹³ Uzomah, *Theories and philosophies of development, p. 35.*

contemporary factor for indexing a country as developed is technology. The concept of the digital era which is the prevailing epoch in humanity's history is rooted in the fact that we are living in a “technologized” society where all facets, dimensions and sectors of societal life are profoundly permeated, infiltrated and engineered by technology. Technology controls societal life from the rising of the sun to its setting, from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn. Therefore technology has assumed an omnipresence status in human life and affairs in the society.

Consequently, the “future belongs to societies that devote their resources to equipping their countries and nations with education in science and technology. The vast majority or population of a country or continent on its own counts for nothing if the people are ill-equipped to embrace the future”.¹⁹⁴ The leeway to experiencing radical development is qualitative education in science and technology. Science and technology has the incredible potential of catalyzing radical transformation of societies. For instance, “Smaller countries like Cuba, Israel, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, etc. are counted among giants because of the big strides they are taking to overcome their economic and social challenges through dependence on science and technology”.¹⁹⁵ Hence, in this era of digitalization no country can afford to display indifferent attitude to the development of science and technology. Remember, humans were able to attain the first ever form of development in the primitive society with the discovery of the first technology- fire; thereafter they started making tools and other devices and contrivances that in time gradually and sustainably transformed the human societies. As humans advanced their creation and use of technology their existence and experience changed for the better as they continually and sustainably reduced their dependence on their environment for sustenance and survival.

¹⁹⁴ Ojewale, “Robbing technology to play politics”, 19.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

African Philosophy as Critique of Culture

It is an undisputable fact that no culture is a finished product and no culture is so sacrosanct that nothing can either be added or subtracted. The latter is the reason why culture is said to be dynamic. Culture in its simplest definition refers to a totality of a people's way of life. Taylor, gives a classic definition of culture as, "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".¹⁹⁶ The obstacle to having a universally acceptable definition of culture is because there is no universally accepted criterion for evaluating the different types of culture. This according to Taylor is referred to in philosophical discourses as cultural diversity or pluralism or relativism. The utility of prescription of a culture, whether material or non material, is assessed within the circumstances of the culture.¹⁹⁷ This implies that no one culture should be used as a paradigm to evaluate other cultures. Every culture is unique and valuable to the people whom it has become their identity and way of life. Affirming this, Giddens, asserts that it is because of this diversity of culture that ethnocentrism by which other cultures are judged with comparism with one's own culture, and often regarded as inferior, is frowned at by sociologists.¹⁹⁸ By this token, it is offensive and despicable for a people of a culture to assert themselves over another or making other cultures to believe they are of inferior races therefore their culture is barbaric. Although every culture is dynamic, nevertheless, every culture is equally necessarily unique. This accounts for the reason why even when there is mutual borrowing between cultures, every culture must maintain its original identity.

However, despite the uniqueness of all cultures, Giddens argues that "amid the diversity of human cultural behaviour there are some common features".¹⁹⁹ These common features are called cultural universals. There are also certain features that are

196 E. Taylor; in A. Edekobi, *Lecture Notes on Sociology*, UNIZIK, Akwa: Unpublished, 2002, p.13.

197 *Ibid.*

198 Giddens, 1993, p. 39.

199 *Ibid.*

unique to particular culture. It is this that identifies members of that culture. However, it is important to note that a particular feature of a culture may not be preserved in all cases. Rather, "it calls for constant re-evaluation depending on the nature of our socio-economic reality and the goals at which we aim."²⁰⁰ Hence, while sociologists and cultural anthropologists may engage in scientific description of different aspects and features of human cultures, the task of this constant re-evaluation belongs to philosophy as a critical discipline.²⁰¹ This is because philosophy possesses the technical knowhow to adequately evaluate any culture not to determine if it is inferior, good or bad, but to determine its usefulness and its value for the integral wellbeing and development of the people.

Consequently, it is the duty of African philosophy to determine through critical analysis what aspect of African culture to promote and what to consider pragmatic and valuable in the light of African needs at a given time. It suffices to argue that some features of African culture constitute liabilities to African integral development. One cannot figure out the reason why despite the abundant human and natural resources available to the African continent she is still technologically dependent on the western world. African philosophy for example and in this context is very abstract in consideration and learning. According to Unah:

The fulfilment of this mandate should result in the production of philosophy graduates with a firm grasp of the groundwork of, and sound knowledge in general philosophy, with adequate information on the inner workings of philosophy, its emergence in different parts of the world, and the different phases of its historical development. Philosophic knowledge, properly dispensed, should result in the emergence of individuals with overall consciousness of the human condition and radical conceptions of life in general. The philosophy

²⁰⁰ O. Oladipo, *The idea of African philosophy*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1992, p. 52.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 48.

programme is designed to inculcate the skills and culture of critical scrutiny of received ideas through orientations in logical reasoning and critical thinking, which are to be deployed in documenting African intellectual heritage from the different societies in the continent, and even beyond to encompass those in the diverse field and endeavours for the purpose of catalyzing action and social development.²⁰²

For the African philosophy to bring about the needed breakthrough in technological development and advancement, it must engage in a critical and constructive study of African cultures. It must critically engage the critical aspects of African culture to reveal what has constituted this push-back to African integral development. Wiredu indicates that such a study, “must transcend the level of mere descriptions to raise questions of truth, intelligibility and significance about the object of study”.²⁰³

It is not just enough for the typical African man to claim, 'this our way of life, our forebears did it this way or that way', but the philosopher must educate and interrogate the African culture to know whether they are intelligible and significant to the long time and short time developmental needs of the people. Based on this imperative, Oladipo observes that “any philosophical study of African cultures, while recognising their useful aspects, should not fail to show their limitations, both theoretical and practical”.²⁰⁴ It is most relevant to ask at this point, what is the worth of a culture if it inhibits the improvement and advancement of man and his social and physical environments? It is in this critical and reconstructive power of philosophy that African philosophy can be of much useful for African integral development. When there is an intelligible and valuable culture, this becomes a step toward the formulation of pragmatic ideologies.

202 J. Unah, “Doing philosophy and doing African philosophy”, M. F. Asiegbu, & J. C. Agbakoba, (eds). *Four Decades of African Philosophy: Issues and Perspective*. Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2008, pp. 38-9.

203 K. Wiredu, *Philosophy and African Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 4.

204 Oladipo, *The idea of African philosophy*, pp. 46-7.

African Philosophy as a Tool for Evaluation of Ideologies

It is pertinent to state here that ideology is to development what food is to man. No meaningful and significant development takes place in a vacuum-without rich and well thought out ideologies. According to Oke an ideology as “a complex system of ideas for instituting or justifying a given set of political interests and goals”.²⁰⁵ An ideology consists of a set of fundamental values which a society implored to strive to imbibe (2001, 30). Ezeani conceives ideology as “a body of pragmatic ideas which form the basis of the economic and political structure of a class of people”.²⁰⁶ From these definitions, it could be seen that ideology is a guiding principle which regulate the economic, social and political, and at times the religious lives of the people. Ideology is the fulcrum on which depends all aspect of human and societal development, it is the basis of integral development.

Like development, ideology could be conceived in two dimensions or aspects. Wiredu, has distinguished two senses by which ideology could be understood: the good sense and degenerate sense. In the good sense, ideology refers to “a set of ideas about what form of the good society must take”.²⁰⁷ In this sense, every society requires an ideology and its purpose is to provide a theoretical framework for socio-political action”.²⁰⁸ This implies that ideology underscored in the good sense acts as principles and philosophy on which depends the socio-economic and socio-political decisions of the state. Also, in this sense it is seen as a positive factor and a catalyst of development. Whereas, in the degenerate sense, ideology consists of “a ready-made set of ideas meant to be adopted by governments as the exclusive basis for the political organization of society”.²⁰⁹ In this sense, it becomes a set of dogmas to be imposed by government with force if necessary.²¹⁰ The basic difference between the

²⁰⁵ M. Oke, *The Nature of Political Concepts and Ideologies*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2001, p. 30.

²⁰⁶ G. B. Ezeani, *Redeeming Nigerian through Marxist ideology*, Yola: Juddy Best Publishers, 1987, p. 13.

²⁰⁷ Wiredu, *Philosophy and African Culture*, p. 4.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

positive sense and degenerate sense of ideology is that the former, it is pragmatic and flexible, while the latter is rigid and in most cases counterproductive.

It is germane to stress at this point that ideology is pertinent to discourses on national development. Therefore a philosopher must be dead-concerned with ideologies if African philosophy must be pragmatic and relevant to the African continent. Wiredu is very apt to stress this imperativeness of ideology to the African philosophy as he asserts: "the African philosopher must be actively involved in the task of combating ideology in the degenerate sense because it is a negation of philosophy itself, and at the same time an obstacle to development. And the best approach is to get people to think critically about abstract notions which lies at the base of ideological discourses".²¹¹ He outlines such concepts to include: truth, knowledge, goodness and beauty. Oladipo, asserts that "the reason for this is that these concepts are easily employed as marks for all sorts of anti-human procedures and actions".²¹² Thus, fundamental concepts like truth can be manipulated to make personal opinions look like independent realities.²¹³

Against this background, African philosophy becomes imperative owing to the fact of the relation between ideology and development. The presupposition behind this is that philosophy must be seen to enhance "self-realization of men as rational beings". One of the ways philosophy can perform this noble task is through critical and intellectual attack on ways which prevents man, a rational being from trying to think for himself, even more terribly, been rendered unable to think for himself.²¹⁴ This implies a clarion call that African philosophy should engage in struggle for freedom of thought, belief and action, a freedom without which a society cannot be said to develop. Today virtually all African countries are

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Oladipo, *The idea of African philosophy*, p. 59.

²¹³ Wiredu, *Philosophy and African Culture*, p. 54.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

technologically in bondage in the hands of the western world. The African philosopher must interrogate those intelligible and insignificant thought patterns and beliefs found within African cultures that give rise to degenerate ideologies.

Positively, African philosophy must also seek to reconstruct ideologies in the positive sense which will aid African development. According to Oraegbunam “this is based on the fact that ideas rule the world”.²¹⁵ This is what lies at the root of American Pragmatism, British Empiricism, French Rationalism, etc. Far from canonizing these ideologies, our attempt is only to delineate the fact that African philosophy can be so useful to genuine development in Africa”. It is the thesis of this paper that philosophy would only be relevance in this contemporary African society only if it generates pragmatic and well thought out ideologies that would make Africa technologically viable. Abstract and baseless philosophy is a liability rather than an asset. Cotemporary African philosopher must critique our ideologies in order to meet the practical needs of our contemporary society. Because of the inalienable and pivotal role of ideas in development, it behoves on African thinkers to critically engage their brain to produce for us philosophical principle on which the integral development we seek may be leveraged.

African Philosophy and Technological Transformation

It is a truism of universal acceptance that man is endowed with the potentiality to tap the resources of nature in order to improve his living condition. Technology unarguably is an important source of an empowerment of a nation. The western countries have long discovered this truth and taken good advantage of it and this in turn is responsible for the advancement and improvement of their countries. In this age when most countries are advancing technologically, African cannot afford to be left out in this band wagon, except she wants to remain the

215 I. Oraegbunam, “Relevance of African philosophy to African integral development”, *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies (WAJOPS)*, Vol.10, Dec. 2007, p. 17.

underdog of the western world. In this regard, Oladipo, is of the opinion that underdevelopment in science and technology was an important factor in the possibility of colonialism in Africa.²¹⁶ The technological transformation which Africans yearn for can only come about through an African philosophy whose task it is to direct it in the light of ultimate destiny of man and his well-being. This is technically called philosophy of technology. But what is philosophy of technology? Nwoko defines this new philosophy thus:

The philosophy of technology judges the rationality of technology to man. It questions and clarifies the telos of technology for man. The basic question of philosophy of technology is the question of the rationality of technology and this is a Philophico-anthropological question.²¹⁷

The claim that this philosophy is expediently deduced is informed by the fact that most African countries seem to think that development is synonymous with western technological growth and that once they have technology transfer unto them, then they are developed. Sometimes what is referred to as technological development imitates the western counterpart much of which is directly against integral development. This has made us totally dependent on the western world, and the resultant consequence of this is lack of originality. This calls that African philosophers must think Africa, must engage in consistent reasoning to initiate genuine ideas that would make Africa self-reliant. It is a truism that the bulk of what we today call African philosophy is bedevilled by irrelevant abstract speculations that are far removed from the actual practical needs of the African society. In most cases they are but mere intellectual exercises that do not have any pragmatic import to the African situation. This is not to say that the western model of philosophy, science and technology should be construed as a paradigm. Hence, Alozie enjoins African philosophers to quarry the western quest for

216 O. Oladipo, *Philosophy and the African experience*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1996, p. 4.

217 M. I. Nwoko, *Philosophy of technology and Nigeria*. Enugu: P. Asomog Press, 1992, PP. 28-9.

development of human mind which are formulated with idealistic culture, with little or no element of pragmatic basis. Instead, problems of science, technology, economics, politics, war and peace should engage the Africans and their philosophy.²¹⁸ Then, when these discourses are generally and objectively associated them as they are develop towards a modernized culture that is built on/by science and technology, African philosophy will be seen as more meaningful in the face of shifting cultures of ideas and opinions.

The philosophy of science and technology we advocate for should be underscored as a fundamental option, because it will revolutionize African traditional ideologies that had made the entire African continent technologically stagnant. African's contemporary philosophy must be poised towards establishing fecund principles that must be adopted by government as blueprints for the formulation of its key policies. University professors and dons under the new order of reasoning are required to pull their intellectual resources together, think technologically and come out with useful ideologies. African philosophy of technology should be speculative as well as pragmatic and it should be spiritio-pragmatic. It should rationally harness the forces of nature as well as black powers and wizardry. Because culture is dynamic, African philosophers should diligently borrow from the west the virtue of publicity and objectivity, that is, it must eschew all forms of secrecy that has characterised African technocrats and that has in turn inhibited the transfer of technology from one generation to another. These are what we consider germane to the basic nature and orientation of African philosophy of technology.

African Philosophy of Science and Technology

While the pre-colonial African philosophy (ethnophilosophy and philosophical sagacity) began with wonder and curiosity, the postcolonial philosophy was inspired by frustration which

²¹⁸ P. Alozie, "Africa philosophy for survival in the 21th century", M. F. Asiegbu, & J. C. Agbakoba, (eds). *Four Decades of African Philosophy: Issues and Perspective*. Ibadan: Hope Pub., 2008, p. 50.

was the necessary concomitant of the infamous tripartite experience of Africa. Moreover, the contemporary African philosophy although subtly inspired by these two factors (wonder/curiosity and frustration) but most fundamentally is propelled by the question of relevance and the expedient need for African philosophy to cope with western imperialism and hegemony in the guise of globalization.

African philosophy is bogged down by the question of its relevance for the society which has thus been impacted by science and technology its question of relevance arose from criticism that African philosophy fails to match the level of effectiveness of science and technology. The development of Europe and America is based on science and technology. The revolutionary and drastic improvement in modern science and technology has impacted our society and affects how people relate to one another and how cultures have expanded or ended. Hardly, can anyone deny the fact about the positive impact of science and technology in every sphere of the society. Contributions of science and technology in the advancement and development of the world cannot be overemphasized, in spite of this African philosophy cannot take the back seat and be set aside from the development of the world.

Consequently, the newest phase of African philosophy is the philosophy of science and technology (African philosophy of development). The vowed objective of this novel second order African philosophy is to critically engage the use and implication of western technologies on African continent; and how African philosophy may develop a home-based or grown African technology through originality of thought and creative prowess.²¹⁹ This is in the bid to emancipate the black continent from technological stagnation. Development is driven by technology, hence, technological stagnation is tantamount to underdevelopment. In this sense, African philosophy of science and technology is a philosophy of development. It is a

219 Uzomah, *Theories and philosophies of development*, p. pp. 1-111.

philosophy that is Africa-concerned and African-oriented. It speaks to African culture unto development. It is a philosophy that de-emphasizes abstract and esoteric speculations and favours pragmatic reflections on practical problems of African development. Hence, contemporary African philosophy represents a paradigm shift from traditional African philosophy.

For African philosophy to actualize its place in the society it is necessary for it to adopt some of the methods of science. This notion is in tandem with Wiredu's advocacy for a new philosophy for Africa which he maintained must be critical and reconstructive. It should be one which is capable of inculcating in a large percentage of the African population those habits of mind, such as habits of exactness and rigor in thinking, the pursuit of systematic coherence and the experimental approach which are characteristics of science.²²⁰ The work of African philosophy of science is not so much about discovering new facts about African philosophy but it is rather coordinating indigenous thought for the purpose of guiding a contemporary coherent cognitive orientation in an African world. Oraegbunam, avers that, it has to be recognized that African philosophy has something to contribute. That is to say that African philosophy having transcended the level of the great debate must think seriously on how best it can be relevant to person-oriented development.²²¹ We are no longer in the era of apologetic philosophy, rather this is the epoch of philosophy of relevance and development. African digital (present day) philosophy should be a philosophy of a holistic pragmatism, practical enough as to make Africa a formidable capitalist and competitive so as to book an enviable space in the global hall of power and platform of exchange in the contemporary global architecture. The global architecture is structured in such a way that it is not a place of humanitarianism. Acts and gestures of humanitarianism are only considered an option directed to uncompetitive and backward nations who by their actions and

²²⁰ Oladipo, *The idea of African philosophy*, p. 39.

²²¹ Oraegbunam, "Relevance of African philosophy to African integral development", p. 10.

inactions have complaisantly decided to be underdogs and stooges before countries that are well positioned-the capitalistic and competitive global economic and political order.

Since science and technology has assumed the pivotal position of an incredible and inevitable fulcrum of development, the latest phase of African philosophy is invariably expected to be a philosophy of science and technology. It is only a pragmatic African philosophy of science and technology that is capable of leveraging and creating a continent that is formidably competitive and one that is capable of becoming a formidable and enviable political global actor. The question that ensues here is, what paradigm or method should African philosophers adopt in this new project of philosophy of development of science and technology? Should it be a home-grown method or adaptation of western paradigm? Omoregbe in Uzomah, is of the view that:

It is not necessary to employ Aristotelian or the Russellian logic in this reflective activity before one can be deemed to be philosophizing. It is not necessary to carry out this reflective activity in the same way that Western thinkers did. Ability to reason logically and coherently is an integral part of man's rationality. The power of logical thinking is identical with the power of rationality. It is therefore false to say that people cannot think logically or reason coherently unless they employ Aristotle's or Russell's form of logic or even the Western-type argumentation.²²²

Omoregbe's line of thought perfectly correlates with African renaissance school of thought. The African renaissance theory encourages Africa to act in a world that is dominated by the metropolitan countries by suggesting that micro-level development and poverty reduction should be the primary focus. Africans could use the indigenous knowledge system to read and forecast the weather. They had their own way of

222 M. M. Uzomah, *Philosophy of development: A Lecture note. Kafanchan: Unpublished, 2022, p. 39.*

dealing with crime, deviance and conflict. It is a fact that Africans could use herbs to treat different ailments. However, the coming of modernity forced Africans to be apathetic about their abilities, knowledge and skills. The use of traditional medical practice was degraded by modernity and modern medical practices were promoted. In the process of modernizing Africa, the people of the continent lost their identity and path to development.

For the records, African renaissance theory is an emerging model of development and it is antithetical to the modernization and the dependency models (paradigms) of development. The theory is founded on African values and norms, which are the very building bricks of African life. The Matunhu, the strength of African Renaissance theory lies in its ability to be adaptable to changes and innovations provided they are initiated within the social and value systems of the average African.

The African renaissance approach to development underscores the importance of social movements whose mandate is to engage people to face issues of justice, inequality and sustainability from a collective or communal approach. It is about reclaiming the African identity and African values. Upon achieving this goal, the continent will be able to go back to the drawing board and redesign a new course to prosperity. The African renaissance theory, unlike its predecessors, advocates for local solutions, pluralism, community-based solutions and reliance on local resources. Therefore the critical issue here is that 'transformation' for the future depends on achieving the transformation of institutions, technology, values and behaviour consistent with ecological and social realities in Africa.²²³

As it were, while we concur that African philosophers of science and technology must devise home-grown solutions to African development problems, of course the desirability for originality demands that, but we do not agree that western paradigms should be totally jettisoned. The nature of our globalized world

223 Korten, cited in Uzomah, *Philosophy of development: A Lecture note*, p. 39.

is such that it is dynamic, and as such, cross-cultural interactions and integrations stimulate development. In addition to relying on our original creative prowess, we must as a matter of expediency be open to new ideas and paradigms coming from anywhere in the global village. Ours is to fine-tune external paradigms and configure them so as to make them pragmatic to resolving African problems.²²⁴ It doesn't matter whose paradigm they are, what matters is the ability of indigenous scholars and technocrats to cascade them to suite African milieu, yearnings and aspirations. African philosophy of development of science and technology should be mindful of what works for Africa, given her peculiarity²²⁵ Original ideas are wholeheartedly welcomed, but if they behold any external paradigm to complement African's original effort, they are most welcomed. The global world today is not so much concerned about original ideas and paradigm, but how much you are able to brilliantly, smartly and creatively pull the tools and resources (internal and external) within your disposal and translate them into sustainable development. No country is an island unto itself, we need cross pollination of ideas, paradigms, technical know-hows, transference of technology, etc. to consolidate our original or indigenous development efforts and strides. We see it as rather arrogance and foolishness for a scholar to advocate for entirely original ideas and thoughts as the only ground for African development. No country's development has been entirely based on their original ideas or indigenous solutions. For instance, China which is currently the second most viable and larges economy after the US is well known for technology theft. They copy technologies anywhere and anytime and remodel them in such a way that they come out far better and more competitive than their original versions. Consequently, African philosophy of development of science and technology must be originally indigenous as well as giving allowance for compatible and useful western and Asian paradigms as necessary complements.

²²⁴ Uzomah, *Philosophy of development: A Lecture note*, p. 35.

²²⁵ *Ibid*, p, 57.

As it were, given the peculiarity of cultures and the ironic globalized nature of the world coupled with the fact of the universal nature of philosophy; there can neither be a purely cultural philosophy nor a purely universal philosophy. Therefore, contemporary philosophy must seek to address contemporary problems that have fundamental implications for human existence. Global terrorism and religious extremism, production of atomic and biological weapon of mass destruction and arms race, global food insecurity, global warming, insurgence of homosexuality and other despicable moral pervasions, and a host of other vices threatening the global moral order and the continual existence of humanity in the planet earth, must be germane concerns of African contemporary philosophy.

African contemporary philosophy must be a cultural as well as a global (universal) philosophy so as to be locally pragmatic to the developmental needs of the continent and at the same to be globally relevant and assertive (superbly competitive). Therefore, in recognition of these two important dimensions of contemporary African philosophy, the cultural dimension demand originality of ideas and paradigm to build a vibrant African economy that is self-reliant and one that is capable of making Africa a formidable global actor. On the other hand, the global dimension of African philosophy (of development) equally demands that African should be dynamic and astute enough to hunt for external paradigms that are relevant and pragmatic enough to boast African's home-grown paradigms. A creative synthesis of home-grown paradigms and external paradigms and the foregrounding of the hybrid that results from this dynamic synthesis will imply a superb African philosophy (of science and technology) that will not only withstand the omnipresent violent incursion and occupation of European and American hegemonic and imperial forces, but more essential one that will be formidably competitive and assertive alongside these forces so as to violently claim a seat of authority and power in the global architecture of comity of nations.

African philosophy and philosophers must in no less measure be deceivably violent to internal hegemonic and imperialist forces that are ready collaborators and saboteurs of African development. This internal hegemonic and imperialist forces are African tycoons, politicians, bad leaders and political parties that are not only ideologically clueless but as charades that bread self-serving politicians and saboteurs. According to Emeh and Eke Rodney affirmed the urgent need for Africans to deal decisively with internal elements selling off African when he asserted that, "One has to deal with those who manipulate the system and those who are either agents or unwitting accomplices of the said system. The capitalist of Western Europe were the ones who actively extended their exploitation from inside Europe to cover the whole of Africa".²²⁶ We must decisively and violently deal with the enemies within before we can adequately take care of the enemies without. The worse colonization Africans are currently facing is the current colonization of Africans by their own sons and daughters who have coveted the continent as their private estate. The political and economic order of this self-arrogated estate is so configured that the common patrimony and wealth of the people is contrived by these colonial sons and daughters of Africa. To maintain and consolidate this unjust order, these infamous hegemonic and imperialists sons and daughters of Africa enter into infamous conspiracy with external hegemonic and imperialists capitalists as either individuals or countries who strive in global market of imbalance dependencies to perpetually juice the juicy African soil.

For more than 52 years corrupt African leaders and tycoons have been looting our commonwealth and patrimony and contrived to cast the blame on western thieves. The most ironic and pathetic thing about this malady is that they know we know about this white lies. African philosophy of development of science and technology must deal with this notorious and prodigal colonial

226 I. Emeh, and J. Eke, "Dependency theory and Africa's underdevelopment: A paradigm shift from pseudo-intellectualism: The Nigerian perspective". *International Journal of African and Asian Studies*. Vol.1. 2013, p. 120.

sons and daughters of African before it can forge a meaningful step ahead. Indeed they are formidable obstacle to African development in general, and African technological development in particular.

Conclusion

From the beginning of philosophy, transformation of the human person and his social and physical environment has always been the inevitable task of philosophy. African Philosophy is not left out in this task. Since it has been established that philosophy plays an indispensable role in the advancement, sophistication and utility of technology, the African philosophy have a pivotal and crucial role to play here. The integral development of the Africa, if it is attainable must be leveraged on African philosophy. Therefore, we agree with Bonachristus, that African Philosophers must think truly, think wisely, think critically, think globally and think virtuously with regard to the humanistic development of Africa. Since, no people of the earth can think the thought do another for them.

African scholars must critically and objectively engage the African culture and ideologies to eliminate redundant and degenerate cultures and ideologies that have held the African continent bound. Since technology is one of the dire needs of Africa that has continually enslaved her to the hegemonies of the western imperialist, African philosophy must be technologically oriented and viable. Since good ideas are the bedrock of integral development, African thinkers should be apt to formulate creative ideas, pragmatic ideas and resourceful ideas. We should not be wary of the fact that knowledge is only worth its practicability, effectiveness and utility. Therefore, African philosophy of technology should be a philosophy loaded with good, pragmatic and ingenuous ideologies. Since, it has been established that originality is the hallmark of a genuine philosopher, African philosophers must reason rigorously, consistently and critically on the ethos and practical problems of the African continent to device original African technologies to

alleviate the plight of this noble continent. When this is religiously done, we believe Africa would be the world's technology hub.

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