



Message from the conference organizing committee

Dear Conference Delegate,

You are warmly welcome to the *African Philosophy: Past, Present and Future* conference which is jointly hosted by the Department of Philosophy (@ Wits) and Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies (@ the University of Nairobi). We wish you a lovely and enjoyable time not just at the conference and Wits but also in South Africa (for those coming from overseas). Given that one of the aims of the conference is to take stock of the strides made in African philosophy as well as its future we hope that the conference will provide not just a veritable and fertile forum for rigorous discussions directed at motivating and re-invigorating African philosophy, as part of developing its knowledge and research directions but also a strong foundation for future collaborations, research and meetings.

As you are aware, *Philosophia Africana* has accepted to publish some articles from the conference. As well, Palgrave Macmillan has agreed in principle to consider an edited volume from the conference with the tentative title, *Mapping the Method and Future of African Philosophy*. Immediately after the conference we'll be sending you more information about submissions and directions regarding timelines and deadlines. We anticipate that the deadline will be sometime in December 2015.

We are sincerely grateful to all those that have given us all kinds of assistance for this conference. We do particularly want to thank the National Research Foundation, the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, the Wits Faculty of Humanities, the Wits School of Social Sciences, the Wits Department of Philosophy, Dr. Robin Drennan, Professor Thad Metz and Dr. John Lamola for their sundry support. We also extend our appreciation and gratitude to Mrs. Yhesmien Hill (the Wits Philosophy Department administrative officer) and our conference assistants for their help.

Very best,

Edwin Etieyibo, PhD, Alberta (Lectures at Wits); **Oriare Nyarwath**, PhD, Nairobi (Lectures at Nairobi); **Francis Owakah**, PhD, Nairobi (Lectures at Nairobi); **John Lamola**, PhD, Edinburgh (Research Fellow at Fort Hare) (africanphilosophyproject@gmail.com)



Conference Dinner Venue

Wits Staff Club (Located on West Campus)



Bios and Photos of Primary Plenary Presenters

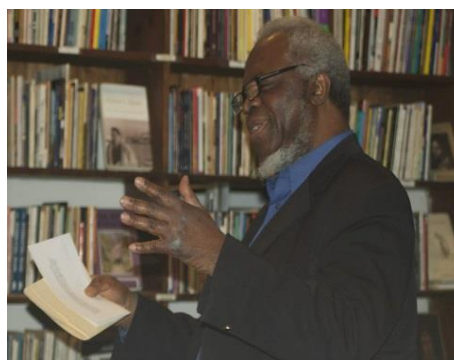
Professor Barry Hallen Bio and Photo

Barry Hallen has been Professor of philosophy in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, Associate at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, Harvard University, and Director of Southern Crossroads. Previously he was Reader in Philosophy at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. His areas of specialization are Theory of Knowledge, Africana Philosophy and Aesthetics, Philosophy and Anthropology, Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Studies. His book publications include *African Philosophy: The Analytic Approach*, (2006, Africa World Press); *A Short History of African Philosophy*, (2009, Indiana University Press), *The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: Discourse About Values in Yoruba Culture* (2000, Indiana University Press), and *Knowledge, Belief, and Witchcraft: Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy*, coauthored with J. Olubi Sodipo (1995, Stanford University Press).



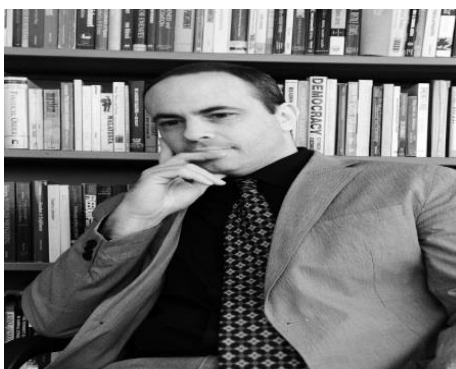
Professor Ifeanyi Menkiti Bio and Photo

Ifeanyi Menkiti was born in Onitsha, Nigeria. He is a philosopher and a poet. He studied in the United States where he received his BA from Pomona College; his MS from Columbia University; an MA from New York University; and a PhD from Harvard University. At Harvard he studied with Professor John Rawls who supervised his doctoral dissertation. He taught philosophy at Wellesley College for 41 years, receiving in 1996 the college's highest teaching award, the Pinanski Prize for Excellence in Teaching. He retired from active teaching in May 2014. Menkiti is the author of the much discussed essay, "Person and Community in African Thought", which Professor Kwasi Wiredu has called a classic in the field of African Philosophy. In his life as poet, Menkiti has published four poetry collections and is currently the owner/proprietor of the historic Grolier Poetry Book Shop in Harvard Square, the oldest continuous all poetry book shop in the United States, founded in 1927 and made famous by its association with poets such as T.S. Eliot, E.E. Cummings, Elizabeth Bishop, and others. Of the Grolier, the American poet Robert Creeley has written: "Poetry is our final human language and resource. The Grolier is where poetry still lives, still talks, still makes the only sense that ever matters"



Professor Thad Metz Bio and Photo

Thaddeus Metz is Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Johannesburg. Author of more than 125 books, articles and chapters. He is the author of *Meaning in Life: An Analytic* Oxford University Press. He is currently working on a new book, *A Relational Moral Theory*: will appear with Oxford University Press in 2016.



Dr. Edwin E. Etieyibo Bio and

Photo

Edwin E. Etieyibo teaches in the Department of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand. He has taught previously at the University of Alberta and Athabasca University. He specializes in ethics, social and political philosophy, social contract theories/and history of, and has broad teaching and research interests and competence in history of philosophy, epistemology, philosophy of education and children, early modern philosophy, applied ethics as well as African socio-political economy and philosophy. He has published in many of these areas, some of which include: (1) "Bargaining and Agreement in Gauthier's Moral Contractarianism", *South African Journal of Philosophy*; (2) "Privatization in Nigeria, Social Welfare, and the Obligation of Social Justice", *Journal of Economics*; (3) "Preliminary Reflections on the Privatization Policy in Nigeria", *African Journal of Economic Management Studies*; (4) "Themes in Brand Blanshard's Coherence Theory of Truth", *Philosophia*; (5) "Ethics of Government Privatization in Nigeria", *Thought and Practice*; (6) "Genetic Enhancement, Social Justice, and Welfare-oriented Patterns of Distribution", *Bioethics*; (7) "The Ethical Dimension of Ubuntu and its Relationship to Environmental Sustainability", *Journal of African Environmental Ethics and Values*; (8) "Political Reparationists and the Moral Case for Reparations to Africa for Colonialism", *Africa Insight*; (9) "Descartes and Epistemology With or Without God", *Philosophia*; (10) "Virtues, Freedom of Expression and Dissent, and



Dēmokratía", *Social Action*; (11) "The Question of Cultural Imperialism in African Philosophy", *Atuolu Omalu: Some Unanswered Questions in Contemporary African Philosophy*, Jonathan Chimakonam Okeke (ed.), UPA, 2015; (12) "The Case of Competency and Informed Consent", *Journal of Clinical Research & Bioethics*; (13) "'God is Dead!' Nietzsche's Zarathustra and Some Reflections on Religiosity in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Philosophy*; (14) "An Outline of an Ecumenical Environmental Ethic," *The Trumpeter*; (15) "Information and Communication Technologies and African Youth in a Globalized World", *African Youth Cultures in a Globalized World*, Paul Ugor and Lord Mawuko-Yevugah (eds.), Ashgate, 2015. His book (co-authored with Odirin Omiegbe), *Disabilities in Nigeria: Attitudes, Reactions and Remediation* will appear with the University Press of America in 2016.

Dr. Jonathan Chimakonam Okeke Bio and Photo

Jonathan Chimakonam Okeke has given many conference presentations in Universities in Nigeria, South Africa and Austria. Some of his works include *Atuolu Omalu: Some Unanswered Questions in Contemporary African Philosophy* (New York Lanham: University Press of America, 2015). *Existence and Consolation: Reinventing Ontology, Gnosis and Values in African Philosophy* (with Ada Agada) (Minnesota: Paragon House, 2015), a co-author of *Njikoka Amaka: Further Discussions on the Philosophy of Integrative Humanism: A Contribution to African and Intercultural Philosophies* (with G. O. Ozumba), Calabar: 3rd Logic Option Publishing, 2014; and *Arguments and Clarifications: A Philosophical Encounter between J. O. Chimakonam and M. I. Edet on the Ibuanyidandaness of Complementary Ontology* (with M. I. Edet) Calabar: 3rd Logic Option Publishing, 2014. He is the Area Editor, African Philosophy on the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, University of Tennessee at Martin. He teaches at the University of Calabar, Nigeria where he is the convenor of the intellectual forum, the Calabar School of



Philosophy (CSP). He is the current editor of *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*.

Professor Dismas A. Masolo Bio and Photo

Dismas A. Masolo is a native of Kenya and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Louisville, Kentucky. He teaches courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, covering a wide range of courses in the traditional Western and non-Western fields. Because of his international visibility and expertise in African philosophy, Masolo travels widely to give invited talks and to serve as external examiner for Master's theses and doctoral dissertations. His own work has been the focus of international philosophical symposia. His publications include *Philosophy and Cultures* (1981) co-edited with Henry Odera Orika, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (1994), and *African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry* (2000) co-edited with the late Ivan Karp, then of Emory University in Atlanta. His latest book, *Self and Community in a Changing World* (2010), has received



critical acclaim and was the focus of discussion in a 2014 special issue of the philosophy journal, *Quest*. Masolo is Series Co-Editor or a Member of the Editorial Board for three Indiana University Press book series, serves on the editorial boards for approximately a dozen academic journals, and additionally is serving as Program Committee Co-Chair for this year's African Studies Association Annual Meeting (2015). The current highlight of Masolo's work is editing and contributing to an anthology of essays on Kwasi Wiredu's philosophy. He previously taught at institutions including: The University

of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Egerton University, and The Consolata Philosophical Institute, all in Kenya, Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN (USA), Rice University in Houston, Texas (USA), The University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA (USA), and Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH (USA). He has been a holder of the Fulbright, Rockefeller, and Zora Neal Hurston Fellowships at several American universities including Purdue (Fulbright), Northwestern (Zora Neal Hurston), Rice (Rockefeller), and the University of Pennsylvania (Rockefeller). Professor Masolo was born and brought up under the British colonial rule in his native Kenya, and was awarded a doctoral degree in philosophy at the Università Gregoriana in Rome, Italy. His research interests reflect a critical awareness of this personal and cultural history by seeking to analyze, explain, and understand, first, philosophical traditions as both part and functions of social histories and, second, the philosophical significance of African cultures and their contributions to philosophical discourses in a global context. This interest is reflected in his pursuit to understand the philosophical positions in the work of indigenous African thinkers such as the philosopher and poet Shaaban bin Robert from then Tanganyika, some of whose works Masolo is currently translating.

Professor Ramose Bernard Mogobe (University of South Africa, South Africa)

Ramose Bernard Mogobe is an Extraordinary Professor at the University of South Africa. He holds a BA from the University of South Africa, South Africa, MSc in International Relations from the University of London, and a PhD (*cum laude*) from Louvain University. He speaks and writes Northern Sotho, Dutch, English and Afrikaans. His field of interest includes theoretical and applied ethics, social and political philosophy, philosophy of liberation, African philosophy, philosophy of international relations. Some selection of his publications include: "A History Denied: African Philosophy and Social Organization", *Series on Alternative Development*, no 2, September 1986, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; "Self-determination in Decolonization", Twining, W. (ed.), *Issues of Self-Determination*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen 1991; "Hegel and Universalism: An African Perspective", *Dialogue and Humanism*, vol 1

no 1, 1991; "Hobbes and the Philosophy of International Relations", *Quest*, vol V no 1, June 1991; "In Search of a Workable and Lasting Constitutional Change in South Africa", *Quest*, vol V no 2, December 1991; "Steve Biko and the Interpreters of Black Consciousness: A Response to Lotter", *Acta Academica* vol 25 nos 2 & 3, December 1993; *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, Mond Publishers: Harare, 1999; "Sovereignty and Constitutional Democracy, South Africa and Zimbabwe", *Thamyris* vol. 6 no 2 1999; "Africa Between Hope and Despair", *Philosophy and Social Action*, vol 28 no 2 2002; "Rationality and the Question of Diversity in South Africa", *Research, Identity and Rationalism*, *Research Institute for Theology and Religion*, CW du Toit, (ed.), University of South Africa Press, Pretoria 2002; "I Doubt, therefore, African Philosophy Exists", *South African Journal of Philosophy*, vol 22 no 2 2003; "Transforming Education in South Africa: Paradigm Shift or Change?", *South African Journal of Higher Education*, vol 17 no 3 2003; "Good Governance: Another Export to Africa", *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa*, J. Obi Oguejiofor (ed.), LIT Verlag: Munster 2003; "Poverty: A Creature of Politics and a Question of Justice", *International Journal of Humanistic Studies*, vol 3, 2004; "In Search of an African Philosophy of Education", *South African Journal of Higher Education*, vol 18 no 3 2004; "Philosophy: A Particularist Interpretation with Universal Appeal", *African Philosophy and the Hermeneutics of Culture*, Oguejiofor, J. Obi & Onah, G.I. (eds.), LIT Verlag, Münster 2005; "Towards Black Theology without God", *Journal of Theology and Religion*, vol 29 no 1, December 2005.



Professor Kai Horsthemke Bio and Photo

Kai Horsthemke teaches philosophy of education at KU Eichstaett/Germany. He is Visiting Professor in the Wits School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. Apart from animal rights, his research interests include African philosophy (of education), indigenous knowledge, (indigenous science, ethnomathematics, ethnomusicology), as well as humane and environmental education. After publishing *The Animals* in 2010 (Porcupine Press), he has just published *Animals and African Ethics* with Palgrave-MacMillan.



Abstracts

Wednesday 09 September, 2015

Keynote Address 1

The "Journey" of African Philosophy

Professor Barry Hallen (Morehouse College, USA)

How is African philosophy presently defined as a specialized field of interest? Why did the issue and nature of rationality in the African context become a controversial issue? Why do prominent African philosophers insist that their work must be infused with African cultural content? Can such philosophizing produce ideas and models that transcend African cultural specificity and qualify for universal relevance and elaboration? The future of philosophy in the African context depends upon informed responses to these and other issues and will ensure its vitality and scholarship.

Breakaway session A (CB3C, CB15, CB17 and CB129)

Revisiting the Seeming Unanimous Verdict on the Great Debate on African Philosophy (1)

Dr. Arinze Agbanusi, Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria
(Agbanzechris@yahoo.com)

The great debate on African philosophy refers to the debate as to whether African philosophy does exist or not. The debate aroused great interest among philosophy scholars who were predominantly polarized into two opposing positions- those who denied the existence of African philosophy and those who insist on the existence of African philosophy. The basic questions in the debate include: What constitutes the 'African' in African philosophy? What body of knowledge qualifies as the proper content of the 'philosophy' in African philosophy? The debate raged in the early nineteen seventies and, in fact, throughout the nineties. Since the inception of the new Millennium and in recent times, a few writers have assumed the arbiter position and, in their writings, passed judgment in favour of the debaters who held that there is African philosophy. Such writers hinge their judgment predominantly on the fact that African philosophy is recently studied in the Philosophy departments of some universities. True as this may seem, the problems are: One, what percentage of African universities study African philosophy? Two, in those Philosophy departments where African philosophy is studied, how many African philosophy courses are studied? Three, at the postgraduate level, where sometimes provision is made for students to study it as a major course in the programme, what is the ratio of African philosophy courses to other philosophy courses in the curricula of the departments in question. Using the analytic and the hermeneutic methods, this paper takes a close look at the above-mentioned problems *vis a vis* finding out whether the acclaimed correct verdict about the great debate on African philosophy actually stands.

A Case for an Existentialist Conception of Alienation in Fanon's Thought (2)

Mr. Siphwe Ndlovu, PhD Student, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (siphwendlovu@yahoo.co.uk)

Since the publication of Fanon's last book *The Wretched of the Earth* there has been a significant number of commentators that have sought to offer analyses of the concept of alienation in Fanon. But these have tended to emphasise either materialistic conceptions, intellectual, cultural, or a combination of these. In so doing, these commentators have neglected a profoundly philosophical conception of alien that

emerges in Fanon's oeuvre particularly in *Black Skin White Masks*. Jock McCulloch (1983) for example takes a psychological reading of Fanon and argues that Fanon's narrative takes the form of political psychology in which alienation is presented as a form of colonial deficiency. David Forsythe (1973), on the other hand, adopts a Marxist reading and emphasises class over racial alienation. Whilst not necessarily incorrect such analyses are at best partially true. Fanon of course graduated with a Psychiatry degree and its influence is easily discernible in his thought. But an analysis of alienation solely located in psychoanalysis does not exhaust Fanon's thought on alienation. And although he makes use of Marxian categories, Fanon does not simply substitute race-based analysis for a class analysis. For him the two are intertwined in a complex manner such that his analysis unties the Marxian dialectic of History. So against such conceptions that reduces his thought to psychoanalysis or Marxism, my paper seeks to locate Fanon's thought within existential philosophy, or more precisely, in the Africana existential tradition. In doing so I demonstrate that there is a compelling case that can be made for reading and conceiving of alienation in Fanon in existentialist terms. It is hoped that this will expand and contribute to existing knowledge about the manner in which alienation in Fanon can be understood.

African Philosophy and Proverbs: The Case of Logic in Urhobo Proverbs (3)

Dr. Edwin Etieyibo, Department of Philosophy, the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
(edwin.etieyibo@gmail.com; edwin.etieyibo@wits.ac.za)

A number of problems or challenges have often been raised and discussed in connection with African Philosophy. Two of these revolve around logic and proverbs. With regard to the former the question is whether logic as a system of reasoning, logical and systematic thinking exists in African philosophy. As to the latter, the issue pertains to what, if any, philosophy can be found in African proverbs. At an introductory level this paper attempts to meet these problems by pointing to the existence of logic in Urhobo proverbs. If it can be shown that there is some logical and systematic thought in these proverbs, then the twofold claim that philosophy can be found in African proverbs and that there is logic in African philosophy would have been preliminarily advanced.

Questions of Method and Substance and the Growth of African Philosophy (4)

Mr. Simon M. Makwinja, PhD Student, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (smakwinja@yahoo.co.uk)

At the onset of formal and professional philosophizing in Africa, it was inevitable first to clear its path by demonstrating its existence. This was coupled with question of methodology and substance in case it existed. For many years now, this has been a trend. The bulk of literature on African Philosophy implies that African Philosophy is a sort of activism which made a passionate appeal to be accepted in the philosophical sphere. African Philosophy looks to be an apologetics project. It appears there is still lack of confidence in what most African Philosophers are doing. There are some who are really committed to tackle more substantive issues in Metaphysics, Politics, Ethics and Logic. Indeed, to be seen to be consistent with other well established philosophical traditions such as the western and eastern types, it was inevitable to borrow methods of philosophizing. Importantly, African philosophy thrived on comparative analysis of problems that formed the crux of other philosophical traditions. In a recent publication edited by Jonathan O. Chimakonam (*Atuolu Omalu: Some Unanswered Questions in Contemporary African Philosophy*, 2015), it appears African Philosophy has not moved much from finding itself a place within philosophy. It is still concerned with questions of its own existence and other related questions at the expense of dealing with more substantive issues from human experience. In this paper I argue that the dominance of our attention to questions bordering on methodology and substance of African Philosophy inhibits the growth of African Philosophy. I will demonstrate how despite efforts to

engage serious philosophizing on more substantive and contemporary issues, we are always drawn to the questions of method and substance. Unless more substantive issues form the menu of African Philosophers, we will always appear on the peripheral of the philosophical enterprise.

Breakaway session B (CB3C, CB15, CB17 and CB129)

The Logic of Consciencism (5)

Mr. Richmond Kwesi, PhD Student, Department of Philosophy, University of Cape Town, South Africa
KWSRIC001@myuct.ac.za

According to Kwame Nkrumah, the conscience of the African society is plagued with three strands of influences which have competing and conflicting ideologies: "African society has one segment which comprises our traditional way of life; it has a second segment which is filled by the presence of the Islamic tradition in Africa; it has a final segment which represents the infiltration of the Christian tradition and culture of Western Europe into Africa, using colonialism and neocolonialism as its primary vehicles." When these three segments with their conflicting ideologies are allowed to co-exist, the African society "will be racked by the most malignant schizophrenia." Nkrumah's solution, *philosophical consciencism*, presents an ideology aimed at achieving a harmony among the three segments in such a way that is "in tune with the original humanist principles underlying African society." I intend to do two main things in this paper: first, to present an analysis and critique of Nkrumah's understanding of how the harmony is to be achieved in African societies; and second, to show how the theoretical ideas of *philosophical consciencism* – materialism, dialectical change, categorial conversion, socialism – are given actual form and content on the social-political scene.

African Logic: The Future of an Illusion? (6)

Mr. Clive Zimunya (czimunya@arts.uz.ac.zw) and Joyline Gwara (jgwara@arts.uz.ac.zw), PhD Students, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

The question of whether African philosophy exists is one that seems to have been settled by philosophers on the African continent and beyond though these scholars differ in what they take this philosophy to be. Yet there still appears to be a huge gap in the existence and nature of logic on the African continent. Philosophy begins in wonder, and with wonder comes questions, and to satisfy these questions arguments have to be constructed. Logic, being a core branch of the philosophical enterprise seems to be an area that has not received much attention from philosophers on the African continent. The question we ask in this paper is: is there a peculiar African logic or is African logic to be benchmarked on Western standards of logic? This question comes against the background of an African context that is rife with practices that seem to counter the fostering of the type of reasoning that Western logic promotes. In a typical African setup, there seems to be many obstacles that hinder the development of critical thinking skills and logic in the thought patterns of Africans. Beliefs in such things as witchcraft still remain prevalent though at best such beliefs seem non-evidence based. The paper argues that tradition seems to take precedence over reason and when a situation that requires decision making arises, Africans appeal to tradition or to the norm instead of appealing to the most reason-supported position. This type of reasoning is clearly given as fallacious in Western logic. The paper therefore explores some of the hindrances to critical thinking that are to be found in typical African societies that have hindered the development of the philosophical enterprise in Africa.

Between Ontology and Logic: An Interrogation of Chimakonam's Criterion of African Philosophy (7)

Mr. Lucky Uchenna Ogbonnaya, PhD Student, Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria (revluckyuogb@gmail.com)

This paper contends that the criterion question – “what is it that makes a philosophy African?” – is, arguably, the most enduring and tactical question about the existence and now, the future direction of African philosophy. We simply cannot successfully talk about the future direction of African philosophy if we did not first settle the argument about what makes a philosophy African. Paulin Hountondji and Odera Oruka are among those who confronted the criterion question and explicitly suggest a way out. Hountondji presents a geographical criterion for African philosophy. For him, a philosophy/text qualifies as African philosophy, if and only if, it is written by an African person. The corollary of this is that a non-African cannot do African philosophy. For Oruka, a philosophy discourse/text qualifies as African philosophy if it is written by an African person irrespective of its subject matter, or if it is a discourse/text on an African issue done/written by an African thinker or a non-African thinker that is verse in African culture. Accordingly, Jonathan Chimakonam, in line with the principles of his conversational school of African philosophy, interrogated the above criteria and conversed thoroughly with Hountondji and Oruka after which he discovered and demonstrated that their criteria are fundamentally wanting. Against this backdrop, Chimakonam proposes his own criteria which ultimately posit that for a philosophy discourse/text to qualify as African philosophy, it “must be produced with African background logic or the logic tradition in Africa”. This paper primarily reacts to Chimakonam’s proposal. The paper agrees with Chimakonam that the criteria of Hountondji and Oruka are wanting; it also interrogates the veracity of Chimakonam’s criteria bearing in mind the relationship between ontology and logic. The point here is that Chimakonam’s criteria tend to suggest that logic is prior to ontology. Contrarily, the paper maintains that logic mirrors ontology; the perception of the nature of being by a given people necessarily determines the nature of their logic. Therefore, what makes a philosophy African is not its background logic but its background ontology. The paper adopts the critical method of philosophy.

The Role of African Epistemology and Hermeneutics for Improving Public Health and Increasing Life Expectancy in Africa (8)

Professor Helen Lauer, Department of Philosophy, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana (helenlauer@yahoo.com)

Exposure of the global arena’s structural and transactional epistemic injustices (Fricker 1999, Anderson 2012) affecting the assessment and prescription of Africans’ social and developmental needs, is an essential requirement, I argue, to effectively address premature mortality and chronic contagions. In most nations of Africa today, epidemic control strategies are dominated by the way health care needs are understood and addressed in the global health arena. The importance of philosophical training for African intelligentsia will be stressed, to unpack the “images of mass deception” (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1944) e.g. that relieving the disease burden requires importing abundant foreign-produced experimental drugs (as per Thomas Pogge 2005), modifying African social norms, and imposing military control of infected populations. The Tallensi anthropologist Alexis B. Tengan (2013) makes a point commensurate with Otto Neurath (1931) when he urges “decolonizing” African science, to unveil the metaphysics embedded within indigenous Dagara/Lobi medical expertise serving economically famished hoe-farming communities of northern Ghana. I hope to demonstrate that global responsibility advocates (e.g. Martha Nussbaum 1997) perpetuate marginalisation of Africans’ subjective agency, hermeneutic authority, and complex systems of modern and traditional expertise. This legacy of liberal western ethical philosophy based outside Africa contributes directly to the disproportionate burden of premature mortality and chronic morbidity on the African continent.

How African is African Philosophy? (9)

Professor Ike Odimegwu, Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria (ferdharris2002@yahoo.co.uk; ikennaodimegwu@gmail.com) and Dr. Eric Omazu, School of Arts and Social Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos, Nigeria (eomazu@noun.edu.ng)

While the Great Debate on the existence or not of African philosophy began more as a political question of whether the African had enough intellectual capacity to think philosophy, the debate diversified into multiple existential and conceptual dimensions. One such conceptual dimension was: Who is an African? Another aspect of the question returned to the perennial inquiry: What is philosophy? This one question could therefore be formulated in these other ways: What is the Africanness of African Philosophy? And what is the philosophicality of African Philosophy? This paper takes up the first part of this question and employs the hermeneutic method to search further into the concept of being African. It will therefore interest itself with such queries as: What defines Africanness? And how much does what has passed for African Philosophy approximate this criterion of Africanness? This inquiry is further pursued by comparatively engaging the dominant themes in African philosophy. The expected breaking into the kernel of meaning from this engagement will provide the locus for a dialogic involvement whose purpose is the integrative growth of meaning and being.

The Shaping of the Future of African Philosophy (10)

Dr. Bernard Matolino, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (matolinob@ukzn.ac.za)

Talk of a future presupposes the existence of a past and a present. Anticipating the future may effectively be a search to break with either the past or the present or both. Alternatively, talk of the future may seek to affirm the veracity and efficacy of either the past or the present or both. What I seek to do in this paper, through a brief and selective analysis of the development of philosophy thus far on this continent, is to offer reasons why we should not talk of the future of African philosophy. The legitimacy of the refusal to talk about the future of African philosophy will principally rest on rejecting an essentialist but subtle rendering of what is African; and what is philosophy prefixed by African. Positively, I wish to offer an outline of what I consider to be the task of any philosopher in any environment. I seek to link the general task of philosophers with the specificities of being a philosopher in place. Such a route, I seek to argue, may be better suited to shape and direct the philosophy of the here than the opaque notion of 'African philosophy and its future'.

African Philosophy, a Catalyst to Progress in African Society (11)

Mr. Osita Nnaji for (gregossy@yahoo.co.uk) and Mr. Chinedu Ifeakor (chineduifeako@yahoo.com), PhD Students, Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

It has been said that in order to change a society, philosophy does neither deal in arms nor violence, rather its weapon is its power of moral, rational suasion and enlightenment. It can do this by questioning the moral conscience of individual within a given polity and this moral philosophical project and mission is called philosophy's prophetic function. But in spite of this philosophical intervention, it is sad to notice that African society is still fraught with vices ranging from indiscipline, corruption, violation of human right, moral turpitude, degeneracy, depravity, laziness, indolence and selfishness. This paper employs hermeneutic method to observe that African philosophy should use its role in engaging in rational examination, justification and elucidation in promotion of culture of truth, democracy and justice. Vices against these ideals can very much be brought before the conscious of the perpetrators through the liberating role which African Philosophy is expected to play. Since western philosophy has produced less

effect in this regard, this paper concludes that African philosophy with its distinct mode of enquiry peculiar to the African looks at the same African world through a “third eye” to ameliorate these anomalies.

African History, History of Philosophy and African Philosophy (12)

Dr. Olusegun Morakinyo, Research Fellow, Centre for Leadership Ethics in Africa, University of Fort Hare, South Africa (olusegunmorakinyo99@gmail.com)

Despite increasing literature challenging the Tempelsian origin of African philosophy and philosophy in and as African, one of the depressing features of the discourse of contemporary African philosophy is its total ahistorical orientation. Thus notwithstanding works from GM James’s *Stolen Legacy* which, exposes the ‘theft’ of the African heritage of philosophy, to Chiekh Anta Diop’s magisterial thesis of the connection of ancient Egyptian philosophy to African cosmogonies and, Theophilus Obenga’s thesis of the etymology of philosophy in ancient Egyptian language. Through Lacinay Keita’s ‘The African Philosophical Tradition’, Henry Olela’s ‘The African Foundation of Greek Philosophy’ and D.A Masolo’s ‘African Philosophy in the Greco-Roman Era’ periodization of the history of philosophy in Africa. In addition to the contemporary restatement of the stolen legacy thesis by Innocent Onyewuenyi, which reflects a deeper history of African philosophy and origin of philosophy in Africa beyond and before Tempel’s publication of *Bantu philosophy*, there continues to be almost total silence on the connection of African history and African philosophy and the history of philosophy in Africa in the discourse of African philosophy. This paper argues for the centrality of not only African history to the understanding of African philosophy. It further argues for the crucial importance of the history of philosophy in and as African from the perspective of Coloniality as against Modernity for epistemic de-colonization and de-linking of African philosophy from its western imperial epistemic mooring.

Breakaway session C (Senate Room, CB15, CB17 and CB129)

Panel on Approaches to Knowledge About Africa

Professor Kathy Luckett, Dr. Shannon, Dr. Aditi Hunma, and Ms Robyn Human

Morreira Kapp and Bangeni (2009:588) note of English-speaking South African universities that “many of the dominant institutional academic and cultural practices are still ‘white’, English, middle class and male (even Oxbridge) in character.” In this panel, members of the Humanities Education Development Unit at the University of Cape Town present the ways in which we have attempted and are attempting to grapple with the need for curriculum reform in the Humanities in light of this reality. Members of the multidisciplinary panel report on different elements of an ongoing research project that examines courses in the Humanities that attempt to take African experience seriously in their pedagogy and content. The panel considers some of the implications of shifting curriculum content such that students from a range of social and language backgrounds are given better epistemic access to the Humanities.

Teaching Africa in the Humanities (13)

Professor Kathy Lockett, Humanities Education Development Unit, University of Cape Town, South Africa (Kathy.lockett@uct.ac.za)

In this presentation I will present a schema using conceptual tools from Legitimation Code Theory that we are using for analysing different curricula that focus on teaching about Africa in the Humanities Faculty at UCT. I will illustrate the schema by using examples from data gathered from a second year course titled "The Philosophy of Race". The data was collected for a broader research project titled "Decolonising the Curriculum in the Humanities". Data collected includes student opinion data and in-depth interviews with the academics offering the courses, where the epistemological position from which they (research and) teach is elicited. I hope to be able to illustrate the effectiveness of the Legitimation Code Theory schema for analysing this data set.

Black Consciousness as pedagogy: The strengths and limitations of using Steve Biko's I Write What I Like as a Teaching Tool (14)

Dr. Shannon Morreira, Humanities Education Development Unit, University of Cape Town, South Africa (Shannon.morreira@uct.ac.za)

Nyamnjoh (2012) argues that in the humanities, colonial epistemology has privileged an ahistorical mode of thinking about Africa, which 'sacrifices pluriversity for university and imposes a one best way of attaining a singular and universal truth' (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 131). In such an instance, it is unsurprising that many spaces within the university do not recognize the knowledge and cultural capital that first-generation students bring with them to the university as valid forms of knowledge and as valid forms of cultural capital. Fricker (2007) refers to such unequal participation in the legitimated system of shared meanings that constitutes culture as instances of 'hermeneutical injustice'. Educational development theorists, such as Morrow (2009) and Muller (2014), have highlighted that in the post-apartheid South African context, simply giving first generation students physical access to universities is inadequate: rather, as Muller argues, there needs to be a concerted effort to provide students with epistemic access to the disciplines and to the hidden curriculum – the unstated, often Eurocentric, rules of academic discourse. In this paper I report on the pedagogical effectiveness of using Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like* as a seminal text in a foundation course as a means of addressing the above issues.

The Journey from Local Landscapes as Reality to Socially Imagined Representations (15)

Dr. Aditi Hunma, Humanities Education Development Unit, University of Cape Town, South Africa (aditi.hunma@uct.ac.za)

The Africa-centred curriculum comes with its own conundrum of representation. How does one imagine a curriculum which is untainted by the Western gaze? What are the resources at our disposal to re-imagine a curriculum that does not simply fall into an essentialist sweep or what Appiah (1997) describes as the 'fallacies of Afro-centrism', 'Europe upside down', but rather one that invites multiple ways of narrating the South African landscapes? On a course entitled Texts in the Humanities, we introduced the notion of place as representation, one whose meanings shifted over time through processes of erasing, (re)naming, and (re)narrating to use Bill Ashcroft's imagery. We involved first year students in an expedition to rediscover their university, to conduct archival research and interviews about university sites and produce posters and reports on those sites. This aspect of the curriculum was aimed at moving away from the 'single story', and in a democratic way, enabling students to re-narrate the landscape in which they find themselves. At the level of knowledge making, the task required a cognitive shift from the real and tangible to theorisations about place, that is, from the ground up, rather than as was often

the case, from abstract canonical texts and theories to the everyday. This presentation reports on the moves made by students, their creative ownership of the local landscapes through processes of re-narration and what this could suggest about aspects of an Africa-centred curriculum.

Africa- Centred Material and Academic Behavioural Confidence (16)

Ms Robyn Human, PhD Student (Department of Psychology) & Lecturer (Humanities Education Development Unit), University of Cape Town, South Africa (robyn.human@uct.ac.za)

Understanding how confident students are in a university environment, and therefore the degree to which they believe they can succeed, can have important implications for teaching these students. The aim of this study was to investigate the levels of academic behavioural confidence (ABC) of first year UCT Humanities Extended Degree (ED) students enrolled in 2 different courses (one which uses Africa-centred material to teach academic literacy concepts, and one that does not use Africa-centred material to teach quantitative literacy concepts) and to document how these levels change over the course of the first semester.

Archie Mafeje and the Question of African Philosophy: A Liberatory Discourse (17)

Mr. Thabang Dladla, Independent Researcher, South Africa (dladlathabang@yahoo.com)

Philosophy and the social sciences, at least in modern times, are largely a product of the west, Europe and the Americas (the new world). This is to say that the west has a monopoly over these disciplines. This may be largely attributed to the colonial conquest of many territories by European powers and the resultant subjugation of the people concerned, people conquered in the unjust wars of colonization. Africa and the Africans are by a large victim of such atrocities by the west. Hence the question of an 'African philosophy' arises, or gets momentum, in the (post) colonial, or at independence. This is because the impulse to philosophise is inextricably linked to the impulse to gain freedom among the bonded. This paper attempts to show how the present subject, Archie Mafeje, dealt with the question of whether there exists an African philosophy or not. In responding to the question it will also be shown what philosophy is and the practice of it in the African context. This is to be understood as a broader philosophy of liberation which liberates philosophy from euro-American contours and consequently liberates the colonized and oppressed, the African in particular, with its engagement with the (post) colonial neo-colonial condition and remedies for the (dis)order thereof.

Afro-communitarianism, Justice and Reconciliation (18)

Dr. Rianna Oelofsen, Department of Philosophy, University of Fort Hare, South Africa (rianna.oelofsen@gmail.com)

Reconciliation, it is generally accepted, "cannot be achieved without justice to the aggrieved party", and cannot occur if there is still a general feeling of injustice and non-accountability for violations. In this paper I will defend a version of restorative justice which, I will argue, is necessary for the Afro-communitarian conception of reconciliation. The understanding of restorative justice I will defend includes aspects of both distributive and procedural justice. What does justice entail from an Afro-communitarian perspective? Is justice necessary for racial reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa? In order to start addressing the relationship between justice and reconciliation, and their respective meanings from an Afro-communitarian perspective, I will first look at Desmond Tutu's position on justice. Next I discuss an objection, articulated by Mamhood Mamdani, that reconciliation as understood in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (and thus, arguably from an Afro-communitarian perspective) is in fact a denial of justice. Mamdani's alternative account of reconciliation is provided in order to elucidate his objection. In order to respond to Mamdani's objection, it is necessary to expand on and clarify what could be meant

by restorative justice, in general, and from an Afro-communitarian perspective in particular, and why reconciliation does not need to result in a denial of justice as Mamdani fears. The relationship between reconciliation, punishment and justice according to an Afro-communitarian moral theory will be clarified, as some central concerns (such as the one by Mamdani) about the restorative position revolves around these issues. While Afro-communitarian justice does not *necessarily* entail retributivism (at least not as retributivism is *usually* understood) Afro-communitarian justice does have the necessary requirement that responsibility ought to be recognized and, as a result of this recognition, that some reparations for the injustice be made, and this payment of reparations can be related to retributivism, as well as to distributive and procedural justice. This emphasis on reparations would, I believe, satisfy Mamdani's objection that reconciliation turns into a denial of justice.

Crime, Punishment and the Proportionality Factor in Contemporary African Society: The Yoruba Experience (19)

Dr. Adebayo Aina, Department of Philosophy, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-iwoye, Nigeria (bayo_kofo@yahoo.com)

A challenge confronting the study of punishment in contemporary jurisprudence, perhaps in Africa, is the strained correspondence between the gravity of the crime and the severity of the punishment. Most of these justifications are tied to the conceptual rut of the battle weary utilitarian and retributivist continuous enactment of conflict that has advanced little substance. This study, therefore, examined the notion of proportional justice within the Yoruba culture in order to establish the fundamental principle of law that reprehensible conduct should be punished and the punishment should also be proportionate to the crime. The study employed the conceptual, critical and constructive methods of philosophy. This proportionality factor in Yoruba culture goes beyond the indeterminate sentencing, engendered by extraneous considerations in formal adjudication, to a more integrated, sound and judicious legal system. It also implants a more coherent equilibrium, between the crime and punishment, towards the certitude of the perfect ideal justice. This underscores the judicious imposition of punishment on the offender not only as a means of establishing responsibility for human conducts but also towards emphasizing proportionate gravitation of punishment which hinders further antagonism and animosity.

Revisiting the Nature and Substance of African Philosophy (20)

Mr. Kudakwashe Bhasikiti, PhD Student, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (kbhasikiti@gmail.com)

African Philosophy has not been able to sufficiently guide African Leadership in the administration of their national duties towards their citizens by providing possible solutions to the problems experienced in African governance. Borrowed philosophical ethos like capitalism; communism and socialism has been forced down the African socio-political and economic environment without a clear African philosophical alternative being provided or adopted across the African continent. This has lead African economies to continue to lag behind and relegate African people to perpetual poverty, destitution and domination by both their European and the Asian counterparts. Bruce B Janz defines African philosophy as philosophy produced by Africa people, presenting African worldviews using distinct African philosophical ethos. (Bruce 2009:74). The same is echoed by K.C Anyanwu (1984) who argues that African philosophy should concern itself with the way African people of the past and present make sense of their destiny and the world in which they live. I seek to argue that African scientific socialism provides the most suitable philosophical direction to Africa's emancipation. I shall demonstrate with classical examples of how – Gutsaruzhinji – an African Scientific socialist ideology in Zimbabwe is promising to extricate indigenous Africans from neo-colonial subjugation to socio-economic independency. I shall conclude by stating that

Africa has no other better choice on alternative besides adopting and preaching one ideological thrust or philosophical position which separates it from both Western Europe and the Eastern or Asian group.

African Philosophy as a 'Naissance': a Heideggerian Perspective (21)

Mr. Neal O'Donnell, MA Student, Department of Philosophy, University of Fort Hare, South Africa
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In my consideration of the future of African Philosophy I will be presenting a perspective of a white African who has been fortunate to have lived in Africa through many of its troubles and triumphs and who is being pulled into the field of African philosophy for the second time. Furthermore, I will take a perspective of the real future of an African philosophy which lies in our students, and more specifically our students at Fort Hare who are the only students I know at the moment. With this I will consider reviewing four views of African Philosophy that appear regularly amongst our students: the concepts of the origins of Western civilisation in Egypt, of 'Decolonising the mind', of the Mbeki notion of the 'African renaissance', and of 'Ubuntu' (I have noted that all of these have tended to appear fairly consistently in conferences I have attended in the past two years). Then, if these can be successfully realigned, I would offer an alternative view to developing an African Philosophy which is in the process of evolving in its own right, and in doing so will call on the early Heidegger for such a view. This alternative view is not totally a fabrication in what little mind I have left, it is an emanation of what I am 'seeing' through discussions with our students of philosophy, who, incidentally, are also my teachers.

The Language Question in Africa and the Challenge of Underdevelopment (22)

Mr. Debo Moses Gbadebo, Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos, Nigeria
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The development of Africa is multifaceted and has generated a lot of debates. Scholars in African developmental studies opine that the continent needs a reappraisal of her developmental strategies in line with contemporary reality. However, these scholars differ in their views and method and they often ignored the socio linguistic dimension to the problem. Attempts by Philosophers like Towa, Hountondji, Mudimbe Wiredu, Gyekye, Gbadegesin, Onyewuenyi etc. were recorded. As such, the perennial reason of a multiplicity of languages in African countries is even cited as a hindrance to the development of the continent. Given that language is the expression of the essence and authenticity of the culture of a people, this paper examines the relationship between African languages and development. Consequently the paper argues the thesis that a native language policy and concrete planning could be the panacea for effective development.

African Journalism's Advancement of African Philosophy in Pursuit of an African Renaissance for the Liberation of African Women (23)

Professor Simphiwe Sesanti, Department of Journalism, Media and Philosophy, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa
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During the course of the liberation struggle, Africans waged a courageous resistance against two intertwined forces, colonization and colonialism. The former implies physical occupation and dispossession of Africans' land, while the latter implies not only political but also destruction of African culture and the imposition of European culture. While "political independence" succeeded in an artificial and superficial sense in granting space for African cultural reclamation, this success presented little or no joy in restoring the dignified space that African women enjoyed in independent (pre-colonial) Africa. African women, in spite of the granting of "independence" and "freedom" continue to be denied the

independence and freedom in African communities, and relegated to second-class citizen status in the name of African culture. This article argues that if freedom is to have any significant meaning for Africans, it must prioritize the African cultural reclamation that puts African women in the centre. This can and will be possible if and when African journalism interrogates African philosophical assumptions about women's "place" in traditional African societies. A thorough exercise by the media in this regard will assist in giving meaning to an African renaissance that secures liberation not only for African men but women as well.

African Philosophy on the March to Universality (24)

Dr. Charles Chukwuemeka Nweke, Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria (nkesun2002@yahoo.com)

African philosophy has come of age such that debate on its existence and *whatness* may no longer be scholarly topical. Given its growth and content, African philosophy in the twenty-first century tends to arguably assume the status of counterpart continental philosophies. In view of its steady progress, this paper raises the question of its universality. Does African philosophy in the twenty-first century remain the project and concern of mainly Africans thinkers? To what extent does it enjoy universal appreciability? With the tools of critical analysis and phenomenological exposition, the paper relates that African philosophy's march to universality is not subtly anchored on the universality of philosophy but driven by its own stature and philosophicality.

Ramose's Legacy and the Future of African Philosophy (25)

Professor Fainos Mangena, Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe (fainosmangena@gmail.com)

In this essay, I critically analyzed the works of Mogobe Ramose, a distinguished professor of African Philosophy and Ethics hailing from Southern Africa. In particular, I looked at five of his many publications in African Philosophy, spanning five years from 1999 to 2014. These works covered five broad topics of philosophical interest, namely; *African Philosophy through Ubuntu* (1999); *I doubt, therefore African Philosophy exists* (2003); *But Hans Kelsen was not born in Africa: A reply to Thaddeus Metz* (2007); *Reconciliation and Reconciliation in South Africa* (2012) and *Dying a Hundred Deaths: Socrates on Truth and Justice*. I must set the record straight that my choice of this selection had nothing to do with whether I considered them to be the best of the works he had produced; the choice was purely random. I observed that in two of these publications, Ramose was in dialogue with philosophers who had written in African philosophy but were not Africans of black extraction and he was vigorously challenging some of the misrepresentations and distortions he had found in their arguments about the nature and character of African philosophy and Ethics. Having critically read his works, my position was that his engagement with these scholars was not only important for the future of African philosophy, but it was also fascinating as he had managed to set the record straight that it was difficult, if not impossible, for Africans of white extraction to prescribe a philosophy or an ethic for Africa. Against this background, I argued that Ramose's contribution to African philosophy provided the foundation and anchor for future debates on African philosophy that present and future African philosophers can tap from.

Thursday 10 September, 2015

Keynote Address 2

Philosophy and the State in Africa

Professor Ifeanyi Menkiti (Wellesley College, USA)

In this address, I begin by examining the differences, if any, between “country” and “state”; between “state” and “nation”; and between “nation” and “nation-state”. I do this in order to get an adequate handle on the notion of “failed state” which is a charge repeatedly brought to bear on the African situation. Has the African state failed? If so, what is the end in regard to which it has failed? Since absent a goal, there is no failure to speak of, the goal, or end, which the African state is supposed to be pursuing must be the yardstick against which to measure failure, or measure success. The task before us then is to elaborate how the goal of African statehood must be understood; to make clear in our own heads what direction the project of state building must take in Africa. Given our present situation, some directions are bound to be better than others. My address, I hope, will also afford an opportunity to examine the nature of political morality, and the assumed independence which aspects of that morality are sometimes said to have, judging from the settled norms of a common morality. Hopefully, also, I will be able to examine the shifting basis of the assignment of rights to citizens, and the attendant question to what extent can one actually succeed in separating the zone of the citizen from the zone of the person behind the citizen.

Panel Discussion 1

African Ideal of Society as a Family: Problems and Prospects

Professor Thad Metz (University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa)

The idea that society should be modelled on an (extended) family is a common theme in African philosophy, explicitly so in the work of Julius Nyerere and Henry Odera Orika. The three members of this panel will critically explore this proposition. One will support the idea with regard to the distribution of wealth (Thad Metz); while two will argue against the idea, instead maintaining that norms governing interaction between strangers should qualitatively differ from those governing a family (Lucy Allais and Bernard Matolino).

Public Address

The State of African Philosophy in Africa

Dr. Edwin Etieyibo (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa) & Dr. Jonathan Chimakonam Okeke (University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria)

The public address is set against the backdrop of developments in the history of African philosophy and sundry issues that arise from this. The aim is to raise awareness and questions regarding the present state of African philosophy in Africa. The primary and overarching question guiding our presentation is fundamentally this: Generally, what sorts of progress have been made in African philosophy following the quashing of the debate regarding the question of its existence or nonexistence in the decades past? In engaging with this question we anticipate some related questions such as: In what ways have scholars advanced the discipline within and outside the classroom? What are the current statistics with regard to the number of universities/philosophy departments in the Sub Saharan Africa that offer courses in African philosophy? Are there sufficient platforms, media and fora for the dissemination and percolation of ideas, thoughts and research in the discipline? What practical and substantive ways can we move the discipline further and forward? Our presentation is not geared towards answering these questions. Rather it is

calibrated to raise these questions, instigate some ideas and thoughts about and around the questions. It is our hope that what the presentation does is to stimulate discussions at the roundtable meeting by opening up the space for discussants and participants to brainstorm on the gap areas in African philosophy with a view to motivating, re-invigorating and developing its knowledge and research directions, as we move forward.

Breakaway session D (CB3C, CB15, CB17 and CB129)

The Call for Conceptual Mandelanization in Contemporary African Philosophy and the Need for African Philosophy Without Ethnocentric Reduction (26)

Dr. Mesembe Ita Edet, Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria
(mesitaedet@yahoo.co.uk)

The paper proposes a project of “Conceptual Mandelanization” in contemporary African Philosophy. By conceptual mandelanization we mean the abstraction of the thoughts, lifestyle and values of Nelson Mandela and the application of same to the interpretation of relevant concepts and themes in the African social condition. This application involves the systematic, logical, critical and analytical tools of thought of the contemporary African philosopher in reflection on the total experience of the African in the Africa we know, in shaping the Africa of the future and her relationship in a world which hitherto structurally marginalised Africa and her contributions. Some of the concepts that require mandelanization are oppression, marginalization, freedom, justice, peace, equity, leadership, corruption, governance, poverty, illiteracy, nationhood, development, progress, disease, healthcare, violence, unemployment, political culture, identity, infrastructure, technology, materialism, religion, tolerance, intolerance, love, hate, humility, forgiveness, selflessness, integration etc. These are all issues, concepts and themes which animated Nelson Mandela’s speeches, writings and advocacies. They are also issues, concepts and themes of universal philosophical interests concerning which the contemporary African philosopher ought to contribute and apply his professional skills. However, the paper critically interrogates Nelson Mandela’s “Long walk to Freedom”, as well as commentaries, and extracts two principles or concepts: Freedom and Forgiveness, in order to demonstrate the character of the proposed “Conceptual Mandelanization”. The point of the paper is that Contemporary African philosophy must address concrete existential problems of the African condition so as to reconstruct the Africa we know, in shaping the Africa of the future. The further point is that contemporary African philosophy can be done without the idol of ethnocentric reduction. It is submitted that this project of conceptual mandelanization in contemporary African philosophy purveys the methodological preconditions for the development of a new African social philosophical system based on the humanist principles of Nelson Mandela. This is necessary and urgent in a world that awaits Africa’s contributions in the current global socio-political landscape. The method adopted in the research is the interrogatory method.

The Arch of Personhood: Menkiti and Kant on what it is to be a Person (27)

Professor Katrin Flikschuh, Department of Government, London School of Economics, London, UK
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Western philosophers tend to view non-Western philosophical traditions through the prism of ‘modernity’ – they tend to think of the latter as more traditional, less developed systems of thought and world conceptions from which Western philosophical thinking has little to learn. The assumption is that, compared to Western philosophical thinking, non-Western thinking, particularly African, has still to catch up – and that when they do they will turn out to be version of Western thought. Underlying this view is a developmentalist teleology that runs deep in Western thinking in general and that protects it, among

other things, from serious engagement with foreign modes of thinking and living. The upshot is that Western thinkers risk depriving themselves of alternatively possible avenues of philosophical inquiry. African philosophical thinking is ambivalent in turn between its claims to uniqueness and its aspirations to participate in and contribute to philosophical discourse in general. My objective in this paper is to approach Menkiti and Kant as possible philosophical interlocutors regarding their respective conceptions of the person. Kant and Menkiti share much in relation to what strikes me as both their non-essentialist conceptions of persons, and of consciousness of self, as reflexively mediated by experience of external world / communal living with others. They diverge with respect to their respective conceptions of persons' afterlife. While for Kant, the human soul appears to persist, at least in the idea, into eternity, for Menkiti, ancestors are 'living dead' who will eventually pass out of existence altogether. Menkiti's account of a person's 'ontological progression' from infancy to the nameless dead is difficult to grasp from the perspective of Western metaphysics, yet there is something deeply attractive, morally, about the idea of persons' temporally bounded moral survival of their own biological deaths. The paper explores Kant's and Menkiti's parting of ways on this point with a view to asking what Menkiti's conception of ancestors as living dead may contribute to our understanding of moral personhood in general.

An Alternative to Kwasi Wiredu's Non-party Consensual Democracy (28)

Dr. Kibujjo M. Kalumba, Ball State University, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Muncie, Indiana, USA (kkalumba@bsu.edu)

Kwasi Wiredu advances three justifications for the consensus principle: ethical, political, and pragmatic. His ethical justification is that consensus is necessary for what he calls the right of substantive representation. On the political level Wiredu argues that consensus is a democratic ideal to be pursued by all governance systems. On the pragmatic level, Wiredu prescribes pursuit of consensus *in a non-party environment* as a means of promoting peace and stability in contemporary multi-ethnic African countries. Wiredu regards the multi-party context as inadequate for the task because multi-party systems are inimical to consensual processes, as each party's sole aim is acquisition of power by putting others out of it. What this winner-takes-all goal means in a typical multi-ethnic African country, where political parties tend to be polarized along ethnic lines, is that many ethnic groups are marginalized from the political life. With the marginalization come frustration and disaffection with all their disruptive consequences. So, Wiredu argues that the non-party system is the proper political environment for enhancing "the willingness to compromise and with it the prospects of consensus." Wiredu's hope is that pursuit of consensus in the non-party context will reduce the problem of marginalization and thereby contribute to the creation of room for peace and stability. In a recent article I expose some major problems with Wiredu's non-party prescription and reject it as a viable pathway to peace and stability. As an alternative, I propose a multi-party system constrained by the provisions of federalism and a two-tiered legislative assembly. Given the virtues of the consensus principle entailed by Wiredu's threefold justification for it, my next step is to seek ways to supplement the proposed system with constitutional arrangements capable of meriting for it the designation "consensual," as Wiredu contends is the case with the multi-party systems of Switzerland and Belgium.

The Weeds in the Garden of African Philosophy (29)

Dr. Karo Ogbinaka, Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos, Nigeria (oogbinaka@unilag.edu.ng; karogbi@yahoo.com)

Since the emergence of Placide Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy*, scholarship in the area of African philosophy has propped up various contentious issues. A few of these, in attempting to establish the existence of an African philosophy, traded intellectual exchanges on what should even pass for philosophy as a field of inquiry. Arguably and understandably, the literature on the debate on the existence or non-existence, the nature of, and sometimes on the methodologies of African philosophy is far much bigger and diverse than that on the *content* of what should figure as African philosophy. This paper points out major flaws literatures in African philosophy have exhibited over the years. It was noted that the problematic created by the word "African" should not be glossed over. This is premised on the fact that it a contentious issue even among the experts in African Philosophy. More importantly, we argue that African philosophy, as presented in various literature, is largely methodologically, comparative philosophy. This is the only way it can be communicated and understood. Unfortunately, this shaft in the garden of African philosophy cannot be weeded away until harvest time.

Beyond Identity: Exploring the Implications of Leopold Senghor's Civilization of the Universal (30)

Professor J. Obi Oguejiofor, Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria (j.obioгу@gmail.com)

Contemporary African philosophy is heavily coloured by the issue of identity. The quest for identity is deeply rooted in recent history of Africa, especially its degrading encounter with both Eastern and the Western worlds. Senghor's Negritude just as most other movements in recent African philosophy can very well be interpreted as a reaction or a position vis-à-vis this singular issue. Senghor's ideas have for too long been uncritically interpreted to represent the ethnophilosophical movement. This essay reviews this reading of Senghor's Negritude and argues that while Senghor makes much about the question of black identity and dignity, he was an early convert to cultural globalization by virtue of his theory of the Civilization of the Universal. An exploration of the import of this theory reveals the deep rooted and unexplored ambivalence inherent in contemporary African philosophic reflections.

Communion and Authoritarianism (31)

Dr. Jason van Niekerk, Jurisprudence Department, University of Pretoria, South Africa (Jason.vanniekerk@up.ac.za; jason.van.niekerk@gmail.com)

A recurring concern about African Communitarian theories claims that these characteristically overvalue deference to authority or conformity to communal will. As applied to virtue ethics, Thaddeus Metz has noted, "conformity and traditionalism are often considered virtues, and their opposites vices." This charge is particularly salient to accounts built on claims that group identity is prior to individual identity, or that individuals are nodes in a field of force, as these struggle to account for individual persons or their autonomy as intrinsically value-bearing at all. In this paper I describe a Perfectionist Communitarian account, on which the essential human feature to be developed to its fullest extent is our capacity to commune with one another. Communion, I argue, is a more attractive conception of the goal of communitarian moral theories than social harmony simpliciter. Since this communion emerges not from the dissolution of individual existence at some abstracted level, but from our characteristic capacity to overcome our default separateness, I argue that it entails strong expectations of reciprocity from authorities and our communities, and a more nuanced account of virtuous engagement with them.

Against Dopamine Democracy: Why the West Needs an African Ethic (32)

Dr. Mark Tschaepe, Philosophy, Prairie View A & M University, Prairie View, Texas, USA
(MDTschaepe@pvamu.edu)

African ethics has generally been considered as primarily communitarian, whereas Western ethics has been understood as primarily individualistic. These two generalized approaches to ethical ideologies have been compared and contrasted both descriptively (enumerations of similar and different points) and normatively (arguments that one is preferable as a general system to the other). Specifically, the sub-Saharan ethic of *ubuntu* has become a popular contrast class to other Western ethical frameworks, such as Kantian deontology and utilitarianism. *Ubuntu* has been considered as appropriate for Africa, but as little more than an ethical curiosity to the West. The ethic of *ubuntu* has not hitherto been considered as an ethical remedy for people in the West. I argue that the West needs *ubuntu* to remedy its current state of hyper-individualism, which I deem *dopamine democracy*. In order to substantiate this claim, I first describe dopamine democracy as it pertains to the general lifestyle of Westerners, which has become hauntingly similar to the individualism depicted by Plato in his analysis of democracy in the *Republic*. Second, I criticize the hyper-individualism of the West, which is rooted in ethical atomism, as inherently contradictory. Third, I provide a pragmatic account of *ubuntu* that may be applicable apart from a sub-Saharan context. Finally, I provide an argument for why *ubuntu* is a possible remedy to save the West from dopamine democracy.

African Philosophy and the Challenges of 21st Century Nigeria (33)

Professor Balogun Oladele Abiodun, Department of Philosophy, Olabisi Onabanjo University,
Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria (balogundele@yahoo.com)

Several scholars have cast doubt on the social relevance of African Philosophy; their argument is predicated on the fact that philosophy cannot contribute directly to social transformation because in its original essence in the West, Philosophy is a purely theoretical enterprise. This school of thought has argued that philosophy is about watching, interpreting and understanding the world, and as a matter of fact philosophy leaves everything as it is. Contrary to this school of thought, I argue that philosophy is indispensably relevant not only to the society but to meaningful human existence. I argue further that African Philosophy is indispensably relevant in tackling the numerous challenges confronting 21st century Nigeria. Some of these challenges range from corruption, poor management of funds, political instability, insecurity and poor governance. It is our argument that the essential and practical tools of African Philosophy can be employed to combat the problems facing Nigeria in an attempt to evolve a better future for the country. Finally, I argue that African Philosophy as a rational enquiry into the belief system of Africa can shape Nigeria society and her tomorrow by changing people's beliefs and habits of thought which in turn may lead to moral revolution.

Friday 11 September, 2015

Keynote Address 3

History of Philosophy as a Problem: Our Case

Professor Dismas A Masolo (University of Louisville, USA)

One does not reflect on history only when she or he tackles the subject explicitly in search of an understanding of its structure, or the motives of individuals and groups whose practices strike us as definitive of turning or highlight points in the succession of specific discourses through different generations of participants. We reflect on history even when we deny either that there is one, or that it is of any significance enough to engage our serious attention. I will claim that the very idea of African philosophy, and the debates that have shaped its contemporary character, present, collectively, a defense, against metaphilosophers of mid-twentieth century, of the impact of history on how human thought takes place, not just about history itself as an abstract idea, but about anything at all. As such, movements that downplay the significance of history are no more than deflections that bear robust but problematic claims to historical hegemony. Movements of thought born in mid-twentieth century, like African philosophy, gained visibility in part because, as counter-positions, they kept alive critical reflections on the idea and nature of history. In this sense, the paper is an outline of points for reflection on how African philosophy, not just African philosophers, stakes a claim on the indelible significance of the idea of history.

Roundtable Discussion

African Unity

Professor Ramose Bernard Mogobe (University of South Africa, South Africa)

The roundtable discussion seeks to explore African unity as a concept and reality. African unity does indeed have a very long history. Considering the fact that from the point of view of biological anthropology, one may argue – as one of the inscriptions in the national museum of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa puts it: “and the world became African” – that the “African exodus” precedes the biblical “Exodus”. An integral part of this argument is that Africa being the ancestral home of all *homo sapiens*, does recognise the geographical dispersal of humanity out of Africa but ought to deny that such dispersal and whatever is incidental thereto must be the reason for the widespread strife and disunity among human beings across the globe. What could African unity mean from this perspective? Other questions that form a cluster and for which the roundtable is devoted to exploring include: From the perspective of the name Africa what could African unity mean? What is the meaning of African unity in the light of this colonial history? What is the meaning of African unity from the historical moment of decolonisation to date?

Panel Discussion 2

Debates on Animal and African Ethics

Professor Kai Horsthemke (Wits, South Africa & KU Eichstaett, Germany)

African ethics is primarily concerned with community and harmonious communal relationships. The claim is frequently made on behalf of African moral beliefs and customs that African society does not objectify and exploit nature and natural existents, unlike Western moral attitudes and practices. This panel investigates whether this claim is correct, by examining religious and philosophical thought, as well as traditional cultural practices in Africa.

Breakaway session E (Senate Room, CB3C, CB15, CB17 and CB129)

Jéan-Paul Sartre and the Challenge of an Africanist Philosophy of Liberation (34)

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Consequent to his ground-breaking analysis of Sartre's contribution to anti-colonial theory, Mudimbe in *The Invention of Africa* (1988) famously proclaimed that Sartre is "an African Philosopher". Indeed, Sartre's detection, appreciation and support of the epistemic revolution that is embodied in the writings of the doyens of the Négritude movement, Senghor and Césaire, would have made him comfortable with the title of a "Negro Philosopher" (Robert J.C Young), whilst the publication of *Situations V* (Colonialism and Neo-colonialism, 1964) sets him apart one of the pioneering systematisers of an African political philosophy. Taking these impressions as our point of departure, we interpret the political activist portrait of Sartre within the context of the philosophical challenges of postcolonial African praxis, and utilise this interpretation as the theoretical framework for an agitation for a paradigm shift in the production of African Philosophy. Our claim is that much of prevalent African Philosophy, notwithstanding its gallant struggle for space in the hegemonious Western academy, is not sufficiently premised on nor inspired by the anguish and absurdities of contemporary African life experience. We propose a remedial approach that takes into account the import of the meaning of "Africanist", as the required paradigm shift. This paradigm would, first and foremost, be concerned with critical formulations and contextual applications of a reconstructive African social thought. The paper presents Sartre's life and philosophy, as a Marxist theorist, phenomenologically seized with the condition of the colonised as a poignant demonstration of both the locus (praxis) and subject matter (freedom as the absolute core of anti and post-colonial theory) of the contemplated Africanist philosophy of liberation.

Complementary Reflection vs. Binary Complementarity: An Interrogatory Discourse of the Problem of Anachronism in African Philosophy (35)

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Interrogatory theory and conversational philosophy are two methodological dispositions of a contemporary movement in African philosophy (the conversational school) articulated by Jonathan Chimakonam. The interrogatory technique posits that the best route to the progressive development of African philosophy as a viable philosophical tradition is through incessant interrogation – peer-criticism, deconstruction and critical, but creative reconstruction of thoughts of fellow actors, principles and systems towards increasing sophistication. Conversationalism has similar aim except that while interrogationism interrogates the thoughts of other actors, conversationalism converses with the actors themselves – a researcher can employ one or both at the same time. Accordingly, this paper interrogates Innocent Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy (also known as Complementary Reflection) and Sophie Oluwole's theory of binary complementarity but goes on to converse with Oluwole as well. The paper argues that Asouzu developed the novel idea that complementarity is the distinctive method of African philosophy – a theory he established following his conversations with leading authorities such as Tempels, Mbiti, Edeh, Kagame and Iroegbu to name just a few. Interestingly, after a decade of continuous development of the theory of complementary reflection, Oluwole came up with the theory of binary complementarity which veraciously corroborates Asouzu's theory. However, the paper notes that Oluwole presents her theory of binary complementarity without conversing with Asouzu or interrogating Ibuanyidanda philosophy which has existed up to a decade before her theory. Given the attention and controversies Ibuanyidanda philosophy has been generating across Nigeria, Africa and beyond, the paper contends that the failure of Oluwole to mention/acknowledge/interrogate or converse with Asouzu

(Ibuanyidanda philosophy) in her discussion of the theory of binary complementarity puts the philosophical rigor of her theory to question in the light of the demands of Chimakonam's interrogatory technique/conversationalism. The paper maintains that Olowole's theory would have been richer if she had conversed with Asouzu and/or interrogated Ibuanyidanda philosophy. Finally, the paper submits that the future of African philosophy belongs to scholars that will eschew plagiarism, intellectual anachronism, patronizing philosophy and the veneration of authorities and embrace the comprehensive research criteria of conversationalism and interrogationism.

Questions of Canon Formation in Philosophy - the History of Philosophy in Africa and its Future (36)

Dr. Anke Graness, Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna, Austria (anke.graness@univie.ac.at)

The history of philosophy is not just an academic discipline, but considered to be a philosophical activity itself. Today, it has become self-constitutive for the subject and discipline of philosophy. It has been instrumental in shaping our understanding of philosophy, our philosophical canon and curricula. The history of philosophy in Africa is still a young discipline, although philosophical thinking (concepts, manuscripts, books, and philosophers) can be traced back until Ancient Egypt. Facing the problem of exclusion and inferiorisation of traditions of thought and philosophy in Africa, the discipline of the history of philosophy involves in the case of Africa very specific problems, and cannot be separated from a project of 'conceptual decolonization'. This explains both the importance and the difficulty of writing a history of philosophy in Africa. The paper deals with some basic methodological questions of writing the history of philosophy in Africa, its specific challenges (heritage of colonialism; language of philosophy; the oral imparting of tradition; the question of authorship) as well as unique opportunities. Considering the fact that any process of writing the history of philosophy is an exclusionary one (thinkers, concepts and terms are included or excluded from the narrative depending on a certain definition of philosophy), the paper asks for first signs of marginalisation in the young discipline of the historiography of philosophy in Africa and tries to identify certain schools and trends which are rarely taken into consideration. The question how do we want to continue writing the history of philosophy in Africa—and worldwide—is still waiting for an answer. The paper is a tentative attempt to answer this question

Levinas and the Postcolonial: An African-European Encounter Par Excellence (37)

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To what extent can Levinas's thought be useful to, engage with, and perhaps learn from, non-Western and postcolonial ethical frameworks and conceptions of identity and difference? Such an encounter seems critical in light of the fact that all of Levinas's philosophical labours have relentlessly been dedicated to uncovering the violence at the very heart of Western philosophy – the reductive tendency of the Self to reduce, subject or 'colonize' any and every form of otherness it comes into contact with. As such, the proposed encounter between Levinas and the postcolonial might be conceived as an African-European encounter par excellence. Within the canon of contemporary Western philosophy, Levinas has been one of the most prominent (if not the first) voice(s) to initiate the ethical turn towards the Other, insisting upon the inherent responsibility we bear towards others. When considering the possibility of such a critical encounter, however, one runs up against a number of challenges. Levinas's racism, the eurocentric and a-political nature of this thought, in conjunction with his insistence upon an abstract Alterity make him an unlikely interlocutor for African philosophers. In this paper, then, I shall critically consider the possibility of such a critical encounter between Levinas and non-Western and postcolonial discourses on the self, the other and their relation by addressing these challenges. The question is whether Levinas's

ethical metaphysics contributes to decolonizing the mind or amounts to yet another instance of the structural violence responsible for the marginalization of difference(s) and/or otherness?

The Imperative of Developing African Eco-philosophy (38)

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Environmental concerns such as shortages of potable water, food insecurity, pollution-related diseases, the loss of species and the associated threat to ecotourism income, human over-population, and global climate change constitute some of the most pressing challenges for current and future African generations. Environmental ethicists have long maintained that the fundamental causes of the current ecological crisis are philosophical in nature. No philosophy or ethic that does not account for how we should value the natural environment can be complete. Yet, relatively little attention has been given to these matters by African philosophers. In this paper I argue that, if African philosophy is to be relevant to the needs and interests of the people of this continent, considerably more work needs to be done to develop African eco-philosophy and environmental ethics. Furthermore, I show that there is a great deal in African thought, indigenous values and philosophy that can deeply enrich our discourse with respect to environment. There is a largely untapped wealth of indigenous knowledge and wisdom regarding how we ought to relate to the natural world that deserves to be brought to light and reflected on philosophically. Finally I argue that any effective response to the environmental challenges that face Africa and the world will require commitment and buy-in, not only from governments and leaders, but from the people of the continent themselves. This is more likely to be achieved if the necessary changes in human behaviour are grounded in existing, indigenous moral notions and values, with which the people of Africa are already familiar, which makes the project of developing African eco-philosophy an even more pressing imperative.

The Future of Sage Philosophy in Africa (39)

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The way sage philosophy is presented in Africa and the objectives it sought to fulfill are new for philosophy in Africa. However, sage philosophy is not unique to African culture and any other culture for that matter. In view of the foregoing, we seek to demonstrate the role played by sage philosophy in the history of philosophy in Africa and speculate on the possibilities of its future.

African Communalism and the Question of Ethno-Nationalism and Xenophobia: A Critical Discourse (40)

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This paper reexamines the plausibility of African communalism in the face of the gnawing tide of ethno-nationalism and xenophobia in contemporary Africa. In a sense, whether the African community spirit that is often bandied when Africans hate, kill, exploit and impoverish Africans? Against this back drop, the paper explicates and repudiates the economic interpretation of African communalism and its motivation in relation to the tides of ethno-nationalism and xenophobia. It maintains that the economic interpretation nay conception of African communalism is essentially restrictive and as such tends to fuel, rather than curb, the tides of different ethnocentric actions. The paper posits that the economic interpretation of African communalism seems to restrict the scope of the “community” to be loved, and whose well-being must be protected and preserved to a specific “ethnic group”, a microcosm of, instead of the whole “human community.” The paper thus expounds the moralistic interpretation of African communalism as an ethical framework for curbing the tides of diverse forms of ethnocentrism in and

beyond Africa. It submits that African communalism is fundamentally moralistic not economic and that given the balkanization and amalgamation of Africa, not to mention the interconnectedness of the contemporary world, the well-being of all ethnic groups in Africa, and indeed the world, is substantially interdependent; all human beings must now realize that we are now, not just members, but live in a human community. No ethnic group or country is self-sufficient and none can sustain itself without the “others”. The ethics underlying African communalism demands that we extend the scope of the community to include humanity at large; the tides of ethnocentric commitments can only be curbed when human actions flow from the conviction that the well-being of all humans are necessarily interdependent and complementary.

The Place of Philosophy in Africa (41)

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Recently there has been a strong movement towards reflections about the “geography” of reason, especially among philosophers who deal with post-colonial thinking. There is also a renewed interest among different schools of thought, both analytical and continental, in the ways our “life world”, or “embodiment”, or “situated cognition”, shape our minds and eventually the philosophy we do. As a result we have seen some publications on the nature and import of the concept of “place” by authors such as Edward Casey, Jeff Malpas and Bruce Janz. In *Philosophy in an African place* Bruce Janz helpfully defines “place” in terms of our “life world”, the context of our lived experience. This means, the question of place is not so much a question of territorial space, that is, about where a philosopher is living, but rather it is a question of lived experience, of “what it is to do philosophy” wherever a philosopher is living. In other words, for the philosopher the question of place is, What is it like to do philosophy where I am? What is it like to do philosophy in this place? Closer home: What is it to do philosophy in an African place? Conversely, What place does philosophy have in Africa and what place does Africa have in philosophy? Expanding on *Philosophy in an African place*, this paper explores the meaning of place within the framework of reflections on the state of African Philosophy and its futures.

The Demise of the Universal School and the Rise of Conversational Philosophy in Contemporary African Philosophy (42)

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While it is a fact that the universal school charged up the discourse in their time; while it cannot be disputed that their approach is critical; questions have re-emerged as to the relevance of the school in contemporary African philosophy. There are now two requirements to which all current actors in African philosophy generally agree upon, to wit; a) the need to find new conversations in African philosophy as well as with other philosophical places and, b) the need to ensure that the new conversations are substantive or phenomenological. Obviously, the agitations of the universal school are on the metaphilosophical level, chief among which is the condition that African philosophy must meet before it becomes philosophy. Evidently, in no way does the agitation of the universal school meet those two requirements above. Thus, if the discussions of the universal school were not thematic to contemporary demands albeit critical, then we must be courageous to declare the school “surplus to requirement” in this new era and give way for the rising of conversational school. In maintaining the critical demand of philosophy in general, the conversational school finds new conversations which are phenomenological as the future direction of African philosophy demands. Our aims in this paper include: 1. To read the obsequies of the universal school, 2. To unveil conversational philosophy both as a school of thought and

a method of African philosophy, and, 3. To redefine the concern of African philosophy in the contemporary time. Our method shall be critical, evaluative and prescriptive.

Using the African Teleological View of Existence to Interpret Environmental Ethics (43)

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Environmental ethics is relatively misconstrued as a relatively new discourse emerging in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I question this view by focussing on the sub-Saharan African view of existence and its teleological orientation towards environmental ethics. I contend that, despite their diverse social and cultural backgrounds, sub-Saharan African communities may not necessarily need a new environmental philosophy as implicit in the bulk of the literature on environmental ethics in general. I argue that, while it has not been critically explored in greater detail, environmental consciousness has always been, and still remains at the core of sub-Saharan African metaphysical views of existence. This is because of the emphasis of the African view of existence on *telos* or purpose for being. I take stock of cardinal virtues towards the understanding of being such as: respect for life, harmony, and balance in creation, well-being and the need for continued survival. I critically examine how these views support an African view of teleologically oriented environmental ethics. Although the area of African environmental ethics has recently been addressed by quite a number of thinkers in the past few years, I intend to explore sub-Saharan African traditional metaphysical and ultimately teleological approaches to existence and environmental ethics, an area that has not received much attention from recent works on African environmental ethics. I critically examine these views in terms of how they inculcate a reasonably novel environmental epistemology because of its focus on the teleological view of existence.