

## AN APPRAISAL OF THE CHALLENGES OF LOGIC AND CRITICALITY AGAINST THE AUTHENTICITY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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**Abstract:** There is no gain saying that sophisticated pattern of thinking and expression in language that is evident in the scholarship of our contemporary world is found wanting in African philosophy. The absent of this formal culture of thinking method and cross-examination of arguments in African philosophy undermined its relevance and contributions to the pool of philosophies abound in the academic world. A closer look at the African philosophy shows that rational, logicity and critical impulses are not as apparent as emotional certainty and intuitive review. African philosophy has unique characteristics that sometimes make the use of logical and critical questionings unnecessary. It is relevant to know that some aspects of African philosophy can be subjected to rational logic and critical re-evaluation while other ones are limited to intuitive and hermeneutic interpretations. Hence, African philosophy needs contextualization for the study of its various aspects that defer rational logic before any substantial knowledge can be achieved.

**Key words:** African philosophy; Logic; Hermeneutic; tradition.

**Resumo:** Não há nenhum ganho em dizer que padrões sofisticados de pensamento e expressão em linguagem, evidentes nos estudos acadêmicos de nosso mundo contemporâneo, são encontrados como carentes na filosofia africana. A ausência dessa cultura formal do método de pensamento e o exame cruzado de argumentos na filosofia africana minaram sua relevância e as contribuições para o conjunto de filosofias abundantes no mundo acadêmico. Um exame mais atento da filosofia africana mostra que a racionalidade, a lógica e os impulsos críticos não são tão aparentes quanto a certeza emocional e a revisão intuitiva. A filosofia africana tem características únicas que, por vezes, tornam desnecessário o uso de questionamentos lógicos e críticos. É relevante saber que alguns aspectos da filosofia africana podem ser submetidos à lógica racional e à reavaliação crítica, enquanto outros se limitam a interpretações intuitivas e hermenêuticas. Assim, a filosofia africana precisa de contextualização para o estudo de seus vários aspectos que adiam a lógica racional antes que qualquer conhecimento substancial possa ser alcançado.

**Palavras-chave:** filosofia africana; Lógica; Hermenêutica; tradição

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## **Introduction**

One of the fundamental characteristics that distinguishes humans from animals in all culture is the power of reasoning and systematic articulation of thought. It is ostensible in every culture that there is no formal school of learning to acquire the rudiments of cultural dispositions and logical rules of expression. Every man is born into a particular cultural background; and by implication, each man is a replica of all that characterised his culture. The fact that we have diverse cultures in the world implies that we have different dispositions and methods of expressions. Actually, there are over 2000 spoken languages in our world of today; and they do not have the same pattern of writing and expression. Nevertheless, people of every culture have no stress in understanding their world views, beliefs, values and all existential realities surrounding their lives in the community. As a matter of necessity, people that are from another culture need to undergo a thorough study of the language, practices and mannerism of a different culture before they can have a credible understanding and appreciation of the contents of their philosophy. African culture like its contemporaries in the world has non-conforming characteristics that set it apart from others. One of its prominent features is the fact that African cultural way of thinking and expression does not commensurate with the Aristotelian standard and logical inferences. This observable difference makes almost all the scholars that are grounded in western way of thinking to cast doubt over the ability of the Africans to think and express themselves logically. This popular Western opinion about the Africans is one of the blights against the credibility of African philosophy in academic world. They think and strongly promote the assumption that African philosophy lacks rational and logical justification in most of its cultural beliefs, values and world views. Hence, the contents of African philosophy are not appreciated in most cases but relegated to mere superstitions and assumptions. The foremost reason is based on the fact that some of them are differ to Aristotelian logic, the yardstick treasured in the western world and their allies.

This paper is out to demonstrate the fact that some aspects of African philosophy can pass the test of Aristotelian logic that established the western thought pattern. The write up also acknowledges the evidence that there are other contents of African philosophy that needed interpretation and intuition before those that have interest can decipher, decode, decrypt and untangle philosophical values inherent in them. For instance, many of the African appreciated values, worldviews and existential realities are represented in African proverbs, wise sayings, mythologies and cultural practices. The necessary outlines of this paper rest

squarely on the meaning of logic and the relevance of critical thinking to any philosophical study. It also illustrates why there is no need for competition between African philosophy and the philosophies available in other cultures. Besides, the paper equally accentuates the justification for contextualization and thematic study of the contents of African philosophy so that adequate understanding and meaning of the issues involved can be achieved and promoted. The research method employed is going to be analytical and evaluative. The key concepts that need proper definition and clarification include, logic, critical thinking and hermeneutic interpretation.

### **Definition and meaning of logic**

Etymologically, logic is derived from the classical Greek word, *logos* meaning what is spoken. This meaning later on developed to mean human thought or reason, the epic centre of the criteria for evaluating arguments whether they are correct (correspond to the reality) or not. Besides, the Concise Oxford English dictionary describes logic as the study of reasoning, thinking process and drawing of inference from the premises identified in a statement. There is no doubt that the precise definition of logic is controversial among philosophers. Nevertheless, it is generally believed among scholars that logic is based on the task of identifying valid and fallacious inference so that one can differentiate logical from unsound arguments. As C.S. Momoh gathers from Robin Horton, cited in Godwin Azenabor, “logic as a critical thinking directed at distinguishing good or correct from bad or incorrect arguments or reasoning. Logic deals with the question, nature and forms of human inferences. Horton then holds the view that traditional cultures, though eminently logical, have never felt the need to develop logic” (48). This is a common practice that often creates lacuna in our understanding of the thoughts of ancient past in many cultures especially in Africa. Usually, logic and philosophy of language are closely related, the later has to do with the science of how language engages and interrelates with human thinking and the former evaluates the reliability of the arguments involved. Hence, the knowledge of logic and the relationship between logic and ordinary speech often helps man to structure his own arguments and give a critique of the arguments articulated and presented by others. As a matter of fact, it is observable that many popular arguments are sophistry because a lot of people are ignorant of the natural principles of logic and unaware of how to appropriately formulate their arguments. It is generally observed that natural logic in a primary sense “is concerned with clarity of expression, the avoidance of fallacies, vagueness, ambiguity and contradiction in natural

language...it has to do with evaluating evidence or situation critically, devoid of emotions. Africans, in any society, must have this first sense of logic as rational human beings” (48).

Therefore, the fundamental characteristics of logic is truth, reality, clarity, coherence, orderliness, consistency, soundness and completeness, anything fall short of these features is technically illogical and fallacious. However, logic in its secondary meaning “is the setting up of constraints, variables, sentence connectives, deductions and transformation rules for deriving the formal validity of arguments,...most philosophers are not logical in this sense, because logic here is really an attribute of formal training in symbolic or deductive logic” (48). Logic in this sense becomes a necessary craftsmanship for scholars and philosophers in particular that often need rational justification for the arguments they normally use to establish their theories and personal opinions on issues at stake.

Historically, many cultures have used sophisticated systems of reasoning and judgement but logic as a clear and categorical analysis of thinking and reasoning was originally and properly developed in three cultures: Indian, Chinese and Greek. It was observable with the Indians as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, among the Chinese people in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and in Greek tradition before the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. (Scott M. Sullivan 1). The Indian and Chinese systems of logic were not developed outside the two traditions while Aristotelian logic became the most famous and adopted system of logic for the Greeks. The favour that Aristotelian logic enjoyed from Greek and Roman civilizations and the commentaries of Islamic philosophers like Averroes and Avicenna established and popularised the Greek variant of logical thought in many modern cultures. Besides, Aristotelian system of logic was generally adopted through the influence of the Greeks because it is more comprehensive and its principles are less controversial than its similitude in other cultures. Hence, Aristotelian logic is later known as traditional logic and from the period of modernity, the knowledge of Aristotelian logic had become a criterion for whoever that wish to engage in critical analysis of philosophical point of views. Whereas the issue concerning the use of logic is inherently implied in the way of African thought pattern. Africans have their own way of thinking that is meaningful and understandable to themselves, hence non-Africans may find their thoughts and world views difficult to understand. African pattern of thinking and reasoning is peculiar to them because their systematic logic of thinking is more intuitive than Aristotelian logical justification. Hence, it is crystal clear the logic behind African way of thinking does not correspond to the ones available in other cultures, especially in the Western culture and its associates.

## **The relevance of traditional logic to philosophy**

Traditional logic is basically concerns with the instruments of thought as naturally intentional and referential to reality, that is, how they are to be applied to the actual characteristics of any statement. This implies that traditional logic is based on philosophical realism, a logic established on common experience that there is an external world out there full of different kind of things that we can know. It is apparent that man instinctively make use of logic by the virtue of his rationality because he recognises inferences and contradictions from the moment he begins to think (Scott M. Sullivan ii). Nonetheless, the formal learning of logic only assists him to get improvement on what he has been doing. There is no doubt that the learning routines and skills involve may be demanding but the perseverance of learning the principles of logic often brings unimaginable benefits to the mind, the benefits that can help a learner in many areas of his life now and in future. As Henri Maurier says, “philosophy should question itself about the proper value of its rational procedure and on the epistemological or gnostic validity of its results” (qtd. in Azenabor 59). This implies the need to evaluate and re-examine the reality of the contents of one’s philosophical views and present them in a systematic, organised and coherent form. As a matter of fact, we see clearly that

to be rational, therefore, is to be able to identify your situation and problem, then being able to find a solution that will be benefitting within the system. Thus, societal and environmental differences must be taken into consideration in determining rationality. This is precisely why it can be argued that the determination of the idea of rationality does not have validity in terms of universal criteria (59).

A good inference from the above quotation shows that it is unfair to consider African philosophical views as irrational because they are not logical and rational in the opinion of the westerners, if rationality is pragmatically evaluated and contextually dependent (Irele 92). Therefore, the study of logic helps man to have the ability to think individually, make proper distinctions, organise his thought patterns that can lead to the deduction of a correct conclusion.

## **Hermeneutic interpretation and its relevance to Philosophy**

Hermeneutic approach to knowledge implies subjective interpretation of the reality associated with a particular phenomenon. Hermeneutic method of research has similarity with Husserlian phenomenological approach to the theory of knowledge. This is an approach in

which terms like 'eidetic' reduction, 'bracketing', intentionality, contextualization, localization, interpretation, suspension and disconnection from certain suppositions like logic, coherence and expressions that logical positivists often use in evaluation. The relevance of hermeneutics to philosophy generally is that it accommodates cultural differences, it supports subjectivity, it respects cultural originality on the issues of concern or evidence derived from a cultural setting.

Moreover, hermeneutic approach to acquisition of knowledge relies on the originality of a member of a particular community that gives cultural narration on any object of research and discussion. The description, interpretations and expressions involved bring about nostalgia and emotional reminiscences of the past. As a result of this, hermeneutic method of research is useful in African ethno-philosophy, metaphysical realities like the relationship between the human body and the soul, theistic problem, problem of evil in the world and witchcraft. These are parts of the burning issues in African ontology that transcend logical analysis and justification.

### **Critical thinking and its relevance to Philosophy**

The word critical is an English translation of the Greek word *kritikos* meaning act of discerning a true judgment with the root in *Kriterion*, that is, standards or yardstick. Etymologically, the word *kritikos* literally means an exposition to the reality. While the Greek verb '*krinein*' means an act of judging. Webster's new world English dictionary described the word critical as an attempt to achieve an objective judgment so as to determine both merits and demerits. Critical thinking is defined as the use of intellectual standards to determine strengths and weaknesses of thinking process. Critical thinking looks for a better understanding of human mind and train the intellect so that errors like prejudice, overgeneralization, common fallacies, narrowness, rigidity, distortion of thought and world views can be minimised if not totally eradicated. The habit of formal critical thinking is traceable to Socrates who developed the act of questioning the opinion of people and claim to knowledge. He wanted the people of his time to know that ambiguities, self-contradictory beliefs, equivocations and vagueness were inherent in their fundamentally empty rhetoric. He was the first to formally establish the significance of asking for the analysis of available evidence, reasoning, assumptions and analysis of basic concepts to differentiate the ones that are reasonable and logical from those that lack necessary rational foundation, no matter how they are pleasing to our cultural and ego-centrism.

In the middle age, critical thinking was known with scholars like Thomas Aquinas as evident in his *Summa Contra Gentile* and *Summa Theologica*, where his thoughts are systematically expressed and evaluated with possible criticisms and rationally justified answers. The tradition of critical thinking and cross examination of thought was popularised between 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries when many European scholars critically examined issues concerning authority, religion, God, society, art, human nature, morality, law, dogmatism and human freedom. As a matter of fact, the invention of printing fast-track the spreading of individual conviction and view on relevant issues concerning the existential realities in human life. It is generally observed that critical thinking has affinity with the schools of realism and logical positivism. This system of thinking approaches issue at stake with sincerity of purpose to define, determine and confirm the reality on ground. A critical mind is no respecter of anybody in as much as evidence is available for justification. Hence, it offers assistance to determine the truth of a research work, originality, objectivity and practicality; and also helps to avoid or detect bias or prejudice, nepotism, favouritism, dogmatism, fanaticism, compromise, hypocrisy and exaggeration in any acclaimed proposition or world view.

### **Ancient African philosophy cannot pass the test of Aristotelian logic**

It is a fruitless effort for any scholar to make traditional African philosophy pass the test of Aristotelian logic because the contents of ancient African philosophy is ethnocentric and not generated by an individual. They are the communal thoughts, beliefs, values, practices and views that are peculiar with a particular African society and traceable to the tradition of the community. The elders of each African community, without mentioning a particular one for a specific view, are considered to be the authors of African traditional thoughts. In African traditional society, authorship of any appreciated values, beliefs, practices and world views are attributed to the community. Whereas in the Western world an individual is considered to be the originator of a particular idea, concept and opinion on issues in the society before it becomes acceptable in the community.

Therefore, it is easier to provide logical justification, criticism and cross-examination for individual thoughts than communal opinions and appreciated world views. According to Momoh, “the sages or elders cannot be analytical because analytical philosophy is a second order activity which is predominantly that of querying, interpreting, criticizing and defending the answers given by the system builder who is the first order philosopher, which the sage is” (qtd. in Azenabor 56). What Momoh tries to put across is that a typical elderly African man

does not depend on Aristotelian logic for him to be rational and logical in his presentation of his arguments on any issue. He acquires his thought pattern naturally from what his culture and immediate environment have given to him. Besides, “wiredu, and some other philosophers, argue that intuition and emotion play prominent roles in African thought. This is to him, is largely responsible for the African unanalytical and unscientific mind” (Azenabor 52). Wiredu in this context wants us to understand the fact that ancient African men and women depended so much on intuitive or emotional logic. It is obvious that whatever outstanding achievements in the areas of politics, religion, ethical values, medicine and other sciences attributed to them are attained through this exceptional logic. Consequently, the attempt of African logical positivists like P. O. Bodunrin to discredit African philosophy because it is not based on Western logical positivism becomes unsustainable and Eurocentric.

### **Unlettered people too can be critical and logical as well**

Many of the ancient Africans that never entered into the four walls of any systematic school appreciated the concept and meaning of truth, integrity, justice, harmony, happiness and love with a deep sense of logicity and criticality. If not, they would not have known the actual nature and characteristics of these values they cherished so much from their fake similitude. It is evident that logic in ancient African philosophy took a different dimension from what is obtainable in the modern or contemporary period. The essential justification for this fact is that a typical African elder in the ancient past, “was not to win arguments and contrive linguistic and conceptual analysis to throw up individual prodigies and intellectual giants. Rather, the aim was to understand, co-operate, empathise with nature, environment and creation and mould a moralistic, humane and communal universe” (C. S. Momoh xii.). What is obtainable among African elders in the past was that the communally appreciated values, opinions and world views were considered as pre-existed any of them, they believed that their originality has been tested and approved by history. As a result of their trust in their cultural history and appreciated values and world views, they held tenaciously to every one of them as authentic and sacrosanct.

Again, individual initiative and creativity does not allow all ancient Africans to have the same view and interpretation on philosophical issues emanating from existential realities abounding in their lives. Africa is generally the home of myriad of cultures that are fundamentally akin to one another and neatly interrelated. However, they are sometimes different on issues like destiny as evident in the soft-destiny in Yoruba culture as against



hard-destiny in Igbo culture, the origin of the universe with its cosmological forces, reincarnation and the rite of passage into the ancestral world. The fact that they often have divergent views on issues like these shows that the ancient Africans too were critical and logical in their convictions. If it were not the case, all African cultures would have gotten the same opinion and conviction on any philosophical issues.

Furthermore, the geographical location and peculiar cosmological forces or realities available in each culture often added to the variable factors responsible for their differences, logicity and criticality on issues about their practical life. For instance, the Africans in the riverine areas, those in the desert lands, the ones in the mountainous and inhabitants of African lowlands have the same philosophical view on the issue of ancestral world but the logic behind the burial rite and criteria for admittance into the world of the dead cannot be the same. There is bound to be disputation on this issue and justification for cultural hanging on particular attitude and disposition. Therefore, rationality cannot be universalised because of cultural differences and variations in appreciated values and experiences. Hence, the necessary characteristics of rationality, logicity and criticality are derivable from each cultural and existential milieu. As Makinde would say, it is impossible to completely rule out the possibility of logicity in the thought pattern of any culture even though there might not be any logical system evident in that language (qtd. in Momoh 116). As a matter of fact, Momoh strongly holds the view that, “if by rational philosophy, we mean a philosophy found upon rational evidence, observation of reality and upon deductions, which can be drawn from human experience, then African philosophy is rational” (Azenabor 60). This is because the criteria for rationality depends on each culture and peculiar experience.

### **The relevance of mythology to Ancient African philosophy**

Mythology is not actually a philosophical view of the Africans but a means by which ancient Africans present and preserve the proper meaning of their appreciated values, convictions, knowledge, beliefs and daily experiences. It is apparent that myths are “used only as a ladder to climb to the higher realms of philosophy”. Thus, mythology is sacrosanct in ancient African philosophy and cannot be extirpated or uprooted from the world view of Africans. The ancient African elders employ the use of myths “to fuse together what –was and what-is to illustrate what should be.” The interpretation of this quotation shows that one can infer logicity and coherence in African ontology that perhaps not actually in line with the logicity and rationality alluded to in the Western world.

A closer look at the ontological foundation of the various existential realities surrounding any African community demonstrates that there is a networks or logical bridges in the people's way of thinking and expression on their physical and metaphysical experiences. For instance, two brothers are forbidden from fanning the same fire into flame with their mouth, one is forbidden to sit on the mortar, a pregnant woman should not go out alone in the night or to the stream by the mid-day. The justification behind these African myths and similar ones is to inculcate in the people the values of hygiene, obedience, prudence, integrity, patriotism, honesty, self-control, truth and so on. African proverbs, myths and wise sayings are to African philosophy what formal references and authorities are to the western scholars. In this context, "the advantage of myths and proverbs over philosophy is said to be that their mode of communication is more accessible to the uneducated masses and the wisdom embedded can be easily shared by all" (Azenabor 65). Hence, myths and proverbs become the easiest and simplest way passing on appreciated values and worldviews to the younger generation of every cultures in Africa.

The fact that African philosophy is metaphysically inclined actually makes mythology necessarily becomes the means by which the ancient Africans explain their existential experiences in the universe to their young ones. Moreover, it becomes an ability by which they sustain harmony and the status quo in the society. It is this relevance of mythology in African philosophy that later developed and multiplied into the search for the basic principles replete today in African metaphysics, physics, ethics, politics, religion etc. As it is ostensive, the ancients Africans held on together the various existential aspects of human life without any criticality or any search for their rational logicity.

What is generally known is that mythology is essentially based on intuition to present convincingly values that human mind discovered and tested to be true, however not with empirical logic but with intuitive logic. In other words, as soon as the mind gets the abstraction about the concern values intuitively, the mind relates them immediately into human inclinations. Justification for the world view of ancient Africans is based on appeal to the heart and not the mind, appeal to emotion and not reason, appeal to wishful thinking and not reality. Nevertheless, mythology serves as the basis on which rational and logical science of existential realities are established. As Momoh wittily asserts, "African mythical formulations are relevant and necessary because they embody a lofty metaphysical, moral, logical, epistemological, and ethical concepts and dimensions which should interest any philosopher" (qtd. in Azenabor 64). Hence, Kant would say that human feeling is the root of

human development of concepts as a way of uniting rationalism and empiricism together as the basis of true knowledge.

### **There is need to particularise the necessary logic to each culture**

The fact that Aristotelian logic and thought pattern are inapplicable to African traditional philosophical thoughts does not imply that its contents are nonsensical and inconceivable for knowledge. It is evident that western philosophy is characterised with the tradition of questioning, logic and criticality while African philosophy assumed the contents of its study from intuition and mythology. Hence, there is no need for competition between African philosophy and other philosophies, the philosophy that characterised a particular culture should be evaluated accordingly since there is no universal way of thinking and expression. As Lucius Outlaw pithily claims, “Western philosophy has served as rationalist court for false universalisms that exclude Africans among others and that such false universalisms are used to rationalize cultural imperialism” (qtd. in M. Von Hook 39). One can wittily deduce from Outlaw that every credible culture, like African culture, is expected to turn against the Europeans’ efforts to dictate the logical rules, the language, the content, the thought pattern and originality of African philosophy.

It is on record that each recognised culture has its own pattern of thought and expression about the realities that are abound in their experience. For instance, Dewey’s philosophy is in orthodoxy with American-philosophy of the time, pragmatism. Hume’s philosophy was in line with British empiricism. Besides, Descartes’ philosophical thought was rooted in French philosophy embedded in rationalism. While Hegel’s philosophical writings were sourced from German idealism. So the nature of African philosophical tradition is in its innermost essence rooted and nourished within the context of African culture, history and experience and this is more metaphysical and spiritual (Francis E. Ekanem 56).

The people associated with the philosophical ideas abound in any traditional African society also has been guiding their community and keep necessary harmony with the fundamental principles derived from the socio-political, ethical, religious, physical metaphysical and cosmological realities available in their day to day experiences. Hence, there are diverse ontological realities and experiences that typified various African communities as earlier mentioned. If this claim lacks no rational justification, there is need to acknowledge the fact that one has to be multi-dimensional in evaluating the contents of philosophy in every traditional African society. Thus, the use of Aristotelian logic and critical

assessment alone cannot give room for holistic knowledge and justification for any African philosophical ideas, concept and values.

This implies that a scholar in African philosophy needs to be dynamic and resourceful in using emotional intuition to discover the justification and foundational logic that hold together some of the contents of African philosophy that Aristotelian logic cannot substantiate. It is apparent that in many occasions, intuitive or emotional logic that is common in Africa also have the characteristics like consistency, coherence, intelligibility, comprehensibility and truth to the reality often appreciated in Aristotelian logic. A cursory look at the African disposition to the values, beliefs, practices and the worldviews cherished and celebrated give credence to the relevance of intuitive logic in the understanding of African philosophy. Therefore, if the fact that man is both rational and emotional is indubitable, and there is possibility of cross breeding of rational and emotional ideas and feelings, one can invariably conclude that no emotional judgment or logic is totally devoid of rationality.

### **Logic is necessary for contemporary African philosophy**

It is evident that African ethno-philosophy or African philosophical sagacity cannot be subjected to Aristotelian logic because the contents of such African philosophy are sourced from the community and not authored by an individual. Today we see that there are many African scholars that are coming up with individual philosophical thought derived from African culture. They articulated arguments to demonstrate the rational foundation on which their philosophical views are recognized as evident in the socio-political philosophy of J. Nyerere, J. O. Awolowo, Leopold Senghor, K. Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe. We also see that the philosophical works of African scholars like William Amo, Appiah, Wiredu, Bodunrin, Sophie Oluwole, P. Huntongi, Molefi Asante, M. Makinde, J. Omoregbe and their contemporaries clearly have similarity with Aristotelian thought pattern and expression.

The works of these African philosophers can lay side by side with the philosophical thoughts of their contemporaries in Europe, America, Caribbean Islands and Asia. These African philosophers are expected to observe, research, discover and read in-between the lines of the contents of traditional African philosophy raising them to acceptable standard for contemporary academic world. For instance, Wiredu of Ghana and his Akan concept of truth, Nyerere with his concept of Ujamaa, J. C. Okpala with Igbo concept of *Chi*, Moses Makinde with Yoruba concept of *Ori* and destiny or predestination have given impetus to this

recommendation. Every African scholars in this category are duty bound to promote African philosophy and they are the ones that can demonstrate the foundational logic that sustain the structures on which the contents of African philosophy are instituted.

The reason behind this obligation is that they are very close to the people and nurtured with African cultural values and practices, they know the knotty and the loose ends of African worldviews and the justification for their existence in African society. This implies that ancient African philosophy may not be necessarily evaluated with Aristotelian logic because of its unique characteristics and the thought pattern of the ancient Africans but the contents of contemporary African philosophy, which is not totally different from traditional African worldviews, needs to be upgraded to pass the test of Aristotelian logic and cross-examination.

In spite of the technicality involved in logic and its application to human reasoning, Momoh insisted that, “patterns of reasoning, inferences and discourses in African philosophy can also be formalised and tested for formal validity or invalidity, using the techniques of modern formal logic” (Momoh xi). In the opinion of Olusegun Oladipo, “the need for criticism arises from the realization that our traditional cultures are deficient in certain respects and the need to recognise these deficiencies for what they are in order to transcend them. Without criticism we may not be able to achieve the required discrimination between the upward paths and downward trends in our traditional culture” (Olusegun Oladipo 12). The inference deductible from this quotation is that no culture can survive and keep to the pace of development in our world of today without constant review and cross-examination of her cherished values and worldviews.

## **Evaluation and Conclusion**

This paper discovers that the general conception of philosophy is a kind of reflection and rational appreciation, definition, determination, acknowledgement and preservation of cherished values and worldviews derived from various existential realities that are abound in a given culture. One of the problems confronting the authenticity and acceptance of African philosophy in academic world is lack of logical and intellectual analysis of its contents.

However, our research confirms that every available philosophy and its contents, thought pattern, logic and linguistic expression are born and nurtured within a particular culture. As a matter of fact, the efforts of globalization to turn the whole world into a village has not remove remarkable differences among available cultures in the world. This indisputable fact gives credence and confirmation to the existence of various cultural

philosophies that contribute to the general pool of human knowledge namely, European, American, Chinese, Indian and African (BonaChristus Umeogu 113-116). We equally observe that African philosophy can get attention from the scholar of other cultures only when its characteristics are properly studied, cherished and promoted. According to Paulin Hountondji, “where philosophy is seen as only universal, Western and scientific by nature, then it seems we cannot make a case for African philosophy, but philosophy also has cultural, humanistic and metaphysical undertones. It is in this latter sense an African philosophy has...proved a worthwhile and fruitful undertaking” (qtd. in Azenbor 154). The cultural philosophies of Chinese and Indian peoples also suffered a setback before they were eventually accepted in the continental world. Therefore, if the pool of philosophy has accommodated Oriental philosophies despite their differences in logic and thought pattern from Aristotelian logic, its elasticity cannot closes against African philosophy.

In conclusion, we want those who are interest in African philosophy to know that some contents of African philosophy are similar and open to Aristotelian logic, rational criticism and adequate scrutiny to evaluate their justification and credibility. While some other ones are better evaluated with consideration to the context and cultural existential realities that are peculiar to the African community under study. And lastly, contemporary African philosophers are saddled with the responsibility of giving rational interpretation, analysis, evaluation and promotion of the relevant contents of ancient African philosophy that fostered them. After all, Socrates did not commit any of his ideas into writing but those that listened to him like Plato later developed any philosophical ideas and values attributed to him. For instance, let contemporary African philosophers, at least, gather relevant African proverbs and wise sayings to analyse, justify and evaluate the values inherent in them and to see the logical foundations that established them in African culture. Proverbs in Africa are often used widely in building cultural values and justification for their relevance in African society. Therefore, proverbs can become tools for many philosophical assertions and authenticity of African philosophical claims as evident in African literary works of Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Oluwole Soyinka and other African literature where numerous proverbs were used to abstract African philosophical views and the foundation of their peculiar political, cultural and ethical values, religious beliefs and general attitude to life.

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