

IS AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY PROGRESSING?

Ada Agada

No 35 Ameh Street, Zone H/B, Otukpo

Benue State, Nigeria

adaagada2002@yahoo.co.uk; adaagada@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Any attempt at writing the history of African philosophy is doomed to be frustrated by the glaring absence of originality, individuality, and creativity in the body of works that come under the heading of African philosophy. In the first place, most of what is called African philosophy is in fact ethno-philosophy, consisting chiefly of researches into the traditional worldviews of various African tribes in the light of Western philosophy. In this intellectually instigating paper I attempted the question whether African philosophy is progressing by showing that there has been some progress, albeit a slow one. I demonstrated this by tracing the development of a genuine African rationalism from Senghor's famous idea of negritude to Asouzu's recent notion of complementary reflection, which finds culmination in the emergent synthesis of consolationism. In the latter rationalism, veiled in Senghor's metaphysical vision and liberated in Asouzu's robust individualism, aspires to a completion never before seen in African philosophical thought. I concluded by saying that the time has come for African thinkers to make African philosophy a tradition that will command universal respect by the radicalization of individual initiative with ethno-philosophy serving only as the foundation of our 21st century inspiration.

African philosophy has failed to make remarkable progress or gain universal recognition in the four to five decades it has existed as a philosophical tradition for reasons ranging from poor attitude towards research, preference for Western philosophy on the part of

African philosophical scholars, the seeming absence of original thinkers, among others. While M.A. Makinde avers that African philosophical scholars ignore African philosophy in the belief that it is not worth being taught in schools and D.A. Masolo thinks that African philosophy is caught up in a crisis of identity, Innocent Asouzu asserts pointedly that the main problem with African philosophy is ethno-philosophical commitment and fixation.¹ Lamenting the obstacles in the way of the growth of African philosophy (which have in fact made the endeavor of producing a history of African philosophy a ridiculous exercise), Oguejiofor notes that “while African philosophy claims equal standing with other philosophic traditions, while it demands the same attention and respect accorded to many other traditions, it is pertinent to note this lacuna [the absence of creativity] that is no longer found in many regional philosophies.”² It is beyond dispute that the Europeans have European philosophy while the Americans have American philosophy. The Indians have Indian philosophy and the Chinese have Chinese philosophy. Yet any reference to African philosophy brings an expression of amazement to the faces of non-Africans while Africans look away from their fellow Africans in guilt. This guilt of the Africans arises from the knowledge that there is very little creativity and originality in the minds of African philosophical thinkers. We have produced professors instead of thinkers. In the absence of the kind of creativity and originality that animate ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary Western philosophy, trying to write a history of African philosophy is like putting the cart before the horse.

It is true that ethno-philosophy (which encompasses communal and traditional African thought, and the scholarly endeavor of their systematization in the light of Western philosophy) marked one tremendous leap for African philosophy, but it is only a stage, a foundational level, of African philosophy.

We are confronted with the naked fact that African philosophy has remained synonymous with ethno-philosophy long after its

conception. Here the real failure lies in the inability to note the true status of ethno-philosophy as the foundation of African philosophy and nothing more. We have failed over the years to build on this foundation laid by Tempels, Mbiti, Wiredu, Gbadegesin, Makinde, Sodipo, etc. We have so far failed to initiate the movement from the particular-particular through the particular-universal to the universal-universal, which last stage is the glorious stage of the African mind unveiled before the world as the mind of man, a revelation of humanity. Can we really count the achievements of African philosophy outside the dominant school of ethno-philosophy? Senghor's negritude and Nyerere's *ujamaa*, for instance, which are often touted as fine examples of sophisticated political philosophy, belong in reality to ethno-philosophy and political science while the socialist ideas of Nkrumah belong to Marxism.

In response to Wiredu's call for the decolonization of African philosophy, a project geared at entrenching the uniqueness of African philosophy by eliminating or at least diluting Western philosophical influences, ethno-philosophers have generally emphasized African traditional worldviews at the expense of incisive thinking. The decolonization project taken to its extreme in the elevation of ethno-philosophy to the status of the definitive African philosophy (that is, identifying ethno-philosophy with African philosophy itself) is contradictory because the idea of an absolutely unique African philosophy is a myth. African scholars have all (without a single exception) systematized the traditional thoughts of their ethnic groups in the light of Western thought, a heritage of their Western education and a testimony to the futility of any extreme interpretation of Wiredu's call for the decolonization of African philosophy.³ Decolonization may be good, but it is in itself not sufficient. Creativity and originality can accomplish this decolonization without our even noticing it, as we can already see in complementary reflection and the emergent synthetic philosophy of consolationism. Indeed, consolationism is

precisely the fulfillment of Wiredu's call for a 'decolonized' African philosophy.⁴ If it is correct to interpret Wiredu's call for the decolonization of African philosophy as a demand for a level of originality and creativity sufficient to distinguish African philosophy from Western philosophy, then consolationism fulfills Wiredu's demand since it insists on a way of philosophizing that traces its inspiration to African traditional thought and the African experience rather than ancient Greece while committing itself to creativity and intellectual rigor.

We cannot understand or seek to understand Western philosophy if we have nothing to learn from that tradition. What is required of us is to be creative and original. Perhaps it is good for us to remember what some scholars say about the African origin of Greek philosophy⁵ even if we cannot help agreeing with Agbakoba that it is simplistic and ultimately futile trying to trace the origin of philosophy in general to a particular society or culture when the question of man – his origin, his beginning – remains essentially unanswered.⁶ A 'pure' tradition is impossible. We must frown at all exaggerated claims to uniqueness in African philosophy, and, indeed, every other philosophy. If we subscribe to the school of thought which holds that "reality evinces itself complementarily ... in full consideration of all possible relation,"⁷ then we will realize that cross-cultural fertilization of ideas does not demean the value of the philosophy a particular culture produces. All philosophies arise from the human existential condition and have the same concerns. This worthy cause destined to take African thought to the next level and earn worldwide respect for the African mind finds some sympathy in Aja who has called for a shift away from unproductive polemic to a culture that honors diversity and creativity, virile enough to support scientific thinking and profound enough to retain a distinct African identity in spite of the influence of foreign traditions.⁸ And Derrida is insistent on the untenability of all exaggerated claims to uniqueness:

Philosophy does not have one sole memory. Under its Greek name and in its European memory, it has always been bastard, hybrid, grafted, multilinear and polyglot. We must adjust our practice of the history of philosophy, our practice of history and of philosophy, to this reality which was also a chance and more than ever remains a chance.⁹

Philosophy essentially is an investigation of the nature of reality. Since reality is ultimately one the answers to the fundamental questions of philosophy available to philosophical investigators across cultural divides are identical. With this in mind, Derrida can assert that Western philosophy is not a unique or pure tradition. In the course of its development it has borrowed ideas from the thought systems of alien cultures like ancient Egypt, as Afrocentric thinkers never tire to point out. It is therefore no embarrassment for African philosophy to borrow ideas from Western philosophy.

Western philosophers cannot do the fertile thinking which alone can save African philosophy. Our destiny is in our hands. Two developments have taken place in African thought with Nigeria as the focal point which must help take away the shame of the black intellect and comfort concerned intellectuals. The first development, significant for putting forward the bold claim of a system independent of ethno-philosophy, is the coming of complementary reflection as a philosophical current. Asouzu is the brain behind this movement. In its sheer originality, complementary reflection has no rival in African thought outside the sphere of ethno-philosophy which we insist is a foundation which alone cannot earn African philosophy international prestige. Yet, while the independence and originality of Asouzu is commendable, his thought retains the essentially polemical character of the works of those philosophers who wasted decades in unproductive controversies. Asouzu's works, far from being profoundly constructive, are essentially methodological. The pathfinder is still obsessed with showing us how African

philosophy should be conducted. This tendency in Asouzu betrays the powerful impact of the controversies over the existence of African philosophy on the master. It is a tendency at once positive and negative. It is positive because it is a promise of future constructive thinking. It is negative because it is very much polemical. For African philosophy Asouzu is a critical Kant without the constructive genius of the Königsberg colossus.

The second development which is going to be a fuller realization of the constructive promise of Asouzu is the emergence of consolationism which acknowledges its solidarity with existentialism and the rationalist tradition of Europe.

Hence, this bold work seeks to answer the question: Is African philosophy progressing? We feel that there has been a progress, but a progress so slow, so meager, that it may count as stagnation given the fact that we are talking about the tradition of an entire continent, a whole race. The valuable legacy is that a foundation has been laid, on which we emergent African thinkers can build, taking our inspiration from the example of Asouzu. Thus we shall trace the little progress made so far in four movements. The first movement will take us from the worldviews of the tribe to the foundation school of ethno-philosophy. The second and third movements will take us from the vision of Senghor to the rationalism of Asouzu. The fourth movement will terminate in the emergent synthesis of consolationism.

2. Transition from the Worldviews of the Tribe to the Higher Comprehension of Ethno-philosophy

No one can disagree with Mbiti who asserts that philosophy of one kind or another supports the thought and practice of every people.¹⁰ This rule of life is applicable to the tribes of Black Africa, some of whom lacked a tradition of writing before the coming of the West. The African tribe, like all pre-critical tribes in other continents, developed simple explanations of animate and

inanimate phenomena as the human mind struggled to make a meaning of the complex totality that is existence. These explanations are what we may call worldviews. They come out strongly in the speech of the community, in dance, proverbs, wise sayings, religious ceremonies, rites of passage, creation myths, myths about human destiny, etc.¹¹ The Idoma tribe to which this writer belongs never produced thinkers who wrote formal works on the soul's immortality, but the problems associated with the mind and the fate of consciousness appear in Idoma worldviews. The practice of offering sacrifices to the ancestors during difficult times and calling for their intercession are indications of belief in the soul's immortality. Not only are the dead still in existence in the spiritual realm, but they may also return to the physical world as new-born babies.

The present author's meditation on the Idoma notion of *otu* has led him to a greater, infinitely sublime, appreciation of Senghor's famous assertion about the emotionality of the African and the rationality of the European. *Otu* literally means 'mind' in Idoma, but the term holds more meaning for the philosophy of mind. On the one hand, *otu* can be understood as the mind and on the other hand as the brain. It can also refer to the bodily organ called the heart. But then this latter reference stands only to the extent that the heart is the symbol of emotion, or as it is symbolized as the seat of emotion. It is the brain and not the heart which coordinates our emotional responses to environmental stimuli. The heart as an organ pumps blood and supplies oxygen to all parts of the body. The brain on the other hand is the centre of the complex neuronal processes that produce mental phenomena such as thoughts and feelings. The identification of the heart with emotion is a universal human prejudice. The Idoma do not escape this prejudice. The 'heart' identified with *otu* is in reality the brain or the mind in its physical moment. In its pure moment *otu* is simply *mind*, an immaterial thing. *Otu* as mind is not the same as *otu* as brain, hence a duality is posited. Yet this duality must accommodate a

certain kind of interactionism, a degree of physicalism, since the mind and the brain connect.¹² Ultimately mind and brain are one in their origin in something more primitive. We see at once that the tribe's worldview carries the complexities of the mind-body problem. Here as in other places, the subject matter of African philosophy and Western philosophy agree. It may be true that as soon as the Western-trained African philosopher tries to comprehend the worldview of the tribe his Western education colors his thinking and leads him to Western categories or instigates the desire to bring the original African inspiration in a forced agreement with Western thought.

Since most parts of Africa never had a tradition of writing before the age of colonialism we are never going to have a philosophical tradition devoid of the influences of Western philosophy. Indeed, purity in philosophy is impossible as Derrida has so eloquently noted. Thus we return to the concept of *otu* which the tribe presents variously as mind, brain, and heart. The ethno-philosopher easily rules out the heart as an authentic meaning of *otu*, for the heart is only a metaphor in this context. The mind is the seat of emotion as subjective experience, although emotion seems to have a bodily foundation in the brain. The consolationist thinker transcends the comprehension of the ethno-philosopher and notes the proper meaning of *otu* which is consciousness. For the term consciousness tends towards the reconciliation of mind and body since it approaches the great problem in the philosophy of mind from a monistic standpoint. Thus we put the great problem of the soul's immortality simply: *Can consciousness survive the disintegration of the body?*

Clearly, philosophy lies brooding in the worldviews of the tribe. The ethno-philosophers have struggled to extract a higher meaning, a greater systematization, a more complete vision, from the worldviews of the tribe. In this regard we can say ethno-philosophy marked the first progress in African philosophy, a progress that promised much for the future, and yet a promise

betrayed by the scandalous indolence of African thinkers who are content hopping around in the shadow of the Western intellect. This leads to intellectual dependence on the West and the stunted growth of African philosophy.

3. Countdown to the Philosophy of Consolation: Transition from the Foundation of Ethno-philosophy to the Metaphysical Vision of Senghor

Ethno-philosophy is also called traditional African philosophy because it gathers worldviews of particular ethnic or tribal groups (the ideology of the tribe which negatively transforms into tribalism) into a thought system made coherent by critical examination, always in the light of Western philosophical thought. The criticism of ethno-philosophy that it presents raw culture as philosophy overlooks the fact that the march of African philosophy must see it progressing from the ideology of the tribe to the philosophy of the tribe (which positively transforms into humanity). The criticism also overlooks the fact that ethno-philosophical commitment remained for a long time the only beacon of originality in the whole of African philosophy. For in ethno-philosophy alone was any original metaphysics to be found before the coming of Asouzu.

That there is philosophy in the worldviews of the tribe we have become convinced. The consolationist thinker, the investigator of the philosophical current of consolationism, is convinced more than anyone else. And so he is in solidarity with ethno-philosophy, seeing in the achievement of ethno-philosophy the promise of consolation philosophy, formerly the promise of the future but now the realization of the present. Thus we disagree with the generally harsh criticism of Hountondji¹³ and see in ethno-philosophy the merit not of quantity but of early originality and the merit of being the foundation of the philosophical thought of the black people of the world. Ethno-philosophy as the key to the future points at limitless intellectual possibilities for Black Africa. In this context

we see the metaphysical vision of Senghor as the first indicator of progress in African philosophy.

The notion of negritude was an intellectual struggle to transform the ideology of the tribe into the philosophy of humanity, the urgency of a movement of thought from the mythology that veils concepts to the rationalism of the independent thinker. Negritude was a struggle to broaden the horizon of the tribe, which broadened space might become fit for humanity to occupy. Senghor saw the vision of the philosophy of consolation but lacked the philosophical tools to clarify this vision theoretically. The task before Senghor was one too great for a poet and a politician.

In Senghor's statement about African emotionality and European rationality we see the seed of consolationism. When we sneer at Senghor's inspiration we forget that it carries the truth about the origin and destiny of *mood*, precisely the universe and everything in it. We also forget that Europeans have said of themselves what Senghor said of Africa and Europe. The English are reputed to think and calculate while the Spanish and Portuguese feel and intuit.¹⁴ What is important here is that we have rediscovered Senghor's unity and are ready to complete it. In Senghor we see the shadow of the doctrine of *mood*. Senghor made the statement that emotion predated reason, that the superiority of reason is only a seeming superiority because reason is merely a refinement of the emotion. Whatever reason realizes is only a development of the impulses active or latent in emotion. Reason has no special existence outside emotion, which is basic. Reason is a term given to emotion that has become conscious of itself, of its own *fatality*, also the fatality of emotion. Hence, we say despair torments the intellect and inclines it to pessimism. Therefore the world is *mood*. As possessing the character of emotion, *mood* is the mind of the world.

Hear what Senghor says of negritude, which he conceives as the totality of African values,

essentially informed by intuitive reason, because this sentient reason ... expresses itself emotionally, through that self-surrender, that coalescence of subject and object, through myths, by which I mean the archetypal images of the collective soul, synchronized with those of the cosmos ... the sense of communion, the gift of myth-making, the gift of rhythm ... the essential elements of *Negritude*, which you will find indelibly stamped on all the works and activities of the black man.¹⁵

To Black Africa he assigns the *reasoning-embrace*, the sympathetic reason:

Negro-African speech does not mould the object into rigid categories and concepts without touching it; it polishes things and restores their original, with their texture, sound and perfume; it perforates them with its luminous rays to reach the essential surreality in its innate humidity – it would be more accurate to speak of sub-reality. European reasoning is analytical, discursive by utilization; Negro-African reasoning is intuitive by participation.¹⁶

By assigning analytical genius to the Western mind and intuitive genius to the African mind, Senghor is not really saying that the one is intellectual without further qualification and the other emotional without further qualification. Senghor's goal is much more ambitious. His ambition is one on a grand scale, a universal scale. It is an ambition far beyond the capacity of ethnophilosophy. Senghor continues to think within the sphere of mythology and so is unequal to the task before him. As an attack on the dogmatic claims of the intellect, Senghor tells us what Hume says in *Treatise of Human Nature*, Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason*, Rousseau in *Emile*, Bergson in *Creative Evolution*, de Chardin in *The Phenomenon of Man*, and Unamuno in *Tragic*

Sense of Life. Yet this is not the big news. For us Senghor is truly great because he tried to tell the world in the infancy of African philosophy that intellect and emotion have their roots in what we may call *mood* or primitive mind, the focus of our serrated monism. The rationality of man must follow from his emotionality. The excellence of human reason derives its validity from human emotion. Without the emotion there is no mind and without mind there is no life. Discursive reason as the power of critical analysis is lifeless and useless without the conviction that supports it, the conviction that, although human life appears pointless, it actually has a value which reveals itself as *consolation*.

This conviction is the participatory intuition Senghor held in such high esteem that he erroneously thought it is exclusive to the black mind. All peoples – black, white, yellow, mixed – share in this hope that the world has value independent of human consciousness. It is not an African peculiarity. By erecting an artificial barrier between the African mind and the non-African mind, the humanism of negritude lost the will to transform itself into a philosophy of human existence. Senghor had the grandiose aspiration of a philosopher, for he acknowledged that negritude is a humanism, in the same way that Sartre proclaimed existentialism a humanism. But need he be ashamed of his inability to give the world Africa's first original system of independent philosophical thought? No. For Senghor was never surpassed by the academic and professional philosophers who crave analysis where there is no synthesis, thus operating mills with no grains in them. It is not for nothing that Sodipo pays tribute to Senghor thus:

Whatever fault one might find with the articulation and content he gave to the conception it is in my view to Leopold Senghor's eternal credit that he boldly even if poetically asserted the existence of a distinctively African conception of the universe and of a mode of existence founded upon that conception.¹⁷

Can we radicalize Senghor by deepening the cause of negritude? Is there any way we can show that Senghor was a promise of a universal philosophy now ripe for the 21st century? If we can radicalize Senghor, then we can show that he saw our day. This can only mean that African philosophy can be traced from the foundation of ethno-philosophy to the dawn of consolation philosophy. In so doing, we must present the philosophy of consolation as the revelation of the melancholy man, not Senghor's emotional 'negro'. The melancholy man is the universal man, the man we see in all the continents of the world, who may be black, white, yellow, or mixed. Man is for us a melancholy being because he strives under the burden of despair and hope to reconcile his mind with nature. We must now run away from our root in ethno-philosophy for a while, still looking back all the time, not in fear but in homage to the works of those who came before us. As we run, as we march into the 21st century, the ideology of the tribe will lose its particular identity as a universal doctrine from Africa. We must be ready, and we are ready, to meet the universal at the level of the universal. Before we declare consolationism a metaphysics of terror and a morality of consolation, let us see how our research has identified a man whose work we have recognized as a link in the transition of African philosophical thought from the age of communal inspiration to the age of individual synthesis, the man Asouzu who we dare anoint the father of modern African philosophy.

4. **Transition from the Metaphysical Vision of Senghor to the Rationalism of Asouzu**

It is not Asouzu's rather harsh criticism of ethno-philosophy that interests us. We are interested in the Catholic priest because he has taken what he himself calls a "critical personal stand."¹⁸ He saw the futility of scholarship in the absence of creativity and made a case for the rationalist who, though inspired by his roots in the community, insists on standing on his feet and looking at the world through his own prism. In replacing the myth with the concept, in

substituting poetry with thought, Asouzu advances the ideology of negritude. Yet the core of negritude remains in Asouzu's complementary reflection. This is the idea of the emotionality of reason and indeed the emotionality of existence, the emotionality that validates rationality. Thus while Senghor rhapsodizes about the African's gift of myth-making, the gift of rhythm, and the sense of communion (ever dear to the Black African), Asouzu talks about missing links of reality and the joy of being. Listen to what these men are saying. At bottom their inspirations are one in solidarity. The rhythm of Senghor is not different from the joy of being of Asouzu. These ideas speak of optimism. But can we make any sense of optimism if there is nothing like pessimism? If the answer is no, then rhythm and joy point at the consolatory value of existence.

Man then is the melancholy man. We therefore succeed in establishing a link between Senghor and Asouzu and between these two great men and the emergent philosophy of consolation. Senghor heralded the age of the independent thinker without reaching the promise land. Asouzu reached the promise land through the tortuous road of rationalism but did not arrive with the great synthesis much awaited. We hope to fulfill the last requirement and record a victory for African rationalism.

The main idea of Asouzu's philosophy is the view of the universe as a totality in solidarity with all its parts, and these parts, therefore, as missing links in the grand unity. Human consciousness, according to Asouzu, in its totalizing moments, is able to grasp the complementary character of the various links of reality – things, ideas, thoughts, etc. Like Hegel he insists fragmentation cannot give us a complete or more complete picture of reality, the whole. Unlike Hegel, Asouzu is not dogmatic about any absolute, although he insists we can only begin to talk about an absolute if we realize that links are scattered and diverse. The mind can comprehend the unity of this diversity as it naturally totalizes. This comprehension comes to the human mind, the mind of man,

not the isolated black or white or yellow mind. The complementary reflection of Asouzu endorses the African experience while at the same time acknowledging the Western experience and indeed the experience of all races committed to this monumental drama of life. Every philosophy of every people is a contribution to the universal pool as a theoretical understanding of consolation or the joy of being. This theoretical understanding is intimate with practice.

Dismissing ethno-philosophy, Asouzu writes:

Contrary to the pretensions of ethno-philosophic inspired method of investigation that the essence of philosophy lies solely on documentation of differences, all philosophies resemble themselves in the point where the philosopher is a bridge between reality, in its most sublime form, and humanity, as this becomes evident even in given localities.¹⁹

The above accusation hardly touches Senghor who saw a great vision and was eloquent, even if poetic, in its clarification. Bringing epistemology and metaphysics closer, Asouzu notes:

Thus complementary reflection explores the conditions for the validation of our claims and assertions which it understands as being fundamentally rooted in the sense of the acquisition of a complementary, unified, emancipated and transcendental mindset. This is the dispositional precondition for ratiocination as it enables the philosopher to attain the full consciousness of himself or herself as a typical instance of being seeking full and comprehensive actualization in history irrespective of local constraints.²⁰

For Asouzu we can talk about hybridity, eclecticism, parallelism and symbiosis only because everything in existence serves as a missing link of the whole. A monism is implied here, but pluralism is not denied. Commonality is at the root of Asouzu's monism and shows itself in instances of association and expansion. There is therefore a revelation of complementarity in moments in which events, though differentiated, seek their common destiny, their common origin. He writes:

This structural constitution is characteristic of universal human experience of reality, as relative subjects, everywhere and every time. It is along this line that the mind always seeks to capture reality in complementary contraries ... day and night, male and female, being and non-being, truth and falsehood, good and evil, up and down, etc.²¹

One may ask what exactly Asouzu's missing links are. They are

finite beings and their different modes of expression in history in so far [as] they are fragments that cannot be conceptualized except in complementary relationship to each other ... finite beings in their diverse modes of expression and the categories of such beings ... the mind can grasp and intuit as missing links units and units of units, things and things of things, ideas and ideas of ideas, thoughts and thoughts of thoughts.²²

Missing links, then, will include the animate and the inanimate, language, and cultures of diverse peoples – man and all that makes his life what it is. Two vital principles follow from Asouzu's thought on universal solidarity. The first is what he calls the metaphysical principle of integration. It states that *anything that exists serves a missing link of reality within the framework of the totality*. The second principle is the practical principle of

progressive transformation which states that *all forms of human action aim towards the joy of being*. With a Kantian love of architectonics, Asouzu asserts the imperative of complementary reflection thus: *Allow the limitations of being to be the cause of your joy*.

The notion of the joy of being re-echoes Senghor's inspiration of rhythm and equilibrium. Yet Asouzu has not given adequate content to this pivotal concept. It is pivotal not only as the link with Senghor but (more importantly) also as the pillar of Asouzu's optimistic philosophy. Let us return now to our earlier criticism of Asouzu. His system, radical and original as it is, remains very much polemical. The little space granted construction by polemics is taken up by methodological discourse. His emphasis on method makes his works appear like one long prolegomena to any future African philosophy. Can it be that the pathfinder has left the work of constructing a more complete metaphysics to a younger generation after showing with great care that no philosophy can exist in isolation from philosophies of other regions? Hear this: "For African philosophy to progress, more works of more broad-based systematic methodological type need to be done."²³ We noted earlier that African philosophy is full of dry polemic and quite barren in terms of content. This barrenness is undoubtedly due to the scarcity of original thinkers. Many a scholar in a philosophy department of an African University thinks it is all right to be simply familiar with Western philosophy. He thinks this familiarity is all he needs to be respected as an African philosopher. This is, of course, not true. Being a scholar of Western philosophy is one thing and being an African philosopher is another thing. This means that there are just a handful of African philosophers. Those who qualify automatically as African philosophers are the ethno-philosophers, for they are in a sense original. But their originality cannot earn African philosophy international acclaim in a thousand years.

We cannot boast about the achievements of Western philosophical genius and expect the West to be impressed. Everyone knows his father's house! Asouzu has now shown us the right way to take. His inspiration has made us ever more jealous for the place of African philosophy in world philosophy. We dare say that we are now on the right path.

5. Transition from the Rationalism of Asouzu to the Doctrine of *Mood* as the Synthesis of the Philosophy of Consolationism

Our consolationism is the doctrine of *mood*. By mood we mean thought shadowed by the primitive emotion of existence and of human life. Thus we say that African philosophy has progressed from the rhythm of Senghor to the joy of being of Asouzu and now to consolationism. Senghor's myth was the veiled concept held by ethno-philosophy. In Asouzu the concept became free. Consolationism is an even more radical break with ethno-philosophy. For while Asouzu repeatedly appeals to his Igbo collective, consolationism has distilled fully into the concept and rejects undue interference from the worldviews of the tribe. Having received its first and greatest inspiration from precolonial Africa (not Greece), it presses on to reveal not only the African mind but indeed the mind of the melancholy man who we can recognize as the 21st century man. The melancholy man is the universal man, the black man, the white man, the yellow man, the red man. Consolationism is the radicalization of complementarity.

In consolationism the optimism of Senghor and Asouzu answers to an ontological pessimism as its foundation. Thus consolationism is a *fatalism*. All is not well with the world, but all may still be well with it. We begin our philosophical endeavor by identifying man as a creature of mood, as the being whose entire life is characterized by sadness and joy. These moods are magnified and diminished by fear and hope. This may appear simplistic; yet it is true that beyond sadness and joy human life has no meaning. Our

science, religion, philosophy, and all practices are instruments of our joy. But joy cannot be isolated from sadness. Man's joy measures his sadness. Since man is a creature of mood we call him the melancholy man. So far we have an immanent philosophy. One notes from the very beginning the similarity of our philosophy to Western existentialism. This is certainly true. But while Heidegger and Sartre appealed to Greece for inspiration, we appealed to the African community, to precolonial Africa, through Asouzu, Senghor, and the ethno-philosophical thinkers. Thus instead of a doctrine of being, we talk about the doctrine of *mood* and instead of talking about non-being we talk about *silence*, the silence of eternity. Whether non-being or silence, one thing we admit: the eternity of *mood*.

Silence is that state of *mood* not yet conscious of itself. It is sadness at a sub-conscious level. When we talk about the silence of the vast space through which the heavenly bodies move without conscious beings to observe all that motion we mean precisely this sadness. We are not merely projecting human subjectivity into the vastness of the universe. After all, we have called our system a monism, a serrated monism. Man's subjectivity, his mind and the thoughts harbored there, has its foundation in primordial mood in which matter too participate. If the inanimate cannot feel joy or sadness, this is to be attributed to the very low level of consciousness, not its total absence. For the inanimate, say, the sun, *yearns*. This yearning is expressed in the laws that are supposed to govern the motions of heavenly bodies. The sadness of the universe is the brooding activity of *mood*. Fear characterizes this activity. You ask, why fear? A universe that exists as a fatality, whose only reason for existing appears a non-reason, cannot but be a universe of terror. The terror of our fatalistic universe lies in its mood. It pulsates in everything conscious, reaching its highest awareness as pain in man's mind. The terror lives in man's reason and torments his intellect, in his despair. All actions and all thoughts that work to diminish man's terror increase his joy. The

actions and thoughts that magnify his terror increase his sadness. Our celebrated rationality, our intellect or reason, is born in grief, like the world which exists for a purpose we do not really know but which we approximate to consolation. Anything that yearns must exist as a consolation. From the beginning perfection is denied it, to the end it is denied it. A beginning that is yearning must have an end that is consolation.

Thus, starting from the grounds of immanence, from the human sphere, we are compelled to move up to the transcendental. From the humble task of analyzing the smile of a pretty woman and the tears of a poverty-stricken old widow we are compelled to carry the burden of clarifying the relation between the mood of man and the mood of the world. Our task becomes much more ambitious and we are tempted to become dogmatic. Yet we cannot be dogmatic because our philosophy, like every other philosophy, is a vision of the world, a way of understanding it to meet man's consolatory need. If science cannot overleap the bounds of probability, there is no reason for us to claim that we have arrived at certainty. We are presenting consolationism as an African philosophical hypothesis. Since our task has become more burdensome, it is only reasonable that the analysis of human joy and sadness should take us into a territory already visited by Western philosophy,

Let us take a hard look at man. He comes into the world blessed with a developed consciousness. As the baby grows its physical and mental powers are enlarged. The baby becomes a man or woman and realizes there is something called moral evil, a fearful capacity of thought. But before he thinks more deeply about the problem of evil he realizes that competition is the rule of earthly life and that he so easily despairs. He is not yet aware that his despair merely reflects the terror of the universe. His peace is completely shattered when it dawns on him that becoming old enough to marry means he is becoming old enough to die. Later he is horrified that inanimate nature too shares in his impotence, in his

grief. He is horrified to know that his solar system is also bound for death. Stricken by grief, he looks out of the window to reassure himself that the external world has not passed away, leaving him to confront his eternal solitude. The world is still there all right but no God is visible. A car pulls into the drive and he sees his wife getting out of the car. In the meantime the woman replaces God and the man rejoices as he hurries out of the house. This is love, the love of the intellect. It is not the presence of the car, a product of *mood* according to the specification of science, that has diminished this man's terror and increased his joy but the proximity of *mood* itself.

The foregoing captures the kernel of consolationism in very simple words. The following questions naturally arise:

1. Is human life worthwhile?
2. What is the relation between emotion and reason?
3. How does man stand in relation to the world?
4. If we agree that man creates value, can we not also insist there is value in the world?
5. How can we show that the universe is not pointless?
6. Can we find a place for God in a universe of terror?
7. What is the meaning of evil?
8. Why must life always be the hope and burden of advanced consciousness?

Consolationism discovered as mere immanence, man's practice in his joy and sadness, leads us to a much more ambitious rationalism, so that we see most clearly the need to root the doctrine of *mood* in a comprehensive metaphysics of terror. This metaphysics of terror will see us tackling such existentialist themes

as despair, anxiety, freedom and determinism, futility, human agony, responsibility, terror, etc. The metaphysics of terror will terminate in the ethics of consolation after we may have shown that morality is not man-made but is part of the resources of the universe which *mood* dominates. In the process of clarifying our philosophy we will give the problems of the reality of evil and the existence of God a distinctly African formulation. Our method is existential, analytical, and rationalistic. With this method we hope to at once kill and resurrect idealism. Our deep-rooted pessimism destroys idealism while the optimism that rises from this pessimism restores idealism. Our serrated monism is not a denial of diversity nor its destruction but the unification of diversity in its origin in the primordial mood. We speak here of a serrated monism because we do not go with an absolute monism. We do not assert that mind and matter are one and the same thing. Rather we think that mind and matter have their foundation in primordial mood. We do not know what exactly the nature of this primordial mood is, but we hypothesize that it is an emotional essence at the bottom of mind and matter.

If anyone objects that there seems to be a little bit of mysticism in our philosophy our response will be that as the logic of existence mysticism of one kind or the other is the pillar of the logic of the intellect. This much development in quantum physics, with its seeming irrationality, has shown. A universe which is the manifestation of the mythopoeic must remain an enigma, in the same way that God the majesty of the mythopoeic must remain a mystery to the prying intellect.

It is not our intention to pour out the content of consolationism in this paper. Not only is consolationism still a work in progress, but, also, our main aim in this paper is to trace the small progress so far recorded by African philosophy. The present author's research has shown clearly the debt he owes Asouzu and Senghor in particular and the school of ethno-philosophy in general. The results recorded by Asouzu and Senghor are of course different from my own

result. The consolationist sketch I have just presented does not promise an optimistic philosophy. Neither is it the outline of a full-blown pessimistic philosophy in the tradition of a Schopenhauer. Joy and sadness as primal elements of the mood of man have their epistemic correlates in optimism and pessimism. The malaise of man if adequately understood throws light on the tragedy of existence and the necessity of consolation. The malaise is deeper still. Man caught it from the unconscious world. This is our monism, the convergence of essences. Can man conquer his despair and realize his joy so completely that he may become happy and overcome his existential malaise? Here the question of God and our developing theodicy comes in. God is almighty not because he is absolute perfection but because he is the being who has conquered fear in Himself and overcome the malaise of existence. Thus God cannot be the originator of evil. Man cannot overcome his despair. His destiny is the destiny of consolation, not happiness. Therefore man can never be free. The notions of freedom and determinism are wishes that dissolve in the notion of fatalism. Our fatalism is not the belief that human beings can do nothing about their situation on account of some eternal decree. Our fatalism is rather the prior knowledge of the inevitability of events, whichever way they go, the necessity of their positive or negative occurrence. Fatalism does not preclude struggle. The resignation of consolationism is the resignation of ethical struggle.

Fatalism is extended to that mode of existence defined as *yearning*. It is a doctrine inspired by the existence which seems to have no reason for existing, outside the fact that it is *yearning*. Our universe is a fatalistic existence, hence its imperfection and the reality of evil. It is not a value-neutral universe. It is value-laden and indestructible. It is a fatality. Here we have found the key to the solution of the problem of evil in the world. If pessimism comes to human consciousness as the knowledge, however hazy, of the tragedy of an existence whose eternal silence is sadness, then all is not well with universal existence. But if a being has

emerged who has overcome cosmic fear (and we think such a being has emerged), then all may still be well. Man has aspired to be precisely this being that conquers despair and pessimism and becomes qualified to be honored as the glorious and powerful rather than the omniscient and omnipotent (the latter categories are applicable only in a perfect universe). It is indisputable that man has failed woefully to be transformed into God. Thus he comforts himself with a science that cannot create living forms, a religion that has not uncovered God, a philosophy that cannot refute the claims of mysticism because it is itself a consolation, an art that seeks to imitate philosophy – in other words, a practice that cannot succeed. What is this success? It is the realization of happiness.

With the doctrine of *mood* we intend to trace the existential cycle of the melancholy man of the 21st century. The melancholy man is the transformation of Senghor's emotional black man to the universal man who measures the value of his life in terms of human joy and sadness. We are of course not going to be satisfied with a purely immanent philosophy. Our metaphysics of terror will seek to capture a God of consolation, a God closer to Unamuno's personal deity than Aristotle's impersonal principle. It is monstrous for the human intellect born in the emotion of sadness to seek to imagine a God who is a mere principle of the world, an empty name. The doctrine of *mood* is in support of religion and in solidarity with science.

6. The Philosophy of Consolation in Relation to Science

What the theory of evolution, the intensely metaphysical, and, perhaps mystical, claims of quantum physics, and the findings of astronomical physics show without doubt is the interconnectedness of the universe, of animate and inanimate phenomena. The holism of modern science finds no opposition in our serrated monism. This undeniable holism challenges established notions of mechanicism. Need we frown too deeply that consolationism is a fatalistic philosophy? No. Our fatalism is the reconciliation of

freedom and necessity in the notion of *yearning*. We preserve ethics by preserving *liberty* while discarding *freedom*. Consolationist fatalism is the peace of pessimism with optimism. Science itself has revealed to us a deeply pessimistic picture of the last moments of the last men on earth, when life will die with the sun. Dolmage raises the following very touching elegy for man and the earth in the name of science:

The mere idea of the decay and death of the solar system almost brings to one a cold shudder. All that sun's light and heat, which means so much to us, entirely a thing of the past. A dark, cold ball rushing along in space, accompanied by several dark, cold balls circling ceaselessly around it. One of these a mere cemetery, in which there would be no longer any recollection of the mighty empires, the loves and hates, and all that teeming play of life which we call History. Tombstones of men and of deeds, whirling along forgotten in the darkness and silence. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*²⁴

However, consolationism is neither a scientific philosophy nor a scientifically oriented philosophy. A system that calls itself "the consolation" must be a philosophy of human existence.

7. The Philosophy of Consolation in Relation to Religion

Consolationism as a serrated monistic conception of the universe favors theism. This position agrees with the idea of God in monotheistic religions. Here we are particularly concerned with the Christian religion which conceives God as omniscient and omnipotent. But we are suspicious of the categories of omniscience and omnipotence which bring into question the goodness of God in relation to the undeniable evil in the world. Ours is not a perfect universe but a yearning universe. The outline of our new African synthesis shows clearly the basis of rationality in emotionality. A

universe such as ours is characterized in terms of consolation, not perfection. The doctrine of *mood* as the dialectic of pessimism and optimism prefers to speak of God in terms of a being of power and glory. This will set the stage for our passionate engagement with the problem of evil in the world which has cast a slur on the purity of the conception of God.

8. The Philosophy of Consolation in Relation to Western Philosophy

Our inspiration has its foundation in the African worldview. Yet we have seen the points of convergence of some of our ideas with Western philosophy. Ancient Greek philosophy endorses the idea of the eternity of matter. We prefer the idea of the eternity of *mood*. We are at a loss about how matter can precede mind. Therefore we prefer to ground both mind and matter in mood, a primitive mind, the silence which is the foundation of being and which Western philosophy identifies with non-being.

Is it possible for any philosopher in the 21st century to attempt the clarification of a metaphysical system without first digesting the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Prolegomena* of Kant? It is foolhardy ignoring that giant of thought. Kant writes:

Metaphysics is properly concerned with synthetic propositions *a priori*, and that these alone constitutes its purpose, but that, in addition to this, it requires frequent dissections of its conceptions, or analytic judgments, the procedure in this respect being only the same as in other departments of knowledge, where conceptions are sought to be made plain by analysis.²⁵

Kant's philosophy rests on the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. He thus distinguishes between transcendental logic which is adequate to his project and general logic.²⁶ The project of

Critical Philosophy, the transcendental deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding and their application, however, “does not by any means exclude such things (noumena), but rather limits the principles of aesthetics, in so far that these should not be extended to all things, whereby everything would be changed into mere appearance but that they would only be valid of objects of a possible experience”.²⁷

Kant’s demand for a body of metaphysical knowledge resting on absolutely certain grounds is too great a demand. His firm confidence in the transcendental deduction is unwarranted. Kant’s dualistic philosophy seems to grant little to ‘nature’ by way of nature possessing value in itself. Once we have defined the universe and everything in it as *yearning* it becomes obvious that nature has a value in its own right independent of human reason, with which human reason should be in solidarity. Little wonder, then, that coming shortly after Kant, Hegel asserted that reality in its parts is contradictory.²⁸ Hence his choice of the dialectical method to reconcile the parts with the perfect whole.²⁹ While we agree with the kernel of Hegel’s dialectic we do not think the total equates perfection.

Let us pass on to existentialism. The existentialist thinkers from Kierkegaard to Unamuno and from Heidegger to Sartre and Marcel all saw that the so-called rationality of the universe can only be true if this rationality is founded on emotionality. Thus they paid much attention to the notion of anxiety which according to Heidegger reveals nothingness,³⁰ the veil of being – the same concept which according to Sartre inspires *nausea* by reason of the realization that freedom means nothingness, that it reveals the complete impotence of the *in-itself* and the absence of any transcendental support for the *for-itself*.³¹ The concept of anxiety is close to us too, but we conceive it somewhat differently from the Western existentialists. For us anxiety leads man away from the despair pessimism animates towards the love of the intellect (solidarity with all things as they make for our consolation) and optimism (joy). This joy celebrated by Senghor and Asouzu is

never far from sadness. For the consolationist, anxiety is a sign of man's impossible apotheosis and the foundation of his peace in the concept of God.

9. Conclusion

It is clear by now that we have a very ambitious project in hand. We have discovered the philosophical unity that eluded Senghor and are now ready to continue from where Asouzu stopped. We have seen how our philosophy stands in relation to science, religion, and, most importantly, the Western philosophical tradition, though more work remains to be done to see how our system stands in relation to Oriental philosophies. But since philosophies of all peoples and regions are outpourings of the human mind seeking consolation, we are confident consolationism will not clash with the fundamental ideas of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and the rest. Borrowing from Asouzu, we say consolationism is African philosophy beyond African philosophy. It is a doctrine of man and for man in the 21st century of techno-emotivism, the century of terrorism and bigotry, of religious and political fundamentalism side by side with the loss of faith in God, of continuing scientific progress and persistent despair. Emotion seems to have drowned intellect in our techno-emotive century. This is a disaster. We have an explanation for this upsurge of primitive emotion. In understanding the emotional root of reason, we will better appreciate rationality in all its dimensions. Our life being what it is – consolatory existence – we cannot pretend to make a philosophy of cold logic, for logic springs into life as the balance of emotion.

Since it is the burden of philosophy to find a balance between the all-conquering emotional demand of human life and the striving of logic for balance and coherence and in agreeing with Plato's Socrates who says in the *Phaedo* that philosophy is the highest music, we present consolationism as the intellectual music of *melancholy*.

African thinkers in the field of philosophy should no longer be proud of their knowledge of Western philosophy. They should be ashamed of themselves each time they enter lecture halls to teach their students the ideas of those mighty men that made Western philosophy mankind's greatest intellectual achievement. They should lower their voices and hang their heads because they are living off the heritage of a people who believe in hard work and merit. Can our Nigerian universities burdened by an inexplicable anti-intellectualism and the philosophy departments filled with mediocre thinkers kick-start Africa's intellectual revolution? Surely a pragmatic rationalism in philosophy will positively affect all fields of knowledge in Africa and beyond. Western philosophy is as great as it is today because Western thinkers worked hard to create their mighty tradition. Africa must wake up from the intellectual slumber of decades. Plato's ideas may be universal, but Plato himself is a Western man. No Western man can think for his African counterpart.

The time has come for individual initiative to dignify the African intellect. The road is now open to creativity and rationalism. We can now shift emphasis from tribal worldviews to individual formulations that will engage both the tribe and humanity.³² It may be true that analysis has replaced systematic philosophizing in Western philosophy. But then Western thinkers have thought systems created by their past philosophers which they can analyze for ever. We in Africa are not in the same position. We must build our thought systems first before settling down to mere analysis. The last original Western thinker died, perhaps, with Jean-Paul Sartre. The world will hardly see a Plato, an Aristotle, and a Kant again; and the West may not again be able to produce original thinkers like Plotinus, Spinoza, Descartes, Hume, Berkeley, Spencer, Mill, Husserl, Unamuno, Bergson, James, Heidegger, Whitehead, Russell, Marcel, Sartre, etc, but Africa can because we have not exhausted our creative energies. We have not even begun to exploit the resources locked up in our minds. But we can start now.

Notes

¹ See M.A. Makinde, “Teaching Philosophy in Africa,” *Teaching Philosophy*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (September 1987): 235– 36; D.A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of an Identity* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994); Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology Beyond World-Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction and Impositions* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 176f.

² J. Obi, Oguejiofor, “Historiography of African Philosophy: The Journey so Far” (paper presented at the 2008 Biennial Conference and Meeting of the Nigerian Philosophical Association held at the University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria, from October 8 – 11, 2008).

³ See Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and the African Experience: The Contributions of Kwasi Wiredu* (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1996), 19.

⁴ Consolation philosophy is still very much the unknown system of a young Nigerian thinker. It is a system of constructive philosophy priding itself as a serrated monism in solidarity with the existentialist, rationalist, and analytical traditions of the West in which all African philosophers are educated. Consolation philosophy is a highly original and individual system. Intense work is ongoing in the systematization and thorough elucidation of this philosophy in my book *Existence and Consolation*. So far my research has been undertaken independent of institutional support. For raw information about consolationism, see my article “Towards the 21st Century Globalization of African Philosophy,” *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 7, No 2 (2010): 99 – 106. Another helpful paper “The Consolationist Manifesto and the New Testament from Africa” is available at http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/agada_consolationist_manifesto.htm.

⁵ See Innocent Onyewuenyi, *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*. (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1993). Onyewuenyi presents an interesting but polemical investigation of the link between Egyptian thought and such Greek thinkers as Pythagoras, Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle.

⁶ J. C. A. Agbakoba, "On the African Origin of Philosophy," *Uche*, Vol. 10 (2004): 61 – 67. For Agbakoba, cultures borrow from one another, the later from the earlier, until the picture becomes unclear. He also thinks the Greeks contributed originally and immensely to philosophy. Paying homage to Greek analytical genius, he pleads for the triumph of scholarship over polemics. Agbakoba is in fact indicting African philosophy for its barrenness and rejecting any attempt to escape into a fool's paradise in the guise of looking back to a past glory whose trace we cannot find today.

⁷ Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuaru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy Beyond African Philosophy* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 53.

⁸ Egbeke Aja, "African Philosophy: Conceptions and Problems," *Nsukka Journal of the Humanities*, No 10 (1999): 105.

⁹ Jacques Derrida, "Of the Humanities and Philosophical Discipline: The Right to Philosophy from the Cosmopolitan Point of View (the Example of an International Institution)," *Surfaces*, Vol. IV, 310, Folio 1 (1994) <http://pum12.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol4/deridaa.html> (accessed June 23, 2004).

¹⁰ J. S Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 1ff.

¹¹ See, for instance, the Yoruba myth of creation. This myth tells us that God sent Obatala with a calabash full of earth and a chicken to

create the world. Alas Obatala got drunk on his way from heaven and Oduduwa took the creation tools from him and continued the journey alone. The earth was formless, being mere water. Oduduwa sprinkled earth on the water and the chicken scattered the earth in all directions with its feet. Thus the earth came to be. This story of the creation of the world and its infancy is not in conflict with the creation stories of monotheistic religions (e.g., Christianity) and science. It is also not in conflict with the idea of the eternity of the world. For more comments on this myth and other African creation myths, see Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Macmillan, 1963); J. S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (London: SPCK, 1975). The ethno-philosopher analyzes these myths and digs out hidden notions of the eternity of matter, creation out of nothing, evil, necessity, etc, in the light of Western philosophy. The task before the consolationist thinker and all other original African thinkers is the universalization of particulars in a manner so original that this universalization at once disengages from, and yet engages, Western philosophy.

¹² Many African scholars tend to agree that the mind is conceived both dualistically and in a quasi-materialistic sense and rarely materialistically in African traditional thought. The mind interacts with the body though distinct from it. To escape the Cartesian problem of interaction the notion of quasi-materialism or quasi-physicalism is postulated by scholars like Wiredu. See Kwasi Wiredu, “The Concept of Mind with Particular Reference to the Language and Thought of the Akans,” in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*, ed. Guttorm Floistad (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 160 – 63; Kwame Gyekye, “The Concept of a Person,” in *Philosophy and Choice*, ed. Kit R. Christenson (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999), 215 – 25; M. P. Edeh, *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola University Press, 1999), 83; B. Hallen and O. Sodipo, *Knowledge, Beliefs and Witchcraft: Analytical Experiments in African Philosophy* (London:

Ethnographica, 1986), 105; M. W. Anshi, “The Concept of the Person in Tiv Philosophy” (paper presented at the Biennial Conference and Meeting of the Nigerian Philosophical Association held at the University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria, from October 8 – 11, 2008).

¹³ See Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

¹⁴ Miguel de. Unamuno, *Tragic Sense of Life*, trans. J. E. Crawford Fritch (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1954), Conclusion, <http://manybooks.net/categories/phi> (accessed September 6, 2011).

¹⁵ See F. O. C. Njoku, *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought & Theology* (Nekede, Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 2002), 49.

¹⁶ Njoku, *Essays*, 49 – 50.

¹⁷ J.O. Sodipo, “Philosophy in Africa Today,” *Thought and Practice*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1975): 117.

¹⁸ Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuaru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy Beyond African Philosophy* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 48.

¹⁹ Innocent Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative,” <http://frasouzu.com/Issues and Papers/Asouzu - The complementary comprehensive noetic alternative.htm> (accessed September 22, 2011).

²⁰ Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative.”

²¹ Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative.”

²² Innocent Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative,” <http://frasouzu.com/Issues and Papers/Asouzu - The>

complementary comprehensive noetic alternative.htm (accessed September 22, 2011).

²³ Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuaru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy Beyond African Philosophy* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 59.

²⁴ Cecil G. Dolmage, *Astronomy of Today*, 3rd edition (London: Seeley and Co. Ltd, 1910) <http://manybooks.net/categories/phi> (accessed September 22, 2011).

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena*, in *Prolegomena and Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Sciences*, 3rd edition, trans. Ernest Belfort Bax (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891), Sect 4, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/361.html> (accessed August 13, 2011).

²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd ed., trans. F. Max Müller (New York: Macmillan, 1922), Division 1, Bk II, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1442.html> (accessed August 13, 2011). Bk II of the first division is concerned with the “Analytics of Principles.” See chapter two of the second book of the second division for “The Antinomy of Pure Reason.” These books throw light on Kant’s idea of the valid and invalid use of reason.

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena*, in *Prolegomena and Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Sciences*, 3rd edition, trans. Ernest Belfort Bax (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891), Sect 32, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/361.html> (accessed August 13, 2011).

²⁸ F. G. W. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. J. B. Baillie and C. J. Freyler, in *The Philosophy of Hegel*, ed. C. J. Friedrich (New York: Random House, 1953), 399 – 439.

²⁹ Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 214 – 49.

³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), Part 1, Division 1, VI, 225 – 42.

³¹ J-P Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1966), Part 4, Ch 1, III, 707 – 711.

³² See Kwasi Wiredu, “Toward Decolonizing African Philosophy and Religion,” *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol 1, Issue 4 (1998) <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v1/4/3.htm> (accessed November 23, 2011).