

# The Major Trends in the Development of African Philosophy in the Contemporary World\*

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**Abstract**—This article focuses on African philosophy issues, ideas and the major trends of its development in the contemporary world. It's emphasized that one of the main trends in the development of African philosophy in the contemporary world is the search for African identity, ideas of African renaissance. The development of African philosophy in the early and mid-twentieth century had the immense influence of the anti-colonial movement, which resulted in rapid development tie socio-political movements. The article discusses the most influential of them, such as negritude, Pan-Africanism, African socialism, etc.

**Keywords**—*African philosophy; Africa idea; African identity; negritude; Pan-Africanism; ethnophilosophy*

## I. INTRODUCTION

African philosophy has a rich and varied history; its roots can be traced more, starting with the dynastic culture of the Egypt and, later, directly before the development of the largest regional philosophical traditions in Northern Africa, western Africa, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa.

If we talk about African philosophy in its general form, it can be defines as the philosophy of the African peoples, representing their worldview, which are completely different, including the original methods of philosophizing of whatever, for the major parts of the present African philosophers are engaged in defining ethnophilosophical parameters of African philosophy and what differentiates or make it different from other philosophical traditions.

## II. SPECIFICS OF THE AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

African philosophy has its own specific object of study, its own specific ways for explanations of the formation and development of human life generally (physical, spiritual and mental) as in the social and natural world, and in his own personal, historical and social cultivated world. Ways and methods of understanding the philosophical problems of the African philosophy are cardinally different from western and eastern philosophy. The philosophy of Africa has original interpretations of the categories of time and space, about

relations of man and society.

One of the main disagreements in the interpretation of the concept of "African philosophy" is actually the interpretation of the term "African": what does it mean? — The content of philosophy, the distinctive methods used, or the community of philosophers? Some researchers admit that philosophy can be considered African in the case if it includes such topics as ethnicity in the perception of personality, time, space and other concepts, or it uses methods that can be defined as Africans.

The Nigerian philosopher Joseph I. Omorebe the philosopher is defined as the person who is trying/attempts to understand the phenomena of the world and the place of man in this world, the purpose of human and natural existences, that is what brings together African and classical philosophy.

In this paper/work, the central focus is on the ideas of the development of African philosophy in the cotemporary world and the major trends of its development. As a philosophical problem, the idea of development received a theoretical formulation and began to be deliberately discussed in the modern time. It is in this era that an understanding of the development of philosophy as enrichment is formed, fields of philosophical problems and its categorical apparatus.

Applied to the history of philosophy, the idea of development as a progressive dispute between some scholars (primarily in the philosophy of postmodernism), it offers excellent schemes and models of awareness from the genesis of the historical and philosophical process. In particular, the proposed concept of nonlinear development, in which the sequence of philosophical systems is not reflected progressive translation of philosophical thought, since these systems have a self-contained sign as well as they do not become obsolete and are not updated.

This provision has often been used to separates and contradicts the developed and undeveloped philosophical systems, in particular, Western and Eastern. For example, the categories of subject, subject-object relation arise in the European classical philosophy itself, at a late stage of its development, thus show about her maturity. However, for example, in Chinese or Indian philosophy, they can't have

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articulated principle, since the central idea of these philosophical systems is the idea of unity of human and the world.

Practically the same can be said about African philosophy. The development of African philosophy in the early and mid-twentieth century had huge influence of anti-colonial movement, resulting in a resonance on the African continent, and in general in the global historical and philosophical process. The development of African philosophy is largely associated with the so-called African Renaissance.

### III. AFRICAN RENAISSANCE IN PHILOSOPHY

The revival of the African continent and its philosophy is not just the physical or material revival, but also spiritual and psychological revival. It's a spiritual transformation, a consciousness of African identity, its basis or ways of thinking and understanding the world, cultural relationships and worldview. One of the major features of these processes is that, they occur in a dynamic developing world in the context of a globalizing world.

As a rule, the concept of Revival (or Renaissance) is usually referred to the development of the Western European philosophy of XIV-XVII centuries, although similar stages were observed in other cultures, including in the East (Muslim Renaissance). In the history of world culture, the Italian Renaissance is most famous, but there was also a northern Renaissance. Different researchers put different contents into this concept, but the three characteristic feature types of cultural Renaissance, that was noted by almost all researchers.

First of all, the Renaissance is characterized as the revival of ancient sciences and arts. Another major feature of cultural Renaissance is considered to be their secular, anticlerical orientation, and in close connection with this is the development of rationalism in both philosophy and science. And finally, the Renaissance is characterized by the promotion of a human person or individual as center of the universe, which is referred to as a humanism and realism inherent in this era.

Practically all these features of the Renaissance processes can be observed in the African Renaissance. The first of all reflected in the search for the origins of African philosophy, in search of the ancient Egyptian roots of African philosophy and their influence on the development of ancient Greek philosophy, as well as in the development of the concept of African philosophy as ethnophilosophy.

Most literatures on African philosophy were decided to begin with a question of discussions about the nature of African philosophy itself. The African continent has two main regions: North Africa and Africa from south to Sahara's, with very different political and cultural histories. North African philosophers have made significant contributions to the development of Greek, Jewish, Islamic and Christian philosophy and left a lot of written works in several languages. In sub-Saharan Africa in the era of becoming philosophical science, there was no written

language and sacred books. There are about three thousand different tribal groups in sub-Saharan Africa, each with its own belief system, language and cultural traditions; Many groups have similar concepts and traditions, but there is no single faith or idea that can be considered common throughout Africa. Due to the lack of written texts, this set of beliefs can be understood in two ways: by studying religions and cultures of different nations, and by studying their oral history and folklore that repeats from generation to generation.

The second trend has found its vivid embodiment in the religious and political renaissance. Politicians and scientists are discussing, in essence, the same problems: "The difference between "civilization" and "Christianity", on the one hand, and "primitivism" and "Paganism", on the other hand, and the methods of "evolution" or "transition" from the first stage of development to the second ... Both discourses are the ideological explanation of compulsory involvement of Africans in a new historical formation. Basically, they are reductionist. Both discourses do not so much discuss on the problems of Africa and Africans as justify the process of mastering and conquest of the continent and the definition of its primitive and abiding in chaos, as well as the subsequent means of its operation and the method of its "revival".

The most important ingredients of European colonization were the missionaries who rendered a great cultural influence on Africans. From XV to XIX centuries, the three major figures determined the forms and paces of mastery, colonization and transformation of the "black continent": researcher, soldier and missionary. The latter acted as a sign and symbol of a new cultural model. The missionaries carried out the "Divine" mission prescribed by the papal bulls: to eradicate paganism and spread Christianity in all open lands.

It is obvious that the ideas of the Universal African Revival are a completely logical reaction. On the processes of world globalization, which in the present conditions do not have their development, but in spite of all the obstacles, they have the embodiments.

The concept of the Universal African Renaissance in its significance and scale could become the head of events of the XXI century. The embodiment of the ideas of self-determination, the departure from the colonial past, of course, could give the desired vector of development, both in the spheres of political and social life of the continent, but, unfortunately, they remained unfulfilled / unrealized.

### IV. PROSPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

The study of African philosophy is of particular interest. This is explained by the fact that the countries of this continent have passed a different path of development. Since the discovery of the mainland, the states located on it have considered Subscribes and exists as colonies of European countries, i.e. they were ruled by the metropolis, which established its political and economic power. In addition to the negative impact of the metropolis which had favoured the

course of the Europeans that came with the European cultures and values, which ultimately led to the struggles for the independence. Getting freedom from the metropolis was a new impetus for the development of philosophical views already taking into account the African identity and European culture and values. One of the main trends in the development of African philosophy in the contemporary world is search for African identity.

Identifying the trends in the development of African philosophy in the contemporary world is a difficult task. The study of African philosophy currently includes four periods:

- Early period (1920-1960);
- The middle period (1960 - 1980);
- Late period (1980 - 1990);
- New era (from 1990 to the present time).

The early period of the development of African philosophy is associated with the development of the scholars aimed at the extraction and restoration of African identity. Ethnophilosophy and school based on ideas of nationalism. The second period went down in history under the name afro-constructivism and afro- deconstruction. This period was marked by rivalry of schools - traditionalists and universalists.

The late period of African philosophy foreshadows the emergence of movements that It can be called a reconstruction of critical theology and afro-eclecticism. The conversational philosophy has become the focus of attention of the new era. Conversational philosophy determines the active participation of individual African philosophers, in creating critical narration by attracting elements of tradition. This demonstrates the post modernization of African philosophy.

The search for African identity, its roots and specificity has increased pace/effort with the acquisition of independence of the African countries. The ideas of the identity of African civilization initiated a number of socially-political trends of such concepts as Pan-Africanism, negritude, African socialism, African humanism, Afrocentrism and others that have a serious influence on African political life. A new powerful incentive to intensify the efforts of African scientists and politicians in this direction was the idea of the African Renaissance described above.

The emergence of many socio-political concepts can be named the second important trend of the development of African philosophy in the contemporary world. It is also an essential part of the deconstruction of the idea of Africa. In its present form, the idea of Africa forms a complex structure, "consisting of different and often traditional ingredients: African tradition, Islam, colonization and Christianity ... In its applied manifestations, this idea is a product of complex and constantly updated hypotheses and interactions between multi-valued events/concepts, ethnos, nations, individuals and humanity, and those Who uses treat interprets or applies in practice these terms. This idea is defined by a complex

system of intellectual experience in which you can choose and emphasize some aspects as, consciously or accidentally, forget or at least minimize other aspects.

Let us turn to the position of the Kenyan philosopher Odera Orika, who complements the traditional idea, suggested a typology of tendencies in contemporary African philosophy. So, he highlighted the following trends:

- Ethnophilosophy;
- Philosophical insight;
- Nationalistic ideological;
- Professional philosophy.
- Further, Orika added:
- Hermeneutic philosophy;
- Artistic or literary philosophy.

According to Orika, the latter means not only philosophical reflections, spontaneously from time to time, growing out of the creative spirit of modern Africa, for which can be serves as "Myth, literature and the African world" Wole Soyinka, but also implicit philosophy hidden in poems, plays, novels and other works of art.

Oruka, in its typology, symbolizes the meaning of the value of the intense interaction between professional philosophy, on one hand, art and literature, on the other hand as sources of intellectual wealth. This method is relatively new to (the majority) Africa, showing that African philosophy should be carried out by the Africans themselves and applied to (be possible, and not only) to the problems of African countries (M. Touva).

The hermeneutic approach to African philosophy is presented by T. Serekerberhan, O. Okolo, F. Fanon, L. Harris, L. Utlav and V.Y. Mudimbe, where living experience is taken as a starting point, since the life of Africans attempts to overcome the effects of European cultural and economic imperialism.

Thus, the main goal of African philosophy, according to representatives of the hermeneutics approach is to achieve relief from injuries sustained by the European hegemony. Traditional beliefs and oral discourse are valuable not only in themselves, but also in relation to the contribution they make to this exemption.

## V. CONCLUSION

The engagement of the peoples of Africa in the processes of globalization has revealed new problems of the African philosophy. First of all are the problems of understanding and interpretation. The diversity of languages in the continent, which one locality or region can speak several dialects, it is reasonable to raise the question of understanding the owner of one language (Zulu, hausa, or ha) features of another (spit, Yoruba, or Akan?). The difficulties associated with the transfer of new research methods and their adaptation with reference to African conditions, for becoming African discourse.

The formation of humanistic values and ideas in the adoption of the global form of humanity occurs in different ways. There may be a wrong impression that politicians play a major role in this process. Political leaders, mostly communicate internationally. However, the formation of common values is an objective cultural and historical process. Reflective role in this process is played by the value forms of consciousness - philosophy, religion, art. The special role of philosophy is that, it's capable of dieting, flexible to speculate on the universal level of cultures and to explicate them explicitly (in clear font or ways).

Africans (both living in and out of Africa) works actively and forcefully, they make a significant contribution to the development of various spheres of modern cultures and nations. However, for Eurocentric African studies, African still remains "non-historical, prelogical and archaistic elements of human evolution".

The well-known African Philosopher P. Hauntongi proclaimed that the real globalization has not yet taken place. According to him, what is existing now is called global society. In reality, it's a new colonial regime of European imperialism, a significant imbalance and inequality of cultures. Modern globalization is only a historical form of European conquest, but already expanded due to the conquest of other non-European cultures by the Western civilization.

Creating a unified global world that is based on its development on non-Western cultural attitudes and values, is a real alternative to the existing globalization. Since the birth of African history and philosophy as a scientific discipline, their main line is clearly traced - the desire to emphasize their peculiarity and independence. It is in this channel that African philosophy should develop further.

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