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**PHILOSOPHY AND BREAD ON THE TABLE  
REFLECTIONS ON EXISTENCE AND ESSENCE OF BEING**

**By**

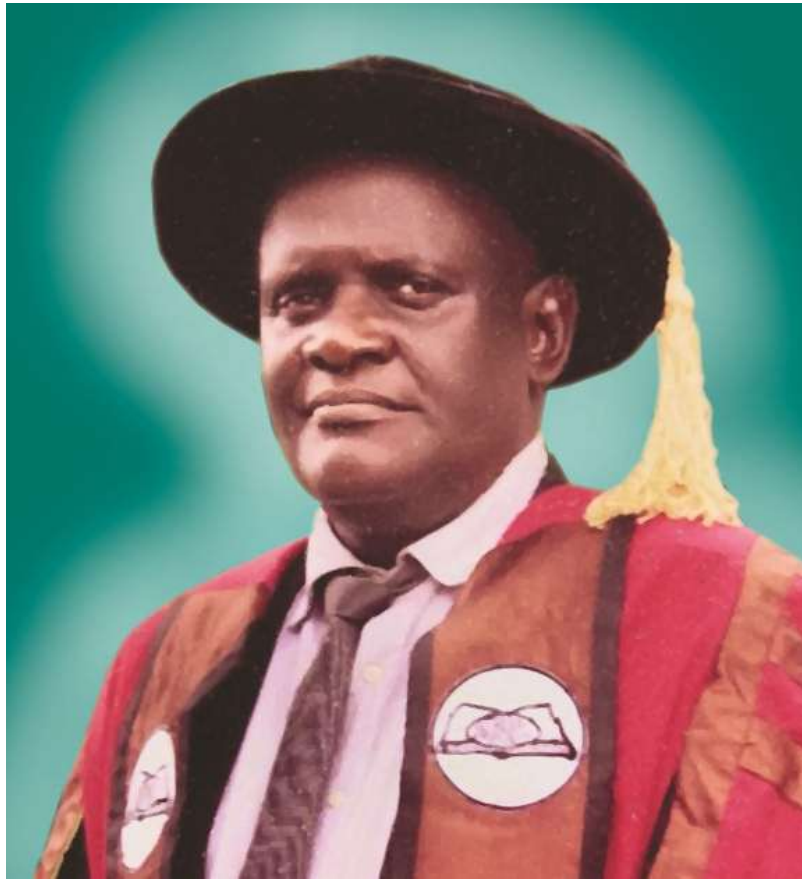
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## **PHILOSOPHY AND BREAD ON THE TABLE REFLECTIONS ON EXISTENCE AND ESSENCE OF BEING**

### **Introduction**

This inaugural lecture, to all intent and purpose, is a celebration of academic culture and one's odyssey, trajectory and contributions to knowledge. If indeed, academic and scholarship should pass through one and not one passing through it, then this brings to the fore, the discipline that I profess, that is "philosophy", since 2006, and capping it all today as an inaugural lecture in philosophy.

My anxiety and concern about this single most important historical discipline is the muted and voiced negative narratives about its relevance to the scientific age. Yet, as a systematic thinking and thinking formula that has shaped civilizations up till this digital era, philosophical reflection is an activity of man's cognitive endowment. Reflection is a privileged cognitive capacity: it is a privileged cognitive activity of man which thinkers and professional philosophers perform extraordinarily as gad-flies. This has propelled the trajectories of my researches to defending and propagating philosophy as the *primus-interperus* of civilization and progenitor of sciences.

It is no surprise, therefore, that when Professor Tunji Olaopa wrote an article in the *Sunday, Guardian, November 16, 2014* titled: *Philosophy and the national question*, he critically raised the issue of philosophy not providing bread on table like the sciences and, challenged philosophers to prove otherwise as the world celebrated the world philosophy day that year. According to him, "the World Philosophy Day" is not a day that many people all over the world would take cognizance of and the reason is not far-fetched... philosophy is an invisible abstract discipline whose relevance is grossly contested all over the world..." (Olaopa, 2014). By this singular remark, though more of a question that requires an answer, this thinker, retired federal permanent secretary and now a university professor, reignited the question of philosophy as a reflective tool globally in the spirit of which UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was founded.

The challenge was not only to my researches but also to philosophy from cradle of civilizations. Hence in response to Professor Tunji Olaopa's article I reacted in my article, *Philosophy, more than the bread on the table* published in the *Guardian, Thursday, December, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014*, in defense of 'philosophical sagacity' as against 'poverty of philosophy' which in Olaopa's interpretation is inability of philosophy to 'bake bread' or 'provide bread on the table'. Drawing from Olaopa's essay, many would see Wittgenstein's epistemological statement, "I know there is a tree" as a mark of insanity, but it is not but a piece of ontology. On reflection it is this kind of epistemological and ontological statement extant in different cultures that is being sought for celebration on UNESCO World Philosophy day, November, every year and where the "relevance of philosophy to the society is the extent to which the core arrears in philosophy namely, logic, epistemology, metaphysics and ethics are expressed implicitly and explicitly in national life..." (Dukor, 2014). Let's not forget that UNESCO was born out of a philosophical, ethical and moral interrogation about the condition of the world..." (Dukor, 2011) and by the way, let not us not forget that philosophy is monarch of all disciplines and the interrogator of all of them. Therefore, UNESCO, on world philosophy days, celebrates and imbibes philosophical values of critical and scientific thinking which precedes bread on the table in all universities, among nations and cultures as well as in private and public spaces all over the world.

Upon reflection and in accordance with the critical and interrogative canon of philosophy and like a gad-fly, I perched on the tenterhooks of COVID-19 only to discover its dilemma in Africa as the problem of bread on the table. Hence I published an article in the *Sun Newspapers*, 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2020, titled: *COVID-19, philosophy and food on the table*. In this paper, Africa or black race, in the context of the pandemic, scrambles for the bread on the table of the masters of the universe, the master-race without reflecting on the philosophy behind every evil and subsequent actions of the master race. I asserted as follows “the black race is a vulnerable race, the poorest of the poor races without philosophy, presumptively without thinking capacity, eating from the droplets from the table of the advanced races... the droplets from the table of the masters of the universe are killer-aids and donations, efficient in killing like the droplets of CIVID-19 from the nose and mouth of a patient. The image of the droplets infesting the other is a metaphor of how Africa is to be deceased...” (Dukor, 2020). In Africa and, particularly Nigeria, during the COVID 19 Pandemic bread supply to cushion economic depression captured news headlines in the national dailies, but upon reflection this is not an end in itself because the masters of the universe (thinkers) were ahead of bread dilemma, thinking of how to be safe and at the same time dominate the world because for them philosophy is more than the bread on the table. These are reflections and conversations on philosophy and bread on the table, but upon reflections again the burden is upon philosophy to take a categorical stand on the question of bread on the table. A categorical answer to a question may not be logically sound but philosophy as the canon and monarch of all disciplines stands tall over the rest to say yes or no with respect to the provision of the bread on the table based on ontological divides between Essence and Existence and Rationalism and Empiricism.

A re-examination of the Existentialism’s doctrine that “existence precedes essence” and a re-affirmation of the principle of Essentialism (essence precedes existence) will be tailored thematically taking into considerations Western philosophy and science and African philosophy and scientific thoughts according to this schematic order:

- The question of philosophy more than the food on the table
- UNESCO and Scepticism
- Essence and existence
- Essence and substance
- The dilemma of empiricism
- Knowledge and bread corruption
- Philosophical logic interrogating truth in science
- Essence of Science and Technology
- The essence of Quantum gravity
- Essence of the universe
- The essence of African philosophy
  - Philosophy study and African philosophy
  - Theistic panpsychic Universe
  - Heliocentric fourth-dimensional space-time reversibility
  - Theistic cosmogenic Geometry
  - Essence of cause and effect
  - Language, predication and theory
  - African literature and freedom
  - Essence and value creation

### **The question of philosophy, more than the bread on a table**

The question of philosophy being more than the bread on the table in the 21st century is a subject matter that has been affirming and re-affirming its relevance from one century to the other. It is no less relevant in the age of climate change, small arms and light weapons proliferation, wars, conflicts, hunger, global economic recession, natural and unnatural disasters, physical and metaphysical evils, post *ebola*, post corona virus and so on even as the world is in danger or in the precipice into Bermuda Triangle or the Abyss of the unknown, which Christians call “the end of time”.

This is, however, attributable to inability of man to unanimously re-assert the place of philosophy as a second order discipline and to prioritize essence over existence and proclaim a 21st century essentialism as a critical recipe to the troubles humanity is facing today. Essentialism is a philosophical theory ascribing ultimate reality to essence embodied in a thing perceptible to the senses like bread on the table and all the sciences and technologies that go with it. Parmenides, the ancient Greek philosopher, was among the first to propose an ontology of reality. But the statement that existence precedes essence is a central claim of existentialism which reverses the traditional philosophical view that essence is more fundamental than existence, the fact of beingness.

Our task is a regurgitation of the logic of philosophy and bread on the table, a non-disputable relation in the classical period, and for that good reason Martin Heidegger argues that essence of technology is not something we make, it is a mode of being, or of revealing. This means that technological things have their own novel kind of presence, endurance and connections among parts and wholes. They have their own ways of presenting themselves and the world in which they operate. When Heidegger states that “the essence of technology is by no means anything technological” he meant that technology’s driving force is not located in machines themselves, not even in the various human activities that are associated with modern modes of production. While Heidegger is implying that essence is not something we make, Nietzsche is saying that essence is not “logged in the heart of things; essence is not something *eidetic* or ontological... is a view, a perspective, a position taken with regard to the thing on the basis of something other than itself” (Nietzsche, 1995:223). In other words, while Heidegger says essence is a mode of revealing or of being, Nietzsche says it is an imposition, a perspective. Either views, essence or ontology, is the mode of being or thing-in-itself. Both are discussing ontology and contradicting themselves by not denying ontology. Therefore, we hereby wish to argue that the meaning of “existence precedes essence” does not upturn ontology or essence as the predicate of existence. Hence, the existentialists may assert that existence precedes essence but they were all in search of essence like the idealists, the rationalists and the empiricists.

### **UNESCO and Skeptics**

Technology or bread on the table has an anthropological origin or value. That is why UNESCO re-enacted philosophy’s roles in the ancient Greek, African and Egyptian civilizations in reaction to (1) lopsided world cultural order (2) 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries colonialism (3) post-colonial lopsided political and economic world order underscored by imperialism (4) religious fundamentalism (5) democratic voices and agitation across the globe (6) the post modern spirit of multiculturalism and (7) the eclipse of philosophical studies by the sciences (Dukor, 2014:16).

To restore order in the world of disorder and man's inhumanity to man, the U.N, (founded upon the superstructure of philosophy of plurality and unity of mankind), through its wing, UNESCO, renews the ancient tradition of "man know thyself" that tenaciously remains the bedrock of man's humanity to man. It goes further to recognize this maxim in all cultures, albeit, in the postmodern spirit, yet with the indispensable role of critical thinking, innovation and transformation of cultures in interface with science and technology for the benefit of man. UNESCO, by the of celebration of Philosophy promotes epistemology, values and ontology so that science and technological discoveries would no longer be the exclusive traditions of one race; a tacit admission that, 'essence', ontology, is the predicate of existence, science and technology, because existence precedes essence only because, physically, it is in search of essence.

Yet, skeptics and agnostics misinterpret philosophy and wallow in poverty of mind. When Ludwig Wittgenstein said, "This is called a leaf", it is a statement of fact but Ludwig Wittgenstein used it to draw attention to indubitable question over certainty in knowledge, the forerunner of science and technology (*Wittgenstein*, 1999:173). But a skeptic would see him as "insane" because he seems to be overemphasizing a common sense. What the statement re-echoes is the second order and critical attitude of philosophy that preceded the Enlightenment and all its scientific configurations. Hence philosophical enterprise or study is not absurd or insignificant. Philosophy is a blueprint for rational goals, science, technology and economics. If existence precedes essence, it is only in the material space (Euclidean space), not in the fourth dimensional space where essence is the predicate of existence. UNESCO, by promoting multiculturalism and epistemological ontology in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, has, therefore, countered the skeptics.

### **Essence and Existence**

Contemporary philosophers and thinkers have, like the ancient Greek philosophers continued to ask these questions; "what is everything made of? How do things come into being, change and pass away?" (Warner, 1958:9). These questions are increasingly irresistible in spite of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth industrial revolutions. This is because the bread is baked and the bread is on the table, but the humanity is in crisis, the essence of existence is missing, the substance is elusive, there are contradictions in existence and the values are in conflict. What is the way forward? Where is the beacon, the torch light? Is it the bread? Or philosophy? As materialism's influence increases, science acquires *dejour* sovereignty over philosophy, the rest of humanities and arts. This is, even as the key words and concepts of humanity-essence, existence, substance, nature, culture and values, - jostle science and human intellect alike.

Philosophy and science have been in a close battle over supremacy and the latter is dangling the carrot of mammon to the overwhelmed and overwhelming majority in the world. At the beginning, philosophy, an all-inclusive discipline and name for all branches of inquiry into human and earthly existence, had asked; what is the substance? Non-philosophers have disagreed on this, but only philosophy has consistently and paradoxically affirmed the substantiality of "existence precedes essence" as the existentialists would hold or "essence precedes existence" as the idealist would hold. However, "essence" is the primacy and substantiality of "existence", as the substance is the defining principle of existence. In the equations of life where "substantiality" is the primacy of existence, "existence precedes essence" is philosophically significant as

“essence precedes existence” is philosophically true. When Protagoras says, “man is the measure of all things” (Russell, 1946:83) he is into a philosophical enterprise. Therefore, “existence proceeding essence” is a philosophical enterprise in search of substantiality. Then what is substantiality?

### Essence and Substance

Substance existentially buttresses the point that philosophy precedes the bread on the table. This substance, otherwise, known as reality, is conceived differently by different Greek philosophers. From the cacophony and multiplicity of views on reality among the ancient Greeks, Plato, the pupil of Socrates says that reality or substance is the form of things or particulars and not matter (Plato Republic). But for Aristotle, reality is the natural world around us; there is no abstract form of platonic reality because for him substance is an individual real thing which is made up of two dimensions, its form and matter, otherwise called hylomorphism (Aristotle, 1958:110). St Thomas Aquinas conceived substance to be of three distinct categories; the divine which is God, the spiritual which is intellectual substance represented by angels and the material substances which include things, animals, vegetables and minerals (Aquinas, 1950:320). On the other hand, George Hegel, the German philosopher, would regard the absolute spirit, which is divine, as the substance from where history of individuals and nations are determined (Hegel, 1946:666). Another rationalist and 17<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher Rene Descartes defines substance as “a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence”, which is ‘I’ which he justified by his *Cogito-Ego-Sum* “I think, therefore, I am,” (Descartes, 1979:49) and which he supposed has connection and interaction with the body, the basis upon which Telepathy and Psychokinesis are predicated.

For Baruch Spinoza, a Jew, a substance exists and it is only and only God since there cannot be two or more substances and everything else is a mode of his Being (Spinoza, 1949:41, 248). The great contemporary Jew scientist, Albert Einstein found the concept of God in Spinoza very appealing in the following sentences: “I believed in Spinoza’s God who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists”, “The cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest driving force behind scientific research” and “God does not play a dice with the world” (Isaacson, 199:22). In the same vein, just as Cartesian Dualism with its thinking substance and extended body (matter) formed the philosophical foundation of Quantum mechanics of Isaac Newton in modern science, the Spinoza substance in one and only one God or nature, otherwise known as pantheism, formed the philosophical foundation of contemporary science especially the General Relativity Theory of Albert Einstein.

In contemporary philosophy “existence proceeds essence” is shared, by existentialists as the cardinal principle or central theme of existentialism; but conceived differently by Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche, Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers and Jean Paul Sartre. Yet it is doubtful whether Heidegger’s interpretation of Being and Time supports the claim by the mainstream Existentialism that “existence precedes essence”. He interpreted Being through time and vice-versa. For him *Dasein* is life, excitement and anxiety. Yet according to him, *Dasein* is temporality (time) in essence. The three-fold ontological structure of *Dasein* portrays essence as existentiality, *Thrownness* and *Fallenness*. Existence represents the phenomenon of the future, *Thrownness* describes *Dasein*’s past condition and *Fallenness* refers to the phenomenon of *Dasein*’s present. Therefore, the idea of the future, the past and the present is a transcendent horizon that

gives meaning to Being within which Dasein (human) is defined. This is the essence of life and existence that precedes everything. For Heidegger's Existential phenomenology, the essence of truth is concealed by life and existence. The existence or encounter of scientific fact, is *unconcealment*, *unhiddenness*, uncovering, *uncoveredness* and opening or listening or presence. Therefore, Heidegger phenomenological ontology is paradoxically an exposition of essence preceding existence with unintended advocacy of substantiality of existence. This is also true of Karl Jaspers, whose "action without thought is blind" is an exposition of the primacy of essence over existence.

From philosophical canvas, every object and being has a substance which, as it were, predates, precedes and more than, the bread on the table. The empiricist would, however, admire the "Table" but the idealist would admire the "Tableness": i.e. something beyond the Table. The Tableness is the substance much as the substance is the essence of existence in the manner in which philosophy does not bake bread but is more than the bread. The baking of the bread or bread on the table, therefore, has these corresponding predicates, "bakness", "breadness" and "tableness" as the essences or substances that produced the bread on the table. In the same manner the substance is the 'thing-in-itself' or the "tness" of a thing which is defined and articulated by philosophy, otherwise called the "idea" or substance or idea of every human pursuit and object. Hence, "if existence precedes essence" is true in baking of the bread, then what is the essence of the existence? It is the substance, the "bakingness" of the bread encapsulated in the concept.

### **The Dilemma of Empiricism**

The fact that "man know thyself" cuts across cultures with the same proposition, lays bare the primordial reality that "essence proceeds existence", that philosophy preceded "scarce and want" as well as the bread on earth. The severing of the symmetry between "philosophy" and "scarce or want" can be said to be logically responsible, for instance, the Nigeria's social, religious, economic and political problems especially the yet to be bridged gulfs between the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani, in the leadership tussles and in the hard choices and decisions that face Nigeria's economy, till date. This constitute the problem of existence encapsulated in the adage mentioned above and which solution lies in thinking and reflection, otherwise, encapsulated in Cartesian philosophy, "I think, therefore I am."

The dilemma of bread on the table is foreshadowed by the dilemma of Empiricism. Empiricism is problematic or in dilemma because of W.V.O Quin's two dogmas of Empiricism namely: a belief in some fundamental cleavage between truths which are analytical or grounded in meanings independent of matters of fact and truths which are synthetic, or grounded in fact; the other dogma is reductionism; the belief that each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct upon terms which refer to immediate experience. These two dogmas differed with Kant's cleavage between analytical and synthetic truths, Hume's distinction between relation of ideas and matters of fact and Leibniz's distinction between truth of reason and truths of fact (Quine, 1999:171) by blurring the boundary between metaphysics and natural science and bridging the gap between ideas and facts as well as the meaningful statements and objects in the external world (Quine, 1999:171), and by implication supposed a logical stitching between philosophy and bread, even as the order of precedence is resolved in favour of the former. Disciplines in Humanities like Religion, History, languages, law



and even Social science constitute one and many paradoxes of philosophy because philosophical problem is implied in all of them and as such the perennial relevance of Humanities is cathartically reduced to philosophy. Hence philosophical problem dies hard, neither would Nigeria's post-colonial burden nor the relevance of Humanities to development be ever extinguished from the table of philosophical fissures and cynosures.

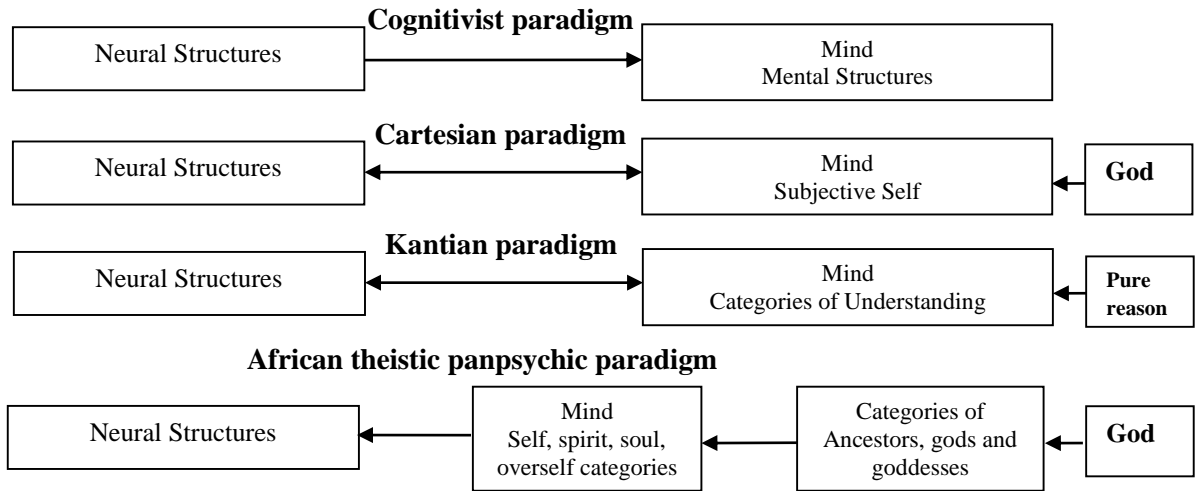
### **Epistemology of Bread on the Table**

There is conceptual knowledge without which the table cannot stand nor the bread be humanly delicious and comprehensible. Before the knowledge of what constitute bread on the table in the West there were protracted, philosophical arguments for and against what constitute the knowledge of bread. It straddled among empiricists like John Locke, David Hume and Schopenhauer who propagated experience as the basis of knowledge and idealists or rationalists like George Berkeley and Rene Descartes who uphold reason and subjectivism as the source of knowing that P is the case and of course, the realists like G.E. Moore, and Thomas Reid who believed in the knowledge of the common sense. There were also others who were sandwiched in between Idealism and Empiricism like Immanuel Kant who propounded the *synthetic a priori*, a thesis that knowledge is based on both experience and innate inductive principles (Kant, 1951:24-27). This great debate in between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is an indirect debate on the priority of idealism over bread (empiricism).

Unlike the African philosophical tradition of Theistic panpsychism, that proffers a deeper understanding of the sensory experience (phenomenalism) and things-in-themselves (nuomena) (Dukor, 2010), the British analytic tradition propounds direct realism or common sense propositions and what they call indirect realism or sense-data theory or phenomenalism on ordinary use of language. While the African theistic panpsychism adduces the spatio-temporality of any existent object or being beyond sense experience the West philosophers were divided in camps about the limit of knowledge beyond sense experience and practical or pure reason. All this suggests different paradigms by different philosophers on what constitute the baking of the bread on the table,

Hence, below are Scientific paradigms, a graphic picture of how Western cognitive science, Cartesian, Kantian and the African theistic panpsychic paradigms understand knowledge generation. While in African Theistic panpsychism and Cartesian philosophy God is the arbitrator of knowledge, in Cognitive science, the mental structure is sovereign and in Kantian transcendentalism, reason, which is the sovereign cannot go beyond nuomena (Kant, 1945:99-101). These are an epistemology of how bread (scientific artifacts) arrive at the table.

### Scientific Paradigms



*Source: Dukor, 2021:255*

While G.E. Moore canvassed for common sense knowledge, pure, direct realism or the indubitable structure of sense experience based on immediate intuition of objects, Modern idealists after Plato, represented by Bradley profess subjective idealism or internal relations of all objects of the external world in the transcendental unity of all realities (Bradley). The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant chides the skepticism of David Hume over objects of experience and Rene Descartes rationalism, as being incapable of going beyond appearance, sense experience, phenomena, the sensibility (a space-time intuitive framework) into the things -in- themselves, except by the *synthetic a priori* judgments which suffices in practical ethics and science (Coopleeston, 1960:232). All, by their positions are however propounding epistemologies of bread and science.

### **Epistemology of Bread Corruption**

Corruption is an endemic and pandemic phenomenon. As a function of action, free will and mind, we inevitably, would be driven to the canvas of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic and analytic tradition of philosophy for us to understand corruption either in politics, education, judiciary, civil service and police or in the bread on the table. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher said that nobody knows what is good and does what is bad. That is why philosophy dwells on the subject matter of good and bad, virtue and vice as well as freedom from corruption via metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and analytic philosophy, all of which squarely focuses on reality. The bread on the table without philosophical reflection would be corrupt. The consequential reality of corruption is, therefore, both in the bread and the food for thought. That is why philosophy is an incorruptible discipline while the rest are in their origin, orientation and temporality or synthetic utility subject to corruption.

That philosophy cannot be corrupted is an indictment on other disciplines that are susceptible to corruption as well a red alert or signal for such other disciplines to remain subjected to the critical scrutiny of philosophy in order for them to be able to meet and satisfy their synthetic, scientific and utilitarian mandates for the benefit of the survival of mankind. The hand of philosophy to be obeyed in other cognate disciplines is its

abstract and objective canon or its critical or second order scrutiny of the first order disciplines who at their levels, as it were, are only evolutionary semblances and ripples of philosophy, the monarch of reason. “Theoretical reason and praxis ought to be able to navigate the society out of corrupting tendency and immoral acts. If ethics and values of society, according to Immanuel Kant, is based on practical reason, then the phenomenon of corruption should be investigated and tackled from the source, the ontology” (Dukor 2018:iv). Permit me to say that the essence of ethics and values of society is the reason for existence; the bread on the table would be corrupted if the essence is eluded.

### **Philosophical Logic Interrogating Truth in Sciences**

According to Gottlob Freg, logical investigations to discover truth is the task of all sciences, it falls to logic (philosophy) to discern the laws of truth (Freg, 1977:1). The search for truth and essence of existence is a problem for 21<sup>st</sup> century problematic essentialism. Science is the method of knowing or arriving at the truth, while logic is the body of rules or laws that should guide the process of arriving at truth. But the extent to which the logical analysis of philosophy is readily employed in all societies is another question, for without the tool of logic, philosophy would be viewed as empty in scheme-content relevance to the science. What is noteworthy here is that traditional philosophy without logic is not enough to support the great edifice of science in the production and distribution of social goods. The seeming reduced cognitive role of philosophy in its traditional goal of seeking truth is the logical outcome of a temptation to separate metaphysics and logic, as the former is limited in both its ontological and epistemological scope. However, when and where philosophy is understood properly as metaphysics, ontology, epistemology and logic it becomes a natural philosophy as science or phenomenology.

Yet, Philosophy, has not diminished in its status or become corrupted by any virus, instead its growth and development is in post-metaphysics schools; analytic philosophy, phenomenology and of course to some extent existentialism which has tended to compete with the epistemological power of empirical sciences. Richard Rorty in his book, *Philosophy and the mirror of nature* says, “the same epistemological blockages that effect analytic philosophy and its search for truth also affect scientific analysis” (Rorty,1979). Therefore, for Rorty, there is an epistemological egalitarianism which bequeaths equal status to science and philosophy qua analytic philosophy. There is no battle line or front between philosophy and sciences, there is no cause for conflict between them instead there is always reason for their mutual interaction in a kind of dialectical continuum and progression for the benefit of man in the service of humanity. At any point there is a break there will be a corruption of knowledge, cognition, truth and then corruption of the bread on the table which is the problematic of 21<sup>st</sup> century progress.

Metaphysics, the most criticized aspect of philosophy cannot easily be wished away in the history of thought because it is the torch light into the contemporary socio-political and scientific gaps, challenges and mysteries. It’s rationalism and epistemological prowess have remained dominant and relevant over the ages from the milieu of ancient Greet period, Platonic and Post-Aristotelian schools and medieval schoolmen to the Andalishian and Timbuktu schools comprising eminent figures like Sinalbn Rushd, Ahmed Baba and so on. Also, the renaissance rationalists like Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza as well as the enlightenment modernists like Immanuel Kant and David Hume

heralded the age of existentialism and empiricism. Contemporary philosophy namely Existentialism, Phenomenology, Analytic Philosophy, logical positivism represented by Fredrick Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Soren Kierkegaard, A.J. Ayer, Gottlob Frege, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, Franz Brentano, Jungen Habermas, Richard Rorty and so on caved into the scientific world and epistemology, studied it, criticized its world - view and created unity of knowledge, methodology out of it, to the extent that contemporary philosophy becomes contemporary science and precursor to Quantum mechanics and Einsteinian General Relativity.

The search for essence is inexorable and open ended. "It is about the nature of reality which metaphysics aims at expanding and which equally has been the per-occupation of the philosophers from Plato, Aristotle, Kepler, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton to Marx Planck and Albert Einstein. From Plato, Aristotle to Kepler the Astronomic model of Geocentrism emerged which is that the universe- the sun, the planets and all the stars, revolve around the earth until the 18th century when new evidence from philosophy and science called the Heliocentric model revealed that the earth revolved around the sun instead. In the pre- Copernicus astronomy earth is taken to be passive while Copernicus took the earth as an active participant in the solar system i.e. "the factor of the movement of spectator on earth or, for that matter, the movement of earth itself was taken into account in observations and conclusions regarding astronomy" (Sugathan, 2000:126). This is what is called Copernicus revolution and astronomy. The subjective role of the human faculty as an active element in the knowledge formation is Kant's Copernicus revolution in philosophy (Suathan, 2000: 126). In Kantian revolution, human mind is neither reality nor create things but things as objects of knowledge for us are subjected to "certain *apriori* conditions of knowledge on the part of the subject" (Copleston, 1960: 224). The categories of human faculty are the *apriori* concepts of reason which are active as against the inactive intuitions of sensibility and yet which cannot transcend its boundaries into the realm of things-in-themselves or *nuomena*. For Kant, this is the quixotic end of reason in the search for reality and the essence of both the universe and things, a paradigm shift from the ontological divide between mind and body discourse among modern philosophers namely: Rene Descartes, Libniz, Spinoza, (Rationalists) and David Hume, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Berkeley (Empiricists).

The philosophical method of rational and logical inquiry via conceptual knowledge underscores all strata of human, artistic, political, social and scientific actions including manufacturing of beverages, drinks, and cookeries. The dropping of atomic bomb in Nagasaki and Hiroshima (Japan) irrationally missed the logical cynosure of philosophical ethics. Similarly, stomach upset, *ebola* disease in 2014 and COVID19 in 2020, in the same vein are results of essential and epistemological gaps. There is nothing in the world including breakfast, love, affection, power, trading, dance, painting, construction, and agriculture that is a not subject to the law of thought namely; Law of identity - A is A, law of contradiction- something is either A or not A and law of excluded middle- something cannot be both A and not A. (Dukor, 2018:17). They are the laws of nature, and existence.

### **Essence of Science and Technology**

Science and technology has taken a quantum toll of substantial segment of human population because of utilities, resources, wants and bread at its disposal, more importantly, because of its ability to exploit, control and enhance physical environment and objects of nature for man's needs. It is, nonetheless, a fact that pre-science utility is a quintessential element that sustains man and his environment from the hazardous and capricious demands of science. The scientific method of providing bread on the table only differs from the idealist method in terms of kind of utility. While the scientific method is a rational, demonstrable and inductive explanation of the world the philosophical method is a rational, deductive and critical explanation of the world. At first in human history it was both inductive and deductive explanations of the measurable, calculable, observable and unobservable.

The ancient Greek philosophers postulated various definitions of reality which today represent in one form or the other the essence of the bread on the table. For Thales, the reality is water, for Anaximander it is infinite, for Anaximenes it is air, for Heraclitus it is fire, for Leucippus, it is atom; to mention but a few (Warner, 1958:12-48). The history of human knowledge or philosophy is a dialectical progression from these Greek thoughts and similar ones in African thoughts to the present complex contradictory world values of bread and technology.

Philosophical knowledge is the summit or essence of all knowledge including medical, pharmaceutical, technological, economic and political knowledge. Philosophy is the beginning and end of knowledge. Its mission and vision has never been eclipsed from the works of philosophers of advanced nations neither is it absent in the curriculum and teaching of philosophy in Africa. Like Bertrand Russell, German philosopher, Gotlob Frege (1848-1925) derived the foundation of Mathematics from pure logic. He invented quantification in logic which subsequently continued to influence penumbra areas in mathematical science and Engineering. Karl Popper was a contemporary philosopher of science who propounded the theory of verification and confirmation of scientific statements and who at any rate could not dismiss metaphysical statements (essentialism) as meaningless, yet many scientists and scientific researches today hold his hypothetic deductive method as of critical importance to the progress of science. For Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) a German Philosopher, *apriori* propositions which are propositions whose truth can be established by reason alone without recourse to experience are not only possible but are principles of science. Kant, Freg and Russell, among others were 18th and 19th century philosophers who constructed the philosophical table upon which bread was placed with instrument of reason and analytical mind. Therefore, in the transitions of human mind from religion to philosophy and philosophy to science, "Reason" has explored approaches in the understanding of the universe.

### **The Essence of Quantum Gravity**

The role of philosophy in the studies of QFT (Quantum Field Theory) or (QM) Quantum Mechanics, GTR (General Relativity Theory) and QG (Quantum Gravity) have been on how to move science forward, to resolve contradictory mechanics and theories in order to rationally and logically fashion out how science could be useful and safe to mankind. In so doing the essence of science is sought in the resolution of those contradictions. The doctrine of essentialism could be explored to find solutions to the contradictions in science.

While the QFT holds that the basic component of the universe is the particle or micro-structure, GTR holds it is the gravitational field or macro-structure (Altekar, 1991:27). In the African universe, the basic component of the universe is conceptual or spiritual. The superstructure underlying the gravitational field in GTR and the wave particle in QFT is equally conceptual. But African thought believes in both physical reality and the conceptual reality. African Ontology is pansychic (which I call Theistic pansychism) and the process of knowing is pansychic and fourth dimensional. To bridge the misunderstanding between particles, gravitational field or macro structure and African spiritual reality, a common meaning has been ascribed to them called quantum consciousness.

Series of research to resolve the contradictions and difficulties in QFT and GTR by physicists have led to the theory of Quantum gravity (QG), and the stubborn problems associated with the QG in reconciling the micro and macro structural worlds have made philosophers to search for theoretical solutions to the problems in metaphysics, phenomenology and ontology. In Quantum Gravity, therefore, the unification of GTR and QFT becomes imperative. In GTR, space time is itself a dynamic object modified, partly generated by the matter energy distribution, has a curvature and it is affected by gravity. (Altekar, 1991:33-34). It is, in tune with African dynamic universe, a changing universe with spiritual underlining and where nothing exists in isolation. In QFT or QM the problem is shifted to consider dualism between field and particle. Therefore, there arises the epistemological problem of understanding quantum gravitational world and the ontological problem of knowing where actually it exists. The ontological problem is the problem of what constitute the basic component of the universe- whether a field or a particle. The attempts to solve these problems have met with little success because of the problem of whether ontology is continuous or discontinuous like the character of field or particle. Theories of quantum consciousness which approximate African concept of consciousness are to solve these problems. In the African sense, quantum reality is spirit – energy reducible to energy which source is God but which functions as a process of perception and conception of the material world. This is, therefore, the epistemology and ontology necessary for the unification of GTR and QFT and which is four dimensional.

What is ultimately demanded for the unification of QFT and GTR is the complete agreement on the method of knowing (i.e. epistemological) and the real existence of the world i.e. ontology (Altekar, 1991:36) because the quantum gravitation and particles are charged with some metaphysical under current (Altekar, 1991: 38). Also the Einstein contention that the curvature of space-time is the essence of gravity is a four dimensional space-time ontology. All of the above interpretations of QFT and GTR are epistemological challenges for 21<sup>st</sup> Essentialism.

Albert Einstein in his Theory of Relativity reveals the organic connection of space and time both with each other and with matter in motion. He shows that at relatively small velocities it is impossible to trace this dependence because the space and time properties change on a scale which can be practically detected only at speeds close to that of light. At speeds close to that of light the length of a moving body compared to a body in a state of rest decreases as the speed increases and the course of time is slowed down. (Gwynne & Begley, 1979:43). According to this theory “space and time changes not by themselves but in inseparable interconnection. This connection is so firm that they form an unbreakable whole, and time acquires, as it were, the role of a fourth dimension,

in addition to the dimension of space. Albert Einstein equations of general relativity theory (GRT)  $E=MC^2$  describes four-dimensional universal fabric and how space-time could be wrapped into a spinning ball. (Einstein, 2015:69). This is theistic panpsychism in process. On the other hand, Newton's theory of gravity is based on Euclidean geometry (absolute space) which is neither African theistic panpsychism nor essentialism.

Astronomers and philosophers have been exploring the meanings of 'black holes', 'white holes', 'singularities' and 'gravity waves' in General Theory of Relativity GTR. Black holes are bottomless pits in space formed when the mass of a dying star collapses into a kernel of matter so dense that its size is negligible but its gravitational attraction is so overpowering that nothing within range, not even light, can escape it. "Black holes act as cosmic vacuum cleaners, scooping up and annihilating all matter and energy within reach". (P.Gwynne and S. Besley, 1979:43). Deep inside each black hole is what mathematicians call a "singularity". This is a region so indescribably dense that the laws of physics break down there. Singularities lead to a passage through which the energy and matter pulled into a black hole might exit into another universe. The opening of the passage is called a 'white hole'. The concepts of 'black hole', 'white hole' and 'singularity' are therefore, functions of reason, experience, intuition and ontology explainable by the conceptual space-time and the fourth dimension. These are metaphysical concepts which the Africans would categorize as forces or spirits and explain away as phenomenological, metaphysical and ontological (Dukor, 2005:13). Here, the world views of GTR and African philosophy are different ways of articulating the essence of things, otherwise called quantum consciousness.

### **Essence of Quantum Internet and Computer**

The anthropocentric world is not only the external world of objects but also the world of predatory Quantum gravity and internet. It is an all-embracing ecology, ecosystem often referred to as deep ecology nature's reserve or Biocentric egalitarianism. In the predatory trajectory of Quantum gravity and internet, "existence preceding essence" is exalted and "essentialism" or "essence preceding existence" is diminished, but when the former turns full circle, the latter returns. We are all living witnesses today to the subjection of the external world of objects, the ecology and biosphere to the dangers of toxic radiations from technology outputs.

There are intrinsic and extrinsic contradictions and negations excreted by scientific artifacts in the 21st century. If it turns full circle, it returns to nature or axiological truth. From quantum mechanics (QM) to General Relativity Theory (GTR) and from Quantum Gravity (QG) to Quantum Internet and Computers, science is not only predatory to the external world of objects but also to humankind; philosophers were intrigued by the subjective or objective reality of the external world of objects which science emphasized in quantum gravity and artificial intelligence wherein the external world will be controlled by electro-magnetic waves. But the essence of this external world remains elusive because for Immanuel Kant the noumena thing-in-itself cannot be known. This elusive unknown is supposedly the essence which is being interrogated.

This elusive essence remains palpable when the quantum internet and computer came on board on the hills of the fourth industrial revolution in the 21st century to anchor internet of things (IOT), robotics, virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence and, subsequently produced 4G and 5G (gigabyte), a faster, smarter and efficient

electromagnetic networks but which radio-frequency radiation allegedly could disrupt cell metabolism and lead to all kinds of diseases. It seems therefore, that in the cause of Quantum internet, the essence of man is still elusive, given some negation of man by the internet knowledge.

Search for essence in the Quantum physics in spite of its anthropocentric face value will continue *pari-pasu* with progress in technology. Philp Emeagwalu said that computer and internet are kernel technologies behind information technology and in his word: “anybody of knowledge has its kernel knowledge” (Emeagwalu, 2005:48). This means that if all the computers in the world and the internet were to disappear, then the IT field will also disappear. But the kernel knowledge is the intrinsic subjective reality. Emeagwalu postulated Super computer, Telepathic mail and Bionic brain predicated on a pantheistic-super being, the self, overself... (Emeagwalu, *ibid*). The self is the intrinsic objective and subjective reality. Internet as computation, Quantum internet, Quantum computer, Super computer are therefore, all reducible to Quantum gravity which in turn is reducible to field particles and again to pantheistic panpsychism and quantum consciousness which will be the driving force behind the next generation of internet or super brain (Dukor 2020:252). Therefore the essence of quantum physics quantum computer is essence of the African theistic panpsychic animistic universe and self or subject as the epicentre of knowledge, cognition and experience.

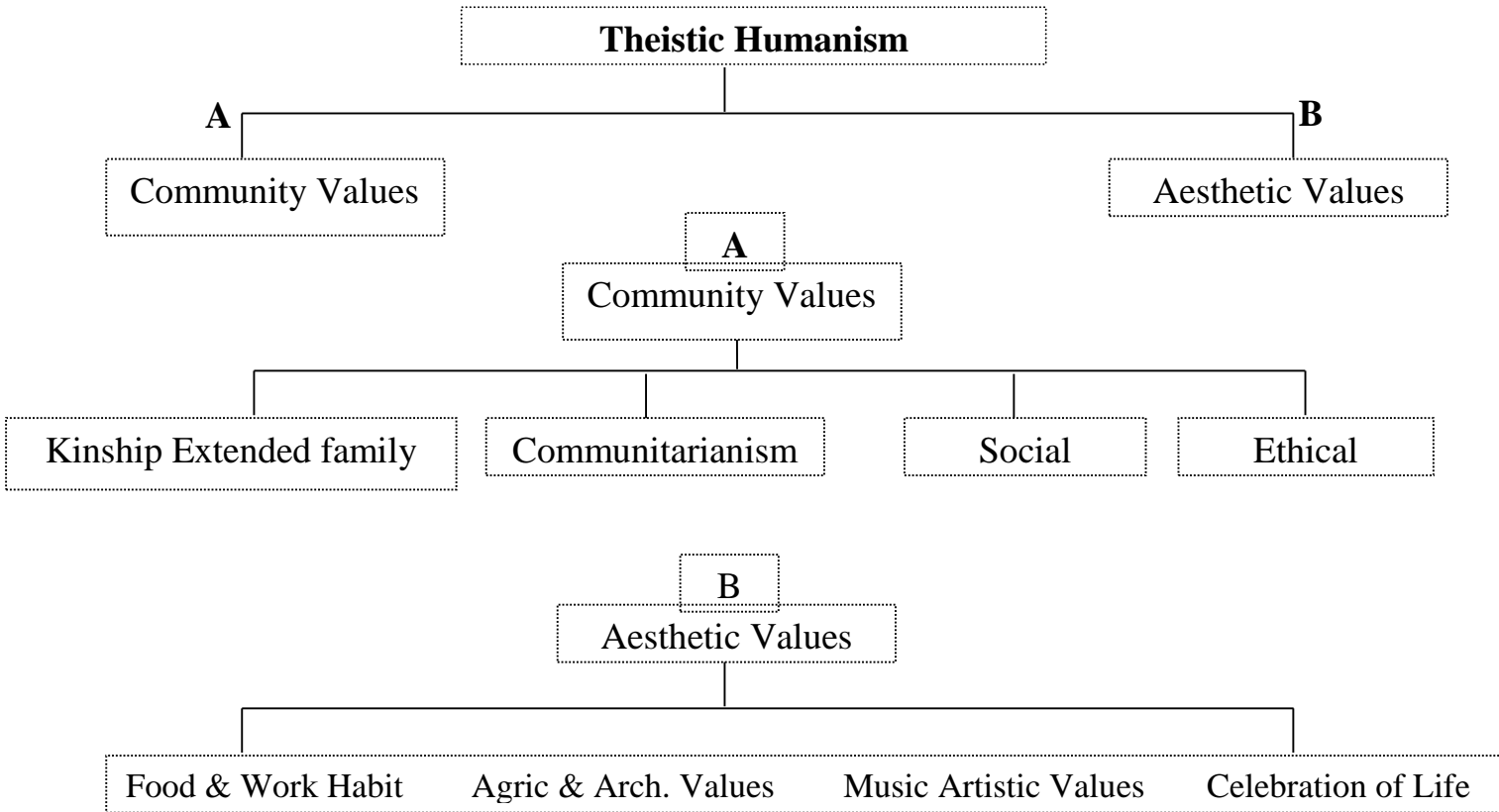
### **Essentialist Categories in African Philosophy**

In the ontological conception of reality in African philosophy the metaphysical order of man, first, subsisting ontologically and second, subsisting existentially, mundanely and materially captures the trajectory of essence preceding existence. Thus, the essentialist warrants leveraging some conceptions of reality in Africa are as follows: Theistic humanism values, Gender stress ontology, Heliocentric four dimensional space time reversibility, Theistic cosmogenic geometry, Essence of cause and effect, Language, Predication and theory, and Essence of African literature and Freedom.

#### **(a) Theistic Humanism Values**

In African Philosophy of culture existence and essence swap each other at every existential turn of events, but cultural and ontological values as essences more often undergird existence. Theistic Humanism values, constitute the summit (essence) of all values namely: community and aesthetic values; kinship, communitarianism, social and ethical values constitute the community values while bread (food), work habit, agricultural, architectural, musical and artistic values and celebration of life constitute the aesthetic values. With the idea of God (theism) and humanism at the summit of the diagram, essences precede existence or bread on the table. This is graphically sketched below:



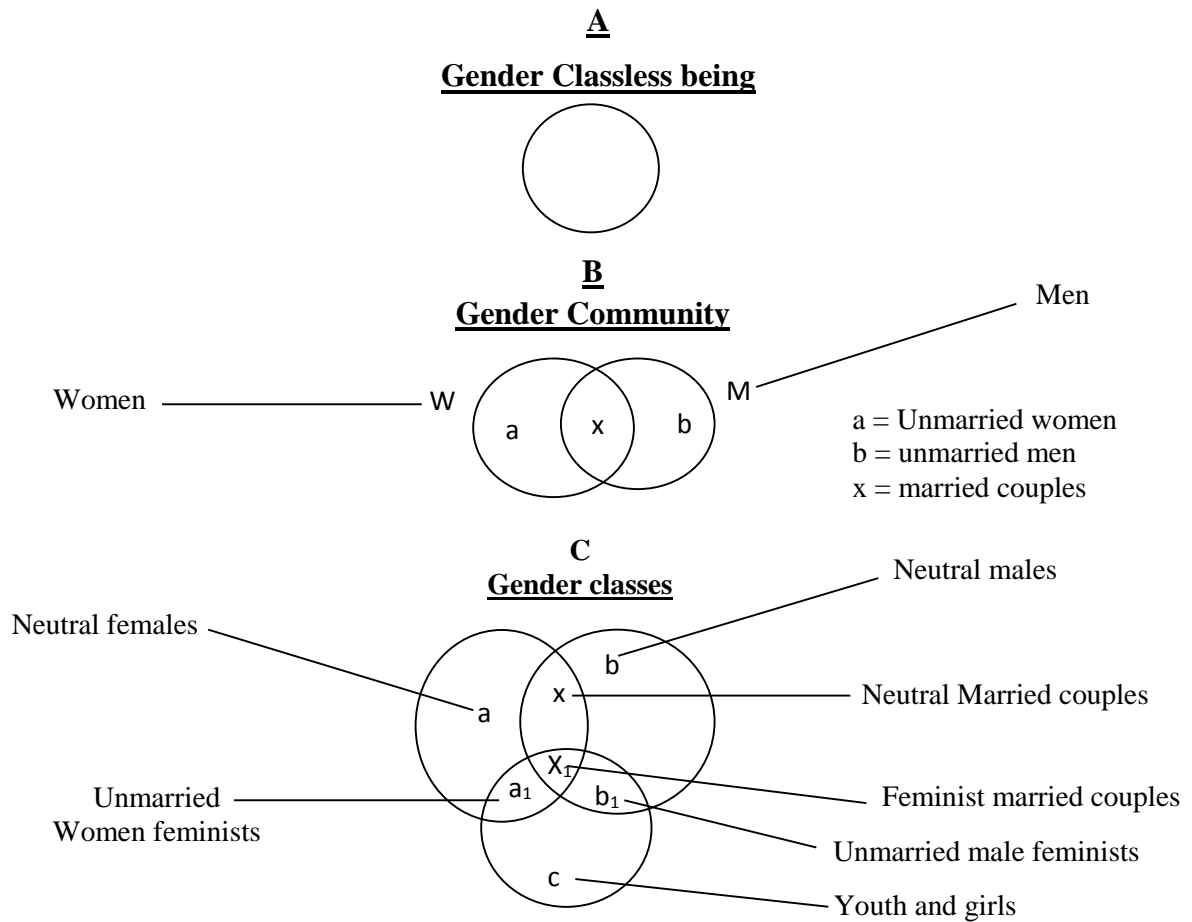


Source: (Dukor, 2021:18)

**(b) Gender Stress Ontology**

The gender stress ontology Venn diagram is a crisis free gender denominations rendered to fit into the furniture of the African ontological being. The Gender stress ontology diagram identifies the essence of man and woman as gender classless beings which precedes bread on the table. The Venn diagram is also an illustration of philosophical crisis about feminism in Africa caused by absence of the ontological and cultural wholeness. These ontological and cosmological structures show the essence of life, the absence of which ontological crisis begins in terms of class wars among men and women.

## Gender Stress Ontology Venn Diagram



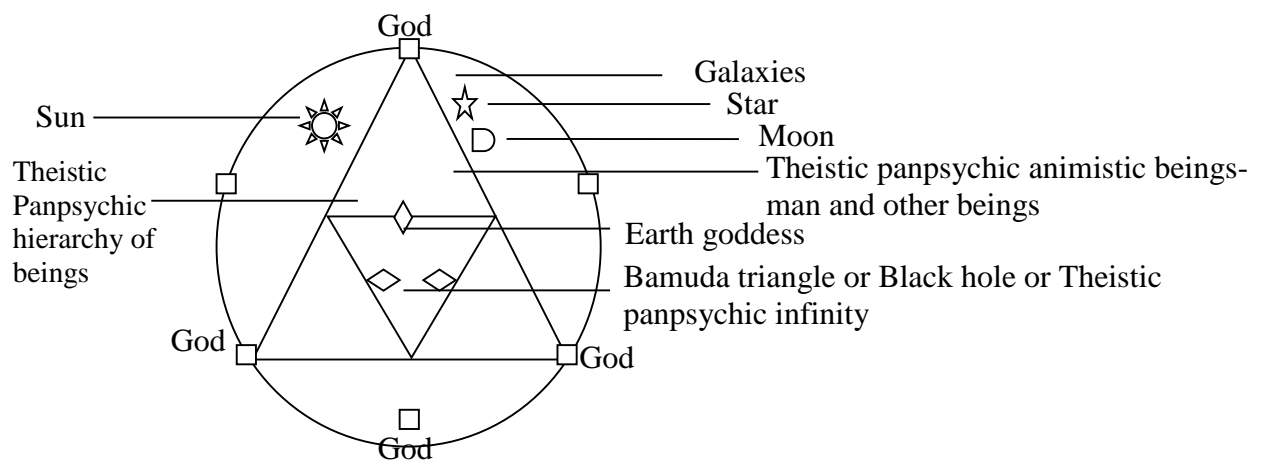
**Source:** (Dukor, 2021:183).

### (c) Theistic Panpsychic Animistic Universe

Another category is the Theistic panpsychic animistic universe. In theistic panpsychic animistic universe God is the highest being and force. Along the inside and sides of the triangle are the theistic panpsychic beings symbolically represented by sky (God) earth (goddess), moon, sun, galaxies and so on. The beings in African ontology are not only theistic panpsychic, they are also substances and monads but with windows connecting them to one another and to God almighty. They are not windowless monads or substances of Spinoza. They are powers and forces immanent and transcendental but connected to God and the earth goddess called *Ani* or *Ala* in Igbo metaphysics. The centre triangle is the theistic panpsychic infinity, the highest but mysterious attribute of God called by Albert Einstein the *Black hole* or what mystics called the Bermuda triangle where objects that mistakenly fall into disappears into infinity. The sun, the moon and the stars are theistic panpsychic manifestation of an immanent and transcendent God. (Dukor, 2021:169)

For the African, the quagmires and problems of black hole, singularity and cosmological constants are as a result of Kantian reason's inability to penetrate beyond the phenomenon to noumena. This noumena is the African Theistic Panpsychic reality, African transcendental apperception, and African panpsychic animistic universe which constitute an ontology of external world. For Einstein, epistemological constant is used to fix the universe of a given size so as to banish the possibility of expanding or diminishing universe. But an epistemological ontology, precisely, Theistic Panpsychism, is the African epistemology of outer space and cosmological constant in a theistic panpsychic animistic universe. All this is illustrated in the diagram below:

### Theistic Panpsychic Animistic Universe



Source: (Dukor, 2021:162)

#### (d) Heliocentric four Dimensional Space time Reversibility

One of these lenses into reality or ontological essence in African philosophy is the concept of time and space. The concept of time is an ontological entity that has its existential bearing in essence and being. John Mbiti categorized time into potential time and actual time without future. And any time that cuts out of these two times is no-time, that is, that which has not taken place, or has no likelihood of taking place in the immediate future. According to Mbiti, potential time is that which has the likelihood of immediate occurrence or which lies within the category of natural phenomenon. The actual time is what is present and what is past, portraying the African time as that which moves backward rather than forward. Time is reckoned according to the activity that takes place at that hour. Years are divided according to the seasons and their resultant activity. The essential component of time is thus the activity that takes place and not time itself. Mbiti's conceptualization of African time as a "two dimensional phenomenon with a long past, a present and virtually no future" (Mbiti, 1969) is either a fallacy or over generalization, cultural relativism or out rightly unfounded because scholars have found the thesis not tenable even among the Kenyan cultural zone where the study was allegedly made. Africans definitely have the future phenomenon in the calendar from Zulu in South Africa, Dogon of Sudan, Thonga of Mozambique to Yoruba and Igbo in Nigeria. For example, the Igbo think of time in cyclical terms because people are born, they walk through life, die and reborn to life. Again, this is reflected in the calendar of existence in terms of week days and seasons reckonings as the Igbo

have four days week, *Eke, Oye, Afo* and *Nkwo*, which is cyclical like the western seven day week. But the cyclical nature of time does not mean irreversibility of time in African Philosophy.

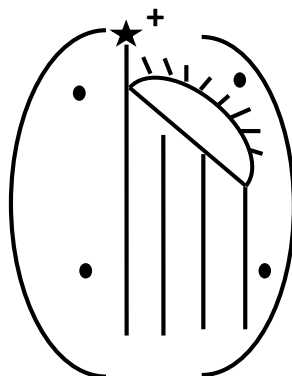
According to Animalu (Animalu, 1990:10), time consciousness is the rhythm that is experienced by all forms of life on earth in their irreversible cycles of birth, death and re-birth, as envisaged in Achebe's "it's baggage of irreducible inheritance genes" (Achebe, 1987) and Wole Soyinka "errant wheel of the death chariot, as the creation snake spawn tail in mouth... wake of dormant seeds and suspended lives" (Soyinka, 1974: 65). However, heliocentric African universe supports reversible time while Geocentricism does not. The reversibility of African time in fourth dimensional world is predicated on heliocentric universe and the active earth. Africans believe in the physical three-dimensional world as well as the spiritual four-dimensional world where the entire solar system routes round the sun and makes it possible to reverse the time of the past for the future. Recent scientific problems have shown that most scientific riddles, incurable sickness and witchcraft cannot be solved without the aid of mystical hardware and reversible time ontology. The complementarity of science and mysticism is sustained by Essentialism because it has been observed that where physical observation and experimentation fail mysticism takes over. So much so that Einstein had to say that no true discovery would be possible without sensation of the mystical. Searching for God's design was "the source of all true art and science (Golden, 1999:24).

The whole question is an epistemological one bordering on how we conceptualize reality. From the African point of view (theistic panpsycism), man has two sources of knowledge, senses which are man's contact with Euclidean space- time and the soul which is man's contact with the conceptual space-time (another dimensional world)" (Ezeabasili, 1977:88). The conceptual space-time is the fourth dimension (quantum consciousness) where all scientific riddles are solved. If an African alchemist can foretell the future or recast a past incident or episode, then the events of this world take place within a space- time in which the past, present or future could be recast and interpreted.

**(e) Theistic Cosmogonic Geometry**

Another lens into reality is the concept of Theistic cosmogonic geometry which is a concept employed by the Igbo to demonstrate how Igbo mind's intuition and sensibility captures the essence of existence and life in space and time using white chalk to draw lines on ground as windows into reality or as means of supplication to the supreme being.

**Igbo Theistic Cosmogonic Geometry (Akika-Nzu)**



*Source (Dukor, 2023:)*

Inside the circle above are four lines symbolizing four market days in Igbo cosmology. In making supplications to God, it is believed that the mind's intuition and sensibility is at work, hence he relates his prayers and petitions to these market days in harmony with the universe depicted in the diagram. That means that while the structural elements in the theistic cosmogenic Geometry remains the same their interpretations are subject to prayer-petition requests which are symbolically inserted at any points in the geometric circle. The four market days represented by the four lines show time calculations around which human activities happen in harmony with the universe. These lines representing four market days are not equal because individuals are not equal materially and otherwise i.e. there is no equality among human beings, hence no cause for envies among men and women, and the star on the tallest line (market day) symbolizes greatness often distributed in favour of some. The African Igbo say that *Okika di gboo* (men are not equal from the beginning). The half sun represents the sun as a god and the first son of God (*mmuo*) – *Anyanwu na Agbala de Okpala mmuo*. The left side of the circle as indicated in the geometry is a symbol of rainy season, hence supplications are directed accordingly. At the apex of this cosmogenic geometry, is + which represents God (*Chukwu Okike*) who owns the earth and says what happens in the universe. (Dukor, 2023: )

One significant point in this theistic cosmogenic geometry is that the four market days symbolized by four line underlines the centrality of man in the universe as the sun rotates around the earth reminiscent of Copernican revolution.

#### **(f) Essence of Cause and Effect**

Another lens into reality or the essence in African philosophy is cause and effect. To the African, the concept of reality is both spiritual and physical. In other words, there is spiritual essence as well as physical essence. That means that cause and effect relationships are either spiritual or physical and which means that, there are spiritual and physical necessities. This does not, however, override the general philosophical outlook that the universe is changing and dynamic. Cause and effect phenomena are not immutable; they can be reversed by some definite metaphysical practices such as the heliocentric, cosmological and ontological time reversal. The existence of spirit is not in doubt in African philosophy and it can turn into matter which occupies space.

Evans-Pritchard's study of Zande Oracle tends to show that there are logical connections among the oracle's statements (Evans Prichard, 1976:150). Zande oracle (divination) recognizes contradictions and it is on this basis that statements are validated or invalidated. The oracle, Zande, administers poison to a fowl, then put a statement to the oracle, if the fowl dies, the statement is taken to be true or untrue and if the fowl survives the statement is also taken to be true or untrue depending on how it was originally put (Momoh, 1989:180).

Two of the statements in the oracle say:

- a. if X has committed adultery, then the poison oracle will kill the fowl, X has committed adultery, therefore, the poison oracle kills the fowl,
- b. If X has not committed adultery, then the poison oracle will not kill the fowl, X has not committed the adultery, the poison oracle did not kill the fowl.

Symbolically,

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{i) } P \supset q \\ P \quad \text{M. P} \\ \therefore q \\ \text{ii) } \neg P \supset \neg q \\ \neg P \quad \text{M. P} \\ \therefore \neg q \end{array}$$

**Source:** (Momoh, 1981:182).

The causative principle in operation here is justifiable in the system of the metaphysical presupposition of Zande science, otherwise called the principle of contiguity. This logical investigation could further be pursued through psychogenic and logogenic logic i.e. the inference that and the inference how respectively.

As for the principle of similarity, the practical example is that when dark green leaves are burnt the green smoke will go into the sky and cause rainfall. The underlying belief is that the dark green cloud that precedes rainfall is similar to the dark green smoke caused by burning green leaves. The conditional statement is, if green leaf is burnt, then there will be rain.

Again, the underlying principles of syllogistic logic will be as follows:

- if green leaf is burnt then there will be rain
- It is in the village that the green leaf is burnt
- Therefore, it is in the village that it is raining

Hence syllogistically it will be

$$\begin{array}{l} G > R \\ V > G \\ \therefore V > R \end{array}$$

(Where G = green leaf is burnt, R = it is raining and V = village).

This is a valid and standard syllogism which obeys the principle of induction and the uniformity or concomitance of nature, the essence of things

### **(g) Language, Predication and Theory**

Another lens into essence in African philosophy is language, predication and theory. Most of Igbo proverbs, wise sayings, adages and maxims are either statements of facts or propositional truths. They are moral or epistemological predicates. Most of the predicates are either ontological, correspondence, coherence or syntactic truths. Hence, most of the predicates are both theoretical and practical. Below are some predication in Igbo moral and epistemological propositions.

### Language and Predication

Igbo	English	Predication
1. <i>ezi okwu dika ehihe ejighi oku enyo ya-</i>	Truth is like noonday, one does not look for it with light.	Nx N = noonday x = truth
2. <i>Anaghi eli ezi okwu n'ala, makana emee nka, oputa ome.</i>	Truth cannot be buried in the ground, because, if it is buried, it will germinate.	-Bx . Bx > Gx B = Buried x = truth G = germinate
3. <i>ezi okwu na – elu ilu.</i>	'truth is harsh to the ears',	Hxy H = harsh x=truth y = ears
4. <i>Anya ka eji ama oka chara acha</i>	It is with the eyes that ripe maize is known.	Rx R = rip maize x= eye
5. <i>Onye ajo okwu</i>	<b>- A nasty speaker</b>	Nx N = nasty X=speaker
6. <i>O gwara ya ajo okwu</i>	- He spoke to him in a bad manner	Sxy S = spoke x= he y = him

**Source (Dukor, 2018:285-2860**

For a good understanding of African epistemology, the roles of theories and predication in it should be understood. Robin Horton has done good and commendable research on theories and theoretical entities in African philosophy. According to Horton, “explanatory theory is basically the quest for unity underlining apparent diversity; for simplicity underlining apparent anomaly” (Horton, 1977:132). He acknowledged the existence of entities or forces operating behind or within the world of common-sense observation thus “such a theoretical scheme is linked to the world of everyday experience by statements identifying happenings within it with happenings in the everyday world” (Horton, 1977:137). Like atoms, molecules and waves, the gods serve to introduce unity into diversity, simplicity into complexity, order into disorder, regularity into anomaly. Theory places things in actual context wider than that provided by common sense. Theory and predication help the mind to transcend the limitation of common sense into the essence. Theory is therefore, the radar to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Essentialism.

Robin Horton observed that both the traditional African thinker and scientist make use of theory to transcend the limited vision of natural causes provided by common sense. For example in Africa, sick or afflicted persons first go to consult diviners as to the causes of their trouble. The answers they receive usually involve a god or another spiritual agency and the remedy prescribed involves the propitiation or calling off of this being or agency like the case of sick man in the heliocentric four-dimensional space time reversibility. This account commonly involved reference to some events in the world of visible, tangible happenings. Similarly, micro world and particles in Western science perform the same theoretical rules as the spiritual forces and ontological entities in African thought. For example, the African personify the force of gravity as the god of gravity; the force of electromagnetism as the god of lightening (Amadioha in Igbo and Sango in Yoruba); the weak force as the god of radioactivity and the strong force

as the god of atomic nuclei and the unified force as the supreme God or Deity (Dukor, 2005: 23).

While the philosophical world view (essence) of the Western renaissance is the belief in the immutability of nature, that of the traditional African is the belief that “fundamental to the notion of power is the dynamic nature of the universe and human life. Beings are not condemned in fatalistic manner to stay always in a predestined lot...” (Parrinder, 1967:26). Also “African thought sees different powers in the world, not just a universal dynamism spreading over the earth like jam. The powers differ among themselves, divine and human, animal and plant, good and evil. Powers act upon one another, for man is a special being and he also lives in a vital relationship with the natural world (Parrinder, 1969:26). Because essence precedes those powers and their existence, investigation into the essence(s) of nature and culture becomes paramount.

#### **(h) African Literature and Freedom**

The 18th and 19th centuries’ colonization of black African people constitutes an existentially calamitous assault on the African identity which later, in a reaction from the founding fathers of African nationalism, becomes the reason to escape from colonial contradictions. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor, to mention but a few, not only affirmed African identity through literature and manifestos but also used Marxist- Leninist class ontology to mobilize world consciousness against the injustice of colonialism and imperialism to the Africans. It is against this existential threat that Nkrumah’s *Consciencism* (1964), Nyerere’s *Ujumaa* (1968) Senghor’s *Negritude*, Maduabuchi Dukor’s *African Freedom, The Freedom of Philosophy* (2021), *Theistic Humanism of African Philosophy* (2021), *African Philosophy in the Global Village* (2021) and *Scientific Paradigm in African Philosophy* (Dukor, 2021) become philosophical voices from black Africa in a lopsided world philosophical heritage and in the struggle for the survival of the fittest in the lopsided world socio-economic world order. In the existential colonial scenario, politicians, the intellectuals in the ivory towers, poets and journalists used fiction, comedies, tragedies and satires to expose the ills of colonial and post-colonial society. This is where the moral obligation of intellectuals and artists to the society comes into play. This duty and obligation to move the moral society forward through activism and writing is, to me, a function of philosophy in action in pursuit of essence.

Commitments of academics, intellectuals and artists to revolutions and in social actions vary from person to person and in space and time. Hence Ali-Mazrui’s mockery or fictional trial and condemnation of Christopher Okigbo, a poet, for participating in the Biafran war against Nigeria is philosophically vulgar. There should be distinctions between Christopher Okigbo, a poet, and Christopher Okigbo, an activist, and a war veteran. They are asymmetrical. Both can be false and both can be true. Okigbo as a poet is a different engagement from Okigbo as an activist. “Wole Soyinka is a dramatist” and “Wole Soyinka is an activist” are different propositions. The same is applicable to “Gani is a lawyer” and “Gani is an activist”, as both can be true and both can be false according to the logical relation of contraries. Therefore, philosophers can either be philosophers or activists in their own rights; while the first or the professional self-esteem is primary the second or the dispositional engagement with the society is secondary and predilectional. Activism can be thunderous but is incapable of diminishing the essence of professional commitment to changing the society in a



gradual, methodical, scientific, existential and intellectual manner independent of the space and time.

Philosophy, although, cannot be said to be independent of other disciplines, is primary to them, engaging them in a systematic scrutiny. It equips other disciplines with the superstructure and ontology of intelligibility and meaningfulness in illuminating social and cultural milieu through the essentialities and logicalities of philosophy. “If music be the bread, love, play on...” (Shakespeare, 1996:141) is a jingle, canticle and maxim in Shakespearean play rendering philosophy and aesthetics to drama, poetry and literature.

In Nigerian literary scene, the bread of philosophy is yet to be appreciated given the complacency of literary critics and creative writers in not openly beholding the study of philosophy as a means of acquiring the requisite logical and critical tools for literary style and appreciation. The talk of orality, tradition, culture and world views only at the level of semantics without the ontic conceptual clarifications of ontology, metaphysics, ethics, logic and epistemology has created the yawning gaps and poverty of philosophy in African literature. The same cynic and lukewarm attitude of Africans have diminished their innovative and creative transformations in scientific discoveries and legal practices. Literature in Achebe and Soyinka are creatively distinctive because of their original interpretative and ant-colonial analysis of African culture, yet mostly anthropological without the rigor, substantive and logical stuff of philosophy. Therefore, a large scale revolutionary flavor for African emancipation and development would necessarily require 21<sup>st</sup> century essentialism in African, poetry, philosophy, artistry and literary criticism.

### **Essence and Value Creation**

The vistas of 21<sup>st</sup> century essentialism underscore and consolidate the dignity of man, while on the contrary, existence preceding essence creates values that often erode the dignity of man. Inquiry into philosophy and bread on the table is an inquiry into Being and Existence, an inquiry into how essence, precedes existence, how philosophy is more than the bread on the table and how courage, piety, wisdom and justice, the attributes of sentient, moral and responsible being extant in African philosophy are human values.

Philosophy as essence that precedes existence, and as value creator that is more than the bread on the table is validated by the natural attitude, natural law and ethical standards of existence espoused in Plato’s *moral virtue*, Kantian *categorical imperative*, Cartesian *cogito-ego-sum* and others thus:

- Grace for meal is utility best (Maduabuchi Dukor)
- Reason is the source of all good things (Maduabuchi Dukor)
- Man know thyself (Egyptian Proverb)
- Man shall not live by bread alone (Corinthians, 10:3)
- My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)
- Action without thought is blind and thought without action is empty (Karl Jasper)
- Unexamined life is not worth living (Socrates)

These are different expressions of ‘philosophy is more than the bread on the table’ and ‘essence precedes existence’. These are expressions of human values and ‘man is an end with dignity and sanctity’ contrary to the indignity experimental science has subjected man today.

The self-knowledge, innate idea and moral virtue expounded in Plato is re-invented by Aristotle, his pupil as “all human being desire to know, one of the noblest of human activity is philosophy” (cf. NE, 10.7). This is an eloquent testimony that philosophy is more than the bread on the table. Also Aristotelian philosophy which allegedly had been traced to African philosophy, points to that African philosophy is the oldest philosophy, no matter how inchoate or less scientific and it is an essentialist philosophy that transcends existence in its limits and limitations.

The United Nations’ charter of 1945, that is, the universal declaration of human rights and values, is a re-echo of the essence of man, the transcendental values of humanity that precedes physical existence, which attest to the Biblical injunction that man does not live by bread alone but primarily by values that sustain him as a rational agent. The end of the Second World War was heralded with the re-visitation of Nazi regime’s laws, their repeals and replacement by natural laws and the consequent trial and prosecution of Nazi commanders and leaders who were master minds of the Nazi atrocities. This was in pursuant of the essence of existence than existence itself.

Since the 18th century, modernity, colonialism and imperialism have destroyed the essence of humanity for the sake of existence and survival of the fittest. The pulse and dynamics of hate speech, fake news, weaponization of food and drug, globalization of wars, racism, ethnicism, xenophobia, apartheid, anti-Semitism and religious bigotry are no less scary than Nazism in its raw form. Man is now a means rather than an end in business, diplomacy, politics, religion, soft and hard powers and for that reason, post-colonial disciplinary substructures like post phenomenology, post humanism, trans-humanism and bio-centrism in the guises of gay, lesbianism and transgender have tended to erode human essence, human consciousness, autonomy, sovereignty. This attack on human person is exacerbated by the products of deviant-humanistic researchers in brain computer interfaces and brain cloud interfaces in which the minds are down loaded and uploaded to technological substrates for remote controlling and monitoring for instance, in nanotechnology, microchips, nanovaccines, nanorobots, cybergs and other hybrids technology by the global imperialists.

At national and domestic levels, human essence has been sacrificed on the alter of “existence precedes essence”. Statehood and governance have failed in most nations like Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, to mention but a few, where individualism, survival of the fittest and the ends justified the means are the ethics of social and political order. This jungle ethic, has been the Nigerian examples of corruption, kidnapping, banditry and communal and ethnic clashes. Since the dawn of the narratives of mafia manager and open-ended interpretation of Machiavellian political philosophy in terms of existence preceding essence, the world has known no peace. Sub-Saharan and Sahel regions in Africa especially countries like Nigeria, need to re-invent human essence of essentialism in African metaphysics, and in African ethics.

Essentialism and value creation as the ontological and axiological foundation of humanity is the spring board and the philosophical superstructure of science and bread on the table, educational systems that is creative, economic policies that are socially and culturally inclusive, medicare that is satisfactorily horizontal, governance that is

altruistic and diplomatic relations that is anti-racist, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist. The mechanistic conception of man implied in the doctrine that existence precedes essence is pro-fascism, racism and anti-humanism, while the reverse, that is, essence precedes existence, is the anchor of human rights, humanism, anti-abortion, communitarianism and the doctrine that means justifies the end in human relations.

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Philosophy is an exercise of the critical intellect and the monarch of all disciplines and professions. Philosophy has a great role to play in town and gown. Philosophy is the torch bearer in the production of bread as well as in its consumption, otherwise, there would be hiccup, constipation, poisons and pollution. That is why the first medic was the ancient Greek philosopher called Hippocrates. Philosophy direct histories, politics and governance in societies. That is why the pioneer statesmen and politicians were philosophers. Also, African philosophy had influenced African independence struggles and governance till date. That was why statesmen like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, S.I. Senghor, Obafemi Awolowo and were philosophers in their own rights.

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