What criterion should define African philosophy

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Abstract
The question of what criterion is to be used to map out African from non-African philosophy has occupied the minds of scholars for some time now. The debate wax stronger and unfortunately, I am drafted to it now. My decision to join the debate is due to the perceived importance of getting the criterion for African philosophy right. A faulty criterion would amount to a weakened foundation for African philosophy. It would also set the stage for a bleak future for African philosophy. This research using the philosophical method of critical analysis, examined the many proposed criteria for African Philosophy and found them wanting and on the heels of that, set a criterion that would overcome their limitations.

Keywords:
African philosophy; criterion question; world-view; culture; myth.

1 INTRODUCTION
The question of criterion is central to the development of African philosophy. Hitting at the right criterion will aid in the easy classification of works, as African philosophy, or non-African philosophy. The failure to raise the right criterion has made many works that are rightfully African philosophies, to be jettisoned as not and most works not deserving of that name to be exalted and incensed as one. Most philosophers who have a genuine claim to being African philosophers, have in likewise been denied that title. Who is an African philosopher and which work is African philosophy? What criteria are to be used in the demarcation of African from non-African? These questions have continued to gnaw at the bone marrow of African scholars and have tended to tense the academic environment. In the Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, a scenario occurred that nearly tore the Department apart. A younger colleague openly told an internationally renowned African philosopher (the originator of Ibuanyidanda philosophy), that his work is not African philosophy. This utterance caused a fuse in the entire department, with a lot of lecturers calling for the head, of the person who made the statement. It is this interesting occurrence that spurred me, into joining the task of setting a criterion on which African philosophy could be categorized.

Several philosophers before me, have proffered interesting criteria to be followed in the classification of works as African or non-African. These attempts at setting a criterion, have been variously criticized by some philosophers, who saw nothing good in the categorization of philosophy. These philosophers disparage the idea of categorization of philosophies into regions, based on their assumptions that philosophy is a universal enterprise, and thus not categorizable into African. One good example of these philosophers is Richard Wright. He believes there cannot be anything like African philosophy, because Africa has diverse cultures and thus there is no homogenous culture to build what could authentically be called African philosophy (1984, 43-44). If philosophy cannot be categorized into African, it means African philosophy does not exist. If African philosophy does not exist, then there will be no need to seek a criterion to classify what does not exist (African philosophy). To argue for a criterion for African philosophy, the reality of African philosophy must be established first. This means the categorization question would need to be answered first. The question therefore is, is there a need to categorize a philosophy, as African, Western, Eastern, Oriental, Christian, Muslim, Hindus? If there is a need, what is the reasoning behind it?

2 THE INDISPENSABILITY OF CATEGORIZATION
Philosophy is philosophy everywhere, most philosophers claim. Since it is the same everywhere, there is no need for categorization, they argue further. While this is a good suggestion, as it will end controversies that accrue because of attempts at categorization, it is not good enough as it will fail to assuage the inward yearning of the human mind. Categorization is an inherent part of human nature. According to Ramose:

Even ‘God’ however, conceived, needs at least one boundary, namely, the separation between creator and creature. Without this line of demarcation, the identity of ‘creator’ and creature’ will be fused into a oneness. ‘god’ cannot be ‘God’ without the boundary between creator and creature. (2003: 150).

If even God cannot possibly exist without categorization, then Human beings cannot possibly live a fulfilled life without categorization of one sort or the other. We have classes of all sorts in the world. We have male, female, humans, non-humans, living, non-living, short, tall, rich, poor, etc. Categorization makes communication and identification easy. It makes the division of labor possible. It makes ethical and harmonious living possible. Even a country cannot fare well without the categorization of people into states. Identity in general is only possible where there is categorization. And identity is not something that man can successfully do without, no matter how he may wish to. This is perhaps why Okere asserts:

Any honest discussion of African culture today must face again the question of its existence and identity. By the question of existence, I do not mean the racist question of whether Africans have any worthwhile culture of which to boast; nor by the question
of identity do I mean whether there is unity of culture in Africa. Rather, here the question of the existence and identity of African culture is that of finding out what we mean when we use the phrase ‘African culture.’ What do we affirm or deny (1996:14).

Tunde Bewaji puts the impact of identity thus: “a sense of identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence. It is not surprising that the idea of identity receives such widespread admiration, from popular advocacy of loving your neighbor to high theories of social capital and communitarian definition” (2008: 273). The advantages of categorization therefore, cannot be overstated. It is part of human’s psyche and thus cannot be wished away. Thus, to demand that categorization in philosophy should be dropped is to demand the near impossible. This is impossible especially now that Africans are frantically in search of an identity, one that has been implicitly and explicitly denied by Westerners. The crafting of an identity for African philosophy is a sort of correction of the historical injustice done to Africa (Bassey 2018). Africa suffered near exclusion from the class of humanity, with the argument that they fail in rationality, which is the hallmark of humanity. While this is no longer seriously held, the skepticism as to the possibility of Africans bringing out a philosophy that could merit the name African philosophy and not Western philosophy has continued to persist. This is precisely why most Western writers seldom give Africa any credit for contribution to philosophy in antiquity and even in contemporary times. It is hard to see any history of philosophy textbooks capturing the contribution of Africans. This is a conscious attempt to blur the identity of Africa and its philosophy, which calls for a reactionary response. Ramose affirms this when he asserts emphatically that “the blurred dotted picture of the history of Western philosophy is a deformation of the African identity. African historical reconstruction is a corrective to this. It is intended to present the true picture of the African identity” (2003, 6). The categorization of African philosophy is therefore, very necessary, not just because it would satisfy our natural psychological yearnings, but because it will be the end of the fight to nail racism, in both its scientific and philosophical variants. What should concern every African now is the resolution of the controversies regarding categorization of African philosophy. That is, a resolution of the quarrel over what and what should not constitute African philosophy. I believe this could successfully be done if we understand how the human psyche construe classes.

3 THE NATURE AND CONTENTS OF A CATEGORY

A common-sense definition of a class or category is not a set with a completely identical features or things. The definition of human beings for instance, as a class of rational humans, does not exclude those humans without this rationality. The human mind continually conceives humans as rational animals, even when deep within it, it knows that not all humans are rational. This means that in every definition of a class or category, there is an implied understanding that there are exceptions, to which the definition does not adequately apply. We define the male sex, for instance, as a class of humans with a deep voice, even when we are aware that some men have light voices. We define sub-Saharan Africans, as a set of Africa that is black in color, even when we can find a good number of people in this region, with light skins (Akpan 2015). Categorization in common sense therefore, does not carry that strict insistence for uniformity, it admits exceptions. The categorization of a philosophy as African, therefore, ought to be understood based on this common-sense understanding of categorization. Categorization as useful as it is, would be impossible if we were to insist on excluding all exceptions. If categorization is taken this way, African philosophy would not be possible. But since categorization generally does not follow this format, there is no need to demand this of African philosophy.

Though, categorization does not insist on a hundred percent uniformity, it demands that at least one quality should be common in all. For instance, the category ‘human’ accommodates a lot of creatures with diverse features that could not honestly be said to be uniformly applicable to all humans. Not all humans have eyes; not all have noses; not all have hands and legs; we cannot say if all have brains, because we cannot examine this, but all have a human form, which makes them human. This one property that is common in all humans justify the classification of all variety of people into the category. If we also look at the category ‘living beings’, we will observe that the only common element here is life. Thus, if during so many differences, one identifiable common feature could justifiably place beings in the same category, it means if we can find a common feature that cuts across many philosophies, we can classify them in the same category. Consequently, if we find one element common in African philosophies, we can use that as a criterion to classify philosophies into one category – African philosophy. What then is that element that could serve as this much sort after criterion?

4 WHAT THE CATEGORY ‘AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY’ CONSISTS OF

What makes a philosophy ‘African’ will most likely be what makes an individual ‘African.’ To identify an ‘African’ is to identify African philosophy. It is the connection to the geographical space called, Africa, which makes one African. This implies that, it is a philosophy connected with the African geographical space that makes it African (Bassey and Mendie 2019). A person for instance, is an African, not because of his/her skin color, shape of nose, tongue, nature of hair, etc. All Africans do not commonly share these. What makes a person, African, is his/her connection to the place called Africa. The fact that he/she was born in Africa or has stayed in Africa for several years, qualifies one to be called an African. It is therefore, the connection with the geographical area called Africa that makes a person, African. This is also applicable to other things, whatever has a connection with the geographical space called Africa, is indisputably, African. The same is true of philosophy. Any philosophy that has a geographical connection with Africa, is African. Since geographical space is the only thing that all Africans share, any philosophy derived from this common feature (land) called African region is African philosophy. If a philosophy is given birth to in a culture, of any African community, it is African Philosophy, the same way any man that is generated (born) from any space within the wider space called Africa,
is African. Since, this human being, born in Nigeria, for instance, is called an African, even though he does not share physical characteristics with all Africans, a philosophy born in Nigeria too whether it shares similar features with that of other African countries, is African. The contents of the philosophy therefore, may not apply universally over all Africans, but if it shares the same entity (land) with all Africa, it is African. Heidegger clearly alludes to the importance of a place in categorization, when he asserts that:

"to be man is to have an existential ‘place’ but this ‘place’ must become the house of our Being in which our ontological dimension, our being here, unfolds and finds fulfillment. ‘place’ places us both horizontally and vertically; it is the dimension of our ontological and existential uniqueness” (1958: 25)

I agree with Heidegger that place is indisputably “the dimension of our ontological and existential uniqueness.” This implies that what could make philosophy unique, is the place. Every other criterion that has been proposed would not confer this uniqueness to African philosophy. African philosophy therefore, consists of or more properly should consist of all philosophies brewed in Africa (any part of Africa). It also consists of all philosophies that have Africa as its proximate end and others as its remote end. A philosophy is brewed in Africa, if it is derived from the culture (not necessarily traditional) of the African people. A culture here means “the totality of custom, techniques, and values that distinguish a social group, a tribe, a people, a nation” (Mondin, 1991: 146). Africa has its own cultures. These cultures though, no longer homogenous are nevertheless still unique, as no two societies can share the same culture. The various elements of culture, blend in each society in different forms and quantity, giving rise contemporaneously to heterogeneous culture in African societies that is unique in these societies. Since every philosophy is a product of a culture, any one that is produced by any of the African cultural background, is unmistakably African philosophy. However, any philosophy that has Africa as its proximate end is also rightfully African.

A philosophy has Africa as its proximate end, if its main aim is to solve the problems bedeviling the African people and environment. A philosophy is not only African if it emerges from the culture of Africans, it is also African if it is aimed at resolving African predicament. In this case, it does not matter where the philosophy is contrived from, if it is aimed at solving African problems, it is African philosophy. As water drawn from a river and poured into a sea, a philosophy drawn from a foreign environment and emptied into the African space, automatically becomes African philosophy. To claim that such a philosophy is not African, is to claim that water drawn from a river and poured into a sea is not sea water. The futility of such a denial, is very clear.

African philosophy therefore, could be defined as any philosophy contrived from African unique culture as it expresses itself in the traditional or contemporary way of life of Africans or a philosophy brewed from anywhere but with Africans in mind. It is a philosophy that emanates from African environment or one that emanates from a foreign environment but collapses into Africa. It is therefore, the place (place of excavation or place of implementation) that confers uniqueness to African philosophy and not necessarily the method employed. This definition of African philosophy, does not demand that a culture must be generally shared by all African communities, before a philosophy, derived from it would be termed African. If a community is African, a philosophy derived from its culture is African. Since Boki is an African community, a philosophy derived from Boki’s culture is African. To deny that it is, is to deny that Boki is African. Wittgenstein is not British, but his philosophy is categorized as British, because it is derived from the prevailing philosophical culture (analytic) of the British. This implies that any philosopher who derives his philosophy from African culture is invariably an African philosopher and his philosophy, African philosophy.

A philosophy being African therefore, does not necessarily mean that it is applicable or binding on all Africans. It does not mean that its contents are shared by all Africans as most philosophers would want us to hold. It also does not mean that its logic or method is peculiarly African (we do not have such a logic, that is distinctively African, which Africans could follow to make their philosophies uniquely African). A philosophy can still be African, even if only one African community or individual holds it, as long as it has that mark that makes anything or human being, African. This uniqueness bestowed on philosophy by the ‘place’ does not make philosophy closed to others, as many people argue. Njoku for instance, argues “if African philosophy is unique …then it is closed to others. It is an ‘African thing’”. (Njoku 2005: 103). African philosophy is an African thing as far as it is generated in Africa or applied to African problems. At the same time, it is not an African thing to the extent that it could be done by any human being. It is also an African thing as far as it has Africa as its proximate end, and at the same time not totally an African thing because it has another region as its remote end.

The primary aim of an African philosophy must be to solve the African predicament, but this does not mean it is not applicable to other areas facing the same problems. In this era of globalization, there is hardly any issue that is not global. There is almost no problem that is not shared albeit, in different degrees by other regions of the world. Corruption for instance, is a global issue, but could be said to be more endemic in Africa. Thus, its degree of occurrence in different countries differ. This however, does not mean that a devised solution of corruption in Africa, cannot be applied to other areas suffering this same evil, even if it exist in small degree. African philosophy could therefore, be said to be unique in so far as, it gives identity to philosophy that is African, in the same way ‘ekpang kukwo’ could be said to be a unique African food. It is a unique African food, not because other parts of the world cannot eat or prepare it, it is rather unique because of its origin. Ekpang kukwo is a unique African food, but with a universal appeal, so also African philosophy is unique to African, but with a universal appeal. This uniqueness is not closed to others, it is an open uniqueness that embraces the other if the base or end of his/her philosophizing is traceable to African land. Note that, it is the conception of African philosophy as drawn from African culture that could truly escape this charge of a uniqueness that is closed to outsiders. We shall explain this when we look at the other criteria proposed by other philosophers.
5 CRITIQUE OF OTHER PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

I have weighed the many criteria put forth for the categorization of African philosophy and found them wanting. Three-valued logic for instance, as proposed by Jonathan Chimakonam, would not make African philosophy unique, because other regions also employ this logic. Chimakonam emphatically states that “a discourse … qualifies as African philosophy not because it is authored by an African … it is because it has African logic tradition at its foundation notwithstanding the issues it treats (The Criterion Question 2015, 110). This to him means that “any discourse that treats African or non-African issues whether produced by an African or non-African but is capable of universal application can qualify as African philosophy insofar as it is produced with the background logic of African ontology or the instrument of logic tradition in Africa which is dialectical in structure” (Addressing Uduma’s Africanness of a Philosophy Question, 45).

Logic as Uduma rightly observes is “universal in nature” and thus cannot be “regionalized” (1996, 374). The “logicality of Africans does not and cannot ipso facto imply the existence of a peculiar African logic” (Uduma 2015: 94). My intention in this paper is not to argue for the existence or non-existence of African logic, but to show that even if it exists, it needs a criterion for identification. It is in this wise that I think African, logic cannot be the criterion for African philosophy as Chimakonam proposed. This will amount to using an ambiguous term to define another ambiguous term, which is a fallacy of ambiguity. African logic, needs a criterion to identify it and thus cannot qualify to be a criterion for another subject. The criterion that would justify African philosophy will be the same criterion that would justify African logic and vice versa. It is likely that Chimakonam did not see it this way.

Between African logic and African philosophy, if one must serve as a criterion for the other (which I doubt any will be qualified) it is African philosophy that should do this job. A logic as Chimakonam himself knows (he captured this in his essay ‘The Logic Criterion’ 104-115) can only be discerned by looking at a philosophy. This means African logic is only discernible by looking at African philosophy. But in this case, that the criterion for determining which work is African philosophy and which is not, is yet to be agreed on, it is surprising that scholars like Chimakonam and others of his ilk are already showing African logic. This amounts to putting the cart before the horse. It is African philosophy that should determine which logic is African. Thus, until a suitable criterion is arrived at that will delineate African philosophy from other philosophies, then we can never know, which logic is African.

The same criticisms leveled against Chimakonam are the same criticisms that Lucky Ogbonna lays to. Ontology according to Ogbonna determines a philosophy. According to him, “ontology is the true criterion of philosophy; and in this case, African ontology is what defines African philosophy as well as all the branches of African philosophy” (13-14). African ontology does not qualify as a criterion for African philosophy, because the ontology attributed to Africa, is not uniquely African, other regions especially the Oriental also share this. Ontology as a criterion also falls into the fallacy of ambiguity. African ontology is seriously in need of a criterion to classify it. What makes a philosophy African, is not the method used to thaw it out, but where it is thawed out from. I could use any method to fetch water from a sea, it will remain sea water. The method used add or subtract nothing from the fact that it is sea water. The method used to catch fish does not change the fact that it is fish. The method, logic, or ontology used to churn out philosophy from a culture does not change the nature of philosophy. It is African no matter the method used; no matter the logic used and no matter the ontology employed. To see logic or ontology as the criterion for a philosophy to be African, is to link the nature of water with the method used to fetch it – this is a grave mistake. The method used does not change the fact that it is sea water, if it is drawn from the region of water called, sea. Also, the method used to philosophize does not change the fact that it is African philosophy, if it is drawn from the geographical region called African.

Houndtonji came close to getting it right, when he asserts that for a philosophy to be African, it must be from an African. He however, narrowly missed the mark, because being an African does not make one’s philosophy, African. One can be an African but contrived his philosophy from the Western culture, making him to be a Western philosopher. This is true, when we consider that Wittgenstein is not a British, but is classified as a British philosopher. One can be an African but a Western philosopher, and one can be a Westerner but an African philosopher. Furthermore, Houndtonji did not seem to consider the fact that the term African is still controversial. To place a philosophy by an African to be African philosophy is to use an ambiguous term to define an ambiguous term (fallacy of ambiguity). The term African itself needs a clear criterion before it can serve as a criterion for another. Houndtonji therefore, mishit by placing African as a criterion for African philosophy. He unfortunately, magnified his error by postulating that such a work must be announced as philosophy by the authors, for it to become automatically African philosophy (Houndtonji 2003: 147). To assert such is unbecoming, it is to make nonsense of philosophy, anything whatsoever could become philosophy, if the author so wish to label it so – this is uncharitable to the philosophy discipline.

Peter Bondurin made attempt to correct the defect in Houndtonji criterion, but still fell into another hole. Bondurin categorization of an African philosophy, as one done by either African or non-African is great, but his clause that this scholar must be living in Africa makes nonsense of his effort. It is the place, where the philosophy is excavated that matters and not the standpoint of the excavator. What makes water in my cup, sea water is not where I stood to get the water, but the fact that it is drawn from the sea. I could stand by the sea shore and extend my hand to get the water, I could jump inside the sea to fetch the water, I could even be in a helicopter or ship to get the water. Wherever I stand to fetch water from a sea, would not change the fact that it is sea water. Wherever I stay to fetch out philosophy from a culture in Africa, it is still African philosophy. Theophilus Okere and Oji Uduma made lovely contributions to the criterion question; contributions that I must confess, are closest to the real.
Okere asserts:

Philosophical reflection is the process of explication, an uncovering, a disclosure, an unfolding of the meaning and sense implied in those objectivations of life which are symbols. Reflection means implicitia explicare – making the implicit, explicit. African cultures have their own symbols pregnant with meaning. A reflection on these symbols with a view to making the implicit meanings explicit would constitute African philosophy (1983: 114-115)

Uduma writes:

it is ... the cultural/geographical background/content of a philosophy that makes it African. For any philosophical work, system, theory, or idea to be African, whether it is written by an African or non-African, it must have an African flavor. It must be a product of wonder from or on the African experience and the African world (2014: 143).

Chimakonam has already criticized Uduma, especially for his use of the terms ‘product of wonder.’ This criticism, however, I think is unjustified because every philosophy stems from wonder. The source of wonder is what is different. The first professional African philosophers may not have wondered through direct experience, but were forced to wonder, on whether or not it was possible for Africa not to have a philosophy, due to the Western attitude to the humanity of Africa. For me therefore, Uduma use of ‘wonder’ is not misplaced, because the Africans too wondered, though their wonder is different from that of ancient western philosophers – it is still wonder nonetheless. Okere as well as Uduma’s emphasis on the cultural background of Africa as the criterion to determine which philosophy is African and which is not is what appeals to me. However, they disappointedly did not realize that a philosophy brewed from a foreign culture and applied to African environment also merits the name African philosophy. It merits the name African philosophy, the same way a river water, when fetch and poured in the sea automatically merits the name sea water. Water drawn from a different environment (river) when poured into another environment (sea) becomes part of the new environment (sea water), so also philosophy drawn from a different culture, when emptied into another culture assumes the nature of that culture. I may be accused of picture-type fallacy here.

However, before this accusation comes, let me make it vividly clear, that I use water here as a mere analogy to drive home my point. My point is very clear, it is the place where a thing is got from, that makes that thing what it is. A hand is Peter’s, only if it is taken from the environment called Peter. This remains true no matter how the hand resembles Paul’s hand. It is not the method employed to cut off Peter’s hand that makes it, Peter’s hand, but the fact that it is taken from Peter. A hand too can also become justifiably Peter’s, if it is transplanted from a foreign body into Peter. It becomes Peter’s if it becomes part of his body. This is the same way a transplanted heart becomes part of the recipient’s body. What informs the categorization of philosophy into Western, Oriental, African, is the geographical niche it is contrived from or emptied on. It is also important to note; a geographical region far from having a homogenous culture that cuts across the entire region, have different cultures. This means, there could arise many philosophies within a region. These philosophies though different, could in their singularity be called African philosophy. The possibility of the emergence of different philosophies from African cultures, is a clear indication that there could be different logics in Africa and not one umbrella logic like Chimakonam, Ijomah, Udo Etuk, Senghor and other would want us to believe. Chimakonam calls his umbrella logic, ‘ezumezu,’ Ijomah calls his ‘harmonious monism’, Etuk describes his ‘affective logic’ and Senghor designates his own ‘emotive logic’ – these logics which are inherently different only in terminologies propose or assert that African logic is three-valued. I wonder if Africa does not employ two-valued, one-valued, and many valued logics in their explanation of reality. I believe that “no one brand of logic is capable of explaining all the beliefs of a region of the world. Thus, no one brand could be designated as African or Western. There exist a moment of oscillation between two-valued logic and three-valued logic in all cultures of the world” (Bisong & Odok, 2013: 23). This implies that, if we must present a different three-valued logic that is African, we must also present African versions of other logics.

The idea of three-valued logic being a uniquely African logic is based on the erroneous reasoning, that Africans have a collective reasoning – a belief that informs the (debased but shockingly accepted by most philosophers) categorization of traditional African philosophy as ethno-philosophy. Ethno-philosophy gives the impression that Africans think uniformly (Bisong, 2019: 40) and this peculiar uniform way is christened either as ‘ezumezu’ logic, or harmonious monism or affective logic. This is very unfortunate, though, my blame goes to the fathers of African philosophy (Tempels, Kagame, Oruka, Momoh, Hountondji and others) who set the tone for this wrong conception of African philosophy. I think it is high time this is corrected. African philosophy is not a group-think, it is an individual enterprise; it is not a blanket philosophy that is applicable to all Africans but a segmented one. There is no ontology or logic therefore, that could be termed African, in that sense of covering all Africans. Thinking so, is merely due to the influence of ethno-philosophic orientation.

It is also important to note, that culture in my definition of African philosophy, does not necessarily mean traditional African culture. This is another point where Okere and Uduma missed the mark. African culture has grown beyond the point that it can simply be constricted to traditional way of life. A culture is African, if it is what is invoked in Africa. Today, traditional African culture is blended with other cultures to form an admixture of cultures. What Africans have now is a hybridization of culture, which is nevertheless distinct from other cultures. Though, there is a mixture of different cultures, this peculiar hybrid, is unique to Africa and thus cannot justifiably be said to be identical with any other one in the world. It is true that all cultures in the world, suffer the same fate like African culture, in that there are no longer homogenous and pure, however, they remain distinct because the different elements of the world cultures cannot possibly mix in the same quantity and quality in different regions. Thus, the fear that makes most scholars insist on building African philosophy on traditional culture is unfounded. The fear that philosophy built on contemporary African cultures would
not produce a unique African philosophy, is not well placed, for African has a unique contemporary culture. Philosophy built on this, would be unique. I am not implying here, that it is only philosophy built on contemporary African culture that merits the name ‘African philosophy.’ The one build on traditional culture also merits that name, but it is safer to build on the contemporary culture, which is more visible and known. Such a philosophy is likely to create more impact in the society (since it is close to the breast of the society) and would be easily imbibed.

6 Conclusion
This research concludes that classification or categorization of philosophy is inevitable. It is something that cannot be wished away. This implies that a criterion is required for the proper categorization of African philosophy. The criterion I suggested in this work is the geographical space, called Africa. A philosophy drawn from this space must be African and a philosophy poured into this space automatically becomes African philosophy. The excavation of philosophy, however, must not cover the whole land of Africa, before it merits the name African philosophy. Just like water drawn from point ‘A’ of the sea is called sea water, it is the same way that water drawn from point ‘B’ of the sea, is called sea water. This remains so even if the water at point ‘A’ is colder than that at point ‘B.’ A philosophy is authentically African, if it is drawn from any cultures of any part of Africa. Similarly, if there must be African logic or African ontology, this logic and ontology must be African only in the sense that it is drawn from the culture of Africans. And not necessarily because it has a different nature. The logic and ontologies from Africa must not have different nature and principles, before it is considered unique to Africans. It is unique to African because it is drawn from Africa various culture.

In conclusion, I wish to state vividly, that there is a serious need to understand, that African philosophy, need not be different in content from Western philosophies, before it be termed African. That mad desire to be different from others should not drive African philosophy. Let us concentrate and do African philosophy. If the philosophy comes out to be like other philosophies somewhere, it would just be a matter of similarity and not identity. The craze for identity has made most African philosophers to want to be different at all cost, even when it means distorting African reality to achieve that. This mentality is what informed Temples misplacement of African philosophy. This desire to be different is also what motivates most fathers of African philosophy, to gleefully accept the injustice of Temples – all they gloried in, was the realization that Temples defended the existence of a unique African philosophy – the negativity involved in this description of African philosophy did not matter to them. It is this same motivation (motivation to be different at all cost) that drives projects like ‘ezumezu logic,’ ‘harmonious monism’ negritude, pan Africanism and such other divisive and polarizing theories. In their zeal to carve a unique identity for African, these projects unwittingly present Africa in negative lights. While it is a good thing to crave for identity, we should not lose sight of the warning by Bewaji that “identity can also kill – and kill with abandon” (2008, 273). Caution should be taken in order not to kill African philosophy with our own hands.

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