

School Mate®



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- \* 1. Discuss the concept of human destiny and freedom in African ontology from the perspectives of Igbo, Akan and Yoruba traditional thoughts.
2. Is African Science true Science? What are the differences between Western and African Methods of Science.
3. Discuss the response of African philosophers to the mind-body problem.
4. Evaluate Mbiti's saying: "I am because we are" in the context of the relationship between the individual and the community in African worldviews
5. ...
6. With your knowledge of a given African ontology, evaluate the debate on whether there is or not the idea of the supreme Being on the traditional African religious thought.

NO2.

## OUTLINE

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. The Concept of Science.
- 3.0. The notion of African Science.
- 4.0. The Method of Western Science.
- 5.0. The Method of African Science.
6. Evaluation and Conclusion.

## INTRODUCTION.

The debate on the existence of African philosophy contend that Africans do not have philosophy

## INTRODUCTION.

Most western philosophers argue that African do not have philosophy since they lack the intellectual capacity required to engage in philosophy. African philosophers on the other hand think otherwise and have in various ways been able to identify philosophy and philosophical reflections in African

This debate about the existence of African philosophy is similar to the debate about the existence of African science. Questions like Does Africa have a science different from western Science? What science means and what science methods science make use of are addressed in this debate.

The problem which is usually noted about African science is that it is couched in, or anchored on the mythico-religious method. Hence the major interest are to differentiate African science from western science and as well understand if there is African science outside religious mythologies.

## THE CONCEPT OF SCIENCE.

Etymologically, the concept Science is derived from the Latin word "Scientia" which has its roots in the Latin verb "Scire" meaning "to know". Thus science in this general sense refers to knowledge; specifically systematized knowledge. Technically, the term science seems to defy any generally accepted definition because scientist and philosophers define it according to their different epochs and school of thought.

Science according to E. O. Wilson is an organized, systematic enterprise that gathers knowledge about the world and condenses the knowledge into testable laws and principles.

O'connor using Aristotle's conception of science said that science is a body of true statements about a particular subject matter.

Francis Bacon also conceived science as knowledge having to do with the activity to conquer nature. For him scientific knowledge is the road to power, hence his recurrent theme "knowledge is power", the knowledge in question being

knowledge of nature.

From a sociological point of view "Maurice Richey conceives science as a cultural process. It is the process or the group of interrelated processes through which we have acquired modern and ever changing knowledge of the natural world which encompasses inanimate nature, life, human nature and human society.

There are other definition of science by other scholars. However the definitions given captures the activity of modern science and as well some aspects of African science.

#### MEANINGS

#### THE NOTION OF AFRICAN SCIENCE.

Following from the debate about the existence of African philosophy, the existence of a distinct African science with its specialized methods has also been a subject of debate. One of the many denialists of the existence of African Science is Samuel Firdze Bajah. He asserted that there is science in Africa but there is no African Science.

In response Murfin, unequivocally said that there is

African science and its existence is what calls for the activities, the nature of understanding and explanation of the phenomena that occurs in Africa. So science exists in Africa as it exists in other parts of the world.

9. O Okoemba in his Analytic and Synthetic Dimensions of African Science characterizes African science as the African man's way of observing, systematizing, testing, confirming facts of his environments with the aim of achieving a high level of understanding of his environment to aid him in controlling or manipulating the forces of nature to his advantage or at least to escape the heavy consequences of uncertainties which characterize natural phenomena.

This definition of African science asks questions such as "What makes African science different from Western science since this is exactly what is involved in Western science? There is need for proper classification and explanation because the traditional method of African science could not be the same with the modernized African science nor with Western science.

## METHOD OF WESTERN SCIENCE.

The Method of western science ordinarily involves an organized way or approach of carrying out scientific activities. It should involve recognized rules of procedures for carrying out research in sciences which are accepted by the scientific community. Unfortunately scientists and philosophers are not unanimous as to which rules are to be recognized or which stage supersedes which.

Progress in science through different variations of opinions about the unanimity of accepted procedures shows that there is a synthesis of every other variations. This synthesis includes observation, collecting data, forming hypothesis and testing the hypothesis, after which a generalization is drawn and a scientific theory given birth to, that is if the hypothesis withstands the test.

This approach, is believed to have encouraged the growth of science and is the hallmark of modern (western) science. The question then is, how has African Science fared vis-a-vis such an approach.

## METHOD OF AFRICAN SCIENCE

African science also follows some method of observation and experimentation like the western science. However, its conclusion are said to be based on mytho-religious foundations. African science is Method of science is classified under two aspects namely: The traditional African Method and the Modern African Method.

### THE TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SCIENCE

Traditional African science refers to the activities of understanding, explaining and exploiting nature (for Man's use), which proceeded from African beginnings on African soil by African people. It is traditional because it proceeded from the African environment and has been passed down from generation to generation, and has not been adulterated by western science. It is pure African science.

Traditional science thrives more on the practical side, it could be said that its method is more of technique than theory. This is a slight depart-

from the Method of Western science, which seems to concern itself more with the ideas and principles which are propounded toward our understanding of nature.

Traditional African science just as Western method consists of observational and experimental stages though it may not be as sophisticated as that of the western method but it is applied where necessary.

One major characteristic of traditional African Science is the belief in Causality, this implies that Traditional African science does not believe in occurrence. Everything is caused and can be explained either by natural reference or supernatural reference.

### MODERNIZED AFRICAN SCIENCE.

The modernized African science also refers to the activities of understanding, explaining and exploiting nature for man's use. But it is different from traditional African science because those who engage in these activities have been adulterated by incorporating the method of modern Western science.

Modernized African science is a mixture of the traditional African science and Western science. The

Modernized African scientist incorporates both the techniques of Western science and traditional African science. Examples of Modernized African scientist are those who operate herbal homes in the town and cities and Western trained African scientists.

Western trained African scientist inspite of their formal training still employ some aspects of traditional African culture when engaging in their activities. This could be seen in western trained scientist who make incantations before administering medication or injections.

## EVALUATION

From the foregoing discussion, we can see that there is no gainsaying the fact African science is not real science. Eventhough the claims of the Western world that African science does not follow any objective procedures, or that it is based on superstitions, that it is based on mythic religious foundations, that it is more practical than religious, that African scientist hide the

knowledge to themselves, have some idea of truth. It cannot however be denied that there is African science.

Also despite the claim of the west that it is a kind of My tho-religious science or pseudo science, there are still some good aspects of African science that can serve as alternative to modern science because they provide more efficient and effective solutions.

There is need to join these two methods of science and to address the issues of African science in order to help its development which would be beneficial to the next generation.

# Decolonising Contemporary African Primary Health Care System:-

Outline.

1.0- Introduction.

The Meaning of PHC

Traditional African Health Care System.

The Decolonising Effort of PHC in Contemporary Africa.

Some African Medicinal plants used in the Treatment of Disease.

Evaluation and Conclusion.

## INTRODUCTION

African health Care system enabled africans to survive their environment and live healthy lives long before the colonialists. African traditional Medicine has comparative advantage in curing sickness over western Medicine. This could include mental and spiritual illnesses, bone setting and stroke.

African traditional medicine provides a dimension of health that is virtually absent in most western-oriented health care institutions. However, western medicine and health practice has taken over the African health landscape and this is draining on African foreign exchange.

It is therefore important to ask "How did African forebears survive without western medicine and how can traditional medicine be <sup>noble</sup> ~~used~~ more vibrant medicine and functional in order to meet primary health care needs in today's Contemporary Africa?

## WHAT IS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (PHC)

Primary health care is understood as the organized provision of medical care to individuals or a community of people whether it has a state policy backup or not.

It is important to get a holistic meaning of primary Health Care by looking at how different scholars construe it. In a technical series on PHC, E Dubois states that modern primary health care emerged when gross Health inequalities became a global concern. This implies that PHC is the foundation for achieving declining premature mortality, rising longevity as well as an increase in healthy lifestyle.

Pius Izundu Okpoko defines PHC following from WHO's perspective, as a very important health care anchored on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology made accessible to all individuals and families in a community at a cost they can afford to maintain at every stage of their development.

The contributions of PHC to the improvements

public health has been widely recognized by the international community even though approaches and execution differs. It is the central function and the main focus of the overall social and economic development.

### TRADITION OF AFRICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

Traditional African Medicine has been in existence long before Western Medicine found its way into Africa and this is what African ancestors survived on when they were faced with all manner of illnesses. Traditional African Medicine refers to the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different African cultures used in the maintenance of health and in the prevention, diagnosis improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness.

Traditional African Medicine is pejoratively called alternative or complementary medicine which suggests that it plays a second fiddle to Western Medicine. However Nevertheless the number

of Africans who have access to this traditional medicine are comparatively higher which mean that (WTO) which has recognized African medicine should do more in research of these medication to enhance production.

of PHC

### THE DECODING EFFORT IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA.

Western Medicine has been beneficial to us and mankind.

Many things, however it is incapable of giving answers to all kinds of health issues in Africa.

Therefore, the most workable health agenda as well as the most urgent for Africa is the institutionalization of traditional medicine in parallel with the Western medicine within the health care system/scheme.

According to WTO, traditional medicine comprise therapeutic practices which have been in existence often for hundreds of years before the development of modern scientific medicine and are still in use today without any documenta-

evidence of adverse effects.

African ancestors knew the application of plant, animals, mineral materials as found in the hierarchy of force sometimes with incantations for healing purposes and which can be rationalized explained and investigated scientifically. This shows that African ancestors employed the technique of empirical observation in their act of curing sicknesses. They do not observation in their act of but carry out experiment in order to arrive at scientific knowledge.

Affordability of healthcare to all who need it is one of the goals of healthcare especially at the primary level, unfortunately Western Medicine are not always cheap. Added to the fact that some sickness cannot be cured with such medicine.

This makes it pertinent that Traditional African healthcare system should be given more attention.

African leaders should give a new face to Traditional African healthcare in order to meet PHC needs. Traditional African medicine can be

developed in such a manner that it can meet the health needs not only of Africans but the entire world. Traditional African medicine also has a good grasp of the principle of life, thus sickness is understood as a diminution of vital force and cure takes place when the vital force is restored or increased.

Unless African countries unite in the understanding that no one can care for the health of the continent like Africans themselves, Africa would continue to suffer serious fatality. Hence there is need to study African universe and medicine which is anchored on the need to restore the broken harmony between the sick and his or her universe.

### SOME AFRICAN MEDICINAL PLANTS USED IN THE TREATMENT OF DISEASES.

It is has been noted that some plants and herbs have been proved to be very effective in curing most common diseases in Africa. These include some of the following:

2. Acanthaceae - Used for curing syphilis, cough, emetic and vaginal discharge.
2. Apocynaceae - Used to cure abdominal pain, ulcers, and gonorrhoea.
3. Leaves of Combretaceae {Ikedike} - used for treating Jaundice.
4. Euphorbiaceae {Iri or Komi} - used for treating insomnia, mouth wash, and gonorrhoea.
5. Root bark of Hypericaceae & Otooro or alibarraf - used in the treatment of piles and trypanosomiasis.
6. Acacia Senegal - used for treatment of different affections.
7. Aloe ferox mill - used as health drink, for skin care and for the treatment of stomach complaints.
8. Artemisia / wormwood - used to treat diabetes, bronchitis, diarrhea, hypertension and neuralgics.
9. Aspalathus linearis - used as a herbal tea which has a caffeine-free and comparatively low tannin status.
10. Pelargonium sidoides - effective in the treatment of acute respiratory infection.

The govt should chart a definite and decisive course on how to make use of these medicinal plants

in Africa to cure the various sickness in Africa.

## EVALUATION

# The mind and body problem.

Outline.

Introduction

The nature of the mind

Points of divergence in Africa & Western conception

Western Solution to Mind-body

African response

Ikenga Metuh

Placid Temples

Kwame Gye Kye

Conclusion.

## Introduction.

Mind and Body problem is a philosophical problem that have been in existence since the time of René Descartes who introduced it into philosophy. René Descartes in his mind and body problem considers the mind and body as two separate entities that interact only through the pineal glands.

Nevertheless, the mind and body is all about the nature and extent of interaction of these two entities. But Western philosophers and African philosophers have discussed on the notion of mind and body problem. While the western philosophers approached this problem from the dualist perspective as proposed in Cartesian dualism. African philosophers rejects it and conceives all that is as "force".

The African responses to this mind and body problem would be examined and compared with the solutions advocated by the westerner philosophers.

## THE NATURE OF THE MIND

Aristotle in his work *De Anima* states that the mind is a process in which the potential actualizes itself. Also Sheldon states that the mind means consciousness.

For David Hodgson, it is an abstract noun referring collectively to each person's mental events. Finally Descartes conceived the mind to be a non-material substance "res cogitans".

## THE WESTERN AND AFRICAN CONCEPTION OF REALITY:- Points of Divergence.

The mind-body problem is general in the study of philosophy, however there are points of divergence in the Western conception and the African conception of mind and body problem.

The West makes bid to conquer the element of nature, with the hope that by so doing they would be of benefit to him, but the African seeks a unitized bond with the elements of nature. As a result of this Western philosophers argue that there is a sharp distinction between the

soul and the body while African philosophers find no reason why the mind (soul) should be said at all to be separate from the body.

For the Africans, the body and soul are not only co-functional, they are substantially independent with their distinct substantiality remaining intact.

(The Genesis and Core Solution to the Mind-body problem in western philosophy.)

#### WESTERN SOLUTION

In the western philosophical tradition the mind-body problem has generated heated debate and this debate is as ancient as philosophy itself. The mind-body problem is all about the nature and extent of interaction of the two entities "mind and body".

Among the westerner philosophers, there are two major camps of the mind and body problem which are the dualist and the monists. The dualist see the mind and body as two different or independent realities while the monist see them as one principle or entity.

There have been various solutions western philosophers have preferred for mind and body problem. The first

Was the idealist solution propagated mostly by Berkeley.  
which argues that there is only mind and as such body/ matter are merely a manifestation of the mind.

In the modern era René Descartes in his thesis called Cartesian Dualism proposed substance dualism.

He argued that the world is composed of matter (res extensa) and non material (soul cogitans). His disciples Arnold Gaultier and Nicholas Malebranche proposed another aspect of mind and body called Occasionalism.

In the contemporary era, advanced theories have been developed about the mind and body problem. For instance, the Behaviorist doctrine contends that mental states are identical with the state of the brain. Also functionalists like George Henry Lewes argue that mental states are realized only by physical states.

The mind-body problem in the west is primarily founded on the disparity of the natures of mind and body. Western philosophers situated the problem on the platform of substance which is basically metaphysical and deterministic. African interpretation on the other hand is not so, but approaches the mind and body problem very formidably and with adequate schematic tools.

## AFRICAN RESPONSE.

African philosophy is peculiarly marked by the dynamic relation and interplay of the elements of reality as a whole. In the African response to the mind and body problem African researchers from various areas buried themselves in critical examination of nature of man and the mind and body problem.

With particular attention given to Kwame Gyekye of the Akan people, Mefuh of the Igbo people and Placid Temples of the Bantu people, we would investigate on the research on the mind and body problem and as well show the importance of the research to African philosophy on the mind and body problem.

### IKENGA METUH

The mind-body relation according to Mefuh is clearly interactionist this is because the promptings of the Chi, the characters of the Ibe and the affections and volitions of the Obi are all communicated to and through the body. (The Obi is Man's prompting animating principle and the seat of affection and volition)

On another hand, whatever affects the body equally affects or influences man's interior constitution. Hence, though Metuh did not set out to work on mind-body relation whether among the Igbo or any other tribes, we can unmistakably pinpoint his interactionist contours in spite of their faintness. The central point for Metuh is that the soul is conceived as a unifying principle and a life force in the universe.

Since the soul of man, is a force while other beings are forces as well; man's interaction with the plenitude of beings is demystified. Man makes use of the subhuman species as palliatives or additives to increase his vital force and he can equally manipulate these forces.

Thus the vital force is man's channel of fundamental relationship with the other. There is a continuous exchange between all the beings in the Igbo world view irrespective of the class of being (visible and invisible) to which they belong.

## PRACID TEMPELS

Tempeles' formidable study of Bantu ontology presents us with a typical African conception of beings and their mode of interaction. Using his framework, the mind and the body assume a unique mode of interaction, one that attempts very closely to resolve the western mind-body dichotomy.

The Bantu distinguish man, the body, the shadow and the breath. The breath is the assumed manifestation the evident sign of life. The body as the physical, visible and tangible physiological base of life. For them the principle of man's life "the soul" is not as parts of man but man himself.

Tempeles tackling the mind and body problem observed that Africans conceive beings as living forces. Being is always active, dynamic and not static. The world of forces Tempeles observed is held like a spider's web of which no single thread can be caused to vibrate without shaking the whole network. Since being is a living force interaction between beings may lead to the reinforcement of the power of beings, or its diminution.

Summary, among the Bantu; the material body and the immaterial soul are the chain of dynamism

organic relatedness. The powers of the mind is manifested in the activities of the body and the action, function, disposition in African pastoral.

The body's vital force is reflected in the mind and can either augment its respective vital force or vitalise it. The unifying movement of the vital force from the soul to the body and vice versa, all constitutes Man as a unity.

### KK(AME GYEKYE (AKAN RESPONSE)

In Gyekye's research among his people, he sets out to interpret, reconstruct and sort out in a more sophisticated way the elements of the Akan collective thought on the nature of a person.

Gyekye is of the view that the proper representation of the Akan conception of a person is that he is composed essentially of mind and body rather than the Akan tripartite view, namely soul, mind and body.

On mind body relation among the Akan Gyekye opposed the vital force as the dynamic channel of mind body relation. Since mind and body are

forces, they prefer penetrate and concentrate each other.

The conclusion from Gekyes argument is that where the soul and the body are no longer independent forces, but are forces that intermingle and interpenetrate each other the relationship between the body and the soul constitute no problem.

### Conclusion.

The African approaches the mind-body problem very formidably and with adequate schematic tools. For them the vital force and not the western substance is the basic thing in all existences. The vital force <sup>that</sup> constitutes the soul is not the vital force that constitutes the body but since they were created by God are both seen as vital energy.

While African philosophers have not claimed that they have solved the mind-body problem absolutely, their approaches are very formidable and can enhance a better answer to the philosophical problem of mind and body.