

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY



UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN
DIRECTORATE OF AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS
BIGARD MEMORIAL SEMINARY, ENUGU

BMS/IB/3019

Candidate's Number (write very clearly)

300

Level of Study

ARTS

Faculty/College

PHILOSOPHY

Department/Course

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Title of Paper

15-02-2024

Date

Examination (insert official title)
of the Examination for which you
have entered, as it appears at
the head of the question paper

15 FEB 2024

DIRECTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Write on both sides of the pages (except in Mathematics)
2. Begin each answer on a fresh page
3. Write the number of each question at the top of each page.
4. All rough work must be crossed through, and enclosed within this cover.
5. If supplementary books are used, they must be fastened a; together at the end of this book and inside the cover. Answers must not be written on the supplementary books unless all the leaves in this book have already been used.
6. In your own interest you should enter in the space provided below, the numbers of the questions which you have attempted (with sub-sections where necessary).
7. In no circumstances must answer books used or unused, be removed from the Examination Room by a Candidate.
8. Candidates are warned that importance is attached by the examination to accuracy and clearness of expression.
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In the order in which they have been written.

All students of the University of Ibadan are expected to show academic integrity at all times. Understanding this, I solemnly declare that I shall not be involved in any malpractice including soliciting, giving, receiving or using unauthorised aid in this examination.

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Question
No.

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Total...

NUMBER ONE THREE

AFRICAN SCIENCE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WESTERN AND AFRICAN METHODS OF SCIENCE

OUTLINE

- 1.0. INTRODUCTION
- 2.0. THE MEANING OF SCIENCE
- 3.0. THE NOTION OF "AFRICAN SCIENCE"
- 4.0. THE METHODS OF WESTERN SCIENCE
- 5.0. THE METHODS OF AFRICAN SCIENCE.
 - 5.1. TRADITIONAL AFRICAN METHOD
 - 5.2. MODERN AFRICAN METHOD
- 6.0. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION.

1.0. INTRODUCTION.

Most western philosophers argue that Africans do not have philosophy, this is because they do not possess 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 Africa.

The debate about the existence of African philosophy is similar to the debate about the existence of African science. Questions such as "Do Africans have a science different from western science, What is science and what methods are used in science" come to mind while discussing African science.

The problem which is identified on African science is that it is said to be anchored or couched in mytho-religious foundations. However we are going clearly

identify what African science means and whether it is related with religious foundations.

2.0 THE MEANING OF SCIENCE

Etymologically, Science is from the Latin word "Scientia", which has its roots from the Latin verb "scire" meaning to know. Science from this general sense means knowledge. Specifically, it means systematized knowledge.

Technically, Science seems to defy any generally accepted definition, this is because scientist and philosophers define it according to their different epochs and school of thought.

Science according to E. O. Wilson is defined as an organized systematic enterprise that gathers knowledge about the world and condenses this 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 conceives science as knowledge, having to do with the knowledge of the activity of the natural world. For him scientific knowledge is on the road to power, hence the recurrent theme "Knowledge is power". Knowledge here means knowledge of the natural world.

From a sociological point of view, Maurice Richte defines science as a cultural process. It is a process or group of interrelated processes through which we acquire knowledge about the natural world, this encompasses, manipulate nature, life, human nature and human environment.

There are other definitions of science, but the ones

offered here captures the activity of modern science and science itself.

3.0 THE NOTION OF AFRICAN SCIENCE

Following from the debate about the existence of African philosophy, African science and its approaches is also debated on. One of the many denier of African Science is Samuel Tunde Rajah, he said that there is science in African but there is no African science.

In response, Morfin equivocally said that there is African science, and it is its existence that calls for the activity and nature of understanding the natural phenomenon that are in Africa. Hence there is science in African as it exists in other places.

9.0. Ozumba in his *Analytic and Synthetic dimension of African science* characterizes African science as the African man's way of observing, systematizing, testing and confirming of facts in his environment with the aim of having a high level of understanding of his environment, in order to aid him in controlling, and manipulating the forces of nature to his advantage or at least to escape the effects of uncertainty that characterizes natural phenomenon.

From this definition one would ask, what is African science as different from Western science, since this is exactly the methods of Western science. Hence to clarify this, we would clearly explain the methods of Western science and the methods of African science to differentiate the two and find out the similarities.

4.0. THE METHODS OF AFRICAN WESTERN SCIENCE

The methods of Western science ordinarily involves an organized way or approach of carrying out scientific activities. It should involve an organized rules or procedure through one carries out a scientific research, that is recognized and accepted by the scientific community. Unfortunately, scientists and philosophers are not unanimous the rules or procedures to be followed, or the stage that should precede the others.

However, as science develops through the variations of opinions concerning the unanimity of procedures that should be followed, there have been a synthesis of these variations. This synthesis involves, observation, collecting of data and forming hypotheses and also testing the hypotheses. After which a generalization is made and a scientific theory is born, that is if the hypothesis passes the test.

This approach is what have encouraged science and is regarded as the hallmark of scientific activities. The question then is how does African science, ^{coher} ~~far~~ vis-a-vis that of the Western Science.

5.0. THE METHODS OF AFRICAN SCIENCE

African Science just like Western Science also involves observation and experimentation, although it is argued that it is based on mythico-religious foundations. The African Methods of Science are divided into two which are:-

- Traditional African Method of Science.
- Modernized African Method of Science.

by the Western Science and its application.

Modern African Science, hence is a mixture of traditional African science and Western science. It implies that traditional Modern African Scientist makes use of the techniques of the traditional science as well as the Western science. An example is seen among those who operate Herbal homes, in towns and cities as well as the Western trained African Scientist.

Western trained Scientist irrespective of their training still makes use of traditional methods in their practice, for instance a Western trained Scientist that makes incantations before administering solution or explanation in his field.

GO EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION.

From the following argument, it is no gainsaying that there is African Science and it is a real science. However the arguments which westerners have against African Science, such as that African Science does not follow objective procedures, that African Science is based on practical rather than theory, that it is superstitious, that its methods are based on religious foundation or that African Scientists have their knowledge may be a true claim, it does not negate the existence of African Science.

Also, that African philosophy is said to be mystico-religious does not mean that there are not instances in which it can be more effective than the Western science. Therefore there is need to join these two methods of science and be able to achieve a more effective and efficient result.

NUMBER FIVE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY IN AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

OUTLINE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

2.0. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WESTERN VIEW OF PERSON AND THE AFRICAN VIEW OF PERSON.

3.0. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WESTERN VIEW OF COMMUNITY AND THE AFRICAN VIEW OF COMMUNITY.

4.0. PERSONHOOD IN AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

5.0. PERSONHOOD AND EXISTENTIALISM IN AFRICAN THOUGHT

6.0. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

According to Menkiti (1984) in his article "Personhood and Community in African thought", the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of the individual life history. This statement is based on the African notion of community and individuals.

In African worldview, the community defines the individual. Individuals do not exist as islands or lone individuals, rather they derive their ^{existence} from the existence of the community. This implies that the individual cannot exist without the community. As a result in the African world view, the community is held as supreme and the individuals strive to be connected to the community.

Menkiti's statements, is said to have been founded in the philosophy of Mbiti, which states that "I am because we are, therefore because we are, I am". This further buttresses

the idea of Communalism over individualism as the practice in African worldview. In communalism, individuals exist together sharing things together and caring for each other unlike the Western practice of individualism where individuals are after individual goals and have no communal goal.

We going to explain in the next section the difference between the view of person in the Western world and the African world.

2.0 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WESTERN VIEW OF PERSON AND THE AFRICAN VIEW OF PERSON.

The Western conception of person is different from the African conception of person. In the Western world a person is defined by certain isolated characteristics. The Western view of a person is abstract. This is because they tend to abstract certain physical and psychological characteristics and make them the basic essential features for defining a person.

This is not so in the African worldview. The African worldview does not define a person with certain isolated characteristics, The African worldview identify/defines a person by making reference to the community. This means that the community is the defining factor of a person. Hence personhood in African worldview flows from the community.

Secondly, the Western view of a person is minimal, this implies that anyone who poses the soul, reason, will or memory fits into the category of being defined as a person. This is not so in African worldview, African view of a person is Maximal, that implies that personhood is processual. Processual here means that one is gradually incorporated into

the society before one can be said to be fully person

These differences arise from the differences between the western notion of reality and the African notion of reality. Hence, whereasⁱⁿ the western worldview, reality is said to be isolated from each other, the African worldview claims that reality is united and does not seek a diversification of the reality like the western view in their bid to explain reality.

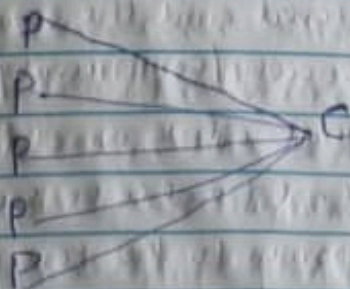
80 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WESTERN VIEW OF COMMUNITY AND THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW OF COMMUNITY.

Menkiti also distinguished between the idea of community among the western world and the African world. According to him, in the western world, it is the individual different individual persons that cause the community to exist. The community exist only because these persons exist. Hence without these persons, the community would not exist.

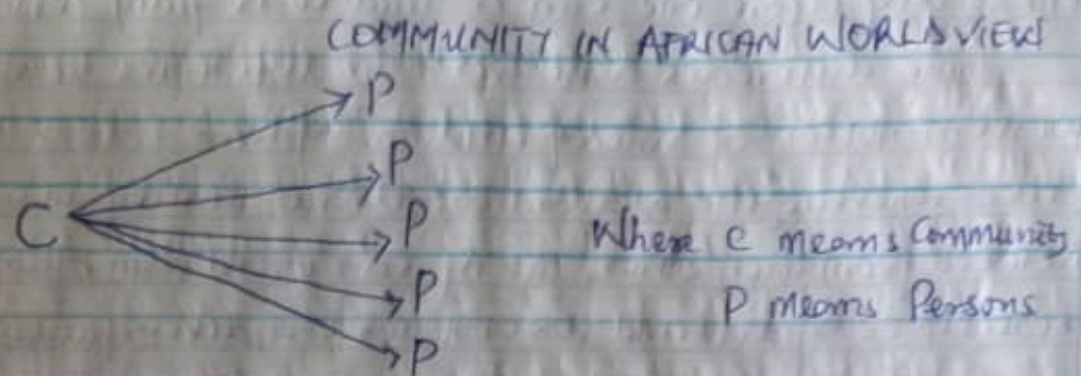
This is not so in African worldview. In African worldview the community is the cause of the individual persons. Hence without the existence of the community, these persons would not exist. Personhood flows from the community in African worldview.

Menkiti gave a diagrammatic representation of this explanation as follows.

COMMUNITY IN WESTERN WORLDVIEW



where C means Community
P means Persons.



From the illustration above, it means that in the Western world view, it's persons that cause the community to exist whereas in the African world view it's the community that cause the persons to exist.

4.0. PERSONHOOD IN AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

In African world view, personhood is not conferred on one, once he is born into the world. It is gradually acquired by the continuous existence in the community. One acquires personhood through incorporation and this is determined by how long one lives in the community. Hence the longer one is in a community the more person he/she becomes. It is believed that the longer one exists in a community, the more excellencies he acquires which are definitive of personhood in African world view.

The statement "Oghola Mmadu" (He has become a person) is used to represent how long one has lived and the stage of growth one has acquired in the society/community. Africans believe in the statement "That what an elder sees while sitting, a young person would not be able to see even if he climb an ~~ofo~~ tree". This points to the true experiences acquired as one lives in the community.

Furthermore, because of the role of experience in determining personhood in the community, elders are more regarded and respected in the community unlike infants. These infants in African worldview are yet to be considered as fully humans because they have not been incorporated fully into the community, hence neuter pronouns such as "it" is used to refer to them. These neuter pronouns cannot be used for adults, because having passed through different stage of incorporation in the community they are fully considered as persons. This explains the reason why there are elaborate funeral rites and ritualized grief at the death of an adult unlike the death of an infant.

5.0. PERSONHOOD AND EXISTENTIALISM IN AFRICA

As earlier stated, personhood is not conferred on an individual at birth, one has to pass through different stages of existence during which the rites of incorporation confer on him personhood in the community.

At birth, the infant is said to have a depersonalized status, because it has not been incorporated into the community, neuter pronouns such as it are used. As the individual grows, he passes through different stages of incorporation which includes the rites of incorporation at puberty which usher one into adulthood when procreation starts. The individual also grows old and dies, At death one said to have joined the community of the ancestors. At this stage, personhood is retained even though one is dead. He is said to have joined the community of the living dead because their memories still lives on in the

mind of the living, and the living makes reference to them.

However after a long period has passed, that is with the passage of many generations personhood is lost (fades away) because their memories are already faded. At this stage one goes back to the stage of lack of incorporation and neutral pronouns such "it" is used to refer to them.

6.0 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION.

Menkiti's statement about African world view is the case in reality. The community is said to have precedence over the individuals, who strive to remain with the community. The individuals fear ostracization because once you are ostracized you lose your personhood.

NUMBER FOUR.

DECOLONISING EFFECT OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

OUTLINE.

- 1.0. Introduction.
- 2.0. The meaning of Primary Health Care.
- 3.0. Tradition African Health Care System.
- 4.0. The Decolonising effects of PHC in Contemporary Africa.
- 5.0. Some Medicinal plants used in the treatment of disease.
- 6.0. Evaluation and Conclusion.

1.0. INTRODUCTION.

African health care system is what Africans survived on long before the ~~cont~~ colonialist. African medicine has a comparative advantage over the western medicines in curing sickness. This is seen in mental and spiritual illnesses, setting of broken bones and stroke.

African medicine offers a dimension of health which is absent in most western isolated health institutions. This means the western medicine and health care have taken over African health care system and it is draining on the African foreign exchange.

Hence, there is need to ask, how African ancestors survived their environments using these ~~the~~ African medicines. Also how can African traditional medicine be made more vital in order that it can provide and serve the needs of Primary Healthcare Systems.

2.0. THE MEANING OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE.

Primary health care is understood as the organised and systematic way of providing medical care to individuals in a community, whether or not it has state policy backup.

It is important to have a better grasp of Primary Health by looking at how scholars construe it. In a technical series on PHE, E. Dubois stated that modern primary health care emerged when gross health inequalities became a major concern globally. This implies that Primary healthcare is the foundation for achieving declining premature mortality, strong longevity and as well as overall good health.

Pius Izundu Okoko using the perspective of WHO stated that Primary Health care is a very important health care anchored on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology, made available to individuals and families in a community at a cost they can afford and maintain at various levels of their development.

The role of primary Health Care in public health has been generally recognised by public and international community though it makes use of various approaches. The main aim of economic and social development is geared towards public health care.

3.0. TRADITIONAL AFRICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

Traditional African medicine has been in existence long before the colonialist and western medicine. It is with it that African forebears used to survive their environment and cure their different illnesses. Therefore, Traditional

African medicine refers to the knowledge, the skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different African ~~to~~ cultures through which is used in the maintenance of health, prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of various health issues and physical illnesses.

Traditional African medicine is perceptoratively identified as alternative or complementary to the western medicine. This means that it plays a second fiddle. However, the number of African that have access to the traditional African medicine are comparatively higher, hence WHO, which have recognized African medicine should do more in the research and development of these medicine to make healthcare affordable to Africans.

4.0 THE DECOLONIZING EFFECTS OF PHC IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

Western medicine has been very beneficial to us and has brought many good things to Africans, however there are some health issues which it cannot adequately explain. This means that the urgent agenda for health care in Africa is the institutionalization of traditional African healthcare system in parallel with the Western medicine in the health care system/schemes.

According to WHO, traditional medicine makes use of therapeutic process which have been in existence for hundreds of years and are still in existence today but do not have any documented adverse effect on the health of man.

and African Medicine and its methods of reconciling the principle of harmony between the sick person and his universe.

5.0 SOME MEDICINAL PLANTS USED IN CURING AND TREATMENT OF DISEASES IN AFRICA

There are some plants which are discovered and have proven to have specific effects in the treatment of different diseases and illnesses. Some of them includes:-

1. Acanthaceae: This is used in treating syphilis, cough, emesis and vaginal emission.

2. Apocynaceae:- This is used in treating abdominal pains.

3. Leaf of Combretaceae (Ikedike):- This is used for the treatment of Jaundice.

4. Euphorbiaceae (Iri or Kiri):- This is used for the treatment of isonwa, mouth wash and gonorrhoea.

5. Root bark of Hypericaceae (Otoro or althibaraf):- It is used for the treatment of gonorrhoea.

6. Acacia Senegal:- This serves as a treatment of various illnesses.

7. Aloe ferox mill:- This serves as healthy drink, for skin care and the treatment of stomach complaints.

8. Artemisia / Wormwood:- This is used in treating diabetes, diarrhea, brachitis, hypertension and neuritis.

9. Aspalathus linearis:- This is used as a herbal drink, with low caffeine rate in them.

10. Pelargonium siliodes:- This is used in the treatment of respiratory tract system.

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Government should make effort to develop these drugs and make them affordable to Africans.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION.

The Traditional African medicine are closer to Africans and its effectiveness is in both mental, spiritual and physical illnesses beyond what western medicine can do, hence there is need to make more researches on the Traditional African medicine in such a way that they are made more affordable not only for Africans but for the entire world.

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