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AN EXPLORATION OF THE INTERPLAY OF AFRICAN THEOLOGY, AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND SECURITY

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Abstract

Security, as a condition of being free from all forms of threat and/or danger, remains a human effort for the protection of lives and property. Through it, the primary value of human life is made more significantly meaningful. Nevertheless, this meaningfulness is supported by well-founded critical views, established in clear and distinct philosophical thoughts, and greatly imbued with proper and understandable theological views contextualized in Africa. This flow of ideas is the thrust of this paper. Using the method of hermeneutics, the researchers try to prioritise security amid human enterprises informed by a sound philosophy and enlightened by a humane science of God within the boundaries of African Weltanschauung.

Keywords: Africa, African theology, African philosophy, security, insecurity.

Introduction

African theology and philosophy are peculiarly deep-rooted intellectual and spiritual traditions that offer a profound understanding of the human experience, shaping both lives and the wider African societies. As Ekei (2022), like others, has posited, Africa, as a continent, has experienced security challenges of different shades and sizes. This has led to the reflection on the question of how African theology and philosophy, as part of the living experience of Africans, can contribute to addressing these challenges and concerns.

The effort in this article is to examine the intersection of spirituality, thought and security. It draws on the wisdom of Africa's past and the insights of contemporary scholars to address the intractable problem of insecurity in Africa.

Appreciation of Religion/Theology

Religion is humanity's responsible and response-able expressive relationship with a supernatural, transcendent power(s) or agent(s). Religion, therefore, is man's inclination towards a power or being that is looked upon as greater than him. By the word "greater", one understands bigger, larger, etc. Encyclopaedia Britannica (2023) explains religion as "human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of special reverence. It is also commonly regarded as consisting of the way people deal with ultimate concerns about their lives and their fate after death". Equally, Merriam-Webster (n.d.), believes that religion is "a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices". It maintains that religion is "the service and worship of God or the supernatural". It is also the "commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance".

Many peoples and cultures have their different experiences and established expressions of relationships in their religions and religious professions and practices. At the level, however, religion and religious practices and innuendoes are mere beliefs and shallow impressive practices. Hence, there is a need for a science that provides a proper appreciation

and functional understanding of religion as humanity's deep-rooted divine reverential encounter. That science is theology. Thus, theology results from religion. There can be said to be a mutual symbiotic relationship between religion and theology. While theology results from religion, religion is sustained by a sound theology. This is why theology can be considered a basic yardstick in the comprehensive understanding of religion.

Etymologically, theology (from Greek *theos* and *logos*) is the science of God. Theology, in this regard, is the narrative of God's encounter with humanity and humanity's response as a result of such an encounter. It is a systematic study and scientific appreciation of God; and, as the highest human discipline, it is a human project on the divine. In this theological project, humanity seeks an understanding of divinity. Iroegbu (1996) gave six nuances of descriptions of theology as "God-talk; search for God through faith and reason; research into the deeper meaning of the supernatural as this is manifested to the human being and in the world; systematic investigation of the contents of one's convictions about supra-natural and divine realities; explanation of one's beliefs about divine verities and clarification of God-concepts and their implications" (p.19). In the above descriptions, three lexical concepts ought to appear in any succinct definition of theology, namely God, search and faith (Iroegbu, 1996). Maritain (2005) writes that "philosophy is the highest of the human sciences, that is, of the sciences, which know things by the natural light of reason. But there is a science above it. For if there be a science which is a participation by man, of the knowledge proper to God himself, obviously that science will be superior to the highest human science. Such a science, however, exists; it is theology" (p.72). Theology is a science of God. As a knowledge, man ought to attain such knowledge *via* the natural power of reason. However, this reason is to be enlightened by faith. To this extent, it is an enlightened faith, an examined faith, or an illuminated faith. These concepts are within the boundaries of proper and functional theology.

Faith as a definitional appreciation of theology is a human attitude. Onebunne (2012) expresses that "faith is a human attitude and more of a Christian attitude...Through this faith, one takes the greatest virtuous risk with God" (p.42). Faith, therefore, is an expressive and impressive understanding of theology. Equally, as a Christian virtue, it shows one's relationship with God. So belief in God as *credo* is part of this faith expression. Iroegbu (1996) maintains that a sub-species of this aspect of theology as adherence to God is what is generally called natural theology or theodicy. Natural theology in this context is an unaided and natural disposition to discovering God within natural realities with the natural light of reasoning, unaided reasoning, as creatures of God. Therefore, natural theology concerns itself with nature and God. Moreover, Iroegbu (1996) believes that "it is a journey: through nature to God. It is distinguished from the mainstream of theology, called sacred theology. Sacred theology is theology based entirely on the revelation of God, in and through history, accepted by man in faith" (p. 20).

Through an enlightened faith, this God that has continued to manifest Himself is searched for and often with an encounter that will lead to all forms of religions and vagaries of worship. Continuing, Iroegbu (1996) explains that theology's third definitional point is search. After having had an encounter with God, encountering Him, receiving His revelation, believing, and/or discovering Him via the light of reason, the individual now sets forth to explore, to logically grasp, what he has received or discovered. This adds up to St. Anselm's classical description of theology as *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding). St. Pope John Paul II seems to have lent credence to his by titling one of his encyclicals:



Fides et ratio (Faith and reason). Theology, therefore, is a systematic discussion, beyond all forms of proof and above all insinuations, on God as known and revealed in the cause of the chequered history of humanity. Theology according to Iroegbu (1996) is “the investigative inquiry and interpretative understanding of one’s belief in God, one’s *credo*”. Hence, he maintains that “to be theology, requires God, and Faith (*credo*), and Rational inquiry” (p.21).

Theology has many branches as humanity searches for the God it believes in, and equally appreciates in totality such a God in a kind and form of divine worship. Thus: Theology of the Sacred Scriptures (Biblical theology and Exegesis), Theology of Dogma (Dogmatic Theology), Theology of Catechesis (Missology and Evangelization), Theology of the Sacraments (Sacramentology), Theology of the Liturgy, Theology of the Church (Ecclesiology), Theology of Morals (Canon Law), Theology of Church History, Perspectivist Theology (Inculturation, Liberation, Dialogal, Mystical, Process, Feminist, Black, etc.) and Narrative Theology. These theologies try to interpret the God-Humanity relationship in history and through history (Iroegbu, 1996). However, these main branches are hinged on other types of theology involved as a result of one’s faith. This is the thrust of World Classified Religions and theology as in *Theism, Atheism, Monotheism, Polytheism, Pantheism* and *Dualism* (Okafor & Onebunne, 2019). Consequently, other major religions of the world have their theology on which the faith of their adherents are founded as Judaism (c. 2000BC): Jewish Religion & Theology; Hinduism (c. 1100BC): Hinduist Religion and Hinduist theology; Buddhism (563BC): Buddhist Religion & Buddhist Theology; Confucianism (c.551BC): Confucius Religion & Theology; Christianity (33AD-313AD): Christian Religion & Theology; Mohammedanism (570AD): Islamic Religion & Mohammedan Theology and African Traditional Religion (as old as the African continent): African Religion & African Theology (Okafor & Onebunne, 2019).

There is, however, a progressive revelation of God in human history. So, in different ways and many perspectives and depending on the contents of the *credo* in question, the type of theology involved is determined (Iroegbu, 1996). Theology is the sustenance of every divine worship. That is to say, theology sustains religion and every religious worship. It is an ongoing appreciation and sustenance of the content of our *credo*. However, narrative theology, according to Iroegbu (1996) is an account of events: historical or factional; he, therefore, maintains that Jesus’ event is a narrative event: in Him was the ultimate *mirabilia Dei* (marvels of God) narrated, i.e. transmitted to humanity. However, it all started in history that Divinity was humanized. This is the incarnational episode that forms today’s theology thereby making Christ the *Kpim* of theology (Iroegbu, 1996). However, Rt. Rev. Mgrs Martin Okeke Maduka (March 27, 1995) in a public lecture on inculturation at the Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Owerri, in the course of the adoption of Pantaleon Iroegbu’s neologism, *kpim*, into the philosophical circle, refers to Christ as the *dum* of theology. The oxymoronic sound of *dum* according to Maduka is an equivalent of *kpim*, as the kernel of issues. Explaining further, Iroegbu (1996) maintains that “the uniqueness *cum* specificity of the Christian religion lies in the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Behold God acknowledged by all religions as creator and provider, becomes also man. In the incarnation the fallen world is taken up...Jesus is envisioned here as the *Kpim* of Christian theology” (p. 26). Pope John Paul II (1990) notes that the redemptive mission of Christ the redeemer remains intact and holistic within the aspects or moments of time past, time present and time future (Iroegbu, 2004) for all in terms of renewal and for the lapsed Christians and non-Christians. Christ,



therefore, is the manifestation of theology. Hence, theology begins and ends in Christ as the *kpim* of theology.

African Traditional Religion and Theology

Having prefixed African tradition on religion one may be tempted to define ATR as the religion of traditional Africans; that is, ATR is a religion born out of African Traditions. It is a particularized religion within African cultural innuendoes expressing their ways of life. In this sense, ATR is the people's religion that grew from their experiential realities. Their theology will be within their experience in the worship or reverence of their God. African Theology is the African understanding of God. It is the science of God within the boundaries of African realities. Such encounter is always within a definitive experience that leads to worship. Before the exploration and exploitation through colonialism, Africans had an experience of the Divine with many forms of worship rooted in their exalted beliefs. Such has been their theology, an African Theology of the object and subject of their worship. African theology, therefore, is an ongoing experience and sustained encounter with African God as their Creator and all-in-all. African theology sustains the African knowledge of God and ATR. African theology presupposes African theism. However, Ikenga-Metuh (1999) in line with this thought opined that "most African societies recognise fundamentally two different types of divinities: the Supreme Being and the subordinate deities", (p.94).

African theology has God made present in Christ, the Son of God, as the foundation. The historical genealogy of Jesus Christ started with the coming to dwell in Egypt by Joseph through slavery (Gen. 37:25-27) as well as his father Jacob and his household who came to Egypt as a family, stayed for 430 years (cf. Ex. 12: 40-41) and went back as a nation in a journey well carved out as Exodus (cf. Gen. 46: 1ff and Ex.13-17:1ff). During the sojourn of this family that became a nation, as a custom and tradition of Israel, they never married themselves as a family rather they intermarried most probably with the Egyptians. Indeed, it can be argued that there was African blood in the forefathers and the genealogy of Jesus Christ. This played out in the Holy Family's (of Joseph, Mary and Jesus) flight into Egypt in a bid to escape the bloodletting terror of King Herod's anger for the new-born King (Matthew 2:7ff), unleashed on the age-mates of the child Jesus, known and referred today as the massacre of the Holy Innocents (Mt.2:13ff). The family likely stayed in the home of a distant relative in Egypt. In that case, that flight gave expression to one of the Igbo age-long sayings that *osọ chuba nwata be nna ya, o gbaga ikwunne ya* (When a child faces persecution from his father's relatives, he seeks sanctuary among his mother's kin). It can be said that just as Africa received the child Jesus during the Flight into Egypt, Christ and the Christian faith have been accepted (have incarnated) in Africa. By that very fact, African theology is deeply rooted in Christ, the Son of God, as its *kpim*.

In another instance, African traditional theology is a result of African Traditional Religion. African Traditional Religion (ATR) is an *ethno-religion*, the indigenous religion of the people, that is, a kind of folk religion as a result of humanity being *homo religiosus*, a religious being. That is to say, if there is no revealed religion as such, man would have created one as a religious conscious being by nature. By nature, therefore, man must worship something; and this is the religious nature of man even as one created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:27). Ikenga-Metuh (1999) explains that "animism, totemism, fetishism, polytheism or primitive monotheism has often been used to designate African Religion...with other descriptive terms as Tribal religion, Ethnic religion, Preliterate

Religion” (p. 3). He complemented this view when he maintains that “the study of African Traditional Religion is plagued by a number of problems some of which are inherent to the nature of African Traditional Religion itself, while others derive from the historical development of its study”, (p. xv).

However, ATR is very specific about many differential nuances when compared with other religions. For instance, ATR is not a religion of the book. ATR as an ethno-religion has many historical currents of interference and sweeping encounter, (Ikenga-Metuh, 1999). Colonialism and Christianization of Africa alongside contemporary developmentalism in Africa, all had their turns in subduing ATR to Western Imperialism and Christian-Europe subjugation. Most humiliating were the acts of stolen legacies where most of the African idols and artefacts in ATR were taken to Museums in many European countries. Unfortunately, these were things they condemned as paganism and forms of black magic yet those items today adorn their museums. Ikenga-Metuh (1999) described the Western influence on African Traditional Religion (ATR) as documented by European explorers and missionaries. He pointed out that many of these observers had brief stays in Africa, preventing them from gaining a deep understanding of the local beliefs and practices. Moreover, they did not engage in a systematic study of African Religion. Despite these limitations, the observations are noteworthy as they uncover the biases and prejudices of the individuals who documented them, shedding light on the perspectives of both the authors and the European public.

Appreciation of African Philosophy

Philosophical traditions study critical traditions or institutions of philosophy within the history of Philosophy as a human excursus. In philosophical traditions, philosophical works, authors and ideas are divided into time and space, to understand how they came about, that is, the evolution or development of such philosophical enterprise. Onebunne & Okoye (2023) note that philosophical traditions have to do with a proper understanding of philosophy from the regional and historical aspects of its development. Granted that philosophers do not and ought not to necessarily agree but their opinions and views are important in the course of history. Perennial problems of philosophy allude to the fact that philosophers do not necessarily agree but their thoughts endure. Onebunne & Okoye (2023) maintain that the idea of tradition is very pertinent in philosophy. Tradition is used to indicate the quality of a piece of information being discussed. Whether they are documented facts or not does not decrease their value as cultural history and literature. Traditions are a subject of study in several academic fields. The concept of tradition, as the notion of holding on to a previous time, is also found in scientific and technological enterprises and more in philosophical discourses. Contemporary philosophy is often divided into traditions dominant in different philosophical traditions. Philosophy, as a part of world philosophical heritage, is a product of traditions of Philosophy: Western Philosophical Traditions (WPT), Eastern/Oriental Philosophical Traditions (EOPT), Abrahamic (Judeo-Islamic) Philosophical Tradition (AbPT) and African Philosophical Traditions (APT). However, Kanu (2015) succinctly observed that the “universality of Philosophy is the basis for African Philosophy” as well the Western Philosophy.

Philosophy, etymologically from Greek *philos* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom), means love of wisdom. To this point, philosophy remains a human science that seeks wisdom and a personal enterprise with an unaided reason. Philosophy is totally a human undertaking and

endeavour. Maritain (2005) maintains that Philosophy is the highest of the human sciences, that is, of the sciences which know things by the natural light of reason. Traditionally, Philosophy is *cognitio rerum per altissimas causas, solar rationis* (science that studies all things in their ultimate and universal principle). It is *scientia rerum per ultima causas*, that is, knowledge of things through their ultimate causes. It is worthy of note that neither discipline nor culture, science or arts and every form of humanities and society is devoid of philosophical influence.

Taking cognizance of its main branches and other applied areas, philosophy cuts across every learning and teaching to be known as *mater scientiae*, mother of science or knowing. Obenga (1990), in his philosophical discourse, writes, “Philosophy has nourished science. It preceded the sciences. Science (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Political Science, Aesthetics, Logic, Biology, Sociology, etc.), was born of philosophy” (p.5). No wonder the medieval philosophers, influenced by the religious innuendoes of their time, based on the chronological coincidence of medieval philosophical tradition and relationship with the significant figure of Jesus Christ and the dominating power and influence of his teachings, regarded philosophy as *ancilla theologae*, the handmaid of theology. This kind of idea borders on analytic or linguistic philosophy. Plato, however, extols philosophy as *regina scientiarum*, that is, *queen of the sciences*. This is why philosophy, as a course, from the first day, equips one with the great advantage of asking basic questions in every situation of life. Philosophy gives the needed self-identity, which is when one’s real self tries to meet with one’s ideal self. It trains the mind to always ask fundamental philosophical questions typified by *why, how, what and who*. Philosophical questions like these and the like will keep one on the go as the Igbo adage would say: *onye ajuju anaghi efu uzọ*. Questioning these makes and identifies one as a philosopher. This is in line with Ezeani’s (2015) definition of philosophy as *inquism*, that is, intelligent questioning. The actual meaning of Philosophy for him is Intelligent Questioning (IQ) plus Critical Analysis (CA). In a simple formula, he maintains that: $IQ + CA = Ph$. Philosophy is primarily an inquiry. Therefore, it will always question one’s intentions and actions.

It is worthy of note that Philosophy is as old as the *homo cogitans*, the thinking man. In the history of humanity, especially about scholarship, philosophy, presumably Western philosophy, goes back to Socrates and his Ionian scholars. Ancient history, as well as contemporary history, has proved that all Greek Philosophy, often referred to as Ancient Philosophy, had oriental and Egyptian sources. Obenga (1990) reiterates this fact about the Ancient Greek philosophers’ studentship in Africa during the Pharaonic period. Onyewuenyi (2005), like many African scholars, supports this age-long view of Egyptian philosophy pre-dating the Greeks. Philosophy, as a part of the world’s philosophical heritage, is a product of traditions of philosophy. In this understanding, African philosophy is appreciated as a discipline and a movement.

Onebunne (2023) maintains that as a discipline, African Philosophy traditionally is knowledge of African realities and African realism in their englobing universal principles. Iroegbu (1994) was very outstanding in giving a succinct definition of African Philosophy. In this definition, one can read a kind of defence as regards African philosophy. This is why, for Iroegbu, African philosophy is a *philo-sophia*, a quest for African wisdom. Moreover, as a discipline, African philosophy is the love of African wisdom, that is, *Philosophia Africana*. Socrates, epitomizing the idea of philosophy as a pursuit of wisdom, defines philosophy as the pursuit of wisdom. One, therefore, can define African philosophy as the

pursuit of African wisdom. African Philosophy, therefore, is *scientia rerum per ultima causas* within African realities. It is the search for the unaided authentic human knowledge that is philosophical and African. It is the *habitus* of every wise and *will* of any reasonable African man.

Consequently, Onebunne (2023) insists that African Philosophy as a movement is a clarion call by Bob Marley's redemptive insinuation to "emancipate yourselves from mental slavery...none but ourselves can free our mind". His *Redemption Song* demands a total breakaway from the stereotypical innuendo that philosophy is the prerogative of the West, therefore, questioning directly our human nature as *homo sapiens* and *homo cogitans* as well as *animal rationalis*. As a movement, African Philosophy, rooted in and springing from African philosophical tradition, is a cursory look into the problematics and prospects of Africa as part of the world's philosophical heritage. As a movement, African philosophy is an effort to recover all the lost status as a result of the stolen legacies of philosophy and its origin. As a movement, African Philosophy searches for the authentic knowledge that is philosophy and African within and or outside the African cultural worldview. Therefore, a definitive and thoughtful interpretation and critical analysis of the symbols of African cultures would be African philosophy *qua tale*. More so, a reflection with profound application of criticality, analyticity and originality on African thoughts and cultures will give credence to Philosophy and rightly put, African Philosophy. However, unlike the Western philosophical tradition which started with wonder, African philosophy according to Chimakonam (n.d.) later started with *onuma*, frustration. That is, having been frustrated by colonialism and racism and other bumps of African predicaments orchestrated by many years of doubt, historical existence greatly shrouded in controversies and submerged in conspiracies of lies, Africans woke up to rediscover the truth about the philosophy that was African and its Western connection. Unfortunately, the truth about African Philosophy must be upheld as the first philosophy of the world philosophies. Therefore, as a movement, African philosophy started earlier than other philosophies. Later, out of frustration as a result of many lies levelled against Africans' literary disposition, Africans have come to put the records straight.

Onebunne (2023) notes that African Philosophy is both a discipline and a movement. It is more of a movement as it tries to reclaim its position as a discipline within the world of philosophical heritage. It is, therefore, fundamentally a disciplinary movement as it tries to rediscover itself within the world's philosophical heritage and equally establish itself as such. In *lato sensu*, African Philosophy is that branch of knowledge that grew from African Philosophical Tradition, as a philosophy done within and outside Africa for humanity as a human enterprise with regard to authorship, scholarship and literature. Moreover, the adjective "African" qualifies the noun Philosophy and, beyond delimiting it, expands such critical enquiry on the far side of just African. In *stricto sensu*, it is that course that is African and philosophical within the limits of *Africanity* and *philosophicality* or *Africanness* and *Philosophicalness*.

African Philosophy is philosophy as it is done in and for Africa and others. It is an African by-product of human engagement in a people's culture. It is a philosophical tradition that is African within the mainstream of philosophy as a systematic study. African Philosophy is the critical and universalizing interpretation of the culture and the worldview of African people by philosophers within and outside the African continent. It is a kind of philosophy done within African philosophical tradition designating the *corpus* of African

philosophical writings. However, African Philosophy, like in other philosophical traditions, has a historical development along the path of human consciousness, critically encountering their realities.

Philosophy, as *love of wisdom* and *habit of the intellect and will*, dwells more on the worldview of the people especially as it is embedded in the culture of the people. Philosophy is wondering about the reality and the worldview of the people in question. Omoregbe (in Boudorin, 1985) asserts that “human experience is the source of the reflective activity known as philosophy” (p.1). It is through this singular human exercise of interpreting realities and reflecting on the people’s worldview and symbolic cultures that one excises the habit of the intellect and attains the level of wondering for the love of wisdom which is *philosophia*. Hence, Ricoeur (in Okere, 1983) asserts: “one can philosophize from culture, or at least from those elements of culture that can be called symbols” (p.18). Okere (1983), further buttressing this idea, remarks that: “symbols are pregnant with meaning...philosophical discourse is, therefore, a hermeneutical development of the symbols... enigmas which precede and nourish it” (p. 18). Therefore, Okere (1983) writes, “We assert, however, that in black Africa there exists a reservoir of cultural *philosophemes* from which any future philosopher can inspire himself or borrow his share of philosophical raw materials. In such a culture a philosopher can plant his roots and from inside it, and as forming part of it, develop a philosophy with his culture as non-philosophical background” (p. 120).

African Philosophy is *scientia rerum per ultima causas* within African realities. Therefore, from the onset, African Philosophy has been a discipline and a movement. It is more of a movement as it tries to reclaim its position as a discipline within the world's philosophical heritage. Hence, as a discipline, African Philosophy is a critical cursory look into the inherent problematiques and prospects of Africa as part of the world's philosophical heritage (Iroegbu, 1994). As a movement, African Philosophy searches for the authentic knowledge that is Philosophy and African within the African cultural worldview. Therefore, a definitive thoughtful interpretation and critical analysis of the symbols of African cultures would be African philosophy *qua tale*. More so, a reflection with profound application of criticality, analyticity and originality on African thoughts and cultures gives credence to Philosophy and rightly put, African Philosophy. However, such profundity in the critical appreciation of African cultural worldviews makes them veritable moments for African philosophy. With the methodological moment of proper hermeneutics, one can dependably and realistically infer that African Philosophy is Philosophy with an African source and is nourished from African culture as its cultural reservoir and primary critical nourishment. Okere (1983) was the *primus inter pares* in asserting authoritatively that culture is the foundation of Philosophy by hermeneutically engaging Paul Ricoeur extensively on the existing relationship between culture and philosophy. Thus:

It is by interpreting the symbols of a culture that one can arrive at reflexion, philosophy. Ricoeur defines reflexion as the connection between the comprehension of signs or symbols and self-comprehension...In a methodical process from culture to philosophy, the movement from symbols to reflective thought, Ricoeur proposes three stages, or levels of interpretation: the phenomenological stage...the hermeneutical stage... and the reflexive stage...Thus for Ricoeur, one can philosophise from culture, or at least from those elements of culture that can be called symbols. Symbols are pregnant with meaning... There



is no symbol which cannot become reflexion or comprehension through an interpretation (p. 58-79).

African Philosophy, therefore, has a share in the mainstream of philosophical traditions growing as a human enterprise as a result of the critical interpretation of tradition and cultural realities. Okere (1983) nevertheless asserts that “all philosophy is essentially an historical and time-bound interpretation of being” (p. 38). Amidst all sorts of bizarre and false ideas on the capability of an African man to philosophize, questioning the depth of their philosophy, one can boast of African philosophical scholarships as well as African authorships. However, Iroegbu (1994), identified as an optimistic contemporary philosopher, was very apt in defining African philosophy as: “the reflective inquiry into the marvels and problematics that confront one in the African world, in view of producing systematic explanation and sustained responses to them. It is an inquiry with two aspects: *philosophical* and *African*” (p. 116).

Iroegbu (1994) was very *preeminent* in giving this succinct definition. In this definition, one can read a *kind* of defence as regards African philosophy. This is why for Iroegbu, African philosophy is a *philo-sophia*, a quest for African wisdom. Iroegbu was astute enough to reiterate that “African philosophy is philosophy done in an African context...the different aspects and complexities of existence that challenge him as an African person. In this respect, every philosophy is contextual philosophy” (p.34). For Iroegbu (1994), therefore, these philosophical concepts alone “are what we generally call the African philosophical *philosophemes*: raw materials for philosophical reflection, questioning, responses, analysis and eventual synthesis” (p.118). In this statement of fact, Iroegbu re-echoes his teacher Theophilus Okere who had earlier conceived the idea of *philosophemes* as deposit of conceptual data or realities for philosophical engagement and critical enterprise.

Security

The history of humanity is replete with stories of insecurity. The mistake of Adam and Eve was a result of insecurity in trying to be like God. The flights into Egypt in the Old and New Testaments, by Jacob with his families sojourning there for 430 years (cf. Gen.37:1ff, Ex. 12:37ff) and the Holy family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (cf. Mt. 2:13ff) respectively, were all as a result of insecurity. In our contemporary time, the concept of security widens within the facets of human interactions. After many internal and international disturbances and undue tension, epitomized by wars, culminated in World War II, the idea of a new subject of academic study, an independent field of study, namely, Security Studies, focusing on national and international security, emerged.

It has been observed that human security is an emerging paradigm in security studies which focuses primarily on the security of people and their communities (“Security”, 2023). This conception of security is summed up in the United Nations phrase: freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity (UNGA, 2005). Human security in action is about attaining the social, political, environmental and economic conditions conducive to a life of freedom and dignity. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) maintains that “security is the quality or state of being secure; freedom from danger, freedom from fear or anxiety, freedom from the prospect of being laid off: It is the state of being able to reliably afford or access what is needed to meet one's basic needs”. The UN Security Council is the premier global body for maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council fosters negotiations,

imposes sanctions and authorizes the use of force, including the deployment of peacekeeping missions.

Security is the profound assurance of untroubled moments in one's life and living. It has to do with a trouble-free time as well as a carefree and unworried period in a place concerning life and property. The word security may be looked at as a state of being protected from danger or a situation of being very confident against any lack or misfortune. Security is primarily understood in terms of the capacity for self-defence. Ensuring the safety and protection of an entity or system while preventing unauthorized access or potential harm as well as protecting sensitive information or valuable assets. There is, therefore, physical security, cyber-security, information security and network security. However, security is always against crime and all forms of psychological disorder, mental breakdown, natural disasters and all forms of man's inhumanity to mankind. Security connotes conditions of peace, stability, order and progress. These nuances give us ideas of socio-economic cum politico-cultural as well as national and other forms of securities. Insecurity challenges any form of development and progress, as the worst threat to continued human existence. Security of lives and property, therefore, is an essential condition and indispensable requirement for meaningful existence and significant interaction amongst human beings in society. This is why the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided in section 14 (1) (b) states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of Government". Hence, the need for security consciousness on the part of our leaders as well as security education in our schools.

Security Education

Security education is the study of the protection, safety and well-being of man in his environment. Environment has to do with natural and man-made resources. Equally, security education has to do with proper appreciation and management of disasters and risk reduction in our human environment. In line with the aforementioned thoughts, security education may be seen as a cooperative, dynamic and lifelong process. In its complementary role, through security education and security consciousness, the society generates knowledge, norms, values and skills for its survival and sustenance against all forms of challenges and threats to its justified well-being and peaceful coexistence. CISCO Security Centre (2013) defined security education programme as essentially an internal marketing campaign to raise awareness about security risks and promote corresponding good practices across the organization. This process is a cooperative approach that shows an appreciable knowledge and understanding of security education. Aside from the formal school system, its content may be learnt personally, or given by different institutions of society and the neighbourhood. The dynamism in security education shows its responsive nature. This implies that its content and methods can change over time as security challenges change. In addition, that it is a life-long process shows that it builds security consciousness and strategies in the individual all through his/her lifetime.

African Theology and Philosophy of Security

We note that Africa as a continent has endemic security challenges that started with the white man's interference in her social, political and economic life in the name of exploration and exploitation even amid their overdue stay in Africa. The partitioning of Africa in Berlin without the consent of Africans makes Africa insecure, open and vulnerable to the West.

These contributed to all forms of stolen legacies that enriched the West and impoverished Africa. All these today demand some security consciousness on the part of Africa. Indeed, security consciousness intertwines with various aspects of African theology and philosophy that were neglected and not appreciated as such with the advent of white missionaries, even though the influence of traditional African religions further shapes our understanding in this realm. This is why throughout African history, multiple incidents of colonization, external invasions, and internal conflicts have profoundly shaped the African experience of security.

African theology and philosophy of security embrace as well as encompass a rich complexity of historico-cultural dimensions of life and spiritual aspects of coexistence providing invaluable deep insights into the concept of safety and security. African theologians and philosophers view security not merely as the absence of physical threats but as a holistic state of well-being encompassing social, economic and spiritual dimensions. Through a proper appreciation of these perspectives on African theology and philosophy of security, one can gain a deeper understanding of different approaches to safeguarding communities. By delving into the influence of traditional African religions on a functional understanding of security, one can uncover the unique perspectives and values held by African societies. Then, the integration of spirituality, often understood as theology in Africa, offers a distinct perspective that is rooted in interconnectedness and holistic welfare. Evenly, an excursus into the depths of African theology and philosophy of security can unravel the tapestry of human existence as Africans.

Accordingly, African theologians and philosophers have continued to address security concerns within their cultural and historical contexts. A good example must be made with Mbiti (1969) who, in his seminal work, emphasizes the interconnection between African religious beliefs and the concept of security. Mbiti argues that traditional African religions hold a holistic view of security that goes beyond mere physical safety to embrace spiritual, communal and ecological well-being. This characteristic appreciation of security is deeply rooted in African cultural values and traditions often expressed in concepts like *igwebuike*, *onyeaghana-nwanneya*, *ibuanyidanda*, *ohazurume*, *ubuntu*, etc. These concepts exemplify a kind of communal link and highlight the communal nature of security in African societies. The belief in the interconnectedness and interdependence within the African community fosters a sense of shared responsibility for everyone's safety and protection. Through the searching lens of African theology and philosophy, the concept of security covers all aspects of community harmony and existential connection. This is why an African perspective on security, informed by traditional African religions and philosophy, challenges the notion of security as solely a Western construct, offering diverse insights that must be recognized and valued. In addition, the conceptualization of security in African theology and philosophy has demonstrated a holistic and multidimensional view that goes beyond the traditional Western understanding to a more realistic African appreciation. Therefore, in African theology and philosophy, security is understood through diverse and nuanced interpretations that safeguard and preserve the sole idea of the primacy of life.

The aforementioned community values, in line with communalism, expressed in African theology and philosophy view individual and/or collective security as mutually reinforcing, promoting the preservation of life, human dignity and justice for all. The continued exploration of African theology and philosophy of security has not only expanded our good understanding of security within the ambience of human development but also provided significant and valuable insights into the interconnectedness of other facets of

humanity's spirituality, culture and communal values as they contribute in reshaping African contextual perspectives influencing African approaches to life. Rooted in theological ideologies and philosophical as well as cultural traditions, African perspectives on security have adapted and evolved. In addition, the introduction and coming of Christianity and Islam to Africa amidst indigenous African religions, have brought new perspectives on security, as these religions often prioritize the idea of the importance of life, the protection and welfare of believers, and the establishment of societal order. Throughout history, various religious beliefs and practices have influenced security ideologies and challenges in Africa. These challenges are often expressed in many forms of religious extremisms, political violence and human rights abuses and violations. Often some scholars believe that African theological traditions are outdated and incompatible with modern security challenges. However, it is essential to recognize the adaptive nature of African theological traditions.

Furthermore, the African philosophy of security refers to the unique approach to security and safety in African cultures. It is based on indigenous knowledge systems and traditional practices. With core elemental principles of African Philosophy such as *ubuntu*, *igwebuike*, *ibuanýidanda*, *communalism*, and *phazurume*, there is this philosophy of interconnectivity and collective responsibility, playing a crucial role in the African philosophy of security. Through these principles, communities work together to ensure the safety and protection of all members: lives and properties.

Conclusion

So far, an attempt has been made to point out the intersection of theology, philosophy and security within the context of Africa. As we can see, African theology and philosophy have a peculiarly unique role to play in the quest for much-needed security in Africa. Central to this role is the insight into an encompassing conception of security that emphasizes a holistic state of well-being of individual members and the wider society. It is hoped that, as the security challenges that traumatize Africans seemingly go unabated, the application of the insights from African theology and philosophy can serve as a veritable guide in the search for an enduring solution.

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