AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: THE IMPERATIVES OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES

by

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Declaration

I declare that **Africa's Development: The Imperatives of Indigenous Knowledge and Values** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

(M. O. Ajei)   2nd August 2007

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List of Acronyms

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AU: African Union

APPER: Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery

BNS: Basic Needs Strategy

CT: Causal Theory [of knowledge]

DC: District of Columbia

DM: Disciplinary Matrix

EU: European Union

GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HIPC: Heavily Indebted Poor Country

HIV: Human Immunodeficieny Virus

IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

IDGs: International Development Goals

ILO: International Labour Organization

IMF: International Monetary Fund

ISENPAD: In Search of New Paradigms for African Development

MAD: Mutual Assured Destruction

MGDs: Millennium Development Goals

UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNECLA: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNPAAERD: United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development

NBER: National Bureau of Economic Research

NEPAD: New Partnership for African Development

NJ: New Jersey

NY: New York

OAU: Organization of African Unity

ODA: Official Development Assistance

PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal

PMD: People-Managed Development

RBA: Rights Based Approach

PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy

SAP Structural Adjustment Programme

SCSST: Studies in the Social and Cultural Studies of Science and Technology

SVO: Subject-Verb-Object

TRIPS: Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual property Rights

USA: United States of America

WCED: World Commission of Environment and Development

WTO: World Trade Organization

Key Terms

African philosophy; Africa's development; indigenous knowledge and values; development paradigms; Africa's liberation; ubuntu; culture; economism; epistemicide; ethics and politics.

Summary

In post-colonial Africa, conceptions of the nature and purposes of development as well as the theories and strategies for achieving them have remained a territory traversed predominantly by non-African social scientists. In this context, social scientists studying Africa's development proclaimed, at the dawn of the 1990s, a "paradigmatic crisis" and embarked on a quest for new paradigms[1].

In advancing this quest, a number of "homegrown" development strategies have emerged. This work argues that these are mere adaptations and reconstructions of dominant Eurocentic paradigms that exaggerate the value of economic goods and wealth creation founded on a competitive marketplace by making them immutable features of development. Yet the ethic of competition theoretically condones a trajectory of killing in the quest for wealth accumulation. In this way, internalist epistemologies perpetuate epistemicide and valuecide in Africa's strides towards development.

The stranglehold of internalist epistemologies has resulted in the impasse of rationality. By this we mean that Reason, apotheosized since the Enlightenment, has advanced humanity out of barbarism to "civilization" but has now placed humanity on the brink of unredeemable barbarism. Reason, through its manifestations in the philosophy of Mutual Assured Destruction and global warming, has condemned humanity to willful but avoidable suicide.

Since the subjects and objects of development must be one and the same, development is necessarily culture-derived and culture-driven, with the preservation and improvement of human dignity and welfare as its ultimate aims. Accordingly, we defend the thesis that it is necessary for a framework meant for Africa's development to be founded on indigenous knowledge and values, if it is to succeed. And at this moment of impasse

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[1] The project In Search of New Paradigms for African Development (ISENPAD), which yielded the Publication of *African Perspectives on Development* (see footnote 2 in the Introduction), is one such effort

reached by Reason, an African ethics-based development paradigm, predicated on humaneness and "life is mutual aid", can restore Reason to sober rationality and liberate Africa's development efforts from the intoxicating prison of profit making.

Hence the institutions and frameworks devoted to Africa's development, such as the Constitution and Strategic Plan of the African Union as well as NEPAD, must incorporate salient features of the philosophic ethic emanating from the knowledge and ontological systems of indigenous Africa into visions of the African future.

INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

i.   Statement of the Problem

At the dawn of the 1990s, social scientists studying Africa's development proclaimed a "paradigmatic crisis" and embarked on a quest for new paradigms[1]. Undeniably, conceptions of the nature and purposes of development as well as the theories and strategies for achieving them have remained a territory predominantly traversed by non-African social scientists. The contribution of many African academicians towards a development vision for Africa has been "to echo, often in an opportunistic fashion, the voices of theorists elsewhere in the world.[2]" Since the 1950s, three Euro-American development ideologies, and their concomitant theories (Modernization, Dependency and Neo-Liberalism), have held sway over development thought and practice in Africa.

In furtherance of the quest for new paradigms, a few 'African inspired' development paradigms have emerged. Significant amongst these are the Lagos Plan of Action, and The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). We will advance the view that their pretensions to a homegrown origin are adaptations and reconstructions of the Eurocentric paradigms mentioned above. These 'African' frameworks were formulated without much input from the African grassroots and can, therefore, hardly escape the charge of being alien in spirit.

ii.   Against 'Economism'

A close analysis of these formulas for Africa's development discloses that they share at least two prominent features. The first is their exaggerated emphasis on measurable economic indexes, especially wealth creation founded on a competitive (or in the case of

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[1] The project In Search of New Paradigms for African Development (ISENPAD), which yielded the Publication of 'African *Perspectives on Development'* (see footnote 2), is one such effort

[2] Hyden, G, 1994, "Changing Ideological and Theoretical Perspectives on Development", in *African Perspectives on Development*, Himmelstrand, U, Kinyanjui, K and Mburugu, E (eds), London: James Currey Ltd., p. 318.

dependency theory, on a fair) marketplace, as sufficient categories for defining development[3]. This is exemplified by the identification of development with the capacity of a national economy to generate an annual increase of its gross national product by at least five or seven percent[4]. The second is their inspiration by categories and principles of Western epistemology and values.

Gyekye has coined the term "economism"[5] to describe such theories, and it is a description that we wish to adopt. These features lead us to conclude that economistic theories affirm processes and relations that denigrate the values and knowledge systems that sustain indigenous African social organization[6].

Economism is misplaced and overstated because of its narrowness and disregard for differences in historical or social situations in conceiving development. Further, economism essentially categorizes societies in a binary pole of wealthy or poor countries, which are the same as developed or under-developed, represented geographically as the north and south![7]. Within this binary structure are embedded nodal points representing gradations of development/wealth or underdevelopment/poverty. These nodes are identified with measurable economic indicators, such that, for instance, country x, whose GDP per capita is say $1000, is conceived as being more developed than y which has $ 700; but x would not match d in development if d's GDP per capita is $1500. Since wealth creation in this framework is driven by the license to the private sector of the economy to maximize its profits, the basic character of economism can best be described as economic fundamentalism[8].

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[3] Ake, C, 1996, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Spectrum Books, Ibadan, p 127
[4] Torado, M. P., 1985, *Economic Development in the Third World*, New York and London: Longman, p. 83
[5] Gyekye, K., 1994, "Taking Development Seriously" in *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 11, no. 1, p. 46
[6] Hyden, G. 1983, *No Short Cuts to Progress: African Development management Perspectives*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 8-11. Here, Hyden locates the root causes of Africa's underdevelopment in economic processes and affirms the view that relations that have economic and social value in indigenous African social organization are impediments to development
[7] In this work the term "the West" will be identified with "the north"
[8] Ramose, M. B. 2002, *African philosophy through Ubuntu*, Harare: Mond Books, p. 131

Although overt discourse on Africa's development by African philosophers is sparse, the subject is clearly implied in their discourse on Africa's self-identity, social progress and the relevance of knowledge and values in the traditional setting to contemporary life and in shaping the African future. Much of these works devote attention to unjustified constructions about Africa in the Western episteme to which philosophical critique needs to be directed [9]. Others point out the importance of Africa taking charge of the struggle for its liberation[10]. Yet others advocate the need to insert a morality motivated by a sense of duty and "inspired by an imaginative and sympathetic identification with the interests of others even at the cost of a possible abridgement of one's own interests"[11]

The need for morally inspired solutions is taken up by Odera Oruka in his critical attention to the question of Africa's development. Oruka rejects the economistic conception of development and argues for the need to insert "ethically appropriate actions and the rational reorganization and redistribution of resources" into development thinking and practice[12]. According to him, a normative aspect to development thinking is necessary because even if the basic physical (economically measurable) needs of the poor are met, in a world of class distinctions, the disparities between the rich and poor will carry over into other rights such as political rights[13]. In this sense, Oruka recognizes the importance of the rights discourse, to which we will return in chapters three and five, to

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[9] Some of these are:
- Anta Diop, C, 1974, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*, Westport: Lawrence Hill & Co.;
- Eze, E. C, (ed),1997, *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
- Mudimbe, V. Y.,1988, *The Invention of Africa:Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press
- Ramose, M. 2002, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu*. Harare: Mond Books

[10] See for instance:
- Irele, A. 1983, "Introduction", in Hountondji, P. J, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. London: Hutchison and Co.; pp 7-32
- Serequeberhan, T. 1998, "Philosophy and Post-Colonial Africa", pp. 9-22 in Emmanuel C. Eze (ed), *African Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell;
- Sefa-Dei J. S. 2000. "African Development: The Relevance and Implications of 'Indigenousness'". pp 70-88 in George Sefa-Dei, Budd L. Hall and Dorothy G. Rosenberg (eds) *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

[11] Wiredu, K, "The Moral Foundations of An African Culture" in Coetzee P. H and Roux, A. P. J. (eds) *Philosophy from Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 287.

[12] Presby, G. M. 2002 "African Philosophers on Global Wealth Redistribution", in Presby, G. M. et. Al (eds), *Thought and Practice in African Philosophy*, Nairobi: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, p 284.

[13] Ibid p. 285-286

the development of Africa.   However, he identifies "ethno-religious solutions" with dogmatism and non-philosophy, and argues that these have no role in addressing the "current prevailing and dehumanizing ethics of political might"[14]. Although the notion of "ethno-religion" is not sufficiently elaborated on in the work from which we refer, it is reasonable to suppose that Oruka means by it what we consider to be salient tenets of indigenous African ontology, epistemology and values. If we are right in supposing this, then we take exception to identification of "ethno-religion" with non-philosophy, and the claim that it has no relevance to interrogating political power.

Gyekye also dismisses economism as "lopsided, inadequate and unrealistic[15]", because it "fails to come to grips with the complex nature of human society and culture"[16]. Furthermore, he highlights the fallacy of composition committed by economism by pointing out that it identifies economic development with development, yet "a species is never identical with its genus[17]".

Although these critics reveal the overstatement and arrogance of the Eurocentric paradigms, there is, in them, a latent acceptance of the position that underdeveloped/poor countries are late on the bandwagon of development, and that they can catch up if they adjusted the economistic conception of development a bit.

A crucial issue often ignored by the critics of economism is the absurdities to which its classification and hierarchization lead. For, if there is a hierarchy of wealthy nations, the apex of which is represented by the G7, then one would expect that its expansion into the G8 would be achieved by adding the next wealthy nation on the rung beneath the G7 countries to make up the G8. Yet Russia, which is much poorer than many nations, becomes the 8th nation of the wealthiest nations. This represents an absurdity by reference to the paradigm that determines 'wealthy nations'.

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[14] Ibid., p. 288
[15] Gyekye, K, 1994, Taking Development Seriously, op. cit. p 46
[16] Ibid. p. 45
[17] Ibid. p 49

Now, this absurdity brings into sharp relief weaknesses in the criticism of economism, such as their passing over pertinent questions arising from the tensions within economistic paradigms. Some of these questions are: what makes a country a latecomer to development? Why should so-called poor countries catch up with the wealthy ones? What does it mean for these countries to be poor, and given a critically appraised meaning of 'poverty', can it be said that their poverty is really being recognized?

iii.   Critique of Competition

Wealth creation based on competition is the cornerstone of economism. A level playing field is assumed for this competition, with disregard for the historical and actual conditions of countries. This assumption of a level playing field is captured in the notion of non-discrimination, which features as a key concept in the law and policy of the World Trade Organization. (W.T.O.)[18]. The notion of competition upheld here represents the pursuance of self-interest in an adversarial and exclusivist fashion. What this means is that competition as it is understood in the context of economism refers to a contest between rivals in which a rational actor seeks his/her interest against that of another rational actor[19]. Under this conception, one becomes excluded from the field of meaningful ability for self-interest seeking if one lacks material or intellectual wealth. Consequently, the assumed level playing field is rendered abstract and meaningless in certain concrete situations.

This understanding of competition can be challenged, even on the basis of the etymology of the word. This is so because competition stems from a contraction of two Latin words "*cum*" and "*petere*", which together mean "to seek together"[20]. But if we seek together, it must be because we have a common goal towards which we are working. This surely

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[18] Van den Bossche, P., 2005, *The Law and Policy of the World Trade Organization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 308. Here, the author distinguishes two main principles of non-discrimination discernible in WTO law. The first is the most-favoured nation treatment obligation, which prohibits a country from discriminating between countries. The second is the national treatment obligation which prohibits a country from discriminating against other countries.

[19] The Group of Lisbon, 1995. *Limits to Competition*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. p xii

[20] Ibid, p xi

shows the distortion of the meaning of 'competition' under the prevalent economistic regime.

iv.   Poverty is Unnatural

Again, this framework of development considers the creation of wealth a necessary condition for alleviating poverty. Indeed "poverty is the creature of a political relationship designed, in practice, to exclude ethics from politics"[21]. From this point of view, it can be legitimately argued that wealth creation necessarily generates poverty, especially if political institutions fail to place definite limits on the notion of competition advanced by economism in the capitalist/globalist context in which it holds sway.

Giving philosophical attention to the notion of poverty becomes an issue at stake, for at least two reasons. One would be to explore various dimensions of poverty and to inquire the extent to which intellectual poverty, manifested in illiteracy, affects the lives of the poor in a world governed by the economistic conception of development. Such an inquiry is likely to yield the view that intellectual poverty represents the helplessness or powerlessness of the poor. Bondy's emphasis on the strong correlation between the concepts of poverty and domination lends credence to this view[22]. According to him, the production of knowledge in underdeveloped countries is characterized by the adoption, *tout court*, of foreign ideas and values, which prove to be sterile in the adopted milieu. Because of their inability to fertilize thought and action in any meaningful sense, these ideas and values create bonds of domination that form and sustain the condition of dependency. With this, the centers of knowledge and power then direct the activities of the dependent countries. The dominated powers live with an orientation to the outside, depending in their existence on the decisions of the dominant powers. Consequently, the keys to knowledge become the keys to power: "only he who has the key to theory can

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[21] Ramose, M. B, 2004, "Poverty: A Creature of Politics and a Question of Justice", in *International Journal for Humanistic Studies*, Volume 3, p. 39
[22] Bondy, A. S. 1986. "The meaning and Problem of Hispanic American Thought" in Jorge J. E. Gracia (ed) *Latin American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Prometheus Books, pp 240 - 241

appropriate the advances and powers of civilization"[23]. Intellectual poverty then easily translates into material poverty. Further, as the precursor to illiteracy, intellectual poverty is epistemicide[24] because it kills the intellectual power of those who can be intellectually wealthy.

Secondly, philosophical attention will be apposite in order to determine whether poverty, which is endemic in sub-Saharan Africa, is a natural condition of societies or it is culturally constructed. Three degrees of poverty are clearly delineated in the various attempts at defining poverty. These are extreme (or absolute) poverty, moderate poverty and relative poverty. Extreme poverty means that households cannot meet basic needs for survival. Moderate poverty generally refers to conditions of life in which basic needs are met, but just barely. Relative poverty is generally construed as a household income level below a given proportion of average national income. 'Poverty', as employed in this dissertation, will refer predominantly to extreme poverty and the lower fringes of moderate poverty as defined. This sort of poverty is characterized by a range of symptoms which include under- and malnourishment; living in miserable housing with bad hygiene and sanitary conditions, which make people susceptible to disease and reduce their life expectancy at birth[25]. Let us look at three key indicators of extreme poverty and determine how sub-Saharan Africa fares by these.

Income of one U. S. dollar or less per day, measured at purchasing power per person per day, is the internationally acknowledged measure of extreme poverty, whereas income levels between one and two dollars is used to measure moderate poverty[26]. Using this measure, about 150 million (or about forty percent of the population) were deemed to live in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa in1981. This number had increased to 310

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[23] Ibid. p 243
[24] I adopt Ramose's use of this term to describe the suppression of the Africans' conception of reality, knowledge and truth by the European epistemological paradigm. A salient philosophical character of this domination, from the point of view of Africans, is the overbearing governance of their lives by foreign epistemologies that invariably leads to the "killing" of their native knowledge systems. This is the commission of epistemicide. See Ramose, M. B., 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* op. cit. p. 36
[25] Martinussen, J, 1997, *Society, State & Market: A Guide to Competing Theories of Development,* London: Zed Books, p 299-300
[26] Ibid.

million persons (or almost half of Africa's population) by 2001[27]. In 2001, therefore, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa lived in extreme poverty[28]. Further, about 200 million people (or about 30% of the population) in sub-Saharan Africa in 2001 were deemed to be moderately poor[29]. What these figures show is that extreme poverty is not only concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa; but also that it is rising in both absolute numbers and as a share of the population.

According to the Human Development Report of 2005, life expectancy at birth for the whole world was 67.1 years old, but for sub-Saharan Africa it was 46.1 years old[30]. Of the one hundred and seventy seven countries listed in the Report, the highest ranking sub-Saharan African country was South Africa, at number one hundred and twenty. In fact from number one hundred and forty one, only Yemen, ranked one hundred and fifty one, is not a sub-Saharan African country[31].

The third indicator of extreme poverty that we would like to comment on is access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Here, it is reported forty two percent of sub-Saharan Africans lack access to safe drinking water whereas about sixty four percent of them lack access to sanitation facilities[32].

In addition to these, the poor lack even the most elementary education. This bad health condition and lack of education conspire to make the extremely poor generally less productive than the rest of the population. For these reasons they are poorly paid when employed and when unemployed are unable to exploit the opportunities available through self-employment. Consequently, they remain trapped in extreme poverty and unable to meet their basic needs.

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[27] Ibid. p 21
[28] Ibid. p 22
[29] Ibid. p 23
[30] UNDP, 2005, *Human Development Report*, p. 222
[31] Ibid. pp. 220 – 222.
[32] UNDP, *Annual Report 2006,* p. 14

This dissertation takes the view that poverty and its trap are cultural constructions with foundations in from two factors. One is economism's arbitrary hierarchical construction and inattention to the significance of the power of 'poverty'; and the second is its perpetuation of structural poverty emanating from the unjust wars of colonization that have survived beyond decolonization.

However, few works in African philosophy succeed in providing a clear approach to an episteme and value system that will affirm and guide theory and practice in the applied sciences in this quest for liberation[33]. Of those that suggest credible prescriptions for addressing the epistemological question, an unequivocal statement on the role that indigenous African knowledge and values may play in fashioning theories and practices for Africa's development is hard to come by.

v.   Thesis Statement

The one-dimensionality of economism, with its attendant absurdities, clearly leads to the need to find alternatives to guide Africa's development. This dissertation proposes one such alternative, by defending the thesis that founding the theories and practices meant for Africa's development on indigenous African knowledge and values is a necessary condition for their success. Accordingly, we will propose a theory of being that recognizes wholeness as the basis for understanding the practice of indigenous African knowledge and values and advancing development in the African spirit.

Our thesis implies the proposition that a framework of development that disengages from the aspirations of the African masses cannot hope to succeed in application. Accordingly, the 'crises of paradigms' is an inexorable consequence of the epistemicide and valuecide[34] that the Eurocentric paradigms foster. It is evident that the discourse on Africa's development has not sufficiently interrogated the epistemological and value basis, as well as the teleology, of these paradigms. Our thesis affirms that there is a viable

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[33] An exception to this is Mogobe Ramose's *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit.
[34] This term endorses the view advanced in footnote 23 but with respect to the domination of European values.

alternative to the Eurocentric paradigms, and that the seeds of these alternatives are embedded in indigenous African thought and practices.

vi.   Methodology:

We wish to advance two claims at the onset of a discussion of the methodological approach to this dissertation. The first is that it is jointly an exercise in deconstruction and reconstruction. Many African philosophers have commented on how Western philosophers persisted in conceiving Graeco-European paradigmatic forms of rational contemplation and understanding as the most definitive and exalted activities of which *true* humans are capable[35]. In the mirror of this Eurocentric definition of 'rational man', Africans were not truly human[36]. The transition from the self-conception of the West as the only rational beings who occupied the universe and as the agents of the universe was effortless.

Now, we hold the view that science is contingent upon philosophy because the theories and practices of science are derived from particular ontologies, epistemologies and sets of values. Development theories and practices are applications of social science, therefore they are sustained by philosophical foundations [37]. Accordingly, this dissertation, as an instance in African philosophy, is deconstructive in the sense that it de-centers the Eurocentric paradigmatic forms "into the history of their construction and maintenance, into the historicity of the philosophical anthropology that forms the fabric of their textuality, and the cultural agenda of the voices in which they became embodied, and the practices through which they were constituted and institutionalized"[38]. The reconstructive component follows from the re-claiming of the historicity of philosophical practice constituted in the thesis.

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[35] Irele, A, 1983, op. cit. pp 10 – 21; Mudimbe, V. Y, 1988, op. cit., p 15 – 19; Ramose, M. B. 2002, op. cit. pp 10 – 15; Sereberquehan, T, 1994, *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy*, New York: Routledge, pp 21 – 23

[36] This is one of the main thrusts of Hegel's theory of history. For a commentary on this see Ramose, M. B., 2002, ibid. pp 1 - 24

[37] We elaborate on this in Chapter 4

[38] Outlaw, L. 2002. "African 'philosophy': Deconstructive and Reconstructive Challenges" pp 137 – 160 in Coetzee, P. H and Roux, A. P. J (eds), *Philosophy from Africa*, p147

Our second claim, which is partly implied in the elaboration of the first, is that this dissertation subscribes to the conception of philosophy as a critical and systematic inquiry into the fundamental ideas or principles underlying human thought, conduct and experience[39]. On these terms, philosophical activity may be inspired by situations or experiences that pose certain fundamental problems for a particular society; for, if philosophy is concerned with human problems, then paying critical attention to the human problems that arise in, or out of, particular historical or social situations is philosophical practice. The fact that certain development approaches have facilitated the progressive impoverisation of African countries underscores the need to turn a philosophical gaze on the suitability of these approaches.

Our thesis is therefore sustained by three key premises. The first of these is that conceptions of development must be based on the specificity and historicity of the culture seeking to be developed, if they are to be relevant. This is necessary because "each philosophy is the self-interpretation of a culture[40]". What this means, according to Okere, is that philosophy is an effort at giving meaning to one's world and existence. As such, it is only within a particular cultural framework that one can understand or philosophize[41]. Given this, it becomes clear that conceptions, theories and strategies of development must be ultimately derived from the needs, aspirations, values and ideals expressed by the people's understanding of the real, the true, the valuable and the beautiful.

This position may be rejected by the Essentialist, whose methodological stance would seem to exclude the subject matter of this dissertation from the set of philosophical questions. According to Essentialists, philosophy's concern is with the human *qua* human, or with human nature as such, rather than with "particular" or "applied" social questions. An appropriately philosophical subject matter, these philosophers argue, is defined by a criterion of universality which abstracts from such differences.

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[39] Gyekye, K., 1997, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 5
[40] Okere, T. 1983, *African Philosophy: A Historico-Hermeneutical Investigation of the Conditions of its Possibility,* Lanham: University Press of America. p xii.
[41] Ibid. pp xii, 114

Consequently, a concrete social and historical question, such as the question of the paradigm for Africa's development, cannot be accorded philosophical status on the criterion of abstract universality.

Carol Gould[42] labels this Essentialist version of universality as *abstract universality*, and refutes it. She then proposes an alternative which she terms *concrete universality* and argues for its adequacy as a criterion for justifying the philosophical nature of particular historical and social subject matters. This is in consonance with Okere's position discussed above.

We uphold Gould's and Okere's conclusions on the nature of philosophical subjects, and wish, therefore, to dwell briefly on her arguments against Essentialism. Gould's refutation rests on two grounds: First, in failing to treat historical or accidental properties philosophically, Essentialism cannot arrive at an adequate account of essences, because the concept of universality entails that actual differences play a role in the determination of what is universal. This is so because not all human properties are essential, and since we cannot know in advance of philosophical inquiry which human properties are accidental and which essential, Essentialists will have to include accidental properties in their investigation. Thus by virtue of this methodological stance, Essentialists are compelled to include consideration of accidental properties as part of their philosophical task. If so, then the claim that philosophy is concerned only with essential properties but not accidental ones fails as a procedural premise[43].

Gould's second objection to abstract universality is that its employment for the determination of essential human properties is not value-free but value-laden. This is because if one can establish an essence for any class of things, and must do this by considering the properties of particular classes, then the Essentialist's choice of one property as essential, with respect to which others are accidental, cannot depend on

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[42] In "The Woman Question: Philosophy of Liberation and the Liberation of Philosophy" in Gould, C. C and Wartofsky, M. W, 1978, (eds), *Women and Philosophy: Toward a Theory of Liberation*

[43] Gould, C., 1978, "The Woman Question: Philosophy of Liberation and the Liberation of Philosophy", op. cit., in Gould, C. C and Wartofsky, M. W, (eds), *Women and Philosophy: Toward a Theory of Liberation*, New York: Capricorn Books, pp. 8 - 15

methodological considerations alone if the choice is not a random one. The choice of an essential property then is likely to reflect particular or contingent social and historical beliefs, prejudices, interests and needs[44]. This value-laden determination of the universal, Gould thinks may expose Essentialism to the charge of deceptiveness[45].

It is a credible philosophical undertaking, then, on the criterion of concrete universality, to justify the claim that conceptions of development must be based on the specificity and historicity of a culture seeking to be developed, if the theories and practices deriving from those conceptions are to be relevant and effective.

The second premise to our thesis advances the view that the frameworks applied for Africa's development thus far are unjustified because they assume the role of principal when their proper role should be that of agents. Consequently, they act *ultra vires*. The primary function of the principal/agent principle is to define the relationship between an ultimately responsible subject (principal) and her delegate (agent) in such terms as to make the agent an extended arm of the principal in the implementation of the principal's will[46]. Consequently, the principal is empowered to sever the relationship between them if the agent transcends the delegated powers[47].

In accordance with this principle, it becomes clear to us that Africans ought to be both objects and subjects of their quest for development. Consequently, other entities engaged in this quest become agents, at best. This means that the structure and content of a development paradigm for Africa would have to reflect the will and aspirations of Africans. To ensure this, Africans need to participate in forging these paradigms and their implementation. However, with African voices merely 'echoing the voices of theorists elsewhere in the world', the roles of principal and agent are inverted.

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[44] ibid. p 16
[45] ibid., p 17
[46] See Furmston, M., 2001, *Chesire, Fifoot & Furmston's Law of Contract*, London: Butterworths, pp. 534-536
[47] Ibid. pp 546-559

This is closely bound to the third premise to our thesis, which takes the position that the conceptions of development that have prevailed in Africa ultimately generate absurdities. There are a number of reasons for this, most of which will be elaborated in chapters Two and Three. One of these reasons is that money, which in these paradigms establishes the boundary between rich and poor countries, is the main reason for the historical inversion of the roles of principal and agent.

The main means by which money achieves this inversion is its complete indifference to individual qualities. Money extracts "from the concrete totality of the streams of life one abstract, general factor which develops according to its own independent norms and which intervenes in the totality of existential interests and imposes itself upon them"[48]. Resultantly, the most salient feature of money, in its regulation of both individual and social relations, is its calculative function. The influence of money, in this regard, "is to conceive the world as a huge arithmetical problem, to conceive events and the qualitative distinction of things as a system of numbers"[49]. It is this abstract quantification of life and the relations in it that obliterates the concrete differences between principal and agent, and consequently allow for the historical inversion of the roles of the two.

Our choice of the criterion of concrete universality as a methodological guide is founded on a number of reasons. The first is that on this criterion, philosophy is concerned with human and social differences; yet it conceives them not as simply accidents, but as aspects which constitute the universal because they are related to each other in constituting the universal itself. This is in consonance with my proposed recognition of be-ing[50] as the basis for understanding the practice of indigenous African knowledge and values.

Further, concrete universality implies a conception of history and of society which I

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[48] Simmel, Georg, 2004, *The Philosophy of Money*, Bottomore, T & Frisby, D. (eds), London: Routledge, p. 442
[49] Ibid. p 444
[50] I follow Ramose, M. B, 2002, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu*. Harare: Mond Books, pp 40 – 51, in contrasting 'be-ing' as an ontological category, from 'being'. The hyphenated usage establishes the dynamism of be-ing by highlighting the importance of the principle of motion within it. This has decisive implications for African metaphysics and ethics. We will return to this is Chapters 5 and 6.

affirm. On its terms, "accidents" are the characteristic features of historical change and actual social life, because society is not a changeless set of relations among individuals who are all essentially the same at all times. Rather, it is constituted by a set of relations among individuals who are very different. Consequently, history becomes constituted by the actions of individuals through their interaction with each other and with the natural world. On this view, theories of development can only reflect responses to historical perspectives which develop through interactions between societies and the dynamics of power that emerges from these interactions. Secondly, the relationship between the West and Africa on the subject of development arises from conquest in the unjust wars of colonization. The conqueror and conquered relationship is the ground for the prevailing exploiter/rich and exploited/poor duality. Since it is a relationship which has developed historically, it is subject to change.

Finally, by conceiving proper philosophical subjects as also embodied in society and history, this criterion empowers us to formulate norms and values in terms not only of what is the same, but in terms of relevant differences which specify the conditions for applying the norm or value. The advantage with such a formulation would be that when such a norm or value is violated, we will not only know that a violation has occurred, but also why or on what grounds, such a violation occurred. Such knowledge is required if we are concerned not only with rectifying the specific violation, but with eliminating the conditions which gave rise to it in the first place and establishing conceptual and practical directions that will sustain the absence of such violations. We wish to reaffirm that our work is primarily concerned with how to critically understand and change the conditions that produced and sustain the 'epistemicide' and 'valuecide' in the discourse and practice on Africa's development

vii.   Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation unfolds in an introduction and five chapters. Chapters one and two will be devoted to a deconstruction of the European epistemological paradigm and the establishment of its influence on the three ideologies and theories mentioned in section i

above. The third, which serves as a bridge between the two chapters preceding it and the subsequent ones, establishes the dependence of applied social science on ontology and a system of values and knowledge. Chapters four and five are devoted to reconstructing a framework for development underpinned by indigenous African knowledge and values. What follows is a brief indication of the content of these chapters.

Introduction:

The key task of the introduction is to set the scene for the thesis by exploring the question 'what is development'? We begin by confirming the philosophical character of this question. We then examine the core characteristics of development, its purpose and possibility conditions.

Chapter One

Here, we present three Euro-American ideologies and their concomitant theories which have influenced development thinking in Africa, and critically review them. These are the Modernization, Dependency, Neo-Liberalist theories of development. Further, we outline and subject to critique supposedly 'homegrown' development frameworks and plans such as the Lagos Plan of Action, Structural Adjustment Policies and Poverty Reduction Strategies, as well as NEPAD, which is publicized by consensus by African leaders and their development partners as the current development framework for the continent[51]. We will locate the genesis of the three theories as well as NEPAD in European epistemology and values, and argue that they sustain the epistemicide and valuecide that continues to be committed in Africa's development efforts.

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[51] NEPAD has been endorsed by the G8, which adopted the Africa Action Plan in June 2002. It also forms part of the agenda of the Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, in March 2002 as well as the agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. Further, it has achieved the endorsement of the international community through United Nations Resolution 57/7 of 2002 which explicitly supports the document.

Chapter Two

This chapter will consider various 'alternatives' to the mainstream development theories discussed in chapter one, and argue that they are mere adaptations and extensions of the mainstream theories and cannot, as such, engender authentic development in Africa.

Chapter Three

This chapter will recapture the unifying ideas of the preceding chapters and strengthen the argument that all applied natural and social sciences are contingent upon an ontology, epistemology and values. We will then proceed to justify the claim that technologies and social-scientific approaches succeed better when they are congruent with the philosophies that conceptually sustain them.

Chapter Four

This chapter upholds ontological categories as fundamental premises which guide the thinking behind a society's institutions and practices. Accordingly, it sees these categories as providing the conceptual grounds for indigenous knowledge and values, defined as "knowledge [and value] consciousness arising locally and in association with the long-term occupancy of a place[52]". The Chapter then looks at the foundations of an entirety of traditional norms, social values and mental constructs that guide, organize and regulate the African's ways of life and her making sense of the world. It is from this point of view that we think the categories they expound can properly guide a paradigm of Africa's development.

We will expound here a theory of being that recognizes be-ing. This ontology discloses a relationship of beings existing in the visible and invisible realm of the universe, and who constitute a network of points of affinity in a universe that "forms one internally

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[52] Sefa-Dei. 2000, Sefa-Dei J. S. 2000. "African Development: The Relevance and Implications of 'Indigenousness' op. cit. p.73

contiguous order[53]" rather than as independent categories existing in a conception of space and time inextricably locked under the key of logical rules. The two realms of existence are complementary aspects of a complex wholeness, and are inhabited by be-ings which share characteristics of both realms. Consequently, categories in this ontology relate to each other with such fluidity that their essential attributes dovetail into each other.

The chapter also expounds on indigenous epistemological systems and argues that although they acknowledge the importance of logic, they do not dismiss the possibility of asserting truths about reality that are dissonant with The Law of Identity, which is a synthesis of the three fundamental canons of Western logic[54]. We then discus how African epistemologies recognize the limitations imposed on the concepts of 'truth' and 'the good' by this logic.

We argue that the knowledge practices emerging out of this epistemology afford us a picture of nature and of history as an aggregate of components that interact in both determinate and indeterminate patterns. It is a knowledge system that encourages recognition and exploration of the interdependence of significant elements in a totality without demanding that they be observable and measurable. Obviously, this definition of indigenous African knowledge does not make a clear and exclusive distinction between knowledge and values, and will therefore not be neatly situated in the categories of Eurocentric thought[55].

Finally, we then defend the Africanity of this theory of be-ing and knowledge, and show how they relate to a concrete universalist framework for development. Implied in this defense is the position that the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa share enough features to make it meaningful to understand the similarities in their basic problems and theoretically

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[53] Abraham, W. E, 1962, *The Mind of Africa,* Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 99
[54] Identity, Excluded Middle, Non-Contradiction
[55] The 'is/ought' distinction is fundamental in Western philosophical discourse. The Logical Positivists, for instance, hold that a statement has cognitive meaning if and only if it is either logically justified or empirically observable. Value judgments, for instance, have no cognitive meaning and cannot therefore be the basis of truth

formulate solutions to them within a particular conceptual framework. Such a position does not amount to the claim that sub-Saharan Africa comprises of homogeneous societies which hold unanimous conceptions and beliefs about society and progress[56]. Such a position would, in fact, be absurd. In spite of its near geographical unity, sub-Saharan Africa is by no means a culturally homogenous entity. Therefore, talk about indigenous African systems is first and foremost talk about particular cultural systems. At a second level, which is a general level, one may meaningfully talk about indigenous systems. This is the level at which "analogous existential experiences of life ….have slowly produced a unified African world distinct from, and comparable to the Western and Asian World"[57].The discussion in this thesis will be pitched at this latter level. In giving legitimacy to our discourse at this level, we affirm the position of the South Report, that "what the countries of the South have in common transcends their differences; it gives them a shared identity and a reason to work together for common objectives"[58]. It must be noted that the common features allowing for this unity and shared identity is distinctly cultural.

Chapter Five

This chapter will theorize indigenous knowledge and value systems as necessary conditions for the formulation and implementation of development theories and strategies for Africa. It will claim that such theories and strategies must be ethics-based. Towards justification for this, the chapter will proceed to expound on African social and ethical doctrines and their concomitant norm-finding procedures; and show how these derive from, and in their turn strengthen the ontological and epistemological aspects of

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[56] This view of African societies is held by both Paulin Hountondji and Robin Horton. Thus Hountondji (at Hountondji, P. J., 1983, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, London: Hutchison and Co., pp 51-55), discusses the "myth of unanimity and the "myth of consensus" held in African societies. This implies a monolithic understanding of issues to which all thinkers in a given African society give unanimous assent. In like manner Horton (at Horton, R, 1971, "African Traditional Thought and Western Science", in Wilson, B (ed) *Rationality*, New York: Harper Touchbooks, p 153), writes that "to me, the most important thing about the traditional cultures is that in each, there is a single, overarching world view which prevails without competition; which has, as it were, a monopoly of people's cognitive preoccupation".

[57] Maquet, J., 1972, *Africanity: The Cultural Unity of Black Africa*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 4

[58] South Report. 1990. *The Challenge to the South. The Report of the South Commission,* Oxford: Oxford University Press; p 1

holonistic reality as discussed in chapter four. We will then attempt concrete applications of these principles and norms to aspects of development practice in Africa.

CHAPTER ONE:
DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON AFRICA

1.1:   What is 'Development'?

Since the Second World War, Western conceptions of the world and history have been characterized by the notion of 'development'[1]. In spite of disputes regarding its exact definition, there is a widespread tendency to associate something positive and desirable with this word. This chapter has multiple aims. First it seeks to establish the meaning of 'development' that has prevailed in the discourse on Africa's development. It will then offer a brief exposition of three schools of thought that have dominated the discourse on development in the aftermath of World War Two; indicate how they have utilized the pre-existing meaning of 'development'; trace their influence on thinking and practice in Africa and briefly indicate why they have failed in this context.

 Such a task compels, at the onset, clarifying the distinction between development concept, development theory and development strategy[2]. A development concept contains the answer to what 'development' is. The concept, as such, is value-laden because it encapsulates notions of what ought to be understood by development. These notions are then formulated as development goals, either in terms of particular conditions that must be achieved or in terms of the conceptual directions for change. Development theories, on the other hand, seek to determine how chosen development objectives can be promoted. They are therefore concerned with the conditions that will facilitate or impede progress, causal relationships that apply to the processes of change and how the changes affect various social groups and localities. Clearly, then, theories also contain significant normative elements[3]. A development strategy on its part refers essentially to the actions

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[1] So, A. Y. 1990. *Social Change and Development*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications ; Ake, C. 1996, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Washington D. C: Brookings Institution Press, p.1
[2] Martinussen, J, 1997, *Society, State & Market*, London: Zed Books, pp 14-15. These distinctions are well articulated here.
[3] Pickering, A, 1992, (ed), *Science as Practice and Culture*, Chicago: Chicago University Press. Most of the contributions to this anthology affirm this point.

and interventions that can be used to promote defined development objectives. As such, it is heavily value-laden because of its prior choice of development concept.

Initially, planners of development as a goal to be achieved by underdeveloped countries estimated that it could be attained through bilateral relations between the colonial powers and their colonized territories. However, this emphasis on bilateralism was to change by the end of the 1940s[4]. Chirot[5] and other commentators argue that an important catalyst to this change was the immediate political interests of the United States of America. Preston suggests that these interests were, predominantly, to fortify America's role as the core power of the liberal capitalist system and order the post-war world in such a fashion as to allow its capitalists access to territories in the Third World[6]; and to halt the spread of communism[7]. However in 1949, Harry Truman, then president of the U. S. A., envisaged his country's role to be thus:

> "We must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a programme of development based on the concept of democratic fair dealing[8]".

The shift of focus from bilateralism to multilateralism, and the role of the U. S. A. in it, was achieved in two main ways. First, the U. S government provided enormous support to interdisciplinary research on development[9]. Secondly, it spearheaded the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions – specifically the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and

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[4] Cooper, F. and Packard, R. 1997. "Introduction", in *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge.* Cooper, F and Packard, R (ed). California: University of California Press

[5] Chirot, D. 1981. "Changing Fashions in the Study of the Social Causes of Economic and Political Change" in James Short (ed) *The State of Sociology.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, p. 261 -262. Chirot suggests here that the U. S government's interest in development at the time stems principally from its recognition of the appeal of communism to the newly independent states of the world (or for the indigenous political elite agitating for independence in colonized countries)

[6] Preston, P. W., 1997, *Development Theory: An Introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell, p. 153

[7] Ibid., pp. 157, 168

[8] From Esteva, G. 1992. "Development", pp 6-25 in *The Development Dictionary*, Sachs, W. (ed) London: Zed Books

[9] So, A. Y. 1990, *Social Change and Development,* op. cit., p. 18;
- Also, Almond, G. 1987. "The Development of Political Development", in Myron Weiner et al. (eds) *Understanding Political Development.* Boston: Little, Brown., p. 437

the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, now generally known as the World Bank – whose functions were predicated upon the notion of open liberal trade[10]. The IMF was established to encourage international cooperation in the monetary field, remove foreign exchange restrictions and facilitate a multilateral payments system between member countries. The purpose of the World Bank was to encourage capital investment for the reconstruction and development of its member countries. This function was an extension of American policy[11] towards Europe, which emphasized economic reconstruction after the destruction of the war. Accordingly, the World Bank's strategy at this period was to lend, and facilitate a massive transfer of resources, to Europe[12].

These institutions helped reinforce the partitioning of the world into three geo-economic areas: the first world, which was conceived as developed; the second world considered to be semi-developed and the Third World which was rendered under-developed. All countries in sub-Sahara Africa, with the exception of South Africa, were categorized as under-developed.

Two observations may be made, with regard to The Bretton Woods institutions and Third World Development. The first is that their predominant interests, right from the onset of their operations, have been far from the facilitation of Africa's development. They have at times remained apathetic to efforts at Africa's development, and on many occasions have pursued strategies and policies that undermine development in Africa. We return to the negative influence of the World Bank on sub-Saharan Africa's development efforts in sections 1.4.3.3 and 1.4.3.4 below. It is worth noting presently, however, that the IMF's

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[10] Preston, P. W., 1997, *Development Theory,* op. cit., p. 168

[11] The most prominent of these were the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan (from its enactment, officially the European Recovery Program [ERP]) was the primary plan of the United States for rebuilding and creating a stronger foundation for the allied countries of Europe, and repelling communism after World War II. The initiative, developed at a meeting of the participating European states on July 12, 1947, was named after the then United States Secretary of State George C. Marshall. The plan was in operation for four years beginning in July 1947, and during that period some $13 billion of economic and technical assistance was given to help the recovery of the European countries. In recent years historians have questioned both the underlying motivation and the overall effectiveness of the Marshall Plan. Some historians contend that America's economic interest was foremost in devising the Plan as, for instance, the money was to be used to buy goods from the United States, and shipped across the Atlantic on American merchant vessels.

[12] Martinussen, J. 1997. *State, Society & Market: A Guide to Competing Theories of Development.* London: Zed Books

mandate essentially severs it from any meaningful contribution to Africa's development. This is because at the time of its establishment, in 1944, all sub-Saharan African countries with the exception of Liberia[13] were occupied by the armed conquest of Europeans who exploited and traded the resources of these countries for their own (the conquerors') interests. Consequently, any benefits that may have accrued from international monetary cooperation or facilities to enhance multilateral payments between countries must have gone to the colonialists. This exclusion from benefit by sub-Saharan Africa by the IMF persists presently, as the Debt Trap in which sub-Saharan Africa, which was facilitated by the IMF, clearly illustrates. In addition to this, a key finding of a recent report by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), is that the voices of developing countries are inadequately represented in the Bank's operations[14].

Further, the designation "Third World" has a philosophic dimension to it that weakens attempts at development by the 'under-developed' world. It is, as Parkinson argues, a residue of Aristotelian superiority and Augustinian exclusiveness which instinctively endorsed the view that the Amerindian, the African and the Australasian cannot be a wholesome authentic human being. Contemporaneously, this racist superiority complex is effected in the following manner: "lurking behind an outward benevolence, it is manifested in a generally condescending attitude towards what we are now pleased to call "under-developed countries" or, relegating it instinctively to the bottom of the scale, the "third world[15]" In Chapter Three, we look more closely at the philosophical foundations of the mainstream development theories and practices propagated after the second World War. Presently, however, we have reason to wonder at the extent to which "the old imperialism" has been transcended in the relationship between the people relegated to the lowest third rung of the ladder and those on the topmost rung.

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[13] This statement is contestable, because although Liberia was officially never colonized, it was a de facto colony of the USA. See Akpan, M. B, Jones, A. B and Pankhurst, R, 1990, "Liberia and Ethiopia, 1880-1914: the survival of two African States" and "Ethiopia and Liberia, 1914-35: two independent African states in the colonial era", (chapters 11 and 28, respectively, in Boahen, A. A. (ed), *General History of Africa, VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880 – 1935*, Paris: UNESCO

[14] The World Bank, 2006, *Evaluating the World Bank's Approach to Global Programs: Addressing the Challenges of Globalization*. http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/gppp/index.html

[15] Parkinson, F. 1977. *The Philosophy of International Relations: A study in the History of Thought*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 24-25.

1.2: Development and Economic Growth

From the onset of their existence, the official conceptions of the Bretton Woods institutions as well as in North America and Western Europe identified 'development' with economic growth (or economic development) in the industrialized countries. An early attempt was made to distinguish between 'growth' and 'development' by Joseph Schumpeter. According to him, growth was the gradual extension of the capital apparatus and increasing production. Development, on the other hand, could occur only when technical innovations introduced new production techniques, new products or means of organizing production[16]. The salutary point for us is that the utilization of production factors in new ways does not change the economic focus of this conception of development. Since my main concern in this work is to indicate the conflation of economic growth (or development) with 'development', I will not hesitate to use economic growth and economic development interchangeably, and 'economism' to denote both.

In spite of the lack of general agreement, wide approval has been gained for the notion of economic development as "a process whereby the real per capita income of a country increases over a long period of time while simultaneously poverty is reduced and the inequality in society is generally diminished"[17]. Conceptions of this kind have been adopted in World Bank analyses and strategies since the early 1970s. Until around 1980, the Bank's overall conception of development was determined by combining growth in per capita income with assistance to the poor. One strategy associated with this was the 'Basic Needs Approach', which we will consider in Chapter Two. In the 1980s, the Bank's focus shifted towards aggregate economic growth in conjunction with restoration of macro-economic imbalances, structural adjustment and increased foreign exchange

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[16] Schumpeter, J. A. 1934, *The Theory of Economic Development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
[17] Meier, G. M., 1989, *Leading Issues in Economic Development,* New York: Oxford University Press, p. 6

earnings. Since 1990, it has again emphasized aggregate growth along with growth for the poor and resource-weak groups[18].

Therefore the one-dimensional focus of economism, and change processes towards greater similarity with conditions prevailing in the USA and the industrialized countries of Western Europe continues to be the official conception of the Bretton Woods Institutions and their mentors[19]. Now, per capita income is computed on the basis of production, employment and consumption of goods and services. However, it is questionable whether measurement of development in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of increasing per capita incomes can give a correct impression of the conditions and state of human dignity and welfare.

First, many of these countries lack the means to gather the necessary data for analysis. In addition, the national accounts, from which per capita income is extracted, are usually based on measurements of production and consumption in prices which assume market exchanges of all the products. But a large segment of production in these countries is exchanged in other ways without pricing. This occasions distortions in the national accounts.

Secondly, these national accounts hardly reflect the distribution of incomes among the citizens of the country. Therefore, aggregate growth in per capita income is often a reflection of growth for high income groups, which necessarily means a decline or stagnation for low-income groups. Per capita income, then, may mask the uneven distribution of national income socially or geographically.

What this means is that the narrow definition of development by economism, results in undue generalization and abstraction. These core features of economism: its one-dimensional focus and abstract character have been inherited by the three predominant schools of thought, to which we now turn.

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[18] Martinussen, J. 1997, *State, Society and Market,* op cit. p. 37
[19] Keita, L., 2004, "Philosophy and Development*",* in Africa Development, Vol. XXIX, No 1, Dakar: CODESRIA, p 1

1.3   Schools of Development Thought and their Influence in Africa

1.3.1:   The Modernization School and its Essential Claims

The first of these is the modernization school, which held sway in the aftermath of the Second World War until the early 1960s. According to this school, countries in the Third World were 'backward' in comparison with countries in North America and Western Europe. The panacea for this 'backwardness' was a process of evolution terminating in modernization, which involves a phased, lineal, irreversible, progressive, and lengthy process modeled on the development paths of the developed world[20]. A key dimension of this process is free trade. Accordingly, each country would prosper it if sold the goods for which it had a comparative advantage on a competitive market. The Third World will achieve modernization if it absorbed Western values and resources in the form of investments, loans and aid[21].

Tipps observes that "there was little in modernization that would seriously disturb the White House, Pentagon, or State Department policy makers[22]." This view is pertinent to the whole of Western Europe at the time, since it was indebted to the United States after the war and looked toward it for political, economic and military leadership. But what is the genesis of this school of thought?

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[20] Himmelstrand U. 1994. "Perspectives, Controversies and Dilemmas in the study of African Development", in Himmelstrand, U, Kinyanjui, K and Mburugu, E (eds), *African Perspectives on Development*, London: James Currey Ltd., p. 37
[21] So, A. Y. 1990., *Social Change and Development*, op. cit., p. 36
[22] Tipps, D. C. 1976. "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective", 62-88 in Black, C. E (ed) *Comparative Modernization: A Reader.* New York: Free Press, p. 72

1.3.1: The Theoretical Heritage of modernization

The core claims of modernization derive from a triple heritage comprising of evolutionary theory[23], and Functionalism[24] and a blend of classical economic theory/Keynesianism[25].

1.3.1.1: Growth Theory under Economic Liberalism

The economics of modernization is best described as "the work of Keynes simultaneously absorbed into a revivified neo-classical orthodoxy"[26].

Elaborating on Adam Smith's political economy, neoclassical economics emphasizes the critical role of market mechanisms, especially competition, as well as the accumulation of wealth and investment to economic growth. If the market were left to its own devices it would spontaneously order society in such a fashion as to maximize human well-being. To this was added the views of David Ricardo, who augmented Smith's sources of growth with technical innovations and international trade based on the comparative advantage of productive inputs in participating countries[27].

On the other hand, Keynesianism holds that if the total level of expenditure in an economy falls below that which is necessary for full employment, then the shortfall should be made up by government spending[28]. Government borrowing to finance expenditure is justified as this spending will boost economic activity. A boosted economy will generate higher tax returns, which could be used to offset the initial borrowing. It

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[23] Portes, A. 1980. "Convergences between Conflicting Theoretical Perspectives in National Development", in Herbert Blalock (ed) *Sociological Theory and Research*. New York: Free Press, p. 223
[24] So A. Y., 1990, *Social Change and Development*, op. cit., p. 18
[25] Preston, P. W., 1997, *Development Theory*, op. cit., pp. 153 - 165
[26] Preston P. W. 1997, *Development Theory*, op cit., p. 154
[27] Mankiw, G. N., 2000, *Principles of Microeconomics*, N. Y. Thomson Learning, p. 55
[28] Ibid. pp 31-33. Also Keynes, J. M., 1936, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, London: McMillan & Co, (rendered into html for the University of Adelaide Library, at http:/etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/k44g/html), Chapter 17, II-III and Chapter 20, III – IV.

would seem that Keynesianism was admitted into the folds of modernization because it was desirable to promote a suitable rate of growth in countries receiving Western aid, and this lent credence to the notion that deliberate intervention in an economy in order to raise its level of activity was allowable[29]. Modernization implied growth but, in applying the school in Africa[30], this growth was conceived to have better come through the functioning of liberal market economies.

1.3.1.2: Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary theory flourished in the nineteenth century, in the aftermath of the Industrial and French Revolutions. These revolutions both shattered an existing order and laid the foundation for a new one. The industrial revolution led to the mechanization of production, higher productivity and their concomitant quest for new markets, many of which were found in colonized territories. The French revolution signaled the beginning of the end of monarchy, and ushered in parliamentary democracy in Europe.

In observing these social, political and economic transitions, evolutionary theorists used different labels to characterize the old and new societies. Thus Ferdinand Tonnies distinguished between *gemeinschaft* (community) and *gesellschaft* (society). In traditional societies, relationships are emotion-based, and are such communal (*gemeinshaft*) relationships. On the other hand, relationships in modern societies are driven by the desire to achieve some specific goal (for example, financial gain). Tonnies called these goal-driven relationships *gesellschaft*, or social relationships[31]. Durkheim, on his part, theorized *mechanical* and *organic* solidarity as characteristic modes of relationships in two distinct phases of social change[32]. According to him, everyone is a jack of all trades in traditional society. What sustains such a society is collective conscience consisting of primitive values and norms. In modern (organic) society, division of labour pertains, and because of this mutual dependence becomes necessary for

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[29] Preston, P. W. 1997, *Development Theory*, op. cit., p. 158
[30] See subsection 2.1.3
[31] Tonnies, F., 1957, *Community and Society: Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Loomis, C. P. (trans & ed.), pp. 223-231, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
[32] Durkheim, E., 1964, *The Division of Labour in Society,* London: Collier-Macmillan, pp. 70 - 132

survival. It is this need for mutual dependence, rather than a collective conscience, that holds the society together. Another of these characterizations is Comte's *theoretical*, *metaphysical* and *positive* stages of social change[33]. According to this distinction, reasoning in traditional societies, characterized as the theoretical stage, is based on religion whereas reasoning in modern (positivistic) societies is based on science.

Three salient features of Evolutionary Theory informed the structure of modernization theory. First, it assumed that social change is unidirectional[34]. Human society, on this account, invariably moves in one direction from a primitive to an advanced state typifed by Western society. Second, it imposed a value judgment on the evolutionary process: the unidirectional movement towards the final phase is good because it represents progress, humanity and civilizations[35]. Third, it assumed that the rate of social change must be slow, gradual and piecemeal - it is evolutionary, not revolutionary -, and the process of evolution from a primitive society to a modern one, is time-consuming.

1.3.1.3: Functionalist Theory

Functionalism bequeaths to modernization its other theoretical heritage. In his version of functionalist theory, Talcott Parsons articulates the concept of pattern variables to distinguish traditional societies from modern ones[36]. According to him, there are five sets of these variables [37].

First of these is *affective* versus *affective-neutral* relationships[38]. Social relationships, in traditional societies, tend to have an affective component. What this means is that they tend to be personal, emotional and face-to-face. Employers treat employees as family members and find it hard to dismiss them even when their company fails to be profitable.

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[33] Comte, A., 1964, "The Progress of Civilizations through Three States" in Etzioni, A and Etzioni, E (eds) *Social Change*, New York: Basic Books, p. 14-16
[34] ibid.
[35] Levy, M. J. 1967. "Social Patterns (Structures) and Problems of Modernization", in Wilbert Moore and Robert Cook (eds). *Readings on Social Change*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 196-201
[36] So, A. 1990, *Social Change and Development*, op. cit. p. 21
[37] Parsons, T., 1952, *The Social* System, London: Tavistock, p. 67
[38] ibid., p. 60

In modern societies, however, social relations are essentially *affective-neutral* in that they are impersonal, detached and indirect. Consequently, employees stand the threat of being dismissed if they stand in the way of economic productivity and entrepreneurial profitability.

The second set of variables is the *particularistic* versus *universalistic* relationships[39]. According to Parsons, people in traditional societies tend to associate with members of the same social circle, trust one another and feel an obligation to fulfill social promises. Usually, an oral agreement is all that is needed to carry out a business transaction. Thus they treat each other as specific and distinct individuals. On the other hand people in modern societies are forced to interact with strangers frequently, and tend to use universalistic norms. For example, a cashier in a bank will not honour a cheque unless the payee presents identification documents.

The third set of variables is *collective orientation* versus *self orientation*[40]. In traditional societies loyalty is often owed to the collectivity, such as the family or community, and people are asked to sacrifice their interest for the sake of fulfilling collective obligations. This stress on collective orientation constrains individual innovation, creativity and imagination. On the other hand self orientation is stressed in modern society. This means that people are encouraged to be themselves and develop their own talents and prospects. This stress on self orientation is said to energize the individual, leading to technological innovation and raising economic productivity.

Ascribed versus *achieved status* constitutes the fourth set of variables. In traditional societies, a person is evaluated by his or her ascribed status, often derived from social background and family connections, whereas achievement is the yardstick for personal evaluation in modern society[41].

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[39] ibid., p. 62
[40] Ibid., p. 60
[41] Ibid., p. 64

The fifth and final set is *functionally diffused* versus *functionally specific* relationships[42]. The relationship between an employer and employee in both societies is invoked for illustration. In traditional societies, according to Parsons, the employer's role is not just to employ. Frequently, it involves training the employee through apprenticeship, the responsibility of hosting and guiding him or her. Therefore, the employer's role becomes functionally diffused, and highly inefficient. In modern societies, however, the employer has limited obligations to the employee. Their relationship seldom extends beyond the sphere of work. Therefore the employer's role tends to be functionally specific. Because they are able to avoid other obligations to each other, the employer and employee can focus on increasing efficiency and productivity.

1.3.1.4: Common Assumptions and Methodology

These foundations of economic liberalism, evolutionary theory and functionalist theory led to shared assumptions and methodology amongst the adherents to the school[43]. First of these is that modernization is a phased process towards economic development. Rostow, whose theory of economic growth[44] represents an apogee of modernization theory, distinguishes five stages of economic development, through which all societies seeking it must travel. The initial stage is that of traditional society which Rostow characterizes as "one whose structure is …. based on pre-Newtonian science and technology, and of pre-Newtonian attitudes towards the physical world"[45]. A series of stages must be passed[46] before coming to the terminal stage, which is high mass-

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[42] Ibid., p. 65-66. For a more straightforward elaboration of these variables, see So, A., 1990, *Social Change and Development*, op. cit., p. 23

[43] See Hungtington , S. (1976) "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics", in Cyril E. Black (ed) *Comparative Modernization: A Reader*. New York: Free Press., pp. 30-31

[44] Rostow, W. W. 1960. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[45] Ibid., p. 6

[46] Ibid., pp. 5 – 14. From the traditional stage, a society slowly edges into "precondition for takeoff growth", when it begins to change by virtue of the rise of new entrepreneurs, the expansion of markets, among others. When the rate of productive investments reaches 10% of national income, the country would have reached the "take-off stage". If this level of investment is sustained, the country soon reaches the phase called "the drive to maturity". This stage is followed by growth in employment opportunities, increase in national income, rise in consumer demand and the formation of a strong domestic market. The country would have then reached the final stage of economic development, labeled "high mass consumption society" by Rostow.

consumption society. According to Rostow, these stages "constitute in the end both a theory about economic growth and a more general, if still highly partial, theory about modern history as a whole[47]".

Accordingly, modernization is, secondly, a homogenizing process. This is easily inferred from Parson's view that "as time goes on, they [the Third World] and we [the western world] will increasingly resemble one another…. Because the patterns of modernization are such that the more highly modernized societies become, the more they resemble one another[48]". Levy, concurs with this view. For him, modernization is a universal solvent in that mere contact with a modern society is a catalyst for the modernization of a primitive society. This, according to him, is because the patterns of modernized societies have shown a universal tendency to penetrate any social context whose participants have come in contact with them. Once this penetration begins, the previous indigenous patterns always change; and they always change in the direction of some of the patterns of the modernized society[49].

In this phased process seeking homogeneity, societies obviously begin with the primitive/ traditional stage associated with the Third World and advance to the complex/modern stage associated with the Western world. Therefore, modernization is, thirdly, an Americanization/Europeanization process. Tipps[50] substantiates this by claiming that Western Europe and the United States have unmatched economic prosperity and liberal democratic stability, and since they are the most advanced nations in the world, they are definitely models that latecomers in development should emulate.

Fourthly, modernization is an irreversible and unstoppable process, such that once Third World countries come into contact with the West, they will not be able to resist the impetus towards modernization. This is implied by the views of Levy and Rostow, and requires no further elaboration. In fact it is modernization's necessarily unidirectional

[47] Ibid., p. 1
[48] Levy, M. J. 1967. "Social Patterns (Structures) and Problems of Modernization", op. cit., p. 207
[49] ibid., pp. 206-207
[50] Tipps, D. C. 1976. "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective" op. cit., p. 81

character that makes it a "universal social solvent" capable of dissolving traditional traits of the Third World countries. All the above assumptions are derived from evolutionary theory.

Fifthly, modernization is a transformative process that renders "tradition" and "modernity" mutually exclusive[51]. This is correctly inferred from Parsons's view that a society's traditional structures and values must be replaced by a set of modern ones in order for it to enter into modernity. Now, if development is equivalent to modernization, and modernization a complete break from the traditional, then anything 'traditional' detracted from the surge toward modernization and must be discarded on the path toward development.

Finally, modernization theorists share the common methodological approach of conducting discussions at a highly general and abstract level[52]. This, with the assumptions enumerated above, leads us to the conclusion that they subscribe to abstract universalism.

1.3.1.5: The Influence of Modernization on Development Practice in Africa

The influence of the concept and theories of modernization on the planning and implementation of development strategies in Africa lasted till about the mid-1960s, and was characterized by two related trends. The first was the investment, predominantly financed by private capital, in enhanced production of mineral, agricultural and forestry resources for American and European industries and economies[53]. In furtherance of their economistic agendas, many of the newly independent governments justified these investments on the grounds that they would help generate capital for an industrial foundation.

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[51] Huntington, S. 1976. "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics", in Cyril E Black (ed). *Comparative Modernization: A Reader.* NY: Free Press. pp 30-31
[52] So A. Y. 1990, *Social Change and Development,* op. cit. p. 35
[53] Nkrumah, K. 1966. *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, New York: International Publishers, p. 85.

The second trend involved the establishment of "large, shiny, capital-intensive projects incorporating the latest in foreign technology and sited where everybody could see them – which meant in or near cities[54]". This drive to industrialize was also fed by the economistic notion. Economic development was positively correlated with the degree of industrialization[55].

Nkrumah observes that the exploitation of Africa's primary products for export, often with the consent of African governments, gained tremendous momentum in the late 1950s and early 1960s[56]. Investments in agriculture were exemplified by the widespread plantations in the erstwhile French colonies. The exploitative tendency in agriculture involved the employment of cheap labour and purchase of land by the capitalists at nominal prices[57].

Exploitation of mineral resources was also a continent-wide phenomenon, but the most obtrusive examples of this occurred in Southern and Central Africa[58], with the tacit approval of the Bretton Woods institutions which served to ensure a stable fiscal regime in the host countries for the functioning of the exploitation.[59]. Another form of exploitation by these foreign capitalists, with the complicity of governments of the host states, was by way of tax remission for the investments and duty exemption for imported machinery[60].

However, the returns on the export of these primary products could not provide the capital anticipated for an industrial foundation. In fact the returns were even paltrier

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[54] Pearson, D. S. 1992. "Trends in planning for Growth and Development" in Aryeetey, E (ed) *Planning African Growth and Development*. Accra: ISSER and UNDP, p. 22.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Nkrumah, K. 1966, *Neocolonialism*, op. cit., p. 84
[57] Rodney, W. 1972. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* Abuja: Panaf, pp. 183–184. Rodney, among others, cites here the selling of 100, 000 acres of the best farmland in the Kenyan highlands to Lord Delamere at one penny an acre! There was also the acquisition by Firestone Rubber Company of U. S. A of one million acres of land in Liberia for a cost of six cents per acre!
[58] Especially in South Africa; South West Africa (Namibia); Angola; Mozambique; Northern Rhodesia (Zambia); Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe); and the Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo). See ibid, 182-183
[59] See footnote 117 below.
[60] Nkrumah, K. 1966, *Neocolonialism*, op. cit., p. 85 and p. 233

"when measured against the values that are added the moment the materials are placed on board the transportation carrier at the point of exit[61]". This is largely because, in consonance with its design, modernization led to the control and ownership of large portions of the economies of these countries by Western interests[62].

The application of modernization in Africa, therefore, provides strong indication of a new scramble for Africa which departs from the old imperialism (colonialism) only in form. The new imperialism does not seek political control of economies. Its main interest is to devise ways to assume direct control of a territory's natural resources and thereby accomplish the objectives achieved by colonialism[63]. Many newly independent African governments served as "policemen" for the new "imperialists"[64]; and the few African countries that dared to resist them were considered as subverting the process of modernization by stifling foreign investment and encroaching on expatriate rights[65].

1.3.1.6:   Critique of Modernization

The above considerations subject the modernization perspective to several criticisms. We will elaborate on a few here and consider others at the end of the chapter. One of these is its insistence on an exclusively "internal" explanation of the causes of Third World development, according to which the deficiencies of the economic, social and cultural patterns internal to the Third World countries account for their underdevelopment status.

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[61] Ibid., p. 236.
[62] According to the U. N Report E/CN.14/246 of 7th January 1964, over 50% of the national income of Congo; 33% of Gabon's and 40% of Liberia's went regularly to European residents and foreign firms.
[63] Kwame Nkrumah calls this Neo-colonialism.
[64] Nkrumah, K. 1966, *Neocolonialism,* op. cit., p. 86
[65] In May 1965, the government of Kwame Nkrumah made her first approach to the IMF for financial assistance. Later in the same year, assistance from the World Bank was also sought. The two institutions sent missions to Ghana, and officials prescribed non-inflationary borrowing and drastic reduction of government spending to levels that could be covered by government revenues. The Nkrumah government found these stipulations unacceptable, as acceptance would have amounted to curtailing the government's development programs which did not necessarily aim, at macro economic prudence but did raise the levels of medical and educational facilities; improve the road and rail network; construct Tema harbor and the township together with related industrial facilities; and built the Akosombo Dam. According to Rimmer (Rimmer, D. 1992. *Staying Poor: Ghana's political Economy 1950 – 1990*. Oxford: Pergamon, p. 120), Nkrumah's rejection of the institutions' pressures "shook foreign confidence in the Ghanaian economy."

The diversity of the experiences of Third World countries is lost in their aggregation into these patterns, which are simply residual categories that summarize ways in which the Third World is supposed to differ from the West. In this way, the historical experience of sub-Saharan Africa, especially of colonization and the unjust wars of conquest, are both denied and assimilated to the historical experience of the West. In view of these, the model of the Third World is very abstract, and that of the modern very skewed.

The question whether sub-Saharan Africa can follow the Western path to development stands in sharp relief. This is principally because of two reasons. First, the racist superiority complex that relegated its peoples to the Third World also defined and sustained the conceptions of development upheld by modernization. Secondly, the same complex underlay the "imperialist" ideology which prosecuted the slave trade and wrested control over sub-Saharan space by force of arms in the enterprise of colonialism[66]. Colonialism fostered an organizational structure that brought non-Western territory forcibly into the capitalist world. In this world, the potential for development of the colonized countries was curtailed since they were deprived of the structural capacity for autonomy and sustained economic growth[67]. Consequently, their developmental fate was essentially determined by the colonizing developed countries, which defined and sustained the conceptions of development upheld by modernization. Therefore, sub-Saharan Africa can justifiably repudiate the values underlying modernization.

In this connection, it has been argued that the historical processes that generate development in Western countries - particularly, the model of economic relationship established between the colonizing powers and the colonies - simultaneously generate underdevelopment in Third World countries[68]. This "development of underdevelopment" of Third World countries stems from the extraction and transfer of economic surplus [69].

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[66] Irele, A,1993, "Introduction", in Hountondi, P. J. *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. London, Hutchison & Co.
- See also Mudimbe, V. Y. 1988, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, Chapter 1
[67] Ibid., p 3
[68] Amin, S, 1974, *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment*, New York: Monthly Review Press. Also Rodney, W. 1972. op. cit.
[69] Frank, A. G., 1967, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, N. Y: Monthly Press Review

We conduct a fuller discussion of whether wealth creation necessarily generates poverty in section 1.4.1 and in Chapter Five. For now, suffice it to say that this feature of modernization underrates the immensity of the question of poverty to development.

The prescription to the developing world to move along the same trajectory as the West derives from centuries of ethnocentrism codified in the belief that European cultural knowledge and values are the best in the world[70]. This ethnocentric posture overlooked the possibility of an alternative pathway for Third World development. Such bias falls woefully short of the requirements of science, to which modernization appeals.

Another aspect of modernization open to criticism is its insistence on the need to eliminate traditional values on the road to development. As mentioned earlier, this insistence depends on the assumption that tradition and modernity are mutually exclusive. This is easily controverted at many levels. First, it needs to be stressed that tradition and modernity always coexist and nurture each other in every culture[71]. Secondly, the leaders of the West today admire and adopt the supposed values of "collective ascription" cherished by traditional societies[72]. Illustrations of this are found in Tony Blair's effusive adoption of the values of communalism during his press conference to explain the need for Britain to amend its immigration laws in the wake of the London bombings of July 7th 2005[73], as well as Hilary Clinton's views in her book "*It Takes a Village to Raise a Child*".

Again, it can be legitimately denied that traditional values are always obstacles to modernization. In fact, traditional values have promoted modernism in some instances. For instance, in the modernization of Japan, the Samurai's value of loyalty to the emperor was easily transformed to loyalty to the firm[74]. This helped to enhance workers'

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[70] Abiola Irele, 1993, "Introduction". op. cit. Also Mudimbe, V. Y. 1988. *Invention of Africa,* op. cit. Chapter 1

[71] Gyekye, K, 1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 252-263

[72] Ibid., 36 – 61.

[73] The Prime Minister was at pains, during a press conference aired on BBC, to explain to journalists why the British would not allow people who "are enjoying our hospitality" to undermine "our country, our values"

[74] Bella, R. N., 1957, *Tokugawa Religion*, Boston: Beacon, p. 187

productivity and to reduce the turn-over rate of employees in Japanese firms. Some of the above criticisms, a decade or so later, gave rise to the next dominant perspective on development, to which I now turn.

1.3.2: Dependency Theory and its Essential Claims

By the mid-1960s Dependency Theory[75] , which represents the first major shift from modernization in development conception and theory, was well formulated. In opposing the Ricardian-inspired claims that international specialization conferred benefits on Third World countries for exporting primary products to the European and American markets and receiving industrial goods in return, scholars within the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), particularly Raul Prebisch[76], held that this international division of labour was at the root of the developmental problems of the Third World[77]. This is because it bequeathed to the Third World the position of subordinate incorporation in the global economy polarized into a core and periphery, where the core is the developed world and the periphery the Third World. In the economies of the Third World structured by imperial interests, each sector represents either a residue of the historical process of the expansion of Western European capitalism or a present requirement of capitalism[78].

A number of interrelated factors accounts for the subordination of Third World economies. First, free trade with the developed world was unfair for the developing world because these worlds were unequal trading partners. The terms of trade between centers and peripheries have perpetually moved in favour of the center as the real prices of the goods for which peripheral countries have a comparative advantage (primary products) progressively depreciate relative to the price of manufactured goods. Secondly, the

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[75] The relation between two or more countries assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can expand and be self-starting while other ones (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion. See Dos Santos, T. 1971. "The Structure of Dependence", pp. 225-236 in Kan, K. T. and Hodges, D. C (ed) *Readings in U. S. Imperialism.* Boston: Extending Horizons, p. 227.
[76] Prebisch, R. 1950. *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems.* NY: United Nations
[77] So, A. Y. 1990, *Social Change and Development,* op. cit., p. 93
[78] Preston, P. W. 1997, *Development Theory,* op. cit., p. 184

capacity of the center to import from any number of locations within the global periphery pitted peripheral countries against each other and drove prices further down. Also, the major global sources of finance were controlled and regulated by Western capitalist countries. Such unfair conditions of trade were unlikely to result in development for peripheral countries. Accordingly, the development of peripheral countries called for a different set of policies than those envisaged by modernization theorists[79].

These policies must have as their goal a development typified by an *autocentic* economy. This is an economy generally characterized by being self-reliant[80]. For these theorists, therefore, the preferred route to development was import substitution industrialization behind protective tariff barriers as a means to meeting the needs of the domestic market[81]. Consequently, dependency theorists advocated active planning on the part of the state to ensure that economic surplus could be extracted from the agricultural sector and used to finance a modern industrial sector[82]. In doing so, these peripheral countries would slowly decrease their reliance on the core countries for their industrial needs. This would help the peripheral countries conserve foreign exchange over time and eventually enhance their economic positions.

The broad sweep of dependency theory analysis can be reduced to three key ideas. The first is the claim that the relationship amongst countries of the world is better conceived in terms of core/centers and peripheries. It therefore stresses the historical experience of countries in conceptualizing and analyzing development. The second key idea is the encouragement of the Third World to focus on import substitution industrialization. Thirdly, they prescribe an active role to governments in the planning and activation of their economies.

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[79] Frank, A. G., 1967, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, op. cit., p. 16
[80] Amin, S. 1976, *Unequal Development,* Sussex: Harvester Press
[81] Sikkink, K. 1997, "Development Ideas in Latin America: Paradigm Shift and the Economic Commission for Latin America" in Cooper, F and Packard R (eds), *International Development and the Social sciences: Essays on the Politics and History of Knowledge.* CA: University of California Press., pp. 1-44
[82] Bloomstrom, M and Hettne, B, 1984, *Development Theory in Transition: The Dependency Debate and Beyond-Third World Responses*, London: Zed*,* p. 41-42

1.3.3:   The Theoretical Heritage of Dependency Theory

1.3.3.1:   Structuralist Economics and the 'Prebisch Thesis'

One of the intellectual insights that fostered dependency theory was the 'Prebisch thesis'[83], which held that the global system was not a uniform marketplace with producers and suppliers freely making mutually beneficial contracts. The principal position against which Prebisch developed his views was Modernization's orthodox Ricardian-inspired theory that international specialization conferred benefits upon all participants. Against this, Prebisch held that a discernible and enduring pattern in the global economic system is divided into powerful central economies and relatively weak peripheral ones. This pattern consigned Third World economies to a secondary and relatively declining position as primary product exporters, and Third World underdevelopment is to be found in these historically generated patterns of economic activity which form their structural circumstances within the global industrial capitalist system.

Prebisch points out a few consequences of this polarization of economies. The first is that the terms of trade between the central and peripheral economies progressively moves against the latter, as primary products fall relative to manufactured ones. This significantly weakens the periphery, as its capacity to finance imports is reduced. On the one hand, the center is better enabled to import independently of its exchanges with the periphery, as poor peripheral countries compete among themselves for trade with the center. Added to these is the sharp fluctuation in the prices, determined by the center, of raw materials. This further weakens peripheral countries as they cannot rely on a steady stream of income. This erratic earning is exacerbated by the fact that the major global sources of finance are controlled and regulated by the capitalist countries of the center, making it difficult for the poor countries of the periphery to have economically viable

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[83] Developed principally in Prebisch, R., 1950, *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems,* NY: United Nations.

access to loans and investments. The main prescription of Prebisch to this subordinate incorporation of the Third World into the global economy is a focus on industrialization as a means to catching up and joining in with the core economies[84].

1.3.3.2: Marxism

Dependency Theory also sought theoretical aspirations from Marxism[85], from which it derived the thesis that development emerges from conflicts, notably those stemming from changes in the material conditions of life[86]. Since imperialism, furthered by Euro/American bourgeoisie capitalism, is at the core of Third World under-development, a socialist revolution is necessary: "development [in the Third World] requires the profound alteration of the economic, social and political relationships in the overthrow of the market and the mobilization of domestic populations in a nationally oriented effort [towards] the creation of a socialist context for development[87]".

This is significant, in the light of the view of some commentators on development theories, indicated in section 1.1, that the government of the USA financed the forging of Modernization theory mainly to promote the liberal capitalist system in the Third World and to halt the spread of communism because it recognized the appeal of communism to the newly independent states of the world (or for the indigenous political elite agitating for independence in colonized countries).

1.3.4: Common Assumptions of Dependency Theory

Like the modernization school, members of the dependency school tend to share certain basic assumptions and methodology. We wish to highlight two of these. First, dependency theorists present two methodologically inconsistent approaches. One of these

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[84] This presentation of the 'Prebisch Thesis', is a distilled version of its discussion by Preston in his work (1997, *Development Theory*, op. cit.) pp 181-186
[85] So, A. Y. 1990, *Social Change and Development,* op. cit., p. 95
[86] Dos, Santos, T, 1973, "The Crisis of Development Theory and the Problem of Dependence in Latin America" in Bernstein, H (ed), *Underdevelopment and Development*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 64
[87] Chilcote, R and Edelstein, J. 1974. *Latin America: The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond.* New York: John Wiley

tends to generalize the condition of dependency, which creates the impression of downplaying national variations and historical complexities in the construction of the concept of dependency and underdevelopment in the Third World. In apparent contrast to this is the theory's structuralist emphasis on the historical linkages between the capitalist West and the Third World. This emphasis generates another assumption, that dependency is a condition that results from externally imposed factors, prominent among which are the legacy of colonialism and the unequal international division of labour. This latter emphasis accords with our concrete universalist stance. However, its involvement in economism weakens this merit and highlights, rather, its generalizing tendency.

The second strand in dependency theory is its economism. As stated above, dependency is analyzed mostly as an economic condition which arises from the flow of economic surplus from the Third World to western capitalist countries. This economistic outlook derives from Marx's contention that the economic structure is the basic structure of a society by which all other structures (the super structure) are sustained[88]. For these theorists, therefore, all other dimensions of dependency, such as political, social and cultural dependency, are contingent upon economic dependency. The taking of such a position weakens the theory in as much as it erodes the merit of providing a historical account of the origins of under-development.

1.3.5: Criticisms of Dependency Theory

Dependency theory also commits the fallacy of composition by equating economic development with development. This is partly because it deems import substitution industrialization as a key pathway to development. Secondly, its core/periphery dichotomy serves merely to analyze the structure of economic relationships between the developed and the Third Worlds. This economistic orientation is in consonance with its Marxist underpinnings, since a central claim of Marx's materialist conception of history is that the laws of history are economic in nature. Consequently, 'the mode of production

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[88] Marx, K,1963, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy,* T. B. Bottomore and M. Rubel (eds), London: Penguin , pp. 67-70

of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life"[89].

Another feature of the theory exposed to criticism is its uni-directionality. This is also inspired by Marx, who employed evolutionary theory in describing social change. According to Marx, societies move through four distinct phases: the Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and bourgeois phases; and that transition to a subsequent phase is inevitable when the conditions for it are fulfilled[90]. As we mentioned in section 1.1.4, the process of social change need not be linear. The Eurocentrism of Dependency theory is easily gathered from Marx's description of the phases of social change. The most advanced phases corresponded to European experiences, and Africa was outside of the historical processes of change.

1.3.6: The Influence of Dependency Theory on African Development Practice

The doctrine of African Socialism and its attendant development strategies[91] can be strongly associated with the Dependency School. Prominent among African leaders who advocated it are Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria, Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia[92]. Due to the constraints of space, I limit myself to the theoretical and practical espousal of this doctrine by Nkrumah and Nyerere, and shall consider these as fair representation of the group.

1.3.6.1: Nkrumah's Communalism and Development Preoccupations

Nkrumah's latest and sustained pronouncement on the doctrine occurs in his "African Socialism Revisited"[93]. In this he claims that the doctrine merely reflects the concrete

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[89] Ibid, 111-112
[90] Ibid., p. 68
[91] Such as those of Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere
[92] Gyekye, K. 1998. *Tradition and Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 5
[93] Nkrumah, K. 1967. "African Socialism Revisited", in *Africa: National and Social Revolution.* Prague: Peace and Socialism Publishers

forms that socialism might assume in Africa. The aim of African socialists is to remold African society in such a manner that the quintessence of the humanist purposes of traditional African societies is reenacted in modern society. The doctrine urges humane development:

> Consequently, socialism in Africa introduces a new social synthesis in which modern technology is reconciled with human values, in which the advanced technical society is realized without the staggering social malefactions and deep schisms of capitalist society[94].

According to him, the view that traditional African society was classless cannot be attributed to African socialism. Neither can the doctrine be based on a metaphysics of knowledge that disdains the rational and critical capacities of traditional Africa[95]. However, the basic organization of African societies in different periods of history manifested communalism. Humanism founded on egalitarianism, was the philosophy underlying this communalism. This philosophy aimed at the reconciliation of the individual's aspirations with group welfare. Consequently, African socialists share two postulates. The first is that each human being is an end in him/herself, not a means; and second, that it is necessary to guarantee each human being equal opportunities for his/her development. This permits an intuitive connection between socialism and communalism because "in socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expression in a modern setting"[96]. It would seem therefore that for Nkrumah, the theoretical ancestor of "scientific socialism" (or Marxism) is communalism.

Nkrumah's 'communalism' is the conceptual equivalent of 'communitarianism' which is a theory of social organization that has been formulated variously by its adherents. There is consensus amongst a number of African philosophers that the communitarian

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[94] Ibid., p. 2
[95] as for example Leopold Senghor's claim that acquiring knowledge by intuition is negro-African whereas the acquisition of knowledge by reason is Hellenic
[96] Ibid., p. 7

ethic underlies social organizational principles and practices in the indigenous African setting[97].

Underlying this ethic is the ontology of the human being as an integral part of the community. The individual person is conceived, ontologically, as an integral and inalienable strand in the social fabric. Therefore, there is a demand on social organizational principles, structures and practices to give weight to the claims of society in its relationship with the individual. The communitarian ethic is expressed in the Akan language by the maxim: "*yewo nnipa a yewo no to kurom*"[98]; and in Sotho as "*motho ke motho ka batho*". Underlying this conception of the relationship between the individual and community is the view that the individual's participation in society cannot be optional. The need of community is an essential attribute of human being-ness.

As a natural part of community, an individual has a natural relation to other members of the community. As such, one must pay regard to the role that one's life may play in the welfare and interests of others. Thus the Akan will say of an individual whose conduct lacks compassion, generosity or concern for others, that "*onye nnipa!*[99]". Societies that adhere to communalism tend, therefore, to seek the cooperation of human beings rather than conflict, and consensus in the making and implementation of decisions rather than dispute[100].

Nkrumah's communalism, thus, led him to socialism. In practicing this, his development programs were geared basically towards diversification of the Ghanaian economy through import substitution industrialization. This was to be achieved by the active participation of the state in economic planning in a socialist framework. These programs

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[97] Some of these are: Ajei, M. O. 2001, *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Good Governance in Ghana: The Traditional Akan Socio-political Example*, Accra: Institute of Economic Affairs, p. 19;
- Bujo, B., 1998, *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, Nganda, C. N. (trans), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, Chapters 1-4;
- Gyekye, K, 1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, op. cit. Chapter 2;
- Ramose, M. B., 2002, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu,* op. cit., 103-117;
- Wiredu, K., 1997. "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity". Pp. 301-312 in Eze, E. C. (ed), *Post Colonial African Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
[98] A human being is born into a human community.
[99] He or she is "not a person". This does not mean that the rights of this person as a human being in the community are lost. It simply means that the person ceases to be worthy of respect and adoration because he/she ceases to be a morally worthy person!
[100] Wiredu, K., 1997. "Democracy and Consensus", op. cit., pp. 306-308

did not necessarily have as their sole aim macroeconomic prudence. In fact, they did raise the levels of medical and educational facilities; improve the road and rail network; construct Tema harbor and the township together with related industrial facilities; and built the Akosombo dam to generate power to primarily cater for industry[101].

Further, Nkrumah was generally noted to be opposed to capitalist ideas and ventures. Writing in 1973, he noted that "individuals who can command capital use their money not in productive endeavour but by the purchase and re-sale at high prices, of such commodities…which are in demand by the people. This type of business serves no social purpose and steps will be taken to see [to it] that our banking resources are not used to provide credit for this type of business[102]" Another important aspect of Nkrumah's development strategy was the liberation struggle against colonialism and neocolonialism. This is exemplified, practically, by his prominent role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity, and theoretically by his authorship[103].

1.3.6.2: Nyerere's *Ujamaa*

Nyerere's African socialism was guided by three main principles: equality and respect for human dignity, sharing of the resources which are produced by the efforts of all, and work by everyone in an agriculturally based economy, and exploitation by none[104]. This was sustained by the notion of "family-hood", which conveys the same denotations as communalism does. For Nyerere, *Ujamaa*, as the practical expression of the doctrine of African socialism, means first and foremost the building of society on the traditional African value of family-hood. An African need not convert to socialism or to European

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[101] Frimpong-Ansah, J. A. 1991. *The Vampire State in Africa: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana. London: James Currey.*
[102] Nkrumah, K. 1973. *The Revolutionary Path.* New York: International Publishers.
[103] Nkrumah authored fifteen books, all of which are related to Africa's (and the 'Third World's') struggles against Western domination. These are: *Africa Must Unite, Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah, Class Struggle in Africa, Consciencism, Dark days in Ghana, Ghana (autobiography), Handbook of Revolutionary Welfare, I speak of Freedom, Neo-colonialism, Revolutionary Path, Rhodesia File, The Struggle Continues, Voice from Conakry*, *What I mean by Positive Action* and *The Challenge of the Congo*
[104] *Arusha Declaration.* Part 1 (a – i) and part 2 (a)

conceptions of democracy, since her own traditional experience is socialist and democratic:

> The true African socialist does not look on one class of men as his brethren and another as his natural enemies. He does not form an alliance with the 'brethren' for the extermination of the 'non-brethren'. He regards all men as his brethren – as members of his ever-extending family. *Ujamaa*, then, or 'familihood' describes our socialism[105].

Ujamaa, then, rejects both capitalism and Marxism. Capitalism is rejected because it seeks to build society on the basis of exploitation of man by man, and Marxism because it seeks to build society on the philosophy of inevitable conflict between men.

The Arusha Declaration demanded true commitment to self-reliance in Tanzania's development process, and its implementation de-emphasized industrial development and centered on the concept of '*ujamaa*'. The ethics of *ujamaa* prescribed cooperating for the common good instead of competing for individual private gain. Allied to this was also a rejection of material wealth for its own sake. The pursuit of individual or collective wealth must be abandoned if it clashes with human dignity and social equity.

Nkrumah's communalist thrust and Nyerere's ethic of cooperating for the common good are two sides of the same coin of "the humanist essence of our [ie. African] culture"[106]. The point of departure for this humanism is abhorrence of unbridled capitalism as well as subscription to the communalist ethic which, as discussed above, prioritizes human dignity. Accordingly, it recognizes and reinforces the "other-ness" of other individuals. This is in sharp contrast to the economistic doctrines driven by the ethic of competition. The communalist ethic is incongruent with capitalist competition because in competition, human life is instrumentalized, as the "other" becomes an entity that stands in the way of, or serves as a tool for, the achievement of "my" goals[107]. The communalist ethic, then, would seem to be pivotal for the struggle against poverty, as we shall see in Chapters Four and Five.

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[105] Nyerere, J. 1968. *Ujamaa. Essays on Socialism.* London: Oxford University Press, p. 27
[106] Wiredu, K., 1980, *Philosophy and an African Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 21
[107] Arnsperger, C., 1996, *Competition, Consumerism and the "Other", A philosophical Investigation into the Ethics of Economic Competition*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut de Reserches Economiques, p. 11

African humanists adhered to some of the prescriptions of dependency theory in their conceptions and practice of development. Thus they upheld the imperative of the state determining socio-economic development through ownership and control of central sectors of the economy; and self-sufficiency was a prominent goal of their development strategies. However, from the perspective of their subscription to indigenous African philosophical thought, they depart substantially from the economistic and Marxist thrusts of dependency theory.

Notwithstanding this, it is of critical importance for us to note the distinction between humanism and humaneness, and our subscription to the latter and rejection of the former. In our preference we follow Ramose in his adoption of the rheomode, the philosophical language of ubuntu, which he conceives as "a critique of a thought and language structure which assumes and imposes a strict and a necessary sequence in terms of subject-verb-object. It is an appeal for the understanding of entities as dimensions, forms and modes of the incessant flow of simultaneously multi-directional motion"[108]. The rheomode therefore acknowledges be-ing rather than 'be'. By so doing, it negates the fixation of be-ing and introduces motion and dynamism into the nature of reality. Hence its adoption implies rejecting the impression given by the –ism suffice, that verbs and nouns must "function as fixations to ideas and practices which are somewhat dogmatic and hence unchangeable"[109]. We will consider these issues fully in section 4.2.3 below.

1.4:   The Neo-Liberal Perspective and its Basic Claims

Since the 1980's, a new perspective evolved from the work of the neo-liberal theorists. This has been characterized as a counter-revolution whose aim has been to undermine and replace earlier orthodox notions of Third World development[110]. These theorists have argued that the 'Third World' only exists as a figment of the guilty imagination of First

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[108] Ramose, M. B., 2002, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu, op. cit.,* p. 45
[109] Ibid., p. 42
[110] Toye, J. 1987, *Dilemmas of Development.* Oxford: Blackwell

World scholars and politicians[111]. This could constitute one of the reasons for classifying this school as counter-revolutionary.

Neo-liberalist theorists reaffirmed economic liberalism with its central role for the free market[112]. Their central claim is that the free-market capitalist system is maximally effective in producing and equitably distributing the economic, social, political and intellectual necessities of life in a developed society. The free market comprises of atomistic rational individuals who know their needs and wants and who contract with other individuals through the mechanism of the marketplace to satisfy those needs and wants. Based on classical methodological individualist notions, neo-liberal theorists argue that these needs and wants motivate self-interested actions. Consequently, self-interested individuals active on a free market within and beyond their national boundaries become the most competent agents of development because the free market is able to enhance their economic status and that of their nations as a whole.

The state must therefore retreat from management of the economy. Its legitimate role is only to provide a basic legal and security system to underpin the individual contractual pursuit of private goals. According to this school, this model represents the essential character of all human economic activity in society[113].

Two major policy measures were advocated in furtherance of the retreat of the state. The first concerns reducing the state's role in the economy. To achieve this deregulation and privatization of state assets were prescribed. This required the liberalization of the market typified by reduction in government planning and regulation of economy, and the abolition of tariff regimes, a more hospitable approach to foreign investment regulations and curbing of trade unions[114]. The second measure was the achievement of

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[111] Preston, P. W. 1997, *Development Theory,* op. cit., p. 260
[112] Friedman, M. 1962. *Capitalism and Freedom*, Chicago: University of Chicago.
- See also Bauer, P. T. 1981. *Equality, The Third World and Economic Delusion.* London: Wiedenfeld and Nicholson.
- Also Lal, D. 1983. *The Poverty of Development Economics.* London: Institute of Economic Affairs
[113] Preston, P. W. 1997, *Development Theory,* op. cit., p. 256
[114] Stallings, B. (ed). 1995. *Global Change, Regional response: The New International Context of Development.* Stallings, B. (ed). NY: Cambridge University., p. 12

macroeconomic stability. This required a state reducing its fiscal deficits, and this could be done by the abolition of various subsidies, restriction of government spending especially on social services.

1.4.1: Theoretical Heritage and Context

In the 1970s the U. S National Bureau of Economic research (NBER) published a variety of studies on the advantages of economic liberalism. Key among these was that of Anne Krueger, which concluded that countries that did not achieve success with liberalization were the ones that had excessive state intervention[115].

The presence of neo-liberal economists in strategic positions in international financial institutions also helped cement the advent of the counterturn in development theory. Three of the scholars associated with neo-liberal orthodoxy (Bela Balassa, Anne Krueger and Deepak Lal) held senior level positions at the World Bank.

The World Bank's 1981 publication entitled *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, spelled out the Bank's neo-liberal orientation and influence of development practice in Africa. According to this publication, the root causes of Africa's development problems are wrong domestic policies leading to overvalued exchange rates, price controls, industrial protectionism, poor investment choices, and excessive state intervention in the economy[116]. This publication provided the framework for structural adjustment programs, typified as conditionality for assisting African economies by the World Bank and IMF in the 1980s[117].

In addition to these works, a variety of events contributed to strengthening the hold of neo-liberalism on development theory and practice. The first of these was the election of

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[115] Krueger, A. 1978. *Foreign Trade Regimes and Economic Development: Liberalization Attempts and Consequences.* Cambridge, Mass: Ballinger Publishing for National Bureau of Economic Research
[116] Colclough, C. 1991. "Structuralism versus Neo-Liberalism: An Introduction", in Colclough, C and Manor, J. (ed) , *States or Markets?: Neo-liberalism and Development Policy Debate.* Oxford: Clarendon Press., p. 22
[117] Preston, P. W, 1997, *Development Theory,* op. cit., p. 255

Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. With their ascendancy to power, "an extensive vocabulary of legitimating [capitalism] was developed, and free enterprise was equated with free economies, which were equated with the Free West, which in turn was equated with freedom"[118]. According to Presby, the ideology behind the thoughts and actions of the Reagan-Thatcher economists is provided by philosophers of capitalism like Ayn Rand and Garreth Hardin, who suggest that "the poor must rather starve and die than become perennial charity cases for those who are rich"[119]. The philosophy of capitalism then espouses an extreme methodological individualism that amounts to defending selfishness as a virtue.

As discussed in sections iii in the previous chapter and 1.3.1.1, competition is a core feature of capitalism in that it drives the market upon which the structure of capitalism rests. In his analysis of the ethics of competition, Arnsperger compares competition with warfare and "victory" with "murder". This is because

> " pushing the other aside as I would a material obstacle as part of the "totality" which obstructs my passage is, ontologically speaking, a form of killing, even if biological life is not in all cases threatened. In a metaphorical sense, firms can "kill" one another on a market; customers can "kill" a firm by arbitrating away from it in favour of another firm; and people can "kill" one another in competing for jobs or positions. In a much more literal sense, a firm can kill people if it decides to relocate and to move from one country to another almost overnight, leaving all its former employees with the choice between being jobless and uprooting their current way of life by moving"[120]

Thus competition implies rivalry that makes human beings mere tools in the quest for the self interest of the competitor. In this quest the taking of life and of human dignity are justified if it will result in 'victory'. As such, this methodological individualism can

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[118] Ibid, p. 252

[119] Presby, G. M. 2002. "African Philosophers on Global Wealth Redistribution" pp 283-300 in Presby, G., Smith, D., Abuya, P. & Nyarwath, O (eds) *Thought and Practice in African Philosophy*. Nairobi: Konrad Adenaurer Foundation., p. 286

[120] Arnsperger, C., 1996, *Competition, Consumerism and the "Other"*, op. cit., pp12-13

hardly be ethically justifiable. Yet the realm of development is the realm of the ethical[121]. For this reason, a development paradigm epitomized by an economic system based on the principle of killing other human beings cannot be desirable for Africa's development. Hence the need to resort to indigenous African knowledge and values, with particular reference to the ethics of humaneness, that enjoins solidarity and mutual aid. We will return to this in Chapters Four and Five.

Second, was the uneven performance of import substitution industrialization policies in both Latin America and Africa. By the early 1980s, most of these countries were plagued with debt and foreign exchange crises[122]. The experience of these two continents stood in sharp contrast to that of the four East Asian "tigers" (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea) that followed a model which was at the time misleadingly interpreted as liberal in orientation[123].

1.4.2: Shared Assumptions

A number of interlinked assumptions are made by adherents to this school. Economically, the assumption is that as free markets act efficiently to distribute knowledge and resources in the economic system, human welfare will be maximized. Bound to this is the claim that as action and responsibility for action reside with the individual, liberal social systems will ensure that moral worth is maximized. Further, as liberalism offers a balanced solution to problems of deploying, distributing and controlling power, liberal polities will ensure that political freedom is maximized. In short, liberal capitalism is a

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[121] Ramose, M. B. 2004. "Poverty: A Creature of Politics and a Question of Justice". In *International Journal of Humanistic Studies*. Vol. 3, pp 36 – 53. This is one of Ramose's conclusions to this paper. We discuss the relevance of this to our thesis in Chapter six below.

[122] World Bank. 1981, *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action,* Washington D. C.: World Bank

[123] Earlier accounts of the success of the East Asian tigers stressed how they had shunned state intervention in favour of an export driven economy which envisaged the whole globe as a potential market. In the early 1990s, revisionist work by such scholars as Robert Wade (1990: *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press) showed that the economic success of these countries resulted from a combination of export orientation and state intervention.

necessary condition of political freedom[124]. This is because the separation of economic power from political power would enable the former to act as a check on the overbearing tendencies of the latter. Finally, there is the assumption that these economic, social and political packages are grounded in positive scientific knowledge, which maximized knowledge production and dissemination.

The economic assumption is refuted by the failure of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), to reduce poverty in Africa. These programmes emerged in the early 1980s as strategies which countries must follow in order to either qualify for World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans or receive concessions on repaying older debts owed to commercial banks, Western governments and the World Bank. Although meant to correct economic imbalances, some commentators have argued that these adjustment policies "made absolutely no economic sense"[125]. One main reason for this is that the conditions of the majority of the population in implementing countries were in fact better before the programmes than afterwards[126].

With regard to the second assumption, our discussion of Ansperger's critique of competition sufficiently indicates that the methodological individualism of liberal social systems diminishes rather than maximizes moral worth. Deep-seated doubts attend to the assumption that liberal systems maximize political freedom in view of the claims of Deepak Lal and the World Bank and IMF's silence on it[127]. Finally, the connection between scientific knowledge and the maximization of knowledge production and dissemination is overstated. If this connection were authentic, the least knowledgeable person in the positivistic liberal system will have more knowledge than the most knowledgeable person in societies which uphold other conceptions of science. But such a

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[124] See Friedman, M. 1962, *Capitalism and Freedom,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
[125] Abudu, A. O., 2000, "Counterproductive Socio-Economic Management in Ghana", in Lauer, H (ed.), *Ghana: Changing Values Changing Technologies: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, II* Washington D. C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, p. 93
[126] See Ninsin, K., 1991, "The Impact of the PNDCs Economic Reform Policies on Ghanaian Society and Politics 1983 – 88" in *Legon Journal of Humanities*, Vol 5.
- Also Abudu, A. O, 2000, "Counterproductive Socio-Economic Management in Ghana" op. cit., p. 93
[127] See section 3.4.3.2 for a discussion of these claims.

claim can only amount to a vulgar statement of Western epistemological ethnocentrism[128] founded in Aristotle's conception of the rational[129].

1.4.3: Influence on African Development Plans and Practices:

In this section we examine five development strategies and plans that draw inspiration from the neo-liberal school. These can be classified into two types. The first comprises plans formulated by African leaders by consensus and meant to have a continent-wide application. The second type consists of strategies supposedly[130] initiated and driven by individual countries but in truth prescribed by the IMF and World Bank. Those of the latter type that will be examined here are the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSs).

1.4.3.1: Common Approaches to Africa's Development

Besides the advocacy of African intellectuals such as Kwame Nkrumah[131] and Cheik Anta Diop[132], concrete and practical steps for a common approach to Africa's development can be gleaned from the infancy of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The first conference of the Heads of State of independent Africa, held in May 22-25 1963, adopted a resolution called Areas of Cooperation in Economic Problems. Consequently, a committee was established to "study the ideas of a common tariff system, to protect Africa's infant industries, [set up] a commodities stabilization fund,

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[128] Mudimbe uses this term to describe the European belief that scientifically, there is nothing to learn from "them" unless it is already "ours" or comes from "us". See Mudimbe, V. Y. , 1988, *Invention of Africa,* op. cit. p 15.

[129] This refers to the particularization of Aristotle's definition of "man" as a rational animal. This universalist definition was particularized to refer only to Western "man", who then assumed both primacy and superiority in the right to reason. Accordingly, the use of reason of the African, Asian and Australasian was doubted. This position has been disproved by Ramose, M. B. 2002. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit. p. 1-2; 6-7

[130] See a discussion of the World Bank and IMFs influence in SAPs and PRSs at section 2.4.3.3

[131] Nkrumah, K., 1998, *Africa Must Unite*, London: Panaf Books. This is the central thesis of this book.

[132] See Diop, C. A., 1987, *Black Africa: The Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State*, Salemson, H. J.(trans), Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books

[work towards] the restructuring of international trade in Africa's favour, and the harmonization of African development strategies"[133].

The economistic perspective of development implicit in this view is unambiguous, and yet it forms the kernel from which subsequent continental perspectives on Africa's development evolves. Ake points out that the continuity of this perspective is evident in documents such as The African Declaration on Cooperation, Development, and Economic Independence[134], adopted by the OAU Assembly of Heads of States and Governments in 1973, The Revised Framework of Principles for the implementation of the New International Economic Order in Africa, adopted by the OAU Heads of States in 1977; The Monrovia Declaration of Commitment of the Heads of States and Governments of the Organization of African Unity on Guidelines and Measures for National and Collective Self-Reliance in Social and Economic Development for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, also adopted by the OAU Heads of States and Governments in 1979.

1.4.3.2:   The Lagos Plan of Action

Such was the trend of the OAU's thinking on development that culminated in The Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa (henceforth to be referred to as "The Plan"). It was adopted by an Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in April 1980 and, before the adoption of New Partnership for Africa's Development[135], is rightfully considered " the most comprehensive and systematic statement of the Vision of Africa's leaders on the development of Africa"[136].

Although The Plan stemmed from the conviction of African leaders that Africa's poor development record resulted from the inadequacy of exogenous development strategies, it

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[133] Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development,* Ibadan: Spectrum Books, p. 21
[134] Also referred to as "The Addis Ababa Declaration"
[135] See section 1.4.3.5
[136] Ake, C. 2001, *Democracy and Development,* op. cit., p 22

nevertheless has a distinctively economistic orientation, and this is sufficiently captured in the preamble:

> "Indeed, rather than result in an improvement in the economic situation of the continent, successive strategies have made it stagnate and become more susceptible than other regions to the economic and social crisis suffered by the industrialized countries. Thus Africa is unable to point to any significant growth rate, or satisfactory index of general well-being, in the past 20 years. Faced with this situation, and determined to undertake measures for the basic *restructuring of the economic base* of our continent, we resolved to adopt a far-reaching regional approach based primarily on collective self-reliance"[137].

Thus two principles underlay the plan: self-reliance and self-sustaining development, but these were to predominantly, if not exclusively, serve the restructuring of African economies. The Plan considered Africa to have virtually rid itself of political domination. What remained to be sought after was economic liberation, and this could be achieved by "exploiting the strength inherent in our economic unity"[138]. To this end, certain basic guidelines needed to be adopted. These included:

a) Changing Africa's almost total reliance on the export of raw materials. This required Africa mapping out its own strategy for development and vigorously pursuing this[139].

b) Africa cultivating the virtue of self-reliance. "This is not to say that the continent should totally cut itself off from outside contributions. However, these outside contributions should only supplement our own effort: they should not be the mainstay of our development[140]"

c) working towards African economic integration, which would serve as the framework within which continent-wide economic co-operation for development, based on collective self-reliance, would be pursued[141].

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[137] OAU, 1980, *The Lagos Plan of Action.* Addis Ababa: OAU, p. 1. Emphasis is mine
[138] Ibid., p. 6
[139] Ibid., 7
[140] Ibid., 7
[141] Ibid., 7

In view of these, three features of the plan deserve commentary. First, is its blend of the ideas of dependency theory and neo-liberalism. The aspiration to transcend the status of perpetual raw material supplier on the international market and become self-sufficient is clearly derived from Dependency Theory which, as discussed in section 1.3.2, prescribes an *autocentric* economy as the way out of poverty for developing countries. However, the call for convergence of African economies adumbrates key tenets of the neo-liberalist perspective, which was emerging at the time of the plan's formulation. In fact, one of the key objectives of the Plan was to facilitate the setting up, by the year 2000, of an African Economic Community which shall aim to promote collective, accelerated, self-reliant and self-sustaining development of Member States; co-operation among these States; and their integration in the economic, social and cultural fields[142]. To achieve this ultimate objective, the implementation strategies specified for both the 1980s and the 1990s by the document advocated harmonization of economic and development plans at various levels in the continent[143].

Next is the prominence it purports to give to African cultural values in the planning of development. The guidelines quoted above were meant to steer the achievement of certain objectives[144] two of which were:

1. ensure that African development policies reflect adequately indigenous socio-cultural values in order to reinforce our cultural identity; and

2. take into account the dimension of the future in the elaboration of development plans including studies and measures aimed at achieving a rapid socio-economic transformation of African States.

What is striking about these aims is that the document never mentions indigenous socio-cultural values again after the statement of these objectives. Yet one would have expected this insight to be re-iterated and elaborated in a "Plan of Action" which essentially is a

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[142] Ibid., 99
[143] Ibid., 99-100
[144] The OAU, 1980, *Lagos Plan,* op cit., pp 4 - 5

strategy for development. This failure raises the question whether the authors of the document really believed in what they preached.

The third feature worth attention is the document's realization of the need for Africa to map out its own strategy for development. Guidelines (b) and (c) as well the two aims above sufficiently state this. However, shortly after these guidelines, the document unveils its main object, which was "….to be devoted to the economic problems of our continent [ie. Africa][145]". This, and the fact that the plan basically plans towards an African Common Market, sufficiently displays its economistic intent and spirit. It is indeed difficult to reconcile this spirit with any serious wish for Africa's self-reliance. This is because although The Lagos Plan of Action echoes some of the insights of Kwame Nkrumah and Cheik Anta Diop regarding Africa's development, which we endorse, significant differences exist at the levels of both insight and approach between these authors and the Plan, and we believe this spells a great weakness of the Plan.

For Diop, there is an urgent need for an African renaissance, led by the African intellectual. What this entails is the concurrent recovery of political sovereignty, economic sovereignty and psychic autonomy[146]. An essential task of this renaissance is for Africa to re-establish connections with the intellectual products of its past and integrate these into modern thought for the movement into its future of self-development. Toward this, Diop prescribes a two-fold exigency. First is the need to demonstrate what is common to African civilization, and this is its common heritage in Ancient Egypt. According to him, "without a systematic reference to Egypt there can be no true cultural renaissance in Africa"[147].

The second arm of Diop's twin exigency is that Africa should draw from this common intellectual heritage, guided by notions of what is useful and effective, to construct a Federal States of Africa. Thus, in his view

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[145] Ibid., p 5
[146] . Diop, C. A., 1987, *Black Africa,* op. cit., pp. 115-116
[147] Ibid.

"enlightened [Africa's] self-interest itself argues for the adoption, before late, of a federal system. …The upshot is that only a continent-wide or a subcontinent-wide federated state can offer a safe political and economic area, stable enough for a rational formula covering the development of our countries with their infinitely varied potentials to be put into effect"[148].

Because a federated state involves a real surrender of sovereignty, it is an irreversible structure which is the only viable vehicle for Africa's renaissance and authentic liberation. We will like to quote extensively from the argument supporting this conclusion, as it exemplifies the entire intellectual legacy of Diop on Africa's unity and development.

"Once again, we are putting the cart before the horse. We want to create regional economic organizations from which member states can draw maximum benefits, yet we refuse to relinquish even an inch of our respective national sovereignties. There is a serious contradiction here. My opinion is that all such regroupments are bound to fail. In the past, each attempt at regional economic regropument [in Africa] was short-lived. The reason they have failed and continues to fail is simple: the links uniting the parties to all such regional agreements have never been irrevocably binding; nor have the terms of economic cooperation ever been indissoluble"[149].

The point in contention is that economic and social development requires decisive political action. Therefore the structure of regional economic development requires an executive organ that is able to take political decisions that will bind all participating groups. Hence political unification, in the form of a federal political entity, must precede attempts at rational organization of Africa's economies.

We wish to highlight a few points flowing from Diop's position. First, it adopts a historical approach to the question of African development, which inherently counters the Eurocentism of Western philosophy that enthrones Western civilization at the apex of human development. Secondly, he projects a universal history of which Africa is an integral part and to which Africa has contributed. Thirdly, he insists a healthy sense of

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[148] Ibid., Foreword.
[149] Ibid. p 95

self-identity involves a reconstruction of history, and that Africa needs to undergo this reconstructive exercise. Finally, he highlights common features in the African cultural experience as, according to him, Africa "reveals a consistent cultural unity, resulting from similar adaptations to the same material and physical conditions of life"[150].

Although it is uncertain whether one of thee authors influenced the other, and if so who was the pioneer and who the adherent, as they are contemporaries who wrote at about the same period, the works of Kwame Nkrumah and Sheikh Anta Diop coincide at many points. As indicated in sections 1.3.5.1 and 1.3.5.2, Nkrumah considered communitarianism as a prominent feature of the African cultural past, and a causal ancestor of socialism. In *Consciencism*, he stressed the continuity of pre-colonial Africa into the present and the future. Further, he stressed that Africa's progress is contingent upon its total liberation from imperialism[151], and Africa's political unity is required to secure this liberation[152]. In fact in his mind, the urgency of such unity could not be understated: "There is no time to waste. We [Africans] must unite now or perish"[153]. These ideas were clearly matured in Nkrumah quite early in his political career, as evinced by his exhortation to Africans to "seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto thee"[154].

Both authors thus acknowledge the multifarious nature of Africa's developmental problems, confer a proper historical dimension to the development problems of Africa by highlighting the significance of Western injustice as their cause, advocate a more comprehensive approach than economic solutions to these problems and stress the exigency of constructing the African future on the intellectual products of its pre-colonial

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[150] Ibid. p 7
[151] Nkrumah, K, 2004, *Neo-colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London: Panaf, p. ix-xx, and pp. 255-259
[152] Nkrumah, K., 1998, *Africa Must Unite*, London: Panaf, p. 217
[153] Nkrumah, K, 1997, "We Must Unite Now or Perish", A Speech delivered at the First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government at Addis Ababa, 24th May 1963, In Obeng, S. (ed), *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah, Vol. 5,* Accra: Afram Publications
[154] Nkrumah reputedly uttered these words in a speech entitled "Poverty versus Plenty" on the campaign trail in Northern Ghana on March 6th 1949. A record of that speech is not known to be extant, but in his book *I Speak of Freedom*, London: Heinemann, 1961, p. 16, Nkrumah acknowledges this aphorism by claiming that "Economic freedom, I told them [i.e. the audience], would follow political freedom".

setting thereby highlighting the relevance of indigenous African knowledge and values in solving them. The thinking of both men has been given some substance of late, from two directions, at least. The first is through Julius Nyerere's plea to the new generation of African leaders to "work for unity with the firm conviction that without unity, there is no future for Africa"[155]; and the second is through the transmutation of the OAU into the AU in July 2002, and the decision by the 10th Ordinary Summit of the AU's Executive Council to accelerate discussion on an "African union government" and "African high command"[156]. We will have recourse to further discussion of the significance of this desire for a "union government" in Chapter Five.

What then are the differences between these authors and the Plan? First, the plan proclaims Africa's substantial political independence. This is something that both Nkrumah and Diop deny. Secondly, although both Nkrumah and Diop as well as the authors of the Plan believe that strength in 'unity' can propel Africa's development, Nkrumah and Diop advocate unity at a more comprehensive level than the economic unity exemplified by the establishment of a common market, which the Plan aims at. This narrow conception of unity, as well as the lack of faith in the Plan displays the relevance of indigenous knowledge and value systems for Africa's development.

1.4.3.3: Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs)

In 1981 the World Bank published *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action*, a report of a study requested by the African governors of the IMF and World Bank. According to this report, "the remedy for Africa's ailing economies lies in giving market forces freer play to bring about dynamism and efficiency"[157]. It is from this point of view that the report has been widely acknowledged as the conceptual genesis of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which emerged in the early 1980s as strategies which countries must follow in order to either qualify for World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans or receive concessions on repaying older debts

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[155] Quoted from New African, February 2006, No. 448, p 23
[156] The *New African* Magazine, March 2007, p. 12
[157] Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development*, op. cit., p. 24

owed to commercial banks, Western governments and the World Bank. Although SAPs are supposedly designed for individual countries, they promote the following invariant demands: devaluation of the country's currency against the dollar; lifting restrictions on imports and exports; balancing the national budget by reducing government spending on social services; encouraging countries to focus on the production and export of primary commodities; and removal of price controls and state subsidies[158]. The abstract universalist and Eurocentric orientations of these programmes are evinced by the fact that they pretend as if there is an infallible and immutable structure to which all economies must adjust[159].

The SAPs tended to encourage anti-democratic, anti-labor and other anti-poor governments, in that "effective adjustment in practice has required a strong, determined and a relatively autonomous state, whether democratic or not"[160]. Ghana in the 1980s provides a case in point. Here, the authoritarian political climate created by the PNDC has been strongly linked to the need to sustain the adopted SAP[161]. Pan-African opposition to the SAPs was vehemently expressed in The *Khartoum Declaration*, which totally rejected the SAPs for aggravating the human condition in Africa because they are "incomplete, mechanistic and of too short a time perspective"[162].

In spite of the documented negative effects of the adjustment programme on the poor in Africa, the Bank published, in 1989, *Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s,* a publication that was meant to demonstrate the soundness of SAPs[163]. In addition to this insensitivity to the plight of African leaders and people, the fact that the IMF and World Bank willingly connived with repressive regimes willing to do their bidding casts doubts

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[158] Preston, P. W., 1997, *Development Theory,* op. cit. p 259-260. See also
- Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development*, op. cit., p. 24, and
- www.whirledbank.org/development/sap.html
[159] Ramose, M. 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* op. cit. p. 4.
[160] Nelson, J. 1990. "Introduction". In Nelson, J (ed) *Economic Crisis and Policy Choice.*, pp. 9-10
[161] See Boafo-Arthur, K . 1999, "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) in Ghana: Interrogating PNDC's Implementation". *West Africa Review: 1.1.* also at www.icaap.org/iuicode?101.1.1.3.
- Also Ninsin, K, 1991, "The Impact of the PNDCs Economic Reform Policies..", op.cit.
[162] UNECA, 1988, *The Khartoum Declaration: International Conference on the "Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development",* Addis Ababa: UNECA, p. 21
[163] One central claim of the publication was that African economies improved with their commitment to adjustment reform.

on their commitment to democracy and poverty reduction. In fact, these repressive policies seem to have fallen directly in line with the position and thinking of high level operatives of these institutions. For instance, Deepak Lal, a World Bank economist is credited with the view that "courageous, ruthless and perhaps undemocratic government is required to ride roughshod over the newly created interest groups"[164]. Lal's position appears to be that a ruthless government, whether military or civilian, will secure the political preconditions needed for economic development through adjustment policies. Since this view was not disowned by The Bank and IMF, one is justified in concluding that Lal's position had their support.

1.4.3.4: Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSs)

Initiated by the IMF and World Bank in 1999, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are meant to provide the basis for Fund and Bank concessional lending and for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative[165]. They describe the macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs that a country will pursue over several years to promote broad-based economic growth and reduce poverty. They further indicate the country's external financing needs and project the sources for this. As of end-August 2005, 49 full PRSPs had been presented to the IMF Executive Board, whereas an additional 11 countries have completed preliminary, or "interim", PRSPs[166]. Of these, thirty two are African countries[167].

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[164] Quoted in Boafo-Arthur. 1999, "Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS) in Ghana..", op cit., p. 9
[165] The HIPC Initiative was first launched in 1996 by the IMF and World Bank as a comprehensive approach to debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries pursuing IMF- and World Bank-supported adjustment and reform programs. By year 2004, 38 countries had gone HIPC, of which 32 are from sub-Saharan Africa. Of these, the following countries had received approval for debt reduction by September 2006, according to the IMF (see http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/hipc.htm): Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
[166] IMF External Relations Department, at www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/prsp.htm
[167] These are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia. See http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp

Although these strategies are supposed to be country-owned, the framework that guides their formulation is largely derived from the World Bank's 'Economic and Sector Work'[168]. Further, the Bank and IMF staff has to sanction the strategy before it will be eligible for Bank or IMF funding. This is because in spite of the insistence by the Bank and IMF staff that a government can present whatever plan it wants, the Bank staff writes a "joint staff assessment" (JSA) which highlights areas of disagreement and perceived weaknesses in a government's PRS Paper presented to the Bank. A positive JSA indicates the judgement of the bank staff as to whether the PRSP is a 'credible' framework within which the World Bank and IMF will provide financial and other support. Without this, which forms the basis of the assessment of the World Bank's Board, the government in question will not get Bank or IMF funding and will be unlikely to get bilateral funding. Thus it is ultimately questionable to what extent a programme can be truly government or nationally owned. To this extent "there is a contradiction between the rhetoric on ownership and the request for WB/IMF Boards to endorse the PRSP[169]"

A consequence of this contradiction is that governments opt for programmes that they know will be accepted by the Fund and Bank even if these conflict with national interests and those of the poor. Both in theoretical orientation and assumptions, PRSs are new versions of SAPs. Even the Bank and the Fund have acknowledged that PRSPs "have not differed much from previous adjustment programmes as far as the core economic policies are concerned[170]".

The SAPs and PRSPs, are premised on the universal applicability of the basic theorems of neoclassical economics. Consequently, they prevent concrete analysis of historically specific interrelations in particular societies. Undoubtedly, this underlies the conclusion of a number of studies to the effect that crucial policy prescriptions within the PRSPs

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[168] The Bank either carries out these studies itself, or commissions them, in its client countries.
[169] Brettonwoodsproject. 2003. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: A Rough Guide. At www.brettonwoodsproject.org/topic/adjustment/PRSP, p 5
[170] Brettonwoodsproject. 2003, ibid, 6

may impair the ability of countries to effectively realize their goals of alleviating poverty and achieving economic growth[171].

1.4.3.5:   The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)

In October 2001, African Heads of State and Government meeting in Abuja endorsed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) the main development agenda for Africa presently[172]. NEPAD purports to constitute a 'partnership' at two levels. Firstly, it is a partnership of African countries with the governments and owners of capital in the Western world. Success at this trans-continental partnership is desirable for two reasons. First, it is envisaged that it would change the historical relationship between Africa and the West in order to dispense with the "dependency through aid" that underpins it[173]. Next, this type of partnership is desirable to the extent that it holds the prospect of generating "capital flows to Africa, as an essential component of a sustainable long-term approach to filling the resource gap"[174]. Secondly, NEPAD aspires to build a partnership among African countries principally for the purpose of implementing 'the Programme of Action'. This programme essentially seeks to derive maximum gain from the anticipated capital flows[175].

The NEPAD document diagnoses the challenge for Africa to be one of understanding the fact that development is a process of empowerment and self-reliance. Africans must not be wards of benevolent guardians; rather they must be the architects of their own sustained upliftment[176]. Consequently, NEPAD assumed the status of an "African-owned

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[171] See Nyamugasira, W and Rowden, N., 2002, "New Strategies Old Loan Conditions: Do the New IMF and World Bank Loans Support Countries' Poverty Reduction Strategies? The Case of Uganda" www.brettonwoodsproject.org/topic/adjustment/ugandaanalysis.pdf, p. 4
[172] The Africa Union has adopted NEPAD as its development plan. See The AU's The Strategic Plan at www.au.org.
[173] Paragraph 5
[174] Ibid. Paragraph 153
[175] Ibid. paragraphs 27, 47, 60
[176] 2001. The New Partnership for Africa's Development. Paragraph 27

and African-led development programme" and, on this basis, claimed difference from all previous initiatives and approaches to Africa's development[177].

The document recognizes that Africa's "malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world" stems from "centuries of unequal relations between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries"[178]. This relationship has occasioned "the credit and aid binomial" which underlies the logic of African underdevelopment[179]. Section V of the document then outlines a 'Programme of Action', for restoring the integrity of Africa in its relations with the world, and stipulates the objectives, goals and strategies for achieving these. The main objective of the programme is to enable the continent catch up with developed parts of the world[180]; and its goals are:

a) To achieve and sustain an average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of above 7 per cent per annum for the next 15 years;
b) To ensure that the continent achieves the agreed International Development Goals (IDGs)[181].

NEPAD is certainly a document open to many criticisms. First, for a document which claims to be African-owned and African-led, it is surprisingly oblivious of the role African culture can play towards development. Although it acknowledges "Africa's rich cultural legacy", the only role it assigns to this culture is that it "should serve both as a means of consolidating the pride of Africans in their own humanity and of confirming the

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[177] Ibid. paragraph 60
[178] Ibid. paragraph 8
[179] Ibid. paragraph 3
[180] Ibid. paragraph 65
[181] Ibid paragraph 68. The IDS are: (1) to reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015; (2) to enroll all children of school going age in primary school by 2015; (3) to make progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in the enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2015; (4) to reduce infant and child mortality ratios by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015; (5) to reduce maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015; (6) to provide access for all who need reproductive health services by 2015; (7) to implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015.

common humanity of the peoples of the world"[182]. Clearly, this is scarcely congruent with "a rich cultural legacy".

Secondly, the anticipated outcomes of its proposed strategies are economic growth, increased exports and enhanced competitiveness in the international economy, increased African integration, especially of economies, reduction in poverty and inequality. Now, except for the last, all these outcomes are related to economic growth. Therefore, it is legitimate to conclude that NEPAD is, principally committed to economic growth. If it claims the status of a development framework, therefore, then it can only be categorized as an economistic conception of development. This is surely in line with the programme's objective of enabling Africa to "catch up" with the developed world.

The theoretical underpinning of the programme is clearly neo-liberalism, whose policy prescriptions have repeatedly been shown not to work in Africa. Its neo-liberal orientation includes its endorsement of opening up African economies to external investors and securing the property rights of foreign capital. This is exhibited in some of the key responsibilities for which the signatories promised to undertake. These are:

(a) Restoring and maintaining macroeconomic stability, especially by developing appropriate standards and targets for fiscal and monetary policies, and introducing appropriate institutional frameworks to achieve these standards;

(b) Instituting transparent legal and regulatory frameworks for financial markets and auditing of private companies and the public sector;

(c) Promoting the development of infrastructure, agriculture and its diversification into agro-industries and manufacturing to serve both domestic and export markets.

(d) Strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution at the regional and continental levels, and to ensure that these mechanisms are used to restore and maintain peace

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[182] Ibid. paragraph 182

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Clearly, (a) to (c) furthers neo-liberalist policies. It is suggested that the achievement of (d) may not even be for its own sake but to provide "an enabling environment[183]" for business.

Given this, the capability of the programme to address the needs of the Africans or deal with the core problems hindering Africa's development is doubtful. NEPAD's emphasis on integrating Africa's economy into the globalization process, free markets and free movement of capital were rejected by Nigeria and other countries at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting at Doha, Qatar. It is most likely that its success would be heavily contingent upon support of imperial interests. This greatly undermines its ability to address local needs and therefore secure local ownership and support[184]

Further, NEPAD distinguishes itself from all previous plans and initiatives by conceiving itself as an agenda reached through participatory processes involving ordinary Africans. However, it does not seem that the African leaders who proclaimed this ideal of participation meant to practice it, as they did not deem it necessary to consult the African people before formulating and adopting the programme. In fact, this disregard for the people's participation is consistent with the document's conception of democracy which states emphatically: "Africa undertakes to respect the global standards of democracy, which core components include political pluralism, allowing for the existence of several political parties and workers' unions, fair, open, free and democratic elections periodically organized to enable the populace choose their leaders freely"[185]. That an "African-owned and African-led development programme" committed to the self-reliance and sustained upliftment of Africa[186] should affirm the philosophy, aims, and processes of globalization, is rather perplexing. As indicated in 1.4.1, this is precisely because the aims and philosophy of globalization vary from the African perspectives on the human

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[183] This is a term frequently used in World Bank and IMF documents to refer to the state of security in a country, and the level of development of its liberal democratic practice and regulative instruments for investments.
[184] Lehulere, O. 2003. "NEPAD, The Program of South African Capital". In *Khanya: A South African Journal for Activists*, 4, November
[185] NEPAD. op. cit. paragraph 79
[186] Ibid., paragraph 27

being and society. We will argue fully, in Chapter Five, for the position that this global form of democracy is unable to uphold real participation and consultation.

Finally, the supposition that a 'partnership' with the West could be achieved to rectify the existing unequal relations borders on fantasy. The Akan maxim, that 'the hand that receives is always beneath that which offers' succinctly explains why such a supposition is illusory, for if one takes the philosophy of capitalism seriously, one would hardly come to the conclusion that capitalists will offer someone resources in aid to enable the person ascend to the position where you can compete with them!

1.4.3.6:   APPER, UNPAAERD and NEPAD

It would be worth our while, at the close of this discussion of NEPAD, to conduct an excursus into earlier attempts by African leaders at a continental development agenda, and consider how these relate to the NEPAD. Towards this, we wish to recall that *The Lagos Plan* was published in 1980, and a year later the World Bank's *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action* appeared. These publications signaled Africa's struggle for the control of its development agenda, a struggle which was considerably exacerbated in 1981 when African ministers responsible for economic development and planning published a document entitled *Declaration of Tripoli on the World Bank Report Entitled: "Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action"*. In this publication the ministers rejected *Accelerated Development* and endorsed *The Lagos Plan* as the authentic and authoritative statement on Africa's development objectives.

However, the Bretton Woods institutions and the West refused to accept the approach of the *Lagos Plan*, which had stated that "Africa was directly exploited during the colonial period and for the past two decades; this exploitation has been carried out through neo-colonialist external forces which seek to influence the economic policies and directions of

African states"[187]. The rejection, though not explicitly stated, constituted in the West's ignoring the Plan and "refusing to re-orient their economic relations with Africa so as to connect with and address the programs and policies of the Plan"[188].

Unable to make headway with generating resources to finance the Plan, the OAU Council of Ministers adopted, in March 1986, a document prepared for submission to a prospective special session of the UN general Assembly meant to "focus in a comprehensive and integrated manner, on the rehabilitation and medium-term and long-term development problems and challenges facing Africa"[189]. The document was entitled *Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis*, and its program of action, known as *Africa's Priority Program for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990,* (APPER), was approved by the Assembly of African Heads of States and Governments of the OAU in July 1985.

Although APPER claimed, among others, to "lay the basis for durable structural change and an improved general level of productivity [of African economies]", in fact, it "largely embraces the critical assumptions of *Accelerated Development* while discarding those of the Lagos Plan"[190]. Two facts justify this statement. First, like *Accelerated Development,* APPER placed emphasis on investment in the traditional export sectors like agriculture, where Africa had a "comparative advantage". This sector was now to lead the way to Africa's economic development as well as its self-reliance[191]. Secondly, APPER advanced the view that good policies and good economic management were those that encouraged market forces[192].

[187] OAU, 1982, *Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa*, 1980-2000, Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, p. 3
[188] Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development,* op. cit., pp. 25-26
[189] United Nations, 1986, *United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990,* New York: UN
[190] Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development,* op. cit. p., 27
[191] United Nations, 1986*, United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990*, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/S-13/2, Paragraph11 (a) and (b)
[192] Ibid., paragraph 11e (i-ii)

We share Ake's view that APPER, popularly called *Africa's Submission*, was indeed a submission, in the sense of a capitulation to the demands of the West[193]. The crux of the capitulation was Africa's acknowledgement of its culpability for its developmental woes, by exonerating the unjust historical relations between the West and Africa from blame, as well as adopting the prescriptions of *Accelerated Development.* However, the capitulation may have been born of a utilitarian calculation, the outcome of which was expected financial contribution from the West. This expectation was also obvious in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD), a programme which was almost identical in scope and emphasis with APPER. The West, however, did not provide this financial support. It was from this background that the UN Secretary-General, in his first Progress Report on the implementation of UNPAAERD to the General Assembly in 1991, mentioned this disappointment by the donor community as having diminished the chances of the successful implementation of the programme[194]. Consequently, "developments during the period of the *United Nations Programme of Action* reinforced the commodity-dependent trend of the 1980s, *a decade that many think of as a period of stagnation and reversal for most African countries*"[195].

The salient point in this excursus is that there is a remarkable similarity between Africa's capitulation to the West through APPER and NEPAD. Both of them are Neo-liberal in economic orientation with considerable emphasis on export-driven economic development. Further, both APPER and NEPAD seek partnership with Western donor agencies for financial contribution towards their implementation. Yet Africa's experience with donor promises throughout the decades questions the prudence in basing the development aspirations of a whole continent on projected financial help from the G8 and its affiliates.

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[193] Ake, C. , 2001, *Democracy and Development,* op. cit. p. 29
[194] Ibid., p 30
[195] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 1991, *Final Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990*, New York: U.N., pp 35, 36. Emphasis is mine.

1.4.4: Criticisms of the Neo-Liberalism and its Development Practices in Africa

Generally, the criticisms of economism and Eurocentrism leveled against the modernization and dependency perspectives apply as well to the neo-liberal perspective. Economism preoccupies itself with differences in the wealth of nations and persons generated through an autonomous market constituted by competition. This makes persons expendable or nuisances if they lack the capacity to compete on the market[196]. However, poverty is an existential fact in Africa and its eradication must be the topmost priority of a development perspective for Africa. Therefore, Neo-liberalist development practices lack the humanist impulse that needs to be incorporated into African development agendas[197]. This is both unethical and irrational, because "there is no need for humanity to imagine itself the humble footservant of an autonomous economic system…..humans make economies, so they can also change them[198]".

Further, the worship of market forces has led some neo-liberalist theorists to conceive the "Third World" as a myth peddled by guilty scholars and politicians. This denial of the existence of a deprived world whose deprivation was basically caused by the process of wealth accumulation in the rich world disregards the historical relationship between Africa and the West. Surely, this flouts the requirements of scholarly sensitivity and rigour.

1.5:   Similarities of Neo-Liberalism with earlier Theories

Substantial similarities exist in the research focus and methodologies of all three schools. As with the earlier two schools, neo-liberalism is concerned with "Third World"

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[196] Presby, G. 2002, in *Thought and Practice in African Philosophy,* op. cit., p. 295
[197] This point will be more fully argued in Chapters 3 and 4. It is stated in Ramose, M. B. 2002. *African philosophy through Ubuntu.* Harare: Mond Books, 114-115.
- Also Mkhwanazi, E. F & Ramose, M. B. 2005. "Review Article: Thought and Practice in African Philosophy" in *Tydskrift vir Letterkunde. 42 (2)*, p. 173
[198] Ibid., p. 296

development; and conducts its discussions on this subject at an abstract level[199]. Secondly, all three theories maintain a polar theoretical framework. In modernization, this is articulated as 'tradition versus modernity", dependency theorists call it "core/metropolis versus periphery/satellite" and neo-liberalism distinguishes between "the free world/capitalism" and a host of terms ranging from "communist" to "evil empire"[200] to denote otherness. Further, all three schools respond to the charge of *economism*, and a homogenizing and universalizing tendency derived from Eurocentrism.

One cannot fail, therefore, to observe that the more things changed in terms of ideas for Africa's development, the more things remained the same. The abstract universalist tendencies and economism pervading all three schools continued to ignore the full human, historical, social and ethical content of development, which for certain cultures are more important than growth of wealth established by macro-economic indicators[201].

This questions the claim, so often made, that 'development' has failed in Africa since the 1960s. As Claude Ake rightly remarked, 'the problem is not so much that development has failed as it was never really on the agenda in the first place'[202]. But if economism is not, a priori immutable, then which alternatives are open to Africa?

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[199] As stated in subsection 2.3.3 above, this applies to only some aspect of dependency theory.
[200] Like Reagan's characterization of the erstwhile Soviet Union as 'the evil empire' and a host of countries as constituting 'the axis of evil'.
[201] Cox, R. W. 1996. "Perspectives on Globalization" in Mittelman, J. H (ed) *Globalization – Critical Reflections,* London: Lynne Reiner Publishers, p. 28
[202] Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development,* op. cit., p. 1

CHAPTER TWO: 'ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES' TO DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

As indicated in sections 1.4.2 and 1.5 of the preceding chapter, proponents of economism consider growth in real incomes of a country as sufficient yardstick of development. This chapter examines a range of conceptions and approaches, with shared ideas and period of flourishing, which converge into a body of criticism of economistic theories. Hettne summarizes these criticisms under the heading of 'alternative approaches' to development[1], and traces their genesis to the Cocoyoc Declaration[2].

These alternatives arise because of the much discussed 'crisis' in development research and practice alluded to in the introductory chapter. The crisis is reflected in the fact that the mainstream theories considered in the previous chapter have failed to provide desirable results for intended beneficiary African countries. A major unifying point for these alternative views is their insistence that increased wealth creation, reflected in bigger national income, is not an end in itself but a means to the improvement of human welfare, which they conceive as the essence of development[3]. While we stress the diversity of these perspectives in the following sub-sections, we concede that what we erect as their boundaries are not impermeable and are easily amenable to reflect similarities among them. We begin with the Basic Needs Strategy.

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[1] Hettne, B. 1990. *Development Theory and the Three Worlds*. London: Longman. pp. 152-167

[2] Adopted by the participants in the UNEP/UNCTAD Symposium on "Patterns of Resource Use, Environment and Development Strategies" held at Cocoyoc, Mexico, from 8 to 12 October 1974 and circulated, in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at the meeting of the general Assembly of the United Nations, on 1 November 1974.

[3] Martinussen, J., 1997, *Society, State & Market*, London: Zed Books, p. 37

2.2   The Basic Needs Strategy (BNS)

This approach is usually considered to have been first formulated by a United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) publication in 1976[4]. While its exponents have varied in emphasis, there is a broad consensus among them that a key component of the strategy is the understanding of development as not only implying economic growth but also persistent and measurable social improvements for the poor and resource-weak groups in society[5]. Principally, these must be improvements of the range of poverty associated symptoms listed in section ii above. Such improvements would constitute the provision of basic needs, and help the poor to exit the vicious circle of poverty.

The proponents of the BNS are generally agreed that, fundamentally, three sets of needs qualify as basic. These are, firstly, the need for food, shelter, clothes and other necessities of daily life; secondly, access to public services such as drinking water, sanitation, health and education; and thirdly, participation in, and ability to exert influence on, community and national political decision making[6].

These sets of needs were not all included in the ILO formulation but developed gradually. One addition to the initial ILO formulation was the Cocoyoc Declaration. As well as accepting the ILO definition of human basic needs, this declaration acknowledged the satisfaction of social, political and cultural needs as the purpose of development: According to the Declaration,

> "Development should not be limited to the satisfaction of basic needs. There are other needs, other goals, and other values. Development includes freedom of expression and impression, the right to give and to receive ideas and stimulus. There is a deep social need to participate in shaping the basis of one's own existence, and to make some contribution to the fashioning of the world's future. Above all, development includes the right to work, by which we mean not simply

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[4] ILO. 1976. In *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem.* Geneva: ILO
[5] Preston, P. W, 1997, *Development Theory: An Introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell, p. 245
[6] Martinussen, J. 1997. *Society, State & Market,* op. cit., pp. 298-299

having a job but finding self-realization in work, the right not to be alienated through production processes that use human beings simply as tools"[7].

It seems to us then that the real value in the need to participate in, and influence, local community and national political decision making[8] seems to be instrumental, in that the satisfaction of this need serves as a condition for the satisfaction of the other two needs. This is because the ability to influence decisions that affect one's livelihood is likely to address factors which work, in a mutually reinforcing manner, to keep people in the poverty trap. Martinussen[9], lists three such factors. According to him, the poor remain thus trapped because firstly, they lack the necessary economic resources to change the mechanisms that keep them in extreme poverty. Secondly, in spite of their large numbers, they have very few opportunities to influence and affect decision making within the political system, even in a democracy[10], and have no access at all to the centers of power in the corporate world. Thirdly, the poor are divided into several distinct social groups. This makes it difficult for them to act collectively and to organize themselves politically. In view of the above, most proponents of the BNS consider cooperation with the poor in development planning and implementation pivotal for the satisfaction of their basic needs[11].

It is clear that the Cocoyoc Declaration's extension of the notion of Basic Needs implies a just distribution of wealth, which in turn requires an egalitarian allocation of natural resources globally. But what would be the ultimate justification for a redistribution of global resources? Such an ultimate ground has been found in the right to life[12]. According to this position, this right belongs to all humans *qua* human. Therefore, the poor in Africa are within their rights to demand that others who have a surplus provide for their minimum needs. Clearly, Oruka sends us into the realm of the ethical with this view. But

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[7] United Nations, 1974, The Cocoyoc Declaration, A/C. 2/292, New York, paragraph 2
[8] Presby, G. M. 2002. "African Philosophers on Global Wealth Redistribution", in Presby, G., Smith, D., Abuya, P. & Nyarwath, O (eds) *Thought and Practice in African Philosophy*. Nairobi: Konrad Adenaurer Foundation, p. 290
[9] Martinussen, J., 1997, *Society, State & Market,* op. pp 300 - 301
[10] We refer to Western-inspired liberal democratic systems, as distinct from the consensual democratic systems of indigenous African communities.
[11] Martinussen, J. 1997, *Society, State & Market,* op. cit. p 301
[12] Presby, G, M, 2002, "African Philosophers on Global Wealth Redistribution", op. cit. p. 289. Here, Presby attributes this view to Odera Oruka.

in a world dominated by the Eurocentric philosophy of competitive wealth creation for self-interest, this ethical argument will need strengthening.

In our view, the right to life argument may be further fortified by the view that redistribution of global wealth to provide basic needs in sub-Saharan Africa is a necessary remedy for the adverse human and economic effects of the unjust wars of conquest and colonization. The argument that reparation must be rejected because all poverty in the world cannot be linked to the colonial legacy is untenable. Equally vacuous is the claim that not all countries participated in colonization[13].

The reasons for this are twofold. First, consider that except for Ethiopia and Liberia, all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa were European colonies or part of them. And all sub-Saharan countries, except for Cape Verde which is number one hundred and five, rank between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and seventy seven (the last country) on the Human Poverty Index of the 2005 Human Development Report[14]. What this suggests is that even if not *all* poverty in the world can be linked to the colonial legacy, *most* poverty can. This is because even Liberia and Ethiopia, which escaped the physical occupation of territory, suffered the ravages of colonialism, in that the policies of the neighboring colonial administrations deprived them of economic and political independence, thereby compelling them into 'alliances' with the colonizers, under terms which were grossly unfair to these 'independent' African countries[15].

In like manner, although some Western European countries and Canada neither directly participated in the slave trade nor had colonies in Africa, it can be legitimately argued that the influx of labour and capital into Europe and North America during the slave trade and colonialism, and the expansion of markets beyond these continents during colonialism, contributed to the economic growth of the whole Western world.

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[13] In his preference for the right to life as the basis for redistribution, Oruka rejects reparation. See Presby, G. M. op. cit. p 289.
[14] UNDP, 2005, *Human Development Report*, pp 228 - 229
[15] Akpan, M. B, Jones, A. B, & Pankhurst, R, 1990, "Liberia and Ethiopia, 1880-1914: the survival of two African states", in Boahen, A. A. (ed), *General History of Africa, VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880 – 1935*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 129-131

Consequently, it would be unjust of Western countries not to provide some of their surplus to those who are suffering the effects of poverty that was and continues to be caused by the mechanisms that provide them with surplus.

In fact it is doubtful if the question of reparations can be plausibly de-linked from the authentic liberation of Africa. Certainly such liberation will not come from the self-interested conceptions and economic calculations of the ostensible financial aid provided by the West for Africa's development. An enduring consequence of these calculations, which fuelled and sustained the slave trade and colonization in Africa, is the self-abasement of the African[16]. Another is the instrumental value, at best, that is allotted Africans and their contributions to human civilization in the prevailing global economic and political order. This self-abasement and external scorn on anything African has created misunderstanding and self-doubt in the African.

Undoubtedly, philosophy's contribution to the search for Africa's development must comprise its call for liberation from oppression in all its forms. In this regard, the philosophical attention to the African experience by Africans has diagnosed the need for philosophy to correct African's misunderstanding of her condition and make her the subject in the struggle for its liberation from these[17]. The ethos[18] of liberation is structured around an axis that is neither compassion nor sympathy, but subverting an established unjust order[19].

Reparation becomes subversive in this sense as it quantifies the pain of slavery and colonialism's domination of physical space, dehumanizing of Africans and their culture, and the integration of the economic histories of Africa into a perspective (the Western)

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[16] Gyekye, K, 1997, *Tradition and* Modernity, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 246. Here, Gyekye provides us with a categorical example of this self-ridicule in his insistence that traditional Akan beliefs and social norms discourage scientific curiosity and perpetuate a superstitious preoccupation and irrational fear of the supernatural for reasons that are "not fully known or intelligible".

[17] Mudimbe, V. Y., 1988, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press pp. 142-143

[18] Dussel, E, 1985, *Philosophy of Liberation*, Martinez, A and Morkovsky, C (trans.), Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock; p. 56. Here Dussel defines 'ethos' as the structural whole of attitudes that predetermine action. We adopt this meaning.

[19] Ibid. pp. 64 - 65

that continues to deride it. Accordingly, proponents of the BNS can mount a frontal attack for wealth distribution if their argument based in the right to life is strengthened by the right to reparation.

2.3   Criticisms of the BNS:

The version of the Basic Needs Strategy advocated by the Cocoyoc Declaration suggests increasing the buying power of the poor as a way out of the vicious circle of poverty[20]. The view here is that the effects of the increased buying power of the poor, and therefore their demand for economic goods, will stimulate the economy[21]. Thus the owners of capital will eventually benefit by "helping" the poor meet their basic needs. In this wise, the BNS is essentially economistic in spirit.

Further, oftentimes "expert guided intervention"[22], which bestows the right to define problems and solutions to technocrats of institutions such as the World Bank and United Nations agencies, becomes the preferred approach to satisfying basic needs. That the Bretton Woods institutions exhibit characteristics of Eurocentrism and economism has been discussed already. It is difficult to disengage this 'expert guidance' from the power relations pertaining between African societies and the capitalist-led global system. Since the latter, invariably provides the financial resources for 'developmental activities' in Africa, they have reserved the right to direct on the disbursement of these resources. Accordingly, the focus on defining and providing for the basic needs of the poor in Third World countries has entailed greater reliance on, and sustaining of, Eurocentrism and economism than the BNS should admit as appropriate.

Further, this reliance on "expert guided intervention" de-emphasizes real people and their choices as proper determinants of action. This brings to light the abstract nature of the

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[20] Cocoyoc Declaration, op. cit. paragraph 2.
- Also, Martinusen, J. 1997, *Society, State & Market,* London: Zed Books, p. 300 - 301
[21] Ibid., p. 301
[22] Preston, P. W, 1997, *Development Theory: An Introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell, p 246

BNS. In these respects, the BNS is far from being a radically new departure in development theorizing and management.

2.4 Human Development

Another dimension on development emerged with the publication of the first Human Development Report in 1990, which declared at its onset that people are the real wealth of nations[23]. Upon this basis, development is identified with 'human development'. The report discusses the meaning and measurement of human development, and defined it as a process of enlarging people's choices. The choices initially defined were the opportunity to lead a long and healthy life, the opportunity to acquire knowledge, and the opportunity to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living[24]. The goal of development then becomes creating the conditions for people to be able to make these choices. The report also defines three key indicators for measuring human development. These are life expectancy at birth, access to quality education, and command over resources needed for a decent living standard[25].

The report declares that this conception of the nature, goals and measurement of development is inspired by philosophers such as Aristotle and Immanuel Kant, as well as by political economists such as Adam Smith, Ricardo and Marx[26]. We believe that if a person does not explicitly disown parts of his or her work, then that person implicitly affirms the views expressed therein. The various outputs of an author must then be considered strands of the person's thinking. As such we have no right or reason to read that person in fragments. With this in mind, we consider as unfortunate the Report's reliance on the ideas of the above-mentioned philosophers and economists. This is because these authors held firm views that are inconsistent with Africa's development. The positions of Adam Smith, Ricardo and Marx in connection with this have been discussed already. Those of Aristotle have been sufficiently discussed by African

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[23] UNDP. 1990, *Human Development Report*, p. 9
[24] Ibid., p. 9-10
[25] Ibid. pp 11 - 12
[26] Ibid. p 9

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philosophers and need not be repeated here[27], and Kant's condescension on Africa will be amplified in section 2.9.3 below. For now, we would like to conduct a fuller exploration of the concept and approaches to Human Development by elaborating on two dimensions of it. These are People-managed Development and Participatory Rural Appraisal.

2.4.1   People-Managed Development

This approach considers civil society as the main actor and vehicle in the process of development.[28] As such, its point of departure is the ordinary citizen. In this wise, it is difficult to overlook the influence of both the Cocoyoc Declaration and the BNS on this approach. As stated in 3.2 above, basic needs strategists highlight the importance of people's participation to the success of development processes, as does the Cocoyoc Declaration, which declares self-reliance as a basic strategy and aim of development, and continues:

> "above all, it [self-reliance] means trust in people…. reliance on the capacity of people themselves to invent and generate new resources and techniques to increase their capacity, to absorb theses and to put them to socially beneficial use, to take a measure of command over the economy, and to generate their own way of life"[29].

In view of this need for self-reliance, leading proponents[30] of people-managed development approaches contend that the level of consciousness needed to influence decisions and resource allocations that affect one's conditions of life becomes a basic need.

This position coincides with the views of the 'alternative economics' school, a prominent member of which is the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, who considers political and civil

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[27] Ramose, M., 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* Harare: Mond Books, Chapter 1
[28] Martinussen, J. 1997, *Society, State & Market,* op. cit p 332
[29] Cocoyoc Declaration. 1974. op. cit. paragraph 3
[30] Gran, G. 1983. *Development by People. Citizen Construction of a Just World*, New York: Praeger; Chambers, R. 1983. *Rural Development. Putting the Last First*. New York: John Wiley; Friedman, J. 1992. *Empowerment. The Politics of Alternative development*. Cambridge: Blackwell

rights expressed through democracy as pivotal to the process of generating informed and considered choices. According to him, political and social participation has at least three values for human well being. First, it has *intrinsic value* in human life. What this means is that to be prevented from participation in the political life of the community is a major deprivation. Second, it has an important *instrumental value* in enhancing the possibilities of giving political attention and support to people's expressions. Further, the conceptualization - even comprehension - of what are to count as "needs" requires the exercise of political and civil rights[31]. In this sense, it has *constructive* importance.

In a later work, Sen amplifies this position into the thesis that the whole range of human liberties – social, political, economic and cultural – is a constitutive component of development[32]. On this view, development may be seen as the process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy. Accordingly, it requires the removal of major fetters on freedom, such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, systemic social deprivation and intolerance[33].

In seeking to enhance people's choices, the PMD approach emphasizes participatory rights as essential to self-determination, which it considers as both a requirement and goal of development. One fundamental assumption underlying this position seems to be that governments would not use resources on mass welfare unless the poor, who are in the majority, are sufficiently powerful to force such a policy on the government. From this point of departure, proponents of this approach criticize mainstream economistic theories for leaving development management in the hands of existing authorities or large organizations such as governments, the World Bank, the IMF or multilateral organizations, bilateral donor organizations or companies[34].

A number of factors support this criticism. First, bureaucratic institutions operate from the top downwards and are so control-oriented that they isolate the people whose conditions they seek to advance. The decision makers and staff of international

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[31] Sen, A. 1999. "Democracy as a Universal Value", in *Journal of Democracy*, 10. 3 (1999), p. 9 - 10
[32] Sen, A. 1999, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 5
[33] Ibid. p.3
[34] Martinussen, J., 1997, *Society, State & Market*, op. cit., p 331

organizations like the World Bank and official bilateral aid agencies are both institutionally and culturally removed from the people they try to assist. Because they remain thus isolated, they are, secondly, incapable of motivating people and mobilizing human resources in a society. Oftentimes this results in these institutions pursuing objectives that bear little relation to the development concerns of the societies in need.

For the proponents of this approach, then, what is at stake in development is not only the satisfaction of is material needs but also social, political and cultural needs. The satisfaction of these furthers one's human development, and through this one's dignity as a human being[35]. If this is taken seriously, then a community's prioritization among its needs cannot be decided a priori or by outsiders, since this hinders the acknowledgement of community members as human beings. What their needs are, which needs to be satisfied first and to what extent, have to be decided through people's participation. Hence for Sen and other people-managed development theorists, participation is not just a means to an end in the development process. It is a goal in itself and as equally important as other development goals.

2.4.2   Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Another off-shoot of the thinking that favours giving communities more responsibility in development management is the Participatory Rural Appraisal (RPA) Approach. This encourages communities to reflect on their situation, diagnose and analyze their problems and identify possible solutions to these[36] with a view to enhancing the achievement of self-reliance and social justice through improvements in the quality of people's participation[37].

The African Network on Participatory Approaches enumerates some objectives for different participants in the development process. According to the Network

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[35] Ibid, p. 337.
- Also Gran, G., 1993, *Development by People*, op. cit., chapter 15
[36] Royal Tropical Institute/World Bank. 2000. *Village Participation in Rural Development*. p. 18-19
[37] JICA. 2001. Participatory Development and Good Governance. http:www.jica.go.jp/E-infopart/MBp011.html

participation, for communities, should be a way to identify, prioritize and implement development activities through better use of existing resources. It is also a principal vehicle to social justice because it is a most reliable way to ensure that the poor will acquire ownership of the processes and resources for development. For government, the use of participatory approaches ultimately generates development programs that respond to local demands and needs. For donors and service providers, participation means becoming more accountable to communities. The strategies devised by the communities become the terms of reference for future assistance to them. Moreover, the members of the community influence how these service providers organize their work in the community[38]. Thus strengthened, the community is better able to evaluate the services received, and indicate how it can be improved in the future.

2.4.3   Criticism of People-managed Development and PRA Approaches

The people-managed development approach articulates many aspects of both the Human Development perspective and the Basic Needs Approach, both of which emphasize the centrality of the participation of beneficiaries in the conception of development and implementation of its strategies. However, in development practice in Africa, this concept of participation is often hollowed out by Eurocentric top-down "banking model[39]". This is often achieved by defining problems and formulating their solutions beforehand, and then holding 'consultations' with beneficiary communities to secure their endorsement of these decisions. As such, the vitality of the self-organization, self-management and self-rule emphasized by the people-centered development and PRA approaches is trivialized.

A well-known example of this contempt for beneficiary communities is implied in the notion of 'development catalysts', advanced by Guy Gran, one of the most fiery advocates of people-centered development. According to him, many obstacles impede the self-organization and collective action of poor people. There is therefore a critical need

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[38] Royal Tropical Institute/World Bank, 2000, op cit. p. 17
[39] In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* 1990, Paolo Freire uses this term to refer to a pedagogical model in which the teacher is seen as the repository of knowledge with the responsibility to transmit it into the learners who are seen as passive recipients.

for a catalyst – a person or persons who can take the initiative and facilitate the processes of self-organization and nurture them until the community can sustain them. These catalysts need not be recruited from the community; they can be recruited from other countries, including the developed countries, preferably from NGOs[40].

Gran's position amounts to the thought that the techniques needed for successful organization and action against poverty cannot be extracted from within the culture seeking to be developed. This supports the contention that the same arrogance and Eurocentrism of the Modernization perspective has re-surfaced in the people-managed development and PRA approaches. It is necessary to note how this displays inspiration derived from Aristotle and Kant. The Eurocentrism of this inspiration ignores the fact that techniques of organization affect the mode of structuring a question within that organization, and that the mode of questioning presupposes a constrained set of answers. Therefore, by bringing in outsiders to organize, one would have decided, a priori, a conceptual direction of development and its concomitant practices.

This direction usually furthers the institutional initiatives of donors[41]. In this manner, participation fails in its attempt to lead development management away from dependence on donors, to mutually respectful partnership and collaboration with them. This undermines the basis of participation upon which both the people-centered development and PRA approaches are supposed to be built.

2.5   The Rights-Based Approach

A rights-based approach to development is a framework that is normatively based on international human rights standards and directed to promoting and protecting human rights[42]. The right to development has been asserted as a fundamental human right in

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[40] Martinusen, J. 1997, *Society, State & Market*, op. cit. p. 338
[41] Matshabaphala, J. D. M. 2001. *An Open Systems Critique of the Macro Theories of Development.* Unpublished dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of D. Litt et Phil in Development Administration to the University of South Africa. p. 91-92
[42] http://www.unhchr.ch/development/approaches-01.html

various provisions of the United Nations[43]. Nonetheless, the Declaration on the Right to Development made an explicit connection between development and human rights[44]. In 1995, the Copenhagen Declaration[45] reaffirmed this link between human rights and development by establishing a new consensus that places people at the centre of concerns for sustainable development[46]. Thus a rights-based approach to development, then, integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development, and would usually include the following four features:

First, they would invariably define the objectives of development in terms of human rights as legally enforceable entitlements. It considers the whole range of these rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - as indivisible, interdependent and interrelated[47]. Secondly, they usually focus on raising levels of accountability in the development process by identifying claim-holders (and their entitlements) and corresponding duty-holders (and their obligations). In this regard, they look both at the positive obligations of duty-holders (to protect, promote and provide) and at their negative obligations (to abstain from violations)[48]; and call for the translation of universal standards into locally determined benchmarks for measuring progress and enhancing accountability.

Rights-based approaches also give preference to strategies for empowerment. They focus on beneficiaries as owners of rights as well as directors of development. Accordingly, they aim at giving people the power, capacities, capabilities and access needed to change

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[43] Such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

[44] United Nations, 1986, *General Assembly Resolution* 41/128. Paragraph 1. 1 of the Declaration states that the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized

[45] United Nations, 1995, *The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development*. New York.

[46] Ibid., Paragraphs 8 and 26a.

[47] United Nations, 1993, *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, as adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (on 25th June 1993). Paragraph 5

[48] Thus under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, States are required to take immediate steps for the progressive realization of the rights concerned, so that a failure to take the necessary steps, or any retrogression, will flag a breach of the State's duties.

their own lives, improve their own communities and influence their own destinies. Therefore attention is given, in the empowerment process, to discrimination, equality, equity and vulnerable groups[49].

Finally, the RBA strongly recognizes participation as a necessary condition for empowerment. Paragraph 2.3 of the Declaration on the Right to Development recommends that such participation must be "active, free and meaningful". Participation includes access to development processes, institutions, information, and mechanisms for redress or complaints. This means, among others, the need to situate these mechanisms in proximity to partners and beneficiaries. Participation, then, counts against mere formal or ceremonial contacts with beneficiaries, as well externally conceived "quick fixes" by 'development catalysts', for instance.

2.5.1   Criticism of the RBA

The RBA is inextricably linked with the Basic Needs Strategy and the Human development approaches. It undoubtedly aims at the active, free and meaningful participation of people in development strategies, and in the fair distribution of the resulting benefits among them. It attempts to achieve this by putting beneficiaries in charge of development.

However, this approach exhibits noteworthy demerits. First, the optimism of the RBA seems to pay little regard to the convergence of factors such as the ethics of global capitalism and corruption, which relentlessly conspires to marginalize the ability of the poor to assume their rights.

Secondly, the RBA advocates basing national development processes on agreed and universal standards of the international human rights instruments. However, the rich and militarily powerful nations have continually disregarded and flouted these instruments. A case in point is the military attacks on Lebanon by Israel with the explicit backing of the

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[49] Although there is no universal checklist of who is most vulnerable in every given context, recently in Africa, these groups have included women, minorities, orphans, HIV infected persons and prisoners. Rights-based approaches require that such questions be answered locally: who is vulnerable here and now; and why?

United States and most of Western Europe, which began in July 2006. Clearly, such aggression against a vulnerable country offends against provisions of the United Nations Charters and Declarations referred to in this chapter, and question the validity and viability of these international standards.

The RBA conceives of rights as justified claims to the protection of persons' important interests[50]. This protection is owed persons for their own sakes. Such a conception of rights and freedoms is clearly individualistic in spirit. This makes the owner of rights an atomistic individual pursing one's interests rationally in an environment of conflicting interests[51]. Such a conception polarizes individual interests and community welfare[52]. As indicated in sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.3.2, it is doubtful that such a conception of rights, and the individual's place and responsibilities in society, can provide the basis for development thinking and practice in sub-Saharan Africa. This position will be more fully argued in Chapter Five.

2.6   The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Declaration[53] set forth quantified and time-bound goals to free the world "from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty", and make "the right to development a reality for everyone"[54]. It was adopted by 147 heads of state and government at the Millennium Assembly in September 2000. The resolutions of the

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[50] This is understood to be the strongest sense of 'rights'. See Honderich, T (ed.), 1995, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p776
[51] Locke, J. 1946, *The Second Treatise of Civil Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, Gough, J. W. (ed.), Oxford, Basil Blackwell. At p.8, of this work, Locke discusses some features of the state of nature, where every man "has the executive power of the law of nature in his hands….". At p. 44, we are told that for the same rational self-interests, this executive power of the state of nature may be surrendered *at will* for the formation of civil society. For further discussion of Locke's theory of individual rights see section 4. 3.2 below
[52] This polarization is the quintessence of Locke's distinction between 'a state of nature' and 'civil society' in *The Second Treatise*. The point is poignantly stated at page 74 of the work, where the tensions between the "liberties and properties of the subject", and the action of the commonwealth "for the preservation of the community" are brought into sharp focus.
[53] United Nations. 2000. Resolution 55/2: Millennium Declaration
[54] Paragraph 11, Millennium Declaration

Declaration subsequently became the MDGs. There are eight of them, which break down into 18 quantifiable targets[55]. These are:

The first goal is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Two targets will serve to achieve this goal. These are first, to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day; and second, to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The second goal is to achieve universal primary education. The target for this is to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling. The third goal is the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, and the target is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

The fourth goal is to reduce child mortality, and the target for this is to reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five. The fifth goal is to improve maternal health. The target here is to reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio. The sixth goal, which is to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases has two targets. The first target is to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS; and the second is to halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

The seventh goal, which is to ensure environmental sustainability, has multiple targets. The first of these is to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; and to reverse loss of environmental resources. Secondly, this is the commitment to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; and finally to achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020.

The final goal is to develop a global partnership for Development. This goal would be considered reached when seven targets are met. The first of these is to develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. The next target is to address the special needs of the least developed countries. This includes: tariff

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[55] http://www.undp.org/mdg/goallist.shtml.
- See also Sachs, J. D., 2005, *The End of Poverty, How we can make it happen in our Lifetime*, New York: Penguin Books

and quota free access for least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPCs and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction. The third target under this goal is to address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States. The fourth target is to deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term. The fifth is the objective to develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth in cooperation with developing countries. The next target is to provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies. The final target is to make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, to developing countries in cooperation with the private sector.

2.6.1   Criticisms of the MDGs:

The eighth goal (the idea of a global partnership for Development) commands a foremost position among the MDGs, since its achievement is undoubtedly essential for the achievement of the others. Now, this global partnership is envisaged to revolve around the prevailing global economic system, which has the international trading and financial system as its core. In this sense, the eighth MDG is rooted in the assumption that liberal economics is the route to development. Its first target sufficiently reveals this.

Here, then, we encounter a revival of the economics of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, as they underpin the law and policy of the World Trade Organization and its precursor[56]. When sufficiently probed, this assumption yields the view already noted in section i of the introductory chapter, that the WTO oversees an impartial international trading and investments system globally, where participating countries fully maximize their comparative advantage over others[57]. As such, countries are liable to benefit from

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[56] This is The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).
[57] Hoekman, B. M and Kostecki, M. M, 2001, *The Political Economy of the World Trading System*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 24 - 25

participating in this system than opting out of it. Therefore it is in the interest of every country to join the WTO. Undoubtedly, this argument is open to refutation.

If indeed a system of trade can be beneficial to all of its participants, then the regulative instruments of such a system must benefit, or at least intend to benefit, all participants. But the assumption of a comparative advantage under unbiased competitive market conditions does not exist in the real world of international trade[58]. In fact, the main aim of establishing the post Second World War economic system was to remove the economic causes of friction which were believed to have caused the Second World War[59]. Accordingly, developing countries have been at the margins of the deliberations of the trading system since its inception.

This is well illustrated by the history of the negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Most developing countries were not involved in the negotiations that resulted in the Tokyo Round under the GATT. The most conspicuous cost of their nonparticipation was that negotiated results often excluded improved access to industrial country markets for the competitive agricultural and manufactured exports of developing countries[60]. In other words, they had to accept the maintenance of high foreign trade barriers against their most competitive exports. In fact it is unlikely that their participation would have made a difference. This disadvantage for poor countries has pervaded the Uruguay Round and the Doha Development Agenda, which constitute the negotiated policies of international trade since the formation of the WTO. Therefore, the aims of the trade policies of the WTO are far from universal advantage to participating countries in general and sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Two factors support this:

The first has to do with the WTO's policies on agriculture, which is the largest economic sector in most sub-Saharan African countries. In this sector, the power dynamics amongst

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[58] Jackson, J. H. 1997. *The World Trading System: Law and Policy of International Economic Relations*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, p. 18

[59] Hoekman, B. M and Kostecki, M. M, 2001, *Political Economy,* op. cit. p. 24

[60] Schott, J. J, 2004, "Reviving the Doha Round", In *Speeches, Testimonies, Papers, May 2004*, Washington, D. C., Institute for International Economics, p. 2

members of the WTO has prevented negotiation of a balance of concessions among its members, and more often than not, sub-Saharan farmers suffer most from this. This is vividly exemplified by the impact on sub-Saharan farmers of the impact of subsidies that America pays its cotton farmers. By encouraging over-production and export dumping, U. S. subsidies to its cotton farmers, which in 2001/02 amounted to 3.9 billion dollars, is driving down world prices that stand now at their lowest levels since the 1930s[61]. These subsidies are destroying the livelihoods of vulnerable farmers in Africa[62], but this does not seem to be the concern of the American government[63].

The United States and the European Union persist in providing billions of dollars in subsidies that protect their agricultural sector from exports from countries that may have a comparative advantage in the sector. This protectionism has survived eight previous rounds of multilateral trade negotiations, and led to the collapse of negotiations on the Doha Round[64] at Cancún in September 2003 and by the Ministers from the G6 group (Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, the European Union and the United States)[65] in Geneva in July 2006[66]. At Cancún, this US-EU alliance provoked the formation of the G-20, an

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[61] Watkins, K., 2002, *Cultivating Poverty: The Impact of US Cotton Subsidies on Africa*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 30,London: Oxfam International, p. 3
[62] Watkins, ibid. p. 4, observes that no region is more seriously affected by unfair competition in world cotton markets than sub-Saharan Africa
[63] Ibid, p. 1. Here, Watkins reports President George W. Bush remarking on 13 May 2002, after signing of the Farm Bill, that "I told the people, I said if you give me a chance to be the President, we're not going to treat our agricultural industry as a secondary citizen when it comes to opening up markets. And I mean that… The farm bill is important legislation… It will promote farmer independence, and preserve the farm way of life. It helps America's farmers, and therefore it helps America"

[64] The Doha Round of talks is the latest trade negotiating round of the WTO. It was launched by the adoption of the Doha Ministerial Declaration at The Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference held in Doha, Qatar from 9 to 14 November 2001. This declaration provides the mandate for negotiations on a range of subjects. The Declaration, as well as the plans and structures for its implementation are cumulatively referred to as "The Doha Development Agenda".
[65] This group is reputed to account for more that three quarters of global trade. See http://money.cnn.com/2006/07/24/news/international/bc.trade.talks.update.reut
[66] The failure in Cancun was followed by talks in Geneva in August 2004, in Paris in May 2005, and in Geneva in July 2006. The Geneva talks achieved a framework agreement on opening global trade. The U.S., EU, Japan and Brazil agreed to end export subsidies, reduce agricultural subsidies and lower tariff barriers. Developing nations agreed to reduce tariffs on manufactured goods, but gain the right to specially protect key industries. But the underlying problems resurfaced in Paris, as the developing countries wanted high state subsidies and import tariffs slashed so they can sell more of their produce abroad. However, the rich nations refused to grant this concession unless developing markets open up their markets more to their own industrial products and services.

alliance of developing countries (led by Brazil, China, India, and South Africa) which continues to agitate for the United States, Europe, and Japan to liberalize their barriers to agricultural trade.

The July 2006 talks in Geneva failed to reach an agreement about reducing farm subsidies and lowering import taxes on products of export interest to developing countries. The point of view that this has to do with inequality on the global agricultural market is reflected in the fact that even if the United States had conceded to the terms of WTO Director General's compromise on cutting its domestic support, this would still have left it with $20 billion worth of allowable subsidies to its farmers and agricultural companies. Further, if the European Union had agreed to phase out its export subsidies, this would still have left it with 55 billion euros in other forms of export support. In return for such minimal concessions, the US, EU, and other developed countries wanted radically reduced tariffs for their agricultural exports to developing country markets[67].

It is uncertain when negotiations will resume. In fact a successful outcome of the Doha Round is becoming increasingly unlikely precisely because of the internal politics of the United States. The trade authority granted under the Trade Act of 2002 to the U.S. President expires in 2007. Any trade agreement reached after this period will need the approval of the U. S Congress with the possibility of amendments, and this prospect decreases the willingness of other countries to pay heed to the success of the Round.

The idea that the Doha Round is a "development round" could not be farther from the truth. At the very outset of the Doha negotiations in November 2001, the governments of the rich world rejected the demand of the majority of countries that the talks focus on modalities for implementing past commitments, especially the Uruguay Round, and avoid initiating a new round of trade liberalization. Some commentators advance the view that this rejection is firmly linked with the aim of the developed countries to have greater access to the markets of the developing countries while making minimal concessions on

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[67] Bello, W, 2006, "Afterthoughts: Doha Round Collapse Best for Developing Countries", INQ7 Viewpoints/Columns, http://opinion.inq7.net/inq7viewpoints/columns/view_article.php?article_id=11543

their part[68]. Invoking development was simply a cynical ploy to implicitly make participation in the Doha Round linked to development assistance, and hence make the process more acceptable to the poor world.

The second factor that shows the WTO's insensitivity to favorable terms of trade and development aspirations of Africa is its position on intellectual property rights. The WTO, invoking its agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), effectively asks developing and least-developed countries to allow for pharmaceutical companies to enforce their rights provided under TRIPS, until January 2016[69]. But what are the development implications of this? First, what this means is that it will be more difficult for these countries to have the support of the WTO to purchase essential drugs to address the public health problems that they face. Now, the achievement of the fourth, fifth and sixth goals are directly contingent on the success of public heath sectors in poor countries. Besides, the success of first three goals is as well dependent, albeit indirectly, on effective public health services. This greatly questions the WTO's commitment to the welfare of the poor parts of the world. Further, considering that most of its countries are the most afflicted with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, it is easy to understand that this provision overlooks the development aspirations of sub-Saharan Africa.

Apart from the negative effect on public health, another effect of TRIPS is that it condones the high cost of technology. Today, the main beneficiaries of intellectual property protection are largely transnational corporations, which use intellectual property laws to own and control research and development[70]. In doing so, they constrain access to technology that can facilitate key aspects of development in Africa.

Finally, TRIPS makes possible the plagiarism of African creative inventions. According to the document, traditional knowledge is not 'new, does not involve an inventive step

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[68] ibid.
[69] WTO, 2001, Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, WT/MIN (01)/DEC/2, paragraph 7
[70] UNDP, 2003, *Making Global Trade Work for People*, Earthscan Publications Limited, p 207

and is not necessarily capable of industrial application'[71]. The point here seems to be that since this knowledge has often been in use for generations and is community-based, it is not owned by an individual whose creative input can be demonstrated and in whom therefore the right of ownership must be solely vested. What this means is that the community which owns such knowledge cannot own a copyright to it or patent it. This makes such intellectual output available for the use of everyone without the payment of royalties. The advantage of this to Western economies is evidenced by the use of African indigenous art in textiles and household products by European and American manufacturers.

So far, our appraisal of the eighth MDG has concentrated on its dependence on "trade" and its regulatory structures and political dynamics. We would now like to consider the concept underlying that goal (development partnership) from a broader perspective. What is 'partnership' in this context, and in what sense can it further Africa's development aspirations? In our view, the 'partnership' sought by the eighth MDG is the same one that the NEPAD seeks[72]. This refers to some form of continuous relationship between the wealthy West and sub-Saharan African countries that is considered desirable to the extent that it holds the prospect of generating "capital flows to Africa, as an essential component of a sustainable long-term approach to filling the resource gap"[73]. Existing global arrangements such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO regime are envisaged to reflect the authenticity of this development partnership.

It has been sufficiently argued in the preceding chapters of this work that these institutions have no intentions of forging a development-friendly partnership with Africa. Such a partnership must be mutually respectful and beneficial. However, the supposition that a partnership could be built that would rectify the existing abusive and unequal relations between the West and Africa borders on fantasy. The Akan maxim, that 'the hand that receives is always beneath that which offers' succinctly explains why such a supposition is illusory. For, if the philosophy of capitalism is taken seriously, one cannot

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[71] Ibid. p 225
[72] See Section 1.4.3.2
[73] Ibid. Paragraph 153

ignore its understanding of the nature and purpose of competition which, as stated in section 1.4.1, justifies the taking of human life and dignity if these obstruct 'victory' in the quest for wealth accumulation. Therefore if one takes this philosophy seriously, then one would hardly come to the conclusion that capitalists will offer someone resources in aid to enable the person ascend to the position where you can compete with them!

The final critical comment on the MDGs that we wish to make is that most of them repeat long-held commitments of the international community that are yet to be fulfilled[74], and one wonders what special circumstances have now emerged to enhance their fulfillment. The Report on the 2005 World Summit on the MDGs acknowledges that Africa is the only continent not on track to meet any of the goals of the Millennium Declaration by 2015[75]. And even the NEPAD clearly supposes that the meeting of these targets by Africa depends on financial support from the rich world. Whatever the merits of this presumption, any optimism for such financial support has been considerably diminished by the decision of the American government and its allies to commit money to a 'war on terrorism' in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the United States. Financing the war on terror has become the opportunity cost of the willingness of the rich world to meet their ODA targets pledged at Monterrey[76]. Yet the Monterrey Consensus stated explicitly that one of the goals for setting these targets is to promote sustainable development[77]. In view of these, the Millennium declaration's commitment to assisting Africa to realize the stipulated goals[78] is questionable.

2.7   Sustainable Development

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published a report entitled "Our Common Future". This document came to be known as the "Brundtland Report" after the Commission's chairwoman, Gro Harlem Brundtland. In

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[74] Sachs, J. D., 2005, *The End of Poverty,* op. cit. p 213
[75] United Nations, 2005. *Revised Draft Outcome Document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of September 2005*, Document Number A/59/HLPM/CRP.1/Rev.2; paragraph 44
[76] Sachs, J., 2005, *The End of Poverty* , op. cit., p. 214-218
[77] United Nations, 2002, *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development*, New York, Paragraph 1
[78] United Nations 2000. *Millennium Declaration*, op. cit. paragraphs 27 - 28

consonance with the theories discussed in this chapter, the report held that fulfilling human needs and aspirations for a better life is the most important goal of development, and that poor people have a justified right in having these needs and aspirations fulfilled[79]. Toward this goal, countries must pursue 'sustainable development', defined as development that meets the needs of the present without endangering the opportunities of future generations to meet their own needs[80]. Essentially, this meant that current human needs and aspirations must be fulfilled by promoting levels and types of production and consumption that do not destroy the ecology.

Since the publication of this report, the discourse on the objectives and strategies of development has been characterized by the concept of sustainability. But to what extent does this concept provide inspiration for practical remedies for the excesses of economism, and for poverty eradication? We take a closer look at the report on the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, to determine this.

In line with the Brundtland Report, the report of the Johannesburg Summit considered economic development, social development and environmental protection as "the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars" of sustainable development[81]. One of the conditions for achieving this is to gain access to financial resources and open up markets for underdeveloped countries[82]. This, according to the report, is easily done by participating in globalization, which it defines as "the rapid integration of markets, mobility of capital and significant increases in investment flows around the world"[83].

The Report adopts the MDGs[84], and participatory approaches to development[85]. It also welcomes and supports NEPAD[86], and yet re-affirms the vital role of indigenous people

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[79] United Nations, 1987, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, New York, p. 24 - 25
[80] Ibid. p. 24
[81] United Nations. 2002. *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg*. New York. Paragraph 5
[82] Ibid. paragraph 18
[83] Ibid. paragraph 47
[84] Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, paragraph 1
[85] Ibid. Paragraph 26
[86] Ibid. paragraph 22

in sustainable development[87]. Further, it "acknowledges the importance of ethics for sustainable development[88]"

Paragraph 7 of the Plan of Implementation of The Report identifies poverty as the greatest challenge facing the world today and its eradication as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. To achieve this, development strategies at the national and international levels must be geared towards:

(a) Halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than 1 dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water;

(b) Establishing a world solidarity fund to eradicate poverty and to promote social and human development in the developing countries pursuant to modalities to be determined by the General Assembly,

(c) Developing national programmes for sustainable development and local and community development to promote the empowerment of people living in poverty and their organizations. These programmes should reflect their priorities and enable them to increase access to productive resources, public services and institutions, in particular land, water, employment opportunities, credit, education and health;

(d) Promoting women's equal access to and full participation in, decision-making at all levels, mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies and strategies, eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and improving the status, health and economic welfare of women and girls through full and equal access to economic opportunity, land, credit, education and health-care services;

(e) Developing policies and ways and means to improve access by indigenous people and their communities to economic activities and increase their employment through, where appropriate, measures such as training, technical assistance and credit facilities.

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[87] Ibid. paragraph 25
[88] Plan of implementation, ibid., Paragraph 2

(f) Delivering basic health services for all and reduce environmental health threats, taking into account the special needs of children and the linkages between poverty, health and environment, with provision of financial resources, technical assistance and knowledge transfer to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(g) Ensuring that children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and will have equal access to all levels of education;

(h) Providing access to agricultural resources for people living in poverty, especially women and indigenous communities, and promoting, as appropriate, land tenure arrangements that recognize and protect indigenous and common property resource management systems;

(i) Building basic rural infrastructure, diversifying the economy and improving transportation and access to markets, market information and credit for the rural poor to support sustainable agriculture and rural development;

(j) Transferring basic sustainable agricultural techniques and knowledge, including natural resource management, to small and medium-scale farmers, fishers and the rural poor, especially in developing countries, including through multi-stakeholder approaches and public-private partnerships aimed at increasing agriculture production and food security;

(k) Increasing food availability and affordability, including through harvest and food technology and management, as well as equitable and efficient distribution systems, by promoting, for example, community-based partnerships linking urban and rural people and enterprises;

(l) Combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought and floods through measures such as improved use of climate and weather information and forecasts, early warning systems, land and natural resource management, agricultural practices and ecosystem conservation in order to reverse current trends and minimize degradation of land and water resource.

(m) Increasing access to water sanitation in national sustainable development strategies

2.7.1   Criticisms of Sustainable Development:

Strategies (a) to (m) are undoubtedly reformulations of the MDGs and elements of the recommendations of Brundtland Report. In this wise, the aspirations of the summit are admirable. However, the report contains a number of noteworthy inconsistencies that deserve critical attention.

As indicated above, the report supports NEPAD, and yet purports to affirm the vital role of indigenous people in sustainable development. We understand this reference to indigenous people to include their cultural products. If so, then we encounter an inconsistency. We argued in section 1.4.3.2 that NEPAD cannot rightfully claim to be African-owned and African-led because of the miserly role it assigns to African culture in the quest for Africa's development. We pointed out that the role that NEPAD assigns to African culture is incongruent with significant contribution to development. Accordingly, the Johannesburg report cannot consistently adopt NEPAD and consider indigenous cultures as assets for sustainable development in Africa.

Secondly, the NEPAD is deeply rooted in neo-liberalism; yet the policy prescriptions of neo-liberal economics have repeatedly been shown not to work in Africa. Further, neo-liberal democratic politics is not consistent with the social theory and organization in the indigenous African setting[89]. Consequently, a programme that wholeheartedly adopts NEPAD will be saddled with intractable tensions when it insists on employing indigenous knowledge and values towards its aims.

Further, the report acknowledges the importance of globalization for sustainable development. As stated in section 2.7 above, it defines globalization as the rapid integration of markets, mobility of capital and significant increases in investment flows around the world. So granted, the neo-liberal economic orientation of globalization will hardly need substantiation. This paves the way for asking whether globalization can ever be in harmony with sustainable development in Africa.

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[89] We will argue this point fully in the final chapter.

2.8   The "African Alternative Framework"

A discussion of the *African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment Programs for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation*[90] (*Alternative Framework*) ought, perhaps to have ensued soon after the discussion of the SAPs in section 1.4.3.3. We chose to present this framework here because of its proclamation to be an 'alternative'. It would be useful therefore to read this in conjunction with section 1.4.3.3 in order to have a clearer insight into the genesis and objectives of this framework.

Soon after the World Bank's publication of *Africa's Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s* which, as indicated in section 1.4.3.3 claimed implementation of SAPs were improving African economies, African opposition to the SAPs moved beyond criticism to the search for an alternative framework. In 1989, African ministers of finance, meeting under the auspices of UNECA, adopted *Alternative Framework* which, unlike the SAP, sought to deal "with the root causes of underdevelopment in Africa"[91].

Claude Ake points out various ways in which *Alternative Framework* differs from the SAPs[92]. First, its point of departure is solutions to the root causes of Africa's underdevelopment. Accordingly, it places the origins of the structural deformities in African economies partly in the colonial period. Further, it conceives of the problems of Africa not as short-term ones to be corrected by monetarism but those that need a long-term agenda from a comprehensive perspective.

These differences move "beyond policies and strategies and agendas and assume an ideological form"[93]. As the then Executive Secretary of UNECA has argued, this is

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[90] United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 1989, *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation,* Document E/ECA/CM, 15/6/Rev.3, Addis Ababa: UNECA
[91] Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development,* Ibadan: Spectrum Books, p. 36
[92] Ibid. pp 36-39
[93] Ibid. p. 38

exemplified in four major ways[94]. First, it is human centered, in the sense that "it distances itself completely from the orthodox mechanistic models or approaches that have reduced the entire business of adjustment to the attainment of a few balances… without any regard to the implications of the social sectors and the overall welfare of the people". Secondly, it is a comprehensive approach to socioeconomic change to the extent that it situates change in a broader context of social, political, cultural and economic values and institutions. Thirdly, its policies derive "their validity and legitimacy from the very structural nature of the African political economy"; and finally, it is sensitive to specificity to the extent that it proposes a program to be applied in Africa.

In spite of this, *Alternative Framework* did "not appear to have emerged as a credible alternative policy"[95], as it was unable to stem the tide of the adoption of structural adjustment by African governments. The question that must be answered then is why so, in spite of the African-centeredness of its program? Could it be because African leaders suffer *akrasis*, knowing what is right and yet lacking the political will to do it? If there is a gap between what African leaders want to do to address the effects of poverty on the continent and what they in fact do, then what other 'alternative' is there to end poverty?

2.9 The End of Poverty

Clearly, the aspirations of the World Bank, IMF, and countries that have formulated Poverty Reduction Strategies as vehicles for development are surpassed by both the Brundtland Report and the Johannesburg Report. This is because these reports espouse the vision of eradicating poverty, whereas the PRSs and the Bretton Woods institutions seek the limited goal of poverty alleviation or reduction. Two notable standpoints, since the Johannesburg summit, have sided with the vision of the Reports. First, at the initiative of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, the leaders of France, Chile and Spain, as well as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan rallied representatives of 110 Member States, including the more than 50 heads of State and government, to adopt the

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[94] Adedeji, A., 1990, "Dimensions of the African Crisis", Keynote Address to the Conference on the Economic Crisis in Africa, October 25-28; cf. Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development*, op. cit., p. 38
[95] Ake, C., ibid. p 39

Declaration on the Action against Hunger and Poverty on the 20th of September 2004. The Declaration considered hunger eliminable and its persistence "the greatest scandal" in the World[96]. Then in 2005 Jeffrey Sachs, in his acclaimed book[97], proposed measures for ending extreme poverty in the world by the year 2025[98]. The key to these measures is what he terms 'clinical economics'[99]. Because of their significant influence on the debate on poverty, we want to turn our attention to Sachs' ideas.

2.9.1 Clinical Economics and the End of Poverty

According to Sachs, 'clinical economics' replaces the "structural adjustment era[100]", which was based on "a simplistic, even simpleminded, view of the challenge of poverty". This simple-mindedness is reflected in both the assumption that the responsibility for poverty reduction lay entirely with the poor countries themselves; and the view that this responsibility would be adequately met by private-sector-led economic development[101].

Sachs outlines five tenets of clinical economics. The first is its acknowledgement of the complexity of economies, and that "the failure of one system can lead to cascades of failure in other parts of the economy"[102]. This leads to the need for, secondly, differential diagnosis and the prescription of appropriate remedies that are well suited to each country's specific conditions". This would require the practitioners of clinical economics to consider the inter-relatedness of economic and fiscal policy, patterns of governance and culture, as well as the physical geography and human ecology of the context they are working in[103]. By contrast, the IMF, in diagnosing the problems of countries, has focused on a very narrow range of issues, such as corruption, barriers to private enterprise, budget

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[96] Action Against Hunger and Poverty, 2004. *The New York Declaration on the Action Against Hunger and Poverty*; at www.mre.gov.br/ingles/politica_externa/temas_agenda/acfp/final_declaration.doc, p.2
[97] Sachs, J. D. 2005, *The End of Poverty,* op. cit.
[98] Ibid. pp2-3, Chapters 14 and 15
[99] Ibid. p 81
[100] It is clear that Sachs considers the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) as extensions of the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1980s, as we have argued in section 2.4.3.3 above. This attribution is plausible because his work was published in 2005, years after many countries have adopted the PRSs. His "structural adjustment policies" could hardly, therefore, be referring to policies of the 1980s.
[101] Sachs, J. D., 2005, *The End of Poverty*, op. cit., p 81
[102] Ibid. p. 79
[103] Ibid. pp 83 - 86

deficits, and state ownership of production. It has also standardized and universalized its prescriptions without regard to the specific context[104].

The third aspect of clinical economics, therefore, is that it views solutions in "family" terms. This means that it does not, like the World Bank and IMF conceive of entirely internal solutions such as trade liberalization and fiscal policy, but understands that internal solutions could be ineffectual if not combined with reforms in the rich countries, debt cancellation, increased foreign financial assistance for investments and support to maintaining peace[105].

Fourthly, clinical economics endorses a monitoring and evaluating framework that judges policy and project outcomes rather than their inputs. According to Sachs, this compares with the IMF and WB's practice of evaluating performance solely by inputs. " A government may be told to cut its budget deficit by 1 percent of GDP. It is judged by whether or not it carries out that measure, not on whether the measure produces faster growth or a reduction of poverty, or a solution to a debt crisis"[106].

Finally, the approach applies the requisite ethical and professional standards that the development economics community hitherto lacked. This deficiency is exemplified by its inattention to the context in defining problems of impoverished countries and prescribing solutions to them[107].

2.9.2   Clinical Economics in Action

The success of clinical economics, we are told, depends on founding a global network of connections between rich and poor countries that can secure Official Development Aid (ODA) and key investments to finance Millennium Development Goals-centered poverty

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[104] Ibid. p 79
[105] Ibid. p 80
[106] Ibid. p 80
[107] Ibid. p. 80 - 81

reduction strategies in poor countries[108]. This position is not new; it goas back at least to the Cocoyoc Declaration. Recently, the Paris Declaration of 2005, adopted by Ministers from ninety one countries as well as Heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions[109], recognized that increasing the volume of aid and other development resources is crucial for the achievement of the MDGs. Likewise, the five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 (the Millennium + 5 Summit) acknowledged the need for substantial increases in ODA, especially meeting the pledges at Monterrey, if the goals and targets of the MDGs are to be met by 2015[110].

Sachs points out, and I think correctly, that the effort required of the rich world toward ending poverty is so little that doing less questions its humaneness. This is because 0.6% of the income of the twenty-two members of the Development Assistance Committee[111] (DAC) of the OECD in 2004, for instance, would in theory have provided for the basic needs of 1.1 billion of the world's extreme poor[112]. Further, the money needed to meet the MDGs by 2015 is 0.5% of the GNP of the DAC members; yet in 2004, only five members of the DAC (Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) met this target[113]. One of the lowest contributors, the United States, is as well the richest economy in the world. It contributed 0.15% of its 2004 income. During that year, the U. S spent about 2.5 billion dollars in two weeks to support its war on terror in Iraq. This is as much it spent for an entire year of economic development assistance to Africa[114]. One needs only to compare this amount with the country's $150 billion of military spending in the fiscal year 2005 to appreciate the seriousness with which the U. S attaches to the effort toward ending poverty globally!

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[108] Ibid. p 287
[109] Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2nd March 2005, Paris. At
http://www.adb.org/media/articles/2005/7033_international_community_aid/paris_declaration.pdf
[110] United Nations, 2005, Revised draft outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of September 2005 submitted by the President of the General Assembly. Document Number A/59/HLPM/CRP.1/Rev.2; Paragraph 22,
[111] These are Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States
[112] Ibid. p 290
[113] Ibid. pp 302 – 304
[114] Ibid. p 307

That these calls have largely fallen on deaf ears is less perplexing if one considers that the predominant guide of social and economic organization in the West is self-interest driven by competition. As noted in the introductory chapter, the ethic of competition is hardly reconcilable with humaneness. It is worth recalling that after passing of the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, which embodied the Marshall Plan, the United States provided more than one percent of its GNP from 1948-1952 to rebuild Europe[115]; and the main reason for this was to bolster America's own economic progress and security interests by establishing properly functioning international trade and markets in Europe, and undermining the advance of the Soviet Union on the East of the continent[116]. Recent events, like the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the perennial support of the U. S. to Israel suggest that not much has changed in this policy since the end of the Second World War. This tradition of pursuing self-interest to the detriment of global poverty eradication and justice suggests that for the United States of America and many of its allies in the G8, 'development aid' is another way of investing for self-interest! This in fact fortifies the arguments, discussed in section 1.1, that the catalyst to a multilateral thinking on development in the West was the immediate political interests of the United States of America. It also questions the veracity of Harry Truman's view, recorded also in section 2.1, that America's aim with assisting the poor world to develop is not based on "exploitation for [self] profit" but on fair dealing.

2.9.3 A Critique of Sachs

Sachs' clinical economics advocates a wide-ranging approach to defining development problems and solutions. In this sense it adopts the sustainable development paradigm and must accordingly answer to the criticisms of that paradigm outlined in section 2.7.1. Sachs also adopts the MDGs. In fact he serves as Director of the Millennium Project, which seeks to realize the MDGs in selected poor countries by applying appropriate

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[115] Ibid. p. 342
[116] Ibid. p. 341

technologies. Accordingly, his clinical economics is also answerable to the criticism leveled against the MDGs in section 2.6.1 above.

Besides these, an infamous weakness in Sachs' views is his suppression of the role of colonialism and the wars of conquest in the prevalent global disparities in wealth. He insists that exploitation of other regions by Europe and the U. S. is insignificant in explaining wealth creation and accumulation in the West. As regards this, he asserts:

> "Let me dispose of one idea right from the start. Many people assume that the rich have gotten rich because the poor have gotten poor. In other words, they assume that Europe and the United States used military force and political strength during and after the era of colonialism to extract wealth from the poorest regions, and thereby to grow rich…… However, the real story of modern economic growth has been the ability of some regions to achieve unprecedented long-term increases in total production to levels never before seen in the world, while other regions stagnated, at least by comparison. Technology has been the main force behind the long term increases in income in the rich world, not exploitation of the poor"[117].

This claim, that current disparities in wealth globally are due essentially to technology is dubious. Economic growth necessarily required the employment of productive resources, and the siphoning of vital human and economic resources out of sub-Saharan Africa during the slave trade, colonialism and their aftermath to the West, has been sufficiently documented[118]. This transfer of resources from Africa to the West merits prominence in explaining the differences in economic growth which Sachs records among these regions. Further, this exploitation of the colonies, which produced excess income for investment in the Western countries, may also partly account for the financing of technological innovation. Therefore the de-emphasis on exploitation in accounting for wealth creation and accumulation in the West is unjustified.

Further, this claim that colonialism bears insignificant blame for the poverty of the Third World invokes a certain level of inconsistency in Sachs. This is because he makes at least

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[117] Ibid., p 31
[118] This point has been sufficiently made by Rodney, (Rodney, W., 1972, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* Abuja: Panaf) and Nkrumah, (Nkrumah, K. 1966, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, New York: International Publishers), and most of the Dependency Theorists considered in sections 2.3.2 – 2.3.5.2 above

three assertions in his work that clearly contradict the above claim. First, he acknowledges that "Africa's development crisis reflects the interactions of history, geography, domestic policies and geopolitics[119]". Secondly, he asserts that "almost every African political crisis has a long history of Western meddling among its many causes. The length of the meddling extends to the colonial era in that most of these conflicts reflect the economic interests of investors from former colonial masters"[120]. Finally, Sachs asserts that "far from lifting Africa economically, the colonial era left Africa bereft of educated citizens and leaders, basic infrastructure and public health facilities"[121]. It is difficult to understand how these three assertions square up with the de-emphasis of colonialism and neo-colonialism as causes of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. In view of these, it is defensible to charge Sachs with inconsistency.

In so far as his desire and approach for an end of poverty in Africa is concerned, another problem we encounter in Sachs is his claim to inspiration by the Enlightenment. He mentions philosophers such as John Locke, David Hume, Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant and Francis Bacon as providing the basis for the notion that "science and technology, fuelled by human reason, can be a sustained force for social improvements and human betterment"[122]. In this respect, he loyally follows the Human Development Report of 1990. Two points are worth noting about this source of inspiration. The first is that it projects the Eurocentric character of Sachs' project. We share Serequeberhan's view that the Enlightenment, as a project of critical and rational emancipation, cannot further the emancipation of non-Europeans, especially sub-Saharan Africans. This is so because according to some of its prominent philosophers, especially Immanuel Kant, reason and rationality are not endowed to black Africans[123]. Secondly, the racism and condescending attitude of many of the European thinkers on whom Sachs' draw towards Africa and Africans, are well documented[124]. It is easily inferred from the evidence that their ideas of

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[119] Sachs, J., 2005, *The End of Poverty*, op. cit. p 188
[120] Ibid. p. 190
[121] Ibid. p 189
[122] Ibid. pp. 348-349
[123] Serequeberhan, T, 2002, "The Critique of Eurocentrism and the Practice of African Philosophy" in Eze, E. C. (ed), *Postcolonial African Philosophy*, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, p 151-152
[124] Ramose, M. B, 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit. p. 12;
- Wiredu, K, 1980. *Philosophy and an African Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 49.

social improvements and human betterment did not include those of Africans. In fact, these ideas embodied epistemologies and applied philosophies that fostered the subjugation and brutality meted out to Africans during the slave trade and colonialism[125]. Another crucial point of criticism of Sachs is, philosophically, that his "clinical economics" solution revolves within the epistemological paradigm of economic science in the West. Accordingly, it cannot be an 'alternative' in the strict sense. As proposed in section 1.1, a framework of development must be based on the specificity and historicity of the culture seeking to be developed if it hopes to succeed in application. Consequently, it is difficult to see how notions that are contemptuous of the reality and humanity of Africans can simultaneously serve to advance their welfare and dignity.

2.10   Concluding Remarks

Although they differ in significant ways from the mainstream perspectives considered in Chapter One, the conceptions and theories discussed in this chapter do not provide fundamental alternatives to Western thinking on development. Many of them merely elaborate on a set of theories "that can be understood within the framework of Western rationalism with roots in the philosophies of the European Enlightenment[126]". They constitute "a confusion of agendas"[127], based on decisions and choices which are seldom adopted on the basis of a conscious reflection on the needs and aspirations of Africans. As such they can hardly be said to be motivated by a quest for Africa's development.

One exemplification of this obliviousness to the needs and aspirations of Africa is that the theories and programmes adhere, in various degrees, to the Eurocentic or economistic core of mainstream economic development theory. In fact none of the strategies considered in this chapter directly criticize the conceptions and theorizing of the

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[125] Mudimbe, V. Y, 1988, *The Invention of Africa,* op. cit., Chapters 1 – 3;
Irele, A, 1983, "Introduction" in Hountondji, P. J, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality.* London: Hutchison and Co.; op. cit., pp 7- 23
[126] Martinussen, J., 1997, *Society, State & Market,* op. cit. p 291
[127] Ake, C., 2001, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, op. cit., Chapter 2

mainstream economistic theories. Rather, they establish, in various ways, that these theories can go wrong in practice[128].

The viability and anticipated success of most of the strategies and perspectives considered in this chapter, especially the MDGs and Sachs' Clinical Economics, as well as the NEPAD, are premised on optimism about the benefits of globalization. However, articulating the view of many commentators, Awoonor argues that the nature and purpose of 'globalization' as presented in official Western discourse and by the Bretton Woods institutions is a myth[129]. In fact, "the globalization agenda today is part of the most recent mutation of the capitalist ideology resurgent after the collapse of the Soviet Union"[130]. Within the context of African economic reality, globalization "defines a plethora of factors including the brutal exploitation of our [Africa's] raw materials and the consolidation of a chronic dependency syndrome"[131].

Hardly, then, can perspectives that tout the 'virtues' of globalization, as those presented in this chapter amount to an alternative paradigm that can successfully mount a frontal attack on poverty in Africa and for Africa's development. Little wonder, then, that the consequence of their application in sub-Saharan Africa is increasing poverty. Conceptions and practices of development are applications of social science. What is needed for Africa's development is a paradigm that reflects the specificity and historicity of Africa. We insist that such a social scientific paradigm must necessarily be rooted in the philosophical soil of the continent for it to succeed. The question arises then as to why a science that is not fixed in the intellectual disposition of a culture must in practice fail in that context? We turn our attention to the exploration of this question in the next chapter.

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[128] Martinussen, J., 1997, *Society, State & Market,* op. cit., p 333

[129] Awoonor, K., 2006, "Humanities and Globalization: An African Perspective", in *Legon Journal of the Humanities: Special Edition 2006,* Legon: University of Ghana, p. 5. Here Awoonor argues that globalization, thus presented, "connotes, at the most benign level, the integration of the world into a unified trading, resource use regime, the sharing of technology which confers on all its corners of the globe, the benefits of free trade and an equal share in the good things that science and technology bring in their wake."

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid, p 7

CHAPTER THREE: SCIENCE AND AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

3.1   Is Science a Universally Valid Knowledge System?

For most of its career, modern Western science has portrayed itself as the only universally valid framework for the explanation and prediction of natural and social phenomena. It has endeavored to retain and promote this self-made image by proclaiming its knowledge as constituted of a level of objectivity and rationality that makes it universally valid. The point of departure for this view is the claim of science to have secured control over 'the principle of the uniformity of nature'. This principle states that what has once happened will, all things being equal, under similar circumstances, happen again[1]. Thus if the events of nature do not happen at random but follow an unvarying pattern, then the primary aim of science is to discover and apply the laws that govern these regularities in order to successfully predict and explain regularities in nature and social phenomena[2]. Science has met this aim sufficiently to make its explanations universally valid, it is claimed. This achievement of science, it is further claimed, stems from its internal procedures that enable scientists to transcend their own interests as well as the interests and values of the cultures in which they work. Sandra Harding characterizes this as upholding an "internalist epistemology", and rejects it. In her view, this amounts to claiming that "scientific knowledge and its effects are consequences of 'internal' epistemological features of modern scientific processes, such as their inherent rationality, unique logic of justification, universal language and objectivity-achieving method[3]. Harding objects to this internalist epistemological stance because in her view, a social context determines not only the presence of scientific ideas and practice, but also their nature. Scientific theories and practice are thus socially constructed and ordered.

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[1] Jeans, J., 1942, *Physics and Philosophy*, New York: Dover Publications, p. 3-4
[2] There is a clear affinity of the natural sciences with the social sciences. This is affirmed by Auguste Comte's claim, reported by Sir James Jeans, that the abstract sciences could be arranged in a hierarchy, in the order: mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, sociology. (see *Physics and Philosophy,* ibid. p 5).
[3] Harding, S., 1997, "Is Modern Science an Ethnoscience? Rethinking Epistemological Assumptions", in Eze, E. C., (ed), *Post-colonial African Philosophy, A Reader,* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p 46

This order, although it is relative to society, appears to the Western scientist as an objective truth about the world.

The aim of this chapter is to share in the rejection of the internalist epistemology of modern science, and to affirm the dependence of science on particular ontologies, epistemologies and sets of values. Further, we will advance the view that the development theories and their approaches considered in chapter two, as applications of social science, have failed to succeed in Africa because they impose Western ontologies and epistemologies. We begin with an exploration into the basis of the claim to objectivity and universality of scientific knowledge.

3.2   Modern Science: Initial and Current Preoccupations

The insistence on a unique rationality and logic of justification for the explanatory framework of modern Western science is a relic of its origins and initial preoccupations. These origins are located in the Copernican Revolution[4], the essence of which was the rejection of the geocentric view of the universe which had dominated European thought for 1500 years, for the heliocentric view[5]. The geocentric view held that the earth was the center of the universe, and that the stars, sun, moon and planets revolved around it. Aristotle, the most influential proponent of the geocentric view, formulated teleological explanations of both the natural and social world. This type of explanation purports to make an event intelligible by ascribing a purpose to it. Accordingly, the physical behaviour of objects was explained in terms of the purposes associated with their material constitution; and the concepts of purpose and design were also applied in understanding and classifying human activity[6]. In fact even contemporaneously, the explanatory power of geocentric science remains. Undoubtedly, purposes constitute *reasons,* in the social

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[4] Although Copernicus bears the name of this shift of scientific paradigm, three works by three persons, stretching from the mid 16th century to the mid 17th century are recognized as being responsible for solidifying its foundations. These are Nicolaus Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus,* which appeared in the 1530s, Johannes Kepler's *Mysterium Cosmographicum* which appeared in 1596, and Galileo Galilei's *The Two Chief World Systems,* published in 1632.
[5] Doyal, L and Harris, R., 1986, *Empiricism, Explanation and Rationality: An introduction to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 27
[6] Ibid. p. 29-30

sciences, why people behave in particular ways. Further, "every time the expressions 'sunrise' and 'sunset' are employed it is testimony to the lingering explanatory power of geocentric system"[7].

On the other hand, proponents of the Copernican Revolution theorized the sun as center of the universe, around which all celestial objects revolved[8]. A key outcome of this Revolution was acceptance that nature should be theoretically and experimentally explored with reference to its observed and supposed regularities. Hence the aim of science became the discovery of laws – universally valid descriptions of the fundamental structure and patterns of the physical and social world, or "the ways things *are*!". In fulfillment of this, explanations in modern natural sciences are deductive-nomological. They are deductive in the sense that their premises (or explanans)[9] logically entail their conclusions (or explanandum); and they are nomological in that at least one of their premises is a law. These explanations are therefore contingent on the canons of mathematics and formal logic.

As footnote 2 indicates, there is a strong affinity between the natural and social sciences. This is exemplified by a number of facts. One is the insistence of many contemporary philosophers and theorists of the social sciences that the basic theories of the social sciences are reducible to some suitable theory in the natural sciences[10]. This means that nomological explanatory principles are applicable to both physical events and human actions[11]. In short, the criterion for the recognition of a theory as worthy of acceptance, for these philosophers and theorists, is the same in both the natural and social sciences. Thus causal necessity is required by explanations in both branches of science. Another fact is the extrapolation of the mathematical and logical methods to the social sciences. We will discus this more fully in section 3.4.

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[7] Ibid. p. 28
[8] This is what is commonly referred to as the heliocentric view of the universe
[9] Generally, this consists of one or more general laws, one or more 'initial conditions' which describe the experimental situation, and an 'assumption' which is usually stated as 'all things being equal'
[10] Morgenbesser, S., 1970, "Is it a Science?", in *Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis,* Emmet, D and MacIntyre, A. (eds), London: Macmillan, p. 20
[11] Harris and Doyal,, 1986, *Empiricism, Explanation and Rationality,* op. cit. p. 52. Also Habermas, J., 1970, "Knowledge and Interest", in *Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis*, op. cit. p. 52.

The preoccupation with causal necessity based on a unique logic of justification seeking certainty is easily traceable to the origins modern science, which are characterized by two exceptional events.   The first is the replacement of the geocentric view with the heliocentric view. The second is the Reformation, which refers to a series of events in the first half of the sixteenth century, initiated by the posting by Martin Luther of the "Ninety five theses" on the church at Wittenberg. These events collapsed the Catholic Church's hold on the production and dissemination of knowledge. Before the Reformation, the monasteries of The Church were centers of excellence for theorizing a unified worship of God, as well as for Aristotelian metaphysics which underlay geocentric science. In spite of its strong connections with geocentric thought, the Church suppressed innovative scientific thinking by branding thinkers as Galileo Galilei and Giodarno Bruno[12] as heretics deserving of anathema and death. In the 1500s, the reformation challenged and overthrew the Vatican as the exclusive seat of religious authority and political dominance. The certainty of geocentric science, accumulated over 1500 years, as well as the hierocratic thinking and ordering of society embedded in the suppression of innovative thought, crumbled with the demise of this unity and authority of The Church and led to the emergence of modern Western science.

The collapse of these two foundations of the production and dissemination of knowledge before the Reformation occasioned "disdainful mistrust and extreme skepticism toward any new system of justifying and authorizing knowledge about nature"[13]. Accordingly, the new scientists promoting the heliocentric view "had an uphill battle presenting themselves as creditable to a nervous, skeptical intelligentsia comprised of intellectual Church officials and scholarly gentlemen affiliated with Royal Courts"[14].

The earliest theorists and practitioners of modern science, then, needed to adopt a unique self-validating posture in order to generate confidence in their methods and results. This

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[12] Burnt at the stake in the year 1600 at the instigation of The Church
[13] Lauer, H., 2004, "Cause and Effect between Knowledge Traditions", in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series No. 8, 2004, Legon: University of Ghana, p. 261
[14] Ibid.

is exemplified by the overriding aim of Descartes' hyperbolic doubt and inquiry in the *Meditations*[15]*,* and his discovery of *cogito ergo sum*[16] as the flawless foundation of all knowledge. What is implicit in the Cartesian enterprise is that rationalism, nurtured by the canons of logic and mathematics, is the only infallible source and justification for knowledge. All competing techniques of knowledge production and justification are rejected as quackery and nonsense. Yet to the extent that the 'truths' of deductive reason could be valid in their own right, i.e., without reference to the empirical world, Descartes' rationalism was a metaphysics.

3.3   The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Natural Sciences

If science is culture-dependent, then a metaphysics and cultural values are necessarily prior and foundational to its knowledge claims. This must be the case since ontology[17] and epistemology are intimately and inextricably linked by mutual implication. If ontology is the theory of being, and epistemology a theory of the justification of knowledge, then each must imply the other because claiming that something exists rationally implies the question: "how do you know"?; and claiming to know that *x* implies admitting the existence of *x*.

In the Western tradition of knowledge production, three special cases that illustrate the profound influence of metaphysics on the natural sciences[18] deserve mention here. The first is Sir Isaac Newton's works, which held exclusive sway as the paradigm of the

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[15] Descartes, R., 1998, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*, London: Penguin, p. 95. At the onset of his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes informs us that the main purpose of his enquiry is to rid himself of belief in things "which are not entirely certain and indubitable" as well as those that are "manifestly false", and "to begin afresh from the foundations" in the quest for "something firm and constant in the sciences". Later on in the *Meditations* (at p 103-105), we are assured that this pervasive doubting is a prerequisite for the quest for a type of foundation for knowledge that is so certain that any attempt to doubt it further proves the truth of it.

[16] "I think, therefore I am". This is the principle, advanced in *the Second Meditations,* (that the existence of a thinker, and of the whole world, incontestably depends on "clear and distinct" thought.

[17] The transition to 'ontology' in this sentence from 'metaphysics' in the previous one is a conscious one, informed by the fact that in Western philosophy, ontology is held to be the centre of metaphysics (see Honderich, T. (ed), 1995, *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 634. Whether this is the case in African philosophy is debatable, but we reserve a discussion of this for the next chapter.

[18] Burrt, E. A., 1932, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science.* , London, Routledge & Kegan Paul. Burrt traverses this territory in this historical and critical essay.

natural sciences until the theories of quantum mechanics and Einstein's theories of Relativity gained currency in the early twentieth century. As discussed in section 3.1, Aristotle was unparalleled in providing the metaphysical and theoretical basis of geocentric science. Newton has been considered by many as the equivalent philosopher and theoretician for modern (heliocentric) mechanistic science[19]. His 'discovery' of the laws of motion and the law of universal gravitation was considered to be the ultimate realization. This was sufficiently displayed by his contemporaries and posterity. Thus Locke spoke of the "incomparable Mr. Newton, an under-labourer, employed in clearing the ground and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge"[20]. Burrt records Henry Pembleton, the editor of the third edition of Newton's Principia Mathematica, in which these 'discoveries' were published, declaring that "…my admiration at the surprising inventions of this man [Newton], carries me to conceive of him as a person, who not only must raise the glory of the country which gave him birth, but that he has even done honour to human nature, by having extended the greatest and most noble of our faculties, reason, to subjects which, till he attempted them, appeared to be wholly beyond the reach of our limited capacities[21]". Further, the French scientist, Laplace, is reputed to have remarked that "Newton was not only the greatest genius that ever had existed, but also the most fortunate; inasmuch as there is but one universe, and it can therefore happen to but one man in the world's history to be the interpreter of its laws"[22].

So far as objects were masses, moving in space and time, under the impress of forces as Newton had defined them, their behaviour was now, as a result of his theories, "fully explicable in terms of exact mathematics"[23]. We need to emphasize that central to Newton's work was his finding a precise mathematical use for concepts like force, mass and inertia; and employing mathematics to assume definite answers to such fundamental questions as the nature of space, time, matter and motion. In this respect, it is legitimate

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[19] This opinion is affirmed by Burrt, ibid., p. 16
[20] Locke, J., 1995, An *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, Note 11 to the 'Epistle to the Reader"
[21] Burrt, E. A., 1932, *The Metaphysical Foundations,* op. cit ibid., p. 18
[22] ibid.
[23] ibid. p. 20

to conclude that Newton's greatest contribution to the growth of knowledge is his reduction of "the major phenomena of the whole universe of matter to a single mathematical law"[24]. For Newton, then, science was composed of laws stating the mathematical behaviour of nature. It is the exact mathematical formulation of the processes of the natural world. This reduction clearly implies authentication of Galileo's and the Descartes' doctrine that reason, exemplified by mathematics is, indisputably, the most reliable discoverer and explainer of the laws of nature[25].

The philosophy that is recipient of the florid eulogies above, then, is nothing short of Newton's affirmation of rationalism as groundwork for the metaphysics of science. The metaphysics of rationalism is displayed in its claim that the "truths" of reason could be valid in their own right, i.e., without reference to the empirical world. It is this metaphysics of science, and its concomitant belief in uniform patterns in nature, that underlie the arbitrary universalism of internalist epistemologies

Another metaphysical presupposition which Newton bequeathed to modern science is the doctrine of primary and secondary qualities of objects, inherited from Locke. That he inherited this from John Locke has been sufficiently argued by historians and philosophers of science alike[26]. Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities is set out in Book 2, Chapter 8 of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. According to this doctrine, the primary qualities of bodies are qualities that belong to, and inhere in the object itself, and as such, cannot be detached from the object. These qualities are solidity, extension, figure, situation, motion or rest, and number. In connection with this, Locke writes:

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[24] ibid., p. 204. Here, Burrt quotes Newton, in his preface to the *Principia* stating his intention to "….investigate the forces of nature, and from these forces to demonstrate the other phenomena". Clearly, the phrase "to demonstrate" suggests the pivotal role of mathematics in Newton's method.

[25] Galileo rejected explanation of natural phenomena in terms of the teleology of physical events as did geocentric scientists in favour of explaining them in terms of a mathematical formula expressing their processes and motions. Ibid., p. 203. Descartes also employs the geometrical method in his Meditations on First Philosophy to arrive at the pre-eminence of reason as a source and justification for knowledge

[26] Mackie, J. L., 1976, *Problems from Locke*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp 22 – 23. Also, Burrt, E. A. *Metaphysical Foundations,* op. cit. p. 20

"Take a grain of wheat, divide it into two parts; each part has still solidity, extension, figure, and mobility: divide it again, and it retains still the same qualities; and so divide it on, till the parts become insensible; they must retain still each of them all those qualities. For division (which is all that a mill, or pestle, or any other body, does upon another, in reducing it to insensible parts) can never take away either solidity, extension, figure, or mobility from any body, but only makes two or more distinct separate masses of matter... These I call original or primary qualities of body, which I think we may observe to produce simple ideas in us, viz. solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number"[27].

Locke believed that the world of primary qualities allows us a solid foundation for knowledge. Secondary Qualities, however, could give us no such knowledge, and are nothing more than the *effects* of the primary qualities on our senses. Thus he writes

"Qualities which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but power to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities, i.e. by the bulk, figure, texture, and motion of their insensible parts, as colours, sounds, tastes, etc. These I call secondary qualities..."[28].

For Newton too, the world of matter was composed ultimately of absolutely hard and indestructible particles equipped with the following qualities: solidity, mass, hardness, impenetrability, motion, size and shape[29]. From these are to be distinguished the secondary qualities, which, for Newton, "have no real existence outside of human brains, save as a disposition of the bodies or the rays to reflect or propagate certain motions"[30]. Just as for Locke, then, the secondary qualities for Newton are not qualities that inhere in the objects themselves.

The metaphysics of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities was criticized by Berkeley. He argued that the distinction is untenable to the extent that Locke insists both that the material world was a mind-independent reality, and also that all we could ever know were our perceptions (or *ideas*) of it. According to Berkeley, this is

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[27] Locke, J., 1975, *Essay* op. cit., Book 2 Chapter 8 Paragraph 9.
[28] ibid., Book 2 Chapter 8 Paragraph 10
[29] Burrt, E., A., 1932, *Metaphysical Foundations,* op. cit. pp. 228-229
[30] ibid. 233

flawed because "An idea can be like nothing but an idea"[31]. The point at issue here is that there is way of determining, *a priori* which qualities of objects are primary and which secondary. If secondary qualities are subjective, then how do we know that the primary qualities are not as well? Insisting nevertheless on this distinction constitutes metaphysics.

Another of Newton's metaphysical assumptions that informed modern science is his conception of the role of God in the existence and sustenance of the world, as well as in the production and validation of knowledge. Newton speaks of God as "containing in himself all things as their principle and place[32]". Also, "the Father is immovable, no place being capable of becoming emptier or fuller of him than it is by the eternal necessity of nature. All other things are movable from place to place"[33].

In light of this pronouncement it is justifiable to claim that when Newton spoke of bodies or of the center of gravity of the solar system moving in absolute space, he was not only referring to mathematical and mechanical laws. He also meant they were moving in God, that is, in the eternal and omniscient presence of the creator of all things. For, him, the role of God in the cosmic order is to impel, by his[34] will, the whole material universe in some direction. This results in motion but no change in place.

But for Newton, absolute space is not only the omnipresence of God. The world is subject to God's absolute dominion and his willful control of the events in it. It is, in other words, the infinite scene of divine knowledge and control[35]. God actively controls the world because He, "being in all places, is more able by his will to move the bodies

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[31] Berkeley, G., 1988, *Principles of Human Understanding/Three Dialogues between Hylas and Plotinus*, London: Penguin Books, 55

[32] Brewster, Memoirs, II, p. 154, Cf Burrt, ibid., p 257

[33] Brewster, Memoirs, II, p. 349, cf. Burrt, ibid.

[34] This pronoun is used advisedly here, to highlight Newton's sexist depiction of God in the immediately preceding quotations. It is clear that Newton's God is the same as Aristotle's who made only the European 'man', a 'rational animal. God is the ultimate rational animal because Newton combines, among his attributes, those which have reference to the mathematical order and harmony f the world.

[35] Burrt, E. A., 1932, *Metaphysical Foundations,* p. 258. Here Burrt refers to Newton's *Opticks*, (p. 344 ff.,) where Newton describes space as "the divine sensorium", a place where the intellect and will of God comprehend and guide events in the world.

within his boundless uniform sensorium, and thereby to form and reform parts of the universe"[36]. God is thus both infinite knowledge and Almighty Will.

For Newton, then, the world moves in accordance with divine energy, and whenever divine intelligence is cognizant of this movement, absolute motion is added to the system of the world. This reference to God's creative energy as the basis of events in the world is metaphysics. And so is the ascription of perfect knowledge to God. Two remarks may be made on this. The first is that arguably, this quest for an all-encompassing custodian of knowledge and reality, capable of certain self-justification of its own reality, underlies the internalist epistemological claim of universality. Secondly, the concept of divine energy as the source and sustenance of events in the world, seemingly believed by some, is not incontestable in African cultures. A number of African philosophers argue that the concept of energy does not necessarily require "divine" provenance or qualities in African culture. Thus Gyekye's claim that that the source of *sunsum* is necessarily divine[37] has been questioned by our position elsewhere that the ontology of *sunsum* is plausibly conceived as "a force of nature"[38]. The same is true of "the life force of the world"[39] the "perpetual exchange of forces" pronounced by Ogotemmeli. We will explore these points further in the next chapter.

Another influence of metaphysics on science is the theory of causation, which comprises of the following two principles:

a) the cause of an event (x) must necessarily precede the event (y)

b) the relationship between x and y is causal in the sense that it is non-coincidental and is necessary

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[36] Newton, Opticks, p 377, ff. Cf. Burrt, ibid., p. 359

[37] Gyekye, K., 1995, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 72-73

[38] Ajei, M. O. 2000*, The Paranormal: An Inquiry into some Features of Akan Metaphysics and Epistemology*, A Thesis presented in part-fulfillment of the requirements for the M. Phil Degree to the Department of Philosophy, Legon: University of Ghana.

[39] Griaule, M., 1965, *Conversations with Ogotemmeli, An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*, London: Oxford University Press, pp 18-19

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David Hume strenuously attacked the metaphysical basis of this conception of causation. He argued that the physical existence of causal necessity is demonstrable neither on purely rational nor empirical grounds. This, according to him, is the case since no logical contradiction is involved in assuming that the relevant correlation between 'cause' and 'effect' will cease to occur:

> "when we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connection; any quality which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession of objects: consequently, there is not in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, anything which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connection. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession"[40].

The plausibility of Hume's challenge deepens in the context of Newton's lifelong dissatisfaction with gravity[41]. This dissatisfaction was due to its paradoxical nature in his system: paradigmatically, Newton understood gravity as action at a distance, a mode of causation which seemed to have no place in his comprehensive system of mechanics[42]. In other words, Newtonian physics, which has shaped the theories and practice of science from the seventeenth century onwards, admitted at least two characteristic modes of causality both of which cannot be supported by "the idea of power or necessary connection". All of these cast doubts on the legitimacy of the claim of the possibility of a purely objective, value-free and universal knowledge, especially in the behavioral sciences.

Finally, Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity also infuses metaphysics into contemporary science. The metaphysical foundation of this theory is the claim that any

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[40] Hume, D., 1975, *Enquiries, Concerning Human Understanding,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 63.
[41] Newton, I., 1958, *Papers and Letters on Natural Philosophy*, Cohen, I. B. (ed), Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. In this work, Newton was at pains to explain that he did not consider gravity to be a primary power of matter since it acted at a distance.
[42] Newton's laws of impact describe the redistribution of velocities and changes in direction that takes place when two or more things collide. This is the very essence of Action by Contact

system of objects has equal title to the claim to be 'absolutely at rest' and hence any of them can be chosen as the frame of reference by which the motions of all other systems are determined[43].

3.4   The Metaphysical Basis of the Social Sciences

To fully appreciate the nature of our discussions in this section, it is necessary to precede it by a discussion on the relationship of the various branches of the sciences. As regards this, we wish to affirm the view that the whole movement of science is essentially of one piece. Two reasons justify this claim. The first, provided by Burrt, is that "the later biological and sociological branches took over their basic postulates from the earlier mechanics [exemplified by Newtonian physics], especially the all-important postulate that valid explanations must always be in terms of small, elementary units in regularly changing relations"[44]. We believe that the meaning of this passage was adumbrated in section 3.2, where we discussed the deductive-nomological nature of explanations in the natural sciences, and wish therefore to revisit the relevant discussions there.

As explained there, science applies nomological explanatory principles to both physical events and human actions[45]. Further, many contemporary philosophers and theorists of the social sciences insist on the reducibility of the basic theories of the social sciences to some suitable theory in the natural sciences[46]. There is, thus, a strong affinity between the natural and social sciences, one strand of which is the upholding, by both of them, of the validity of explanations that are contingent on mathematical and logical principles.

Burrt also offers us the second reason why modern science is justifiably conceived of as of 'one piece'. This is because, "in all but the rarest cases, the postulate that ultimate causality is to be found in the motion of the physical atoms"[47], is upheld by all sciences.

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[43] Harre, R., 1972, *The Philosophies of Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 15 - 16
[44] Burrt, E. A., 1932, *Metaphysical Foundations, op. cit.* p. 17
[45] See footnote 9 above
[46] See footnote 8 above
[47] Burrt, E. A., ibid.

This affinity between the natural and social sciences has been said to be "fundamentally misconceived"[48], so it is worth our while to reappraise its validity. When the natural sciences explain an event in deductive-nomological terms, then the natural laws and initial conditions describing the circumstances which are supposed to have caused the event should always be applicable whenever these circumstances are repeated. When fully present, the cause becomes sufficient for the event. This accounts for the symmetry between explanation and prediction in the natural sciences. It has been argued that what conclusively differentiates a natural scientific explanation from explanation in the social sciences is that there is no requirement for a general law in the premises of a social scientific explanation. As such, social scientific explanations do not have universalist pretenses[49].

The claim that the social sciences do not employ nomological generalizations is rather surprising. The Laws of demand and of supply, which constitute the strongest foundation of economic science, are explicitly nomological[50]. But even where nomological generalizations are not explicitly stated in social scientific explanations, they are implicitly presupposed. Two related reasons may be deployed to show this. The first is that the concept of rationalism is behind the validity of such explanations. In fact, the implicit requirement of a social scientific explanation that all events (or actions) must be explained with reference to reason amounts to claiming that all actions are rational. This is one side of their universalist and rationalist character.

Secondly, the reasons offered in social scientific explanations can legitimately be regarded as causes of those events in the natural scientific sense. These reasons are believed to be logically sufficient for the action. Accompanying this belief is another; hardly extricable from the first, that there exists an entrenched mechanism in the reasonable man (the scientist) that converts logical sufficiency of reasons into causal

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[48] Doyal, L and Harris, R., 1986, *Empiricism, Explanation and Rationality,* op. cit., p. 61
[49] Ibid., p. 62-63
[50] See Cohen, A. V, & King, H. B., 1997, *Microeconomics,* Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley, p. 33. Here, the Law of demand is defined as : "Other things remaining the same, the higher the price of a good, the smaller the quantity demanded" whereas the law of Supply is said to state that "other things remaining the same, the higher the price of a good, the greater the quantity supplied"

sufficiency. To the extent that scientific narratives can explain specific events in nature, they can similarly account for particular actions in society. What is characteristic in both natural scientific and social scientific explanations is that a previously unknown event is described which, in conjunction with the occurrence of other known conditions, is considered to produce the event/action in question. These reasons, then strongly establish the affinity between the natural and social sciences.

There can be little doubt that for at least three hundred years up till our contemporary times, except for the challenge of Marxism that spanned almost the whole of the twentieth century, the social and political scene in Europe and the Western world has been determined almost entirely by liberalism. Liberalism is a nuanced socio-political ideology, but is currently best known for its specific economic and political expressions, which are capitalism and liberal democracy respectively. "Liberalism" derives from the Latin *libertas*, meaning "liberty" or "freedom". Consequently liberalism insists on the freedom of the individual. It insists on the freedom of individuals *from* undue external and governmental controls, as well as their freedom *for* the pursuit of their own interests.

As we indicated in section 2.5.1 of the preceding chapter, Locke's conception of rights makes the owner an atomistic individual pursing self-interest rationally in an environment of conflicting interests. In that section, we alluded to features of Locke's conception of the state of nature, which invests every man with "the executive power of the law of nature in his hands"[51]. Further, Locke maintains that in the state of nature man has "uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions" and "the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions[52]"

Reason, then, is the law that governs the life and unbridled liberty of independent individuals in a state of nature. Since the rational, self-interested individual should

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[51] Locke, J. 1946. *The Second Treatise of Civil Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, Gough, J. W. (ed.), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, p.8.
[52] Ibid. p. 5

relinquish this liberty only *at will* for the formation of civil society, it is easy to conclude that for Locke, the individual, by nature, has priority over society. As such, liberalism may also be called individualism, "inasmuch as it affirms the individual over the state, which is seen not as the master but as the servant of the individual, and as the guarantor of the individual's interests and rights[53]". As stated in section 2.5.1, it is doubtful that such a conception of rights, and the individual's place and responsibilities in society, can provide the basis for development thinking and practice in sub-Saharan Africa. This position will be more fully argued in Chapter Four.

Another metaphysical assumption that underlies the social sciences is that societies move purposefully through time toward a predetermined end[54]. It is this assumption that feeds the conception of Africa's development as the transformation from 'primitive' or 'agrarian' societies to 'modern' ones partaking in the global economic and financial system with the guidance of Western democracy and technology. This economistic conception of development is an application of the notion of human progress, articulated in the Enlightenment as the growth of human intellectual capacity and knowledge, and after the industrial revolution as "the 'natural' tendency of material wealth to grow"[55].

Cartesian philosophy nurtured the Enlightenment[56] and the emergence of Newton's *pricipia mathematica*, which underlay mechanistic science. Since the Enlightenment, the preoccupation of modern science with legitimizing itself by de-legitimizing all rival frameworks of inquiry and belief-legitimization, and the European arrogation to itself of the exclusive right to reason, have occasioned vicious attacks on African systems of thought and inquiry, particularly in the works of David Hume, Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, all of whom have had decisive influence on the course of Western philosophy and science[57].

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[53] Miller, E., 1984, *Questions that Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy*, N. Y: McGraw-Hill, p. 449
[54] Zein-Elabdin, E. O., 1998, "The Question of Development in Africa: A Conversation for Propitious Change, in *African Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1998, p. 113
[55] Ibid. p. 115
[56] This denotes an intellectual movement which began in Europe in the seventeenth century. The age in which the movement predominated is also known as the Age of Reason
[57] Although we begin our account of the racist and epistemological ethnocentrism in Western thought from a philosopher who flourished in the mid-eighteenth century, the roots of this attitude run deeper into

We have seen the legacy of Hume's criticism of the metaphysics of the concept of causation on Western philosophy. His racism has had an even stronger impact on Western thought, as it influenced both Kant and Hegel. An illustration of this racism is apparent in his citation by Kant in support of the view that the Negro is naturally inferior to the white man. According to Kant,

> "Mr Hume challenges anyone to cite a simple example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or another praiseworthy quality; even among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between the two races of man, and it appears to be as great in mental capacities as in color"[58].

Kant deepens Hume's racism by locating it in ontology. According to Kant, human beings gradually work themselves out of barbarity and into 'Enlightenment'. However, people of the non-European world are *by nature* incapable of the self-reflexive and self-reflective project of Enlightenment on its own terms, since they are incapable of reason. Therefore, 'civilization' or 'Enlightenment', for the non-European, has to come from the outside[59].

The upshot of Hegel's thesis was that sub-Saharan Africa is not part of universal history because world history is a rational process to which sub-Saharan Africa doesn't have the capacity to contribute[60]. One could not, of course, ignore important developments in the

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Western philosophical thought. Its most exalted initial statement is Aristotle's definition of man as "a rational animal". "Man" here was made t exclude – by the interpreters of Aristotle - the African, Amerindian and Australasians. By derecognizing the rationality of these peoples, Aristotle's claim founded the "claim that only one segment of humanity [the European] has the prior, superior and exclusive right to reason".(Ramose, 2002. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, Harare: Mond Books, p vi.)

[58] Eze, E. C. 1997, "The color of Reason: The Idea of "Race" in Kant's Anthropology", in *Post-colonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader,* op. cit. p 122

[59] Serequeberhan, T., 1997, "The Critique of Eurocentrism and the Practice of African Philosophy" in *Postcolonial African Philosophy,* (ed) Eze, E. op. cit. pp 151-152

[60] For a more thorough examination of this thesis and its influence on the history of global knowledge practices, see
- Ramose, M. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* op. cit

northern part of Africa in the achievements of Carthage and Egypt, but this belonged to Asia and not the African Spirit, according to Hegel. What he "properly understand[s] by Africa is the unhistorical, undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the world's history"[61]. For, the Negro has not attained the level of civilized consciousness, and "as we see them at this day, such have they always been[62]". In fact childlikeness properly characterizes the "negroes", who are incapable of developing and cultivating their minds. Hence "Africa is the land of gold, closed upon itself, the land of children, it is the gold-land confused within itself – the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night"[63]. For Hegel, reason is the basis of history and also the defining characteristic of European philosophy, which is situated at the pinnacle of this history[64].

The elaborate rationalization of European ethnocentrism by these philosophers "provided a powerful philosophical base for the chorus of denigration of the non-white races which accompanied and buoyed up the European colonial adventure all through the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century"[65]. This ethnocentrism matured into constructions of African mentality as 'primitive' and 'pre-logical' by Western anthropologists who theorized Africa indigenous knowledge traditions in the first half of the twentieth century. For instance, Levy-Bruhl repeats the perceptions of Kant and Hume by asserting that:

> "the two mentalities [i.e. African and European] which are face to face are so
> foreign to each other, so divergent in their habits, so different in their means of
> expression! The European employs abstractions almost without thinking and the
> simple logical operations have been rendered so easy for him by his language that
> they cost him no effort. With the primitives, thought and language are of a

- Irele, A, 1983, "Introduction", pp 7 – 23, in Hountondji, P. J, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. London: Hutchison and Co.

[61] Hegel, G. W. F. 1990, *The Philosophy of History,* Sibree, J. (trans.), New York: Wiley Book Co., p 99
[62] ibid., p 98
[63] ibid. p 91
[64] Hegel, G. W. F., 1953, *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, New York: Macmillan, pp 11-25
[65] Irele, A., 1983, "Introduction", op. cit. p 12

character almost exclusively concrete….. In a word, our mentality is above all 'conceptual', the other barely so"[66].

It needs to be pointed out that this 'orthodox view of rationality' translates directly into the Western paradigm of what a cognitive system should be. According to this, a key concern of any cognitive system should be "how to justify as true propositional knowledge that which is and must remain secondhand for the individuals concerned. In other words how to justify as true information that which we will never be able to test or verify in a firsthand manner"[67]. The recognition of this as a problem, and the determined quest for its solution in the Western epistemological paradigm, defines a cognitive system's rationality and 'modernity'. From this point of view, the relative lack of attempts to define and solve this problem is what makes African mentalities 'primitive'. We will provide a few brief responses to this here, in anticipation of further discussion of the issues it involves later in this chapter and in the subsequent ones.

First, proceeding from our concrete universalist methodology, this paradigm can be countered with the view that different cultures define cognition in different ways. It has been convincingly shown that the limitation of knowledge by the Yoruba to first-hand experience, and consigning all information that cannot be verified directly to the realm of belief, is an empirically based model that lacks nothing in rationality[68]. Secondly, a number of African cultures empirically legitimate other ways of knowing such as telepathy and precognition[69].

Further, within the tradition of Western philosophy, this view of rationally derived knowledge has been challenged by the Causal Theory of Knowledge, which holds that one's belief is rationally justified if the belief is caused in an appropriate way[70]. This "appropriate way" of getting a true belief is simply to be able to distinguish the actual

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[66] Lucien Levy-Bruhl, 1910, Le functions mentales dans les societes inferieures, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 505-506, cf. Irele, A. ibid.
[67] Hallen, B. 1998, "Academic Philosophy and African Intellectual Liberation", in *African Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1998, p 95.
[68] Hallen, B. and Sodipo, J. O, 1986, *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft, Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy*, London: Ethnographica, pp 76-80
[69] Ajei, M. O. 2000, *The Paranormal, op. cit.*
[70] Appiah, K., 1989, Necessary *Questions*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p. 52

state of affairs in which the belief is true, from relevant possible states of affairs in which the belief is false. This discrimination of the actually true from the possibly false state of affairs is best done by a method that is reliable in the circumstances[71].

The suggestion that a reliable method for distinguishing true beliefs varies with the circumstances means that what constitutes good evidence for a true belief is relative to the state of affairs prevalent in the belief situation. Since a contextually determined reliable method justifies a belief, according to the Causal Theory, much of what is considered the product of 'primitive mentalities' can be rationally validated by the Causal Theory, and therefore within contemporary theories of epistemology in Western philosophy. From a philosophical point of view, this profoundly challenges the plausibility of the cognitive imperialism of science through its internal epistemologies. We now turn to criticisms within Western science of the assumptions and cognitive imperialism of internalist epistemologies.

3.5 The Challenge of Theoretical Physicists to 'Internal Epistemologies' and the Metaphysics of Science

It should be observed at the outset that the structure of internal epistemologies is predominantly preserved by the explanatory apparatus of the physical sciences, which subscribes fully to the doctrine of physicalism[72]. But at the turn of the 20th century, physicalism's fundamental postulate about reality was questioned by new events in physics. These events profoundly diminished the relevance of the metaphysical assumptions of the sciences and their attendant methodology and knowledge claims.

The factors that first led physicists to distrust their orthodox faith were two theoretical systems developed between 1900 and 1927. One was Quantum Theory, the other the

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[71] Goldman, A., 1978, "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge", Pappas, G. S. and Swain, M (eds), In *Essays on Knowledge and Justification*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 124

[72] This is the doctrine that the real world contains nothing but matter and energy, and that objects have only physical properties such as spatio-temporal position, mass, size, shape, motion, hardness, electrical charge, magnetism and gravity. See Honderich, T., 1995, *Companion to Philosophy,* op. cit. p 679

Theory of Relativity. Both of these theories are now accepted pillars of modern physicalist thought.

At the heart of the subject matter of quantum mechanics lies the question whether an atom is a thing, as the proponents of the primary and secondary qualities of matter will have it, or it is just an abstract construct used for explaining a wide range of observations. If an atom really exists as an independent entity in Newtonian space and time as claimed by the physicalist, then at the very least it should have a location and a definite motion in space at all times. But Quantum Theory denies this. It states that it is impossible to know simultaneously the velocity and the position of an electron orbiting around an atomic nucleus. You can know either position or momentum, not both. This is the celebrated *Principle of Uncertainty*, formulated by Heisenberg, one of the founders of this theory. This principle asserts that it is impossible with any of the principles now known to science to determine the position and the velocity of an electron at the same time – to state confidently that an electron is "right here at this spot" and is moving a such and such a speed". This is because micro particles traverse their path in space discontinuously: they move to other parts in space only by disappearing and then reappearing at a new location: they change location by "quantum jumps". In other words the most we can know of a particle is its partially defined state. This is because an attempt to arrest a particle at place (p) and time (t) produces such a simplified wave-structure of it that its particularity is, literally speaking, "loosened" and it spreads throughout the configuration of space[73].

To give meaning to the wave-like and particle-like representations of nature, Niels Bohr proposed another principle: the *Principle of Complementarity*, which states that

> "The particle picture and the wave picture are two complementary descriptions of the same reality, each of them only partially correct and only within a limited range of application. For a full account of reality both viewpoints are needed, even though they are incompatible and cannot be viewed simultaneously"[74].

[73] Akyeampong, D., 1993, *The Two Cultures Revisited: Interactions of Science and Culture,* Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, pp. 16-17
[74] Ibid., pp. 20-21

In a sustained elaboration on the *Principle of Complementarity,* Finch writes:

> "In quantum theory, the properties of an electron or photon do not exist until they are perceived and measured. Thus, what a photon is going to be – wave or particle – depends entirely on how if the most neutral, unencumbered experiment imaginable could be designed, the results of the reaction would still be altered by the very act of observing it. This means that the perceiver and the thing perceived are indissolubly linked; absolute objectivity is impossible. Form the quantum perspective things exist because they are perceived"[75].

From the above considerations, two implications of quantum physics emerge that refute the metaphysics of science and its attendant universalizing tendencies. We can infer from the *Uncertainty Principle* that the location of causal events in the micro world cannot be completely determined. If there exists no exact state of the particle, then the idea that a real thing is that which can be located at a certain place at a certain time is questionable and, with it, the classical notion of causality. If all explanations and predictions of micro phenomena can only be inexact, and it is these micro phenomena that are the ultimate constituents of macro phenomena, then events and phenomena at the macro level whose cause cannot be determined with mathematical certitude could be plausibly taken to illustrate the course of nature or society.

On its part, the *Complementarity Principle* suggests that the metaphysical barrier that separates man the observer from physicalism's 'objective reality', or the 'primary qualities' of an object, has become obscure. For whenever Man attempts to spy on the 'real' objective world, he changes and distorts it by the very process of his observation. Furthermore, this principle supports the view that there exist phenomena in nature which cannot be explained or understood with the current methods of science. By rejecting all absolutes, this principle implies that there are limits to any particular scientific insight. It suggests that we should approach reality from several perspectives, and that these various perspectives, taken together, will produce a better understanding of an experience which defines thought in a single framework of knowledge. The upshot of the conclusions of quantum mechanics is that physicists will be unable to precisely predict future events

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[75] Finch, C.S., 1998, *The Star of Deep Beginnings, The genesis of African Science and Technology*, Atlanta Khenti Inc., p 263

under definite circumstances: "Yes! Physics has given up. We do not know how to predict what will happen in a given circumstance, and we believe now that it is impossible – that the only thing that can be predicted is the probability of different events"[76]. This certainly refutes the universalizing tendencies of internalist epistemologies and affirms the methodology of concrete universalism.

Thus at the dawn of the 21st century, a new scientific worldview, a synthesis of scientific insight over the past centuries, emerged. Instead of strict determinism, this insight affirmed the statistical nature of reality, and replaced the insistence on the objectivity of the natural world with the view that the behavior of the object under investigation changes as we change our point of view. The present scientific worldview, especially the *Complementarity Principle*, confirms the notion that there are several mutually exclusive approaches to reality, and that the methodology of physicalism is only one of these.

The impact of the new scientific world view on phyisicalism's denial of truth to other systems of knowledge production is clear: modern science cannot legitimately maintain its position on this issue, for the best that its epistemological paradigm can reveal are some truths, but not all the truths, about nature. Hence it is prudent for the physicalist to pay regard to plausible propositions of truth about nature and society from other knowledge traditions.

3.6 Science as Culture and Practice: the Challenge of Contemporary Philosophers and Historians of Science

The recalcitrance and ubiquity displayed by internal epistemologies have incurred even sharper criticism from contemporary Western philosophers and scientists. Since the 1960s, a sustained focal point of studies in the social and cultural studies of science and technology (SCSST) has been to reject science's proclaimed objectivity and neutrality by

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[76] Feynman, R. P., Leighton, R. B., & Sands, M, 1965, "Quantum Behavior", in *The Feynman Lectures on Physics: Vol. 3. Quantum Mechanics.* Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, p. 10

showing that its cognitive core is ultimately determined by social and cultural elements. As such, every science is a local knowledge system or an "ethnoscience"[77].

Although these studies differ in thematic interest and detail, most of them converge on the thesis of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Therefore we shall devote some time to the views emphasized in this work, as we consider it to be fairly representative of the new SCSST studies. Kuhn advances the thesis that science always takes place within a certain conceptual framework, which comprises the theoretical and methodological assumptions, operations and interpretations that guide practice. As such, the framework provides 'the lenses' through which a scientific community, operating under a period of 'normal science', sees natural phenomena. It also determines to a large extent what questions they may consider as worthy of pursuit, and the kinds of answers that might be acceptable to them. Scientists would not disagree about their conclusions once they are derived and tested from within the prevailing framework. Kuhn calls such a framework a 'paradigm', and distinguishes between a broad and narrow sense of it.

3.6.1 The Paradigm as a Disciplinary Matrix (DM)

The broad denotation of a paradigm is the conception of it as the broad theoretical and practical background which members of a scientific community share. It consists of the following:

a) Symbolic Generalizations: These include the laws, postulates or hypothesis of a science. Some examples of these in physical science would be Newton's Laws and the Boyle-Charles Law of Gases.

b) Theoretical and Heuristic Models: A model is an attempt to give a concrete picture of how things, according to the scientific theory, work e.g. according to the Law of gases mentioned above, molecules of gas are said to behave like tiny billiard balls colliding into each other and bouncing away.

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[77] Harding, S., 1997, "Is Modern science an Ethnoscience?" op. cit. p. 45

c) Shared Values: the following are some of the values a scientific community is supposed to cherish and share: accurate prediction and quantitative methods, adherence to whatever margin of error is accepted as the standard, and the social utility/usefulness of the science.

3.6.2 The Paradigm as Exemplars:

Exemplars constitute the narrow sense of 'paradigm'. They are the widely accepted solutions to old problems that are considered the paradigm's best examples of ways to solve new problems. These include concrete solutions to problems which students of a particular science learn in their education. These shared examples of problem-solving techniques constitute important reference points for a scientific community, for the exemplars allow practitioners to see a variety of situations as similar in some important respects[78].

'Normal Science', then, is carried out by a scientific community which shares a Disciplinary Matrix based on a shared stock of exemplars, i.e; a paradigm, which comprises essentially of a world view and its inspired rules. During their education, the practitioners of normal science would have internalized the nuances of the paradigm in the context of learning the accepted exemplars. Because they derive from their world view, the validity of these rules is taken for granted by the normal scientist working within the paradigm[79]. Further, because a paradigm exemplifies a particular culture, resistance to it by a subscriber to another paradigm can be illogical or unscientific[80].

In fact, scientific knowledge is culture-based in as much as it is merely the culture of the everyday world, but artfully transformed and enhanced. This is illustrated by the fact that features of everyday life are employed as epistemic devices in the production of

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[78] Kuhn, T., 1970, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 10
[79] Ibid., pp 144-145
[80] Ibid., p. 159

knowledge in the laboratories of science[81]. Science is deeply and inextricably anchored in everyday life. The role of everyday life in science is " a foundational role which reduces everyday life to the common ground science shares with everything else and which construes science as a new kind of enterprise connected to everyday life through no more than a relationship of ultimate dependence"[82]. As such, the claim of internalist epistemologies to a special scientific rationality or method that fundamentally distinguishes the culture of scientific practice and that of ordinary life is totally unfounded.

The dependence of science on everyday life and its assumptions and values becomes apparent in that the social provides the understanding of how rules (theory) and practice are joined together. It provides the possibility for consensus of rule followers (scientists) on proper practice:

> "New members are socialized (i.e., trained) in these practices and achieve full membership through acquiring the relevant competences. Ultimately, such competences may become habitual; they turn into smoothly operating and easily available dispositions that each individual can call upon at will. Here we have the origin of our sense of the rule "guiding" the follower, of it going its own way as a matter of course. Nevertheless, it is, ultimately, the fact that these dispositions lead to agreement in practice that gives to the rule follower the sense of having followed the rule rightly or correctly"[83].

The foregoing insights on the cultural and social basis of science lead to the inference of the contingent validity of scientific frameworks. This is what makes resistance to one paradigm by a subscriber to another never illogical or unscientific. The plausibility of the view that the validity of cognitive frameworks is relative to a context is supported by Hume's denial of the conclusiveness and universality of the truth of experiential claims, among others. According to Hume, the evidence for the truth of 'matters of fact', which is the second object of human reason, cannot be conclusive. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible because it can never imply a contradiction. Accordingly, that the

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[81] Cetina, K. K., 1992, "The Couch, the Cathedral and the Laboratory: On the Relationship between Experiment and Laboratory in Science", in Pickering, A. (ed), *Science as Practice and Culture*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 119
[82] Ibid., p. 136
[83] Bloor, D., 1992, "Left and Right Wittgensteinians", in *Science as Practice and Culture*, op. cit., p 270

sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, that it will rise"[84].

This amounts to the position that all experience amassed up till today is insufficient to conclusively determine what will happen in the future. In view of this, nothing can demonstrate the falsehood of the contrary of our most justified experience-based knowledge. Since scientific knowledge is largely derived from experimental outcomes, it incurs Hume's restriction, which suggests that claims to universality, trans-cultural objectivity and rationality by the modern sciences are based in some context-dependent metaphysical assumption.

3.7   African Critique of Internal Epistemologies and Western Science

The concept, practice and utility of science have received the critical attention also of a number of African scholars. Notable among these is Theophilus Okere in an article entitled "Is there One Science, Western Science?". Okere premises his critique on the observation that the desire to know is natural to all humans. Therefore all cultures have developed their forms of knowledge. As such "every form of human knowledge must be situated or generated from within a culture or bounded by presuppositions, prejudgments, interests etc"[85]. Science then "remains only one of many [legitimate] forms of knowledge, and the West only one of its producers"[86]. Accordingly there cannot be only one universally valid science as internal epistemologies propose.

Towards this thesis, Okere distinguishes three levels and meanings of the term 'science'. In his view, it refers first and foremost to knowledge as such. In this sense it is " a special activity or mode of being of man by which man relates to reality from the perspective of

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[84] Hume, D., 1975, *Enquiries* op. cit., p. 25-26

[85] Okere, T, 2005, "Is There One Science, Western Science?", in *Africa Development,* Vol. XXX No. 3, p 21

[86] ibid. p 20

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truth [or reality as it is]"[87]. All human cultures have science in this sense, as all human beings desire to know.

Secondly, science could refer to "the building of bodies of systems of truth about specified regions of reality, following certain well defined methods of inquiry"[88].
It is this level of knowledge or science that constitutes the disciplines and curricula of formal education. The third meaning of science is characterized by a narrow definition of both its object (inanimate matter) and method (generality derived from mathematical abstractions)[89]. As such, this conception restricts science to a fraction of the vast subject matter of knowledge as well as to a fraction of the pathways to human knowledge[90].

Undoubtedly, it is this meaning of science, which owes its origins to Newton, through Descartes and Galileo, which has become the core of the sciences and as such conceptually nourishes all the other sciences. The preeminence of this meaning of science derives from the Enlightenment, whose philosophers and their successors made reason the distinguishing feature of human being-ness, and placed it under exclusive Western ownership. Through this arrogated ownership, human civilization was virtually defined in Western terms and by Western standards. Accordingly, science in this meaning which, according to Newton's admirers quoted above, reflects the epitome of the activity of reason, became a unique Western achievement.

Okere points out that it is absurd to claim unique possession of science in any one of its three meanings. One cannot claim exclusive ownership of science as knowledge in general because, as a matter of fact, all human cultures possess some knowledge. This empirical fact displays the many-sidedness of science. Further, since knowledge seeking and gathering is a human activity, it is consequently historical[91]. This also supports the pluralistic view of science.

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[87] ibid. p. 22
[88] ibid.
[89] Ibid. pp 23, 27
[90] Ibid. p 27
[91] Ibid. p. 25

Science, as systemic or organized knowledge, cannot but also be plural. This is because "to call them bodies of knowledge is the same thing as to say that there is not just one science[92]". So although no one can deny the overwhelming contribution of science as systematic knowledge, it is absurd to exclude the contributions of other civilizations to this activity: "A mathematics, for instance, that has its roots and rudiments in virtually every known human culture, that has been on written record in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia for millennia, that develops in ancient Greece, gets re-invigorated by medieval, Islamic culture and wins prestige and appreciation from its successful use in the 17th and 18th century physics, attaining its present 'maturity' in 19th century Europe – such a science cannot be claimed for one culture, Western or otherwise"[93]. As with mathematics, the story of the rest of the major branches of science has been a continuum. The borrowing from one culture of the products of another and the assimilation of these borrowed elements into its knowledge and value systems is rampant and extensive in the history of human civilizations[94] Granted this history and extent of cultural borrowings, it can be presumed that "every scientific revolution has been a revolution on an existing state of science[95]".

Okere's critique suggests a number of unattractive features of the type of science which promotes internalist epistemologies and universalism. First, because its restrictiveness has produced phenomenal successes in technology, it has become "more a science for the materially useful and less a science in quest of the true, a know-how rather than a knowledge"[96].

Further, through its restricted focus and method, this brand of science may also have irreversibly compromised the future of mankind. It may have done this by rendering knowledge subservient to the sort of power that affirms the assurance of Thrasymachus

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[92] Ibid.
[93] ibid. p 26
[94] Gyekye, K., 1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, Oxford: O. U. P., p. 269-270
[95] Okere, T. 2005, "Is There One Science, Western Science?", op. cit., p. 26-27
[96] ibid. p. 27

that "might is right"[97]. Certain currents in international relations, such as the amassing and maintenance of nuclear weaponry to sustain the possible obliteration of humankind through the principle of MAD[98], the depletion of the Ozone layer, and the refusal of the wealthiest and greatest pollutant in the world (the US)[99] to sign the Kyoto Agreement, all point to an affirmation of the doctrine of Thrasymachus and to an insecure future for the inhabitants of the earth. Yet it is highly unlikely that this brand of science will ever succeed in acknowledging and reversing its genocidal tendency, "since quantity, not man or society or values have formed its alpha and omega"[100]. Since self-defense and preservation of self is "a natural, perhaps even an instinctive reaction of all living organisms confronted with imminent injury[101]", this genocidal tendency of science and the international relations that it sustains, questions the intelligence of the practitioners of this brand of science, who may, by their actions be guaranteeing their own self-destruction and the destruction of their loved ones, with others. On this reasoning, "science" as the continual parody of human reason is the denial of civilization. In reality, it is the return to barbarity but under the banner of deadly progress.

Further, because of its success in improving the material conditions of man, this narrow-focused epistemology has devalued other complementary and necessary forms and ways of knowing. In other words, its limited methodology and subject matter, as well as its aggressive epistemological ethnocentrism has compromised the possibility of widening the ambit of human knowledge. An illuminating example of this restriction of human knowledge is the refusal of science to admit the reality of 'paranormal' phenomena and their ability to yield legitimate forms of knowledge.

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[97] Plato, 1974, *The Republic*, Grube, G. M. A. (trans.), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 388 c (p. 12). Here, Thrasymachus, in an attempt to define justice, (i.e. right conduct toward others), claims that justice is "nothing else than the advantage of the stronger". This assertion is commonly re-formulated as "might is right"

[98] "Mutual Assured Destruction".

[99] Kenya Airways, 2007, *Msafiri*, p. 53; informs us that the United States, which has 4.6% of the world's population contributes 23.5% of the global emission of carbon dioxide, which is the principal agent for global warming

[100] Okere, T., 2005, "Is There One Science, Western Science?", op. cit. p. 27

[101] Ramose, 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit., p. v

From the African point of view, such a narrowly focused science which is oblivious to the complexities of man and society and values, can hardly form the basis of a successful development paradigm. To begin with, its ontology conceives of the human community as constituting human beings presently alive. From the African point of view, such ontology can hardly support the concept of 'sustainable development', which as we have seen, means meeting the needs and interests of the present generation without compromising those of future generations. On the other hand, traditional African ontology, which conceives of human community as a continuum of the unborn, the living and those who have "remained somewhere[102]", and sustains the principle of "thou shall not kill but enhance life within community" as the primal ethical principle, is well amenable to this concept.

Other African philosophers, besides Okere, have contested the claims to universal validity of the primary concepts of Western science, and of its refusal to accept the validity of the conclusions of other knowledge traditions simply because they defy the concepts of science. A key Western scientific concept which has incurred the criticism of African philosophers is that of causality.

Many philosophers and anthropologists are of the view that indigenous African cultures subscribe to the principle of universal determinism. They believe, in other words, that the principle that every event has a cause is a fundamental principle in the causal theory of these cultures. This position is equally shared by Gyekye[103], Minkus[104], and Agyakwa[105], Oluwole[106] and Ayoade[107]. These philosophers and anthropologists deliberate on the indigenous concepts of the Akan, Yoruba and Bantu peoples. Thus in

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[102] This translates as "waka baabi" a phrase used by the Akan of Ghana to announce the 'death' of a person. The significance of this rendition of death is that it does not imply a final departure from participation in spatio-temporal schema that is the world human beings live in.

[103] Gyekye, K., 1987, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought, op. cit.* p. 82

[104] Minkus, H., 1977, "Causal Theory in Akwapim Akan Philosophy". In *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Wright, R (ed). Washington D.C.: University Press of America, p. 115

[105] Agyakwa, K.O., 1974, *Akan Epistemology and Western Thought*, Unpublished PhD dissertation submitted to Teacher's college, Columbia University, p. 79

[106] Oluwole, S., 1995, "On the Existence of Witches", in Mosley, A., (ed) *African Philosophy,* New Jersey: Prentice Hall

[107] Ayoade, J.A.A., 1979, "The Concept of the Inner Essence in Yoruba Traditional Medicine" in Ademuwagun, Z. A. et al., (eds), *African Therapeutic Systems*, Waltham, Mass: Crossroads Press p. 49-55

view of their subscription to the principle of universal causality, the suggestion of a chance event in nature, for Akan thinkers, is discreditable. Gyekye even goes as far as stating:

> "When a European explains an unpredictable or unexpected natural event by reference to chance, coincidence, luck, or fortune, from the point of view of Akan thinkers, that is the same as saying that the cause is unknown. But the Akan thinker would here retort that ignorance of the cause of an event does not imply the non existence of a cause"[108].

Yet Akan determinism differs fundamentally from that of Western philosophy and science. In Western thought, if x is determined by y, then the moment y occurs x follows necessarily. Embedded in this is the serial notion of causation, which asserts that a cause (y) must precede the event (x), which y causes. There may be intermediate chain of causes between x and y, but all these intermediaries must derive from y before it can properly be considered as the cause of x. There is thus a lineal progression of causes from y to x, such that any causal event closer to y in the chain of causes precedes a cause closer to x.

Within the deterministic universe of Africans, two types of causal explanations can be delineated. The first type is explanations to what Gyekye terms 'Why 1 questions'. In these, contiguous causal relations are established and therefore physical laws are considered relevant and sufficient to explain relations between natural phenomena. This is the same as the theory of causality upheld in Western philosophy and science. But where the events to be explained are considered extraordinary in character, such that physical laws prove inadequate to explain them, then these events will invoke a 'Why 2 question'. Why 2 explanations do not necessarily project a serial progression of events from cause to effect. This is largely because the inter-linkages between events are not so clearly delineated. For Western philosophers and scientists, the why 2 question will hardly arise because nature is supposed to be fully explicable by scientific concepts and laws.

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[108] Gyekye, K. 1987, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought,* op. cit. p. 82

For indigenous African thinkers, however, Why 2 questions merely admit the limitations of the explanatory capacity of physical laws, and seek different kinds of explanations.   In his commentary on the Yoruba concept of Inner Essence, Ayoade suggests that we should not conceive of non-supernatural and supernatural questions as constituting two irreconcilable categories of causal theory but rather as different points along the same continuum.   He writes "this is particularly so because the Yoruba believes that a non-supernatural ailment makes a patient highly susceptible to, or softens up a patient for, the infliction of a supernatural ailment"[109]. Ayoade's 'non-supernatural' and 'supernatural' coincides with Gyekye's 'Why 1' and 'Why 2' questions, respectively.

The salutary point in Ayoade's view is that in Yoruba causal theory, Why 1 causes and those of Why 2 are complementary and mutually inclusive. The same conclusion can be reached for the causal theories of Akans and Bantus. We shall see in the next chapter that the African ontology admits of a visible and an invisible aspect of the world. The visible world is composed of bodies to which the laws of physics apply. But the quintessence of these bodies is a force which itself is invisible. In fact this claim of the invisibility of explanatory postulates underlies all the theories of modern natural science. As maintained in section 3.2, Newton considered forces the basis of action in the world. We have also seen that forces underlie the theories of Relativity and Quantum mechanics. These forces are phenomena that cannot be seen but experienced. Thus elaborating on electromagnetic force, which was posited largely to explain 'action at a distance', Einstein writes:

> "As a result of the more careful study of electromagnetic phenomena; we have come to regard action at a distance as a process impossible without intervention of some intermediary medium. If, for instance, a magnet attracts a piece of iron, we cannot contend to regard this as meaning that the magnet acts directly on the iron through the intermediate empty space, but we are constrained to imagine that the magnet always calls into being something physically real in the space around it, that is something being what we call a 'magnetic field'[110]

Now, according to Einstein, to explain some types of natural phenomena, physicists *are constrained to imagine* the intervention of some physical reality pervading all space. We

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[109] Ayoade, J.A.A., "The Concept of the Inner Essence in Yoruba Traditional Medicine" op. cit. p. 49
[110] Einstein, A., 1931, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory,* New York: Crown Publishers, p. 74

can legitimately infer from this that even in an uncompromising scientific framework as the discipline of theoretical physics, the borderline between the physical and the non-physical is not clear-cut as mainstream logical analysis would like to affirm, that there is an area between these two realms in which we cannot with logical certainty identify events as belonging here or there. Adopting this integrated approach to causal analysis makes plausible explanations of the anomalies and paradoxes that we see in nature and which Western science has labeled 'paranormal'.

In his book *Foundations of African Philosophy*, Godwin Sogolo argues, inter alia, for the importance of cultural determinants in the analysis of 'cause'. According to him, a given event can have a variety of causal explanations and our interest in that event determines which of these various causes we advance. He describes a fire event brought about by an arsonist, and writes:

> "Our interest in the fire example is two-fold. Firstly, it shows the almost infinite kinds of causal explanation that can be given for a single event. And because the explanations are different sorts, the question of the superiority of one over another is misplaced. The explanations provided by the fire fighters, the psychologist, the social worker, the anti-smoking campaigner, and the fundamentalist preacher might appear to be out of tune with what, in scientific terms, is accepted as a causal explanation, but this is so only from the point of interest of the scientist. Besides, there is no consensus among scientists about the notion of causality or what should count as an adequate causal explanation. The second crucial point about the example we have chosen is that the different explanations are complementary and non-mutually exclusive"[111]

On this view, the Western scientist's disdain for African explanatory frameworks is because the scientist has no interest in these. But this disinterest is hardly sufficient to render the African explanation false or illegitimate in comparison with dogmatism.

This conclusion, of the non-immutability of any particular explanatory framework, has been strongly defended by Oluwole in her article entitled "On the Existence of Witches". Here, Oluwole criticizes Western skepticism about witchcraft. She denies that witchcraft or any 'paranormal' phenomenon can be dismissed simply because Western science has

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[111] Sogolo, G., 1993, *Foundations of African Philosophy – A Definitive Analysis of Conceptual Issues in African Thought,* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, pp. 107-108

not been able empirically to verify them, and points out that the assumption underlying the current requirements of empirical verification, the assumption that information can be transmitted and received by human beings only through the recognized channels of the senses, is subject to amendment in the future. She contends that the denial by science of reality to the paranormal stems from mistaking tentative epistemological conclusions for immutable ontological ones. She writes:

> "until scientists accept that they have not discovered an indubitable method of knowing what is real; until they realize that science…is a direct consequence of our epistemological rather than an ontological argument, so long will they give room for being accused of "intellectual fraud"- "fraud" for substituting the epistemic for the ontic. As a matter of fact, this demand, this scientific hypothesis, transcends experience. Our consent to the occurrence of mysteries confirms that the mysterious is that which is not yet understood but not that which is unknowable"[112].

Scientists, then, would do better to distinguish "between understood physical things and physical things not understood"[113]. To do this would be to acknowledge two things, at least. First it would be acknowledging that scientific criteria for, and conclusions on, reality and truth are, at best, only good working hypotheses for the present. One, then, cannot talk of facts representing objective and immutable reality. The methods of science can disclose facts, but these may change, and science must acknowledge this fact about 'facts'.

It would also imply acknowledging that scientific activity is but one subject matter in the inquiry into nature and society. Therefore nature and society cannot be wholly describable by its laws. Hence to declare something unreal or false just because it defies the explanatory framework of contemporary science is to offend against the laws of logic by begging the question and committing the fallacy of reaching a hasty conclusion.

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[112] Oluwole, S., 1995, "On the Existence of Witches", op. cit., p. 364
[113] Menkiti, I. A., 2004, "Physical and Metaphysical Understanding: Nature, Agency, and Causation in African Traditional Thought", in Brown, L. M. (ed), *African Philosophy, New and Traditional Perspectives*, Oxford: OUP., p. 117

Oluwole then asserts that the reality of witchcraft power can be scientifically proved by the following three methods, arguing that the positive result of any one of them would be sufficient to establish the reality of witchcraft:

i)   we may be given an explanation of the *modus operandi* of witchcraft power

ii)   we may experimentally establish a causal relationship between the postulated paranormal power and the event that proves the practical efficiency of this power

iii)   we may show a practical manipulation of the power[114].

Oluwole then asserts that the African's claim that her belief in the reality of the paranormal forces falls within the logic of Western science[115] is based on methods (ii) and (iii). This conclusion is legitimate. It has been sufficiently argued that experience underlies the inference of the existence of the paranormal by Africans[116]. Thus, the belief in the paranormal by Africans is due to the testimony of practice: they have seen people use extra-sensory powers over and over again, control these powers and teach others how to invoke and control these powers. Accordingly, Africans can show that their belief in the reality of paranormal events cannot be ruled out on purely logical grounds. They can hardly be ruled out on empirical grounds either, on account that they meet the demands of the verification principle, one of the basic principles of scientific empiricist doctrine, states that an entity or event is true if and only if it is scientifically provable to be demonstrable. Thus the existence of these phenomena is inferred from knowledge of their effects by Africans. From these effects they seek to derive their possible causes. Claims of the existence of these phenomena are strengthened by applying Oluwole's third method (manipulating this power). Here too, there exist abundant claims of the ability to control and manipulate these powers. Medicine-men, diviners and others with the ability for extra-sensory perception claim knowledge of these powers, and there is enough

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[114] Ibid., p. 367
[115] By Oluwole's "logic of Western science", I understand "rational methods to substantiate belief in reality" In other words, I do not read her as referring to the logic of Western science which defines truth only in terms of the law of the identity.
[116] Ajei, M. O., 2000, *The Paranormal,* op. cit. p 106

testimony to the apparent genuineness of some of these claims[117]. Accordingly, it is reasonable to believe in the reality of these phenomena, and that they can be the basis of legitimate knowledge.

In fact, Oluwole is perfectly right in denying that a scientific theory is legitimate if and only if it can explain the modus operandi of the entities it postulates for explanatory purposes. What we know as gravity is a field of force first demonstrated, in Western science, by the fall of Newton's apple. Now, it is a common view among philosophers of science that Newton's Laws of Motion (which inter alia, postulate and explicate the force of gravitation) merely provide descriptive generalizations of unobservable entities. Harre, for instance, characterizes Newton's Laws as a species of "Reticular Theories" and affirm their scientific legitimacy[118]. He explains that these theories are explanatory hypotheses whose confirmation is purely descriptive, not conceptual. The modus operandi of the force responsible for the fall of Newton's apple (i.e. the cause in the meta-descriptive sense) is still unaccounted for. Therefore, the claim that there is a force in nature called gravity is a mere belief, legitimized each time an apple falls when thrown aloft. Why does this happen? No answer can be provided to this beyond descriptions. In fact towards the end of his life, Newton reputedly expressed his dissatisfaction with the unexplained status of gravitation, and made suggestions as to "the hidden order of things that might account for it"[119]. This hidden order has eluded human understanding up to date. Therefore although Newton's force of gravitation is in brisk scientific business, it remains subject to amendment in the future, as does all empirically based knowledge.

3.8   The Social Sciences and Africa's Development

All the theories that have been applied to Africa's development, since development emerged as a goal to be achieved by developing countries, have emerged from the social sciences[120]. They have come either from sociology, political science, law or economics,

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[117] Ibid, p. 138
[118] Harre, R., 1964, *Matter and Method*, London: Macmillan & Co. , p. 8-20
[119] Ibid., p 106-108
[120] As developed by Europeans and their descendants elsewhere in the world.

especially development economics, or a combination of these[121]. As stated in section 3.2, before the 1960s explanations in the social sciences almost exclusively assumed the 'internalist epistemological' stance by supposing that their truth or validity is a function of the trans-cultural and internal features of the "laws" that they employ; and that these laws reflect "the way human nature, and/or society, is". Human behaviour is presumed by these explanations to be derived from human nature, which is characterized by law-likeness. This stance is still quite popular in the social sciences.

Two main social scientific theories, espousing this epistemology and view of human nature, are reflected in the practice of Africa's development. One is the Lockean view stated above, that human beings are, by nature, discreet and rational individuals pursuing their self-interests in an environment of competing self-interests. This provides the theoretical base for, and the Eurocentric and universalizing impulses in, both the Modernization and Neo-liberal schools. The second theory, which theoretically founds the Dependency school, is Marx's theory of human nature, within which is to be found substantial ambivalence.

A distinct feature of this theory is Marx's claims about our essentially social nature. For him, "the real nature of man is the totality of his social relations"[122]. Thus save a few obvious biological facts about a human being, Marx would tend to deny any such thing as individual human nature. What kind of individual one is and what kind of things one does are determined by the society one lives in: "it is not the consciousness of men that determine their being; rather it is their social being that determines their consciousness"[123]. Thus the norms of one society, or what seems instinctual in one society, may be quite different in another.

Against this is Marx's theory of history, which provides the background to his theories. Marx claimed to have found a scientific method to the study of human societies, and

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[121] This follows from footnotes 1 and 2 above. See also So, A., Y., 1990, *Social Change and Development*., Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, chapters 1-2

[122] Marx, K, 1963, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy,* Bottomore, T. B and Rubel, M (eds), London: Penguin op. cit., p. 83

[123] ibid., p 67

looked forward to the day when there would be a single science, including the science of man along with the natural sciences[124]. Consequently, he held that there are universal laws behind historical change, and that the future course of history can be predicted from these laws. These laws are economic in nature[125]. In view of Marx's theory of human nature and the uniqueness of human societies that it implies, it is unclear how the proposal of 'laws' that apply to the behaviour of human beings *qua* human can be plausible. Clearly, this appeal to universal law refutes the proclaimed uniqueness of human societies stated inferred from the claim of our essentially social nature. However, it undoubtedly forms the basis of the Eurocentic imperialism and universalism inherent in Dependency Theory.

One may now pose the question: is the North's grip over modern science and technology and its imperialistic proclamation of their universal validity, not designed purposely to exploit the weaknesses of the developing world? Has science ever aimed to improve the wellbeing of humankind, or has it always been an instrument of domination and control? Such questions demand immediate attention precisely because science cannot escape the imprints of culture, and also because of its contribution to the global disparity between rich and poor.

If science is culture-based, then surely social, economic and political strategies become part and parcel of scientists' conduct. This sensitivity to context must influence the scientist's focus on solving local (Western) problems and meeting local aspirations. The preoccupation with self-validation which defined the lot of the first modern scientists seemed to have simply mutated, with time, into a focus on meeting the needs of the Western world. Such a focus yielded patterns in the systematic knowledge of Western science and technology that inhibits the development of sub-Saharan Africa and the developing world, in general. In terms of the employment of science to colonize and exploit non-Western cultures, I quote at some length Harding, who observes that

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[124] ibid., p 85
[125] ibid, p. 111-112

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"For example, modern science answered questions about how to improve European land and sea travel, mine newly needed ores, identify the economically useful minerals, plants, and animals of other parts of the world, manufacture and farm for the benefit of Europeans living in Europe, the America, Africa and India, improve their health and occasionally that of the workers who produced profit for them, protect settlers in the colonies from settlers of other nationalities, gain access to the labour of the indigenous residents, and do all this to benefit only local European citizens...But they have not been concerned to explain how the consequences of interventions in nature for the benefit of Europeans would change the natural resources available to non-Westerners, or what the other social, psychic, environmental, economic and political costs of such interventions might be. They have not been concerned to explain how to eradicate diseases that do not much affect peoples of European descent, and especially, the already disadvantaged within this group, or how to use effectively renewable energy sources. Even physics, supposedly the most value-neutral of sciences, is far more shaped by its pursuit of militarily useful knowledge than is generally recognized"[126].

The employment of science and technology to counteract development in sub-Saharan Africa is also discernible in the extent to which technology supports the global economic and financial system to deepen poverty in the region. We saw, in section 2.6.1 of the preceding chapter, how WTO envisages its trade policies as offering universal advantage for its members. We also saw how the United States employs these same policies to benefit its farmers and diminish the livelihood security of cotton farmers in sub-Saharan Africa. This happens precisely because the farmers[127] employ industrial and agricultural technologies of the U. S to produce surplus goods which the rich world is unable to use itself. The farmers are paid to keep them employed and thereby keep up the demand for these industrial and agricultural technologies. The cotton (or whatever the product may be) is then dumped on the world market which, in response to the principles of economics devised and employed in operating the world trading system, causes the prices of sub-Saharan commodities to collapse, and thus deepen the worsening livelihood standards and security of the poor.

Further, in this age of globalization, information and technology systems have enabled the financial institutions of the rich countries to foray into the economies of sub-Saharan

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[126] Harding, S., 1997, "Is Modern Science an Ethnoscience"?, op. cit. p 54
[127] This applies to farmers in rich countries, or those at the 'core' of the global economy, generally.

countries, drawing them deeper into the global market. Having committed its scarce resources to make a sector competitive on this market, and once on the market, poor countries then encounter protective barriers blocking their goods. They also find the rich world having used its technology to its advantage on the market by developing substitutes for the products that the poor countries have brought for sale. Consequently, the export value of the goods from the poor countries and therefore their earnings fall drastically. They are then faced with the need to service the debts incurred to make their export sectors 'competitive', and eventually "the debt-trap" and extreme poverty.

Another dimension of the "paradigmatic crisis" of science on the practice of Africa's development is the fact that the connivance of science in the pervasive exploitation of the poor threatens the survival of both the majority of people on earth, and the earth itself. Although the previous quotation of Harding adumbrates this point, it s more lucidly articulated by Khor Kok Peng, who maintains that:

> "The crisis is that science has not been able to help fulfill the simple survival needs of a very large proportion of people in the world; it has not been able to conserve natural resources to ensure the decent survival of the majority of human beings in the generations ahead. Instead, it has helped to deprive the poor of the Third World of their basic requirements, and it has contributed to the depletion of natural resources that are required for the long-term and even the medium-term survival of man. It has also developed new chemicals, materials and processes which cause immense harm to human health and the environment"[128].

Although we generally agree with Peng, he would have commanded our complete concurrence had he replaced the word "able" in the first sentence of this citation with "willing". In our view, the crisis does not result from any strict contradiction between the products of modern science (and its applications in technology) and indigenous African systems of producing and evaluating knowledge as such. In fact cultural borrowing and adaptation of ideas is a distinctive feature of human history[129]. The chief problem with appropriating the benefits of the modern scientific method and integrating them

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[128] Peng, K. K., 1988, "Science and Development: Underdeveloping the third World", in Sardar, Z (ed), *The Revenge of Athena: Science, Exploitation and the Third World*, London: Mansell, p. 207.

[129] As indicated below in footnote 130, Western philosophy and science borrowed heavily from ancient Egyptian concepts. Further, numerals, which form the basis of mathematics which in turn defines the methodology of the primary modern science – physics -, originates from Arabia.

effectively into indigenous African knowledge systems would seem to stem from two sources. The first is that "the modern scientific tradition has typically prevented it"[130], presumably through its elitist posturing and cognitive imperialism described above. As such, Western science can be said to have "tended to inhibit or even prevent the development of a really universal, human-knowledge project"[131]. The second source, closely allied to the first, is the marginalization of Africa's indigenous knowledge by its intellectuals, and its scientific dependence[132].

As mentioned earlier, colonial ideology and administration strenuously and consistently enforced the imperialism of modern science and its applications in technology. The contemporary global economic order continues in the same vein. A basic proposition of this ideology, firmly installed in the minds of many Westernized African intellectuals, is the extension of the views of Hume, Kant and Hegel into the thesis that Africa "is a continent that has contributed little or nothing to human ideas and civilization"[133]. This renders educated Africans captive to the force of their Eurocentric training, making them eager to abandon their harshly negated past for Western epistemological categories in their cognitive practices. According to Mudimbe, "the fact of the matter is that until now, Western interpreters [in the humanities and social sciences] as well as African analysts have been using categories and conceptual systems which depend on a Western epistemological order".[134]

These categories are considered "modern" and "civilized", as opposed to "traditional" ones, which are everyday suppressed in legal suits, political rhetoric, and in economic and social planning and policy-making. This uncharitable view of the intellectual heritage

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[130] Lauer, H., 2004, "Cause and Effect between Knowledge Traditions, op. cit., p 263
[131] Okere, T., 2005, "Is There One Science, Western Science?", op. cit. p. 20.
[132] Hountoundji, P, 2004, "Knowledge as a Development Issue", in Wiredu, K., (ed), *A companion to African Philosophy,* Malden, MA: Blackwell, p 532
[133] Bodunrin, P., "The problems of, and Prescriptions for, an Action Philosophy in Africa", paper delivered at the Colloquium on the Place and Role of the Humanities in Africa Today, University of Ghana, April 1975, p. 5.
[134] Mudimbe, V. Y., 1998, *The Invention of Africa:Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p. x

of Africa, and its contribution to human civilization[135] has contrived to relegate indigenous knowledge systems into the background in the production and application of knowledge in Africa[136]. This is not a strange phenomenon, given that in the quest for knowledge, "who gets to name natural and social realities gets to control how they will be organized and managed"[137]. Thus a crucial challenge for Africa's intellectuals, if they are to be relevant in the quest for Africa's development, would be their pursuit of authenticity.

3.9   Indigenous Knowledge, Scientific Systems and Africa's Development

This authenticity demands that we "have to stop being what we have not been, what we will never be, and what we do not have to be"[138]. An important first step toward this, it has been suggested, is to harness "the usable past" to construct an "authentic African episteme[139]". Forceful contentions have emerged, from the last quarter of the twentieth century, on how African intellectuals may achieve these. Of these, we will briefly consider the perspectives of Paulin Hountoundji, Mogobe Ramose and Tsenay Serequeberhan, which we count among the many prominent ones.

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[135] This view has been strenuously denied by many African philosophers, many of whom point to the African contribution to Western thought. Prominent among these are
- Olela, H., 1977, "The African Foundations of Greek Philosophy", in Wright, W (ed), *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Toledo: Universities Press of America. On pages 77 -80, Olela strenuously and shows the influence of African world views on the prominent ancient Greek philosophers, such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato and Aristotle, who defined the themes and problems of the Western philosophical tradition.
- Diop, S. A., 1974, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*, Cook, M. (ed & trans) Westport: Lawrence Hill and Co., pp. 230-236. At p. 230, Diop states explicitly that "The Greeks merely continued and developed, sometimes partially, what the Egyptians had invented"; and the main thesis of the book is that historical, archeological and anthropological evidence supports the view that ancient Egyptian civilization originated from Sub-Saharan Africa.

[136] An unambiguous demonstration of this mentality is Gyekye's pronouncement on the discouragement of indigenous knowledge systems of the scientific spirit

[137] Harding, S, 1997, "Is Modern Science and ethnoscience..", op. cit., p 48

[138] Anibal Quijano, 1990, "Estetica de la Utopia" in *David y Goliath*, 57, p. 37; cited in Arturo Escobar, 1995, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 221

[139] Mudimbe, V. Y., 1988, *The Invention of Africa:Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p. 179

Hountoundji suggests that an important step towards correcting Africa's scientific dependence, and bringing its indigenous knowledge to the service of its development, is to integrate indigenous knowledge systems "into the mainstream of ongoing research…."[140]. It is important to note, that by "ongoing research", Hountoundji means the internalist epistemology of modern normal science, for just as he thinks that there is a "standard" way of doing philosophy[141], he also believes in the universal validity of modern science. Thus according to him, his approach to the study of indigenous knowledge is to look "for ways and means to test them in order to validate whatever in them can be validated, and make contemporary science take them into account in a reciprocal process of updating" itself. This is because "ethnoscience does not ask any question about the *truth* of local knowledge systems. It just describes them and leaves them as they are"*[142]*.

A number of flaws in Hountoundji's position and its aims may be pointed out. First, in contrast with the contemporary social and cultural studies of science and technology, he distinguishes between "ethnnoscience" and 'science'. For him, 'ethnoscience' represents an aspect of the cognitive practices in indigenous African setting, whereas science refers to modern science. As such, he ignores Okere's argument on the varied nature and sources of science, which we uphold[143]. He also, with this, perpetuates the Eurocentric

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[140] Hountoundji, P., 2004, "Knowledge as a Development Issue", op. cit. p 534

[141] Ibid., p. 530. Here, Hountoundji distinguishes between "ethnophilosophy", which he rejects and the standard way of doing philosophy, which he endorses.

[142] Ibid., p 535. The emphasis on 'truth' appears in the original text.

[143] The term 'science' is employed here with utmost caution. This is because I find plausible Harding's view that the inclusion of empirical knowledge traditions of other cultures under the label "science" reinforces the self-claimed superiority of a European conceptual framework, in the sense that European term names the standard that any desirable knowledge tradition must achieve. (see Harding, S. 1997, op. cit. p 49) Harding's view is affirmed by Ramose when he argues that the term 'African Renaissance' is historically and philosophically inapposite to describe Africa's desire for resurgence because 'Renaissance' invokes the images and agendas of the European Enlightenment. Ramose, therefore suggests the term *Mokoko-Hungwe* as symbol of "the period for Africa's reversion to unmodified and unencumbered sovereignty". (See Ramose, M. B., 2002, "'African Renaissance': A northbound gaze", in *Philosophy from Africa*, op. cit. p 608-609). However, as seen in 3.6, Okere suggests that the meaning of 'science' is highly nuanced, and that science, under some of these meanings, is legitimately attributable to any culture. On this view, Harding's objections are defensible only if one conceives of science as that field of study that "considers only inanimate matter, bodies or anything with mathematical properties" (Okere, op. cit. p. 23). In this work, however, allusions to 'African science' will refer to the critical and experimental practices, towards problem-solving in particular and knowledge production in general, in the indigenous setting of Africa

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dichotomies evolved by the Western philosophers and anthropologists discussed above, and their denigration of the intellectual products of Africa.

Secondly, Hountoundji seems to be suggesting that the practitioners of science in the indigenous setting of Africa were/are impervious to validating their hypothesis and beliefs. This is refutable in view of empirical studies on the subject. One of these is a philosophical appraisal of the practice of diviners in Ghana, which concluded that African diviners, in their practice, undergo processes that meet Kuhn's criteria for normal science: they do employ a Disciplinary Matrix (DM) and apply symbolic generalizations to nature, they acquire, by training, a treasury of techniques, procedures and ethics in applying a paradigm, and they generate hypotheses and confirm them within that paradigm[144]. This conclusion has been affirmed by Sophie Oluwole's analysis on the philosophical nature of the *Ifa* corpus. According to her, *Ifa* verses actually are rational justifications of specific philosophical positions[145].

Thirdly, although some Western philosophers such as Alfred North Whitehead have argued for the open-endedness of science[146], it is doubtful that science will ever want to adapt its paradigm in response to refutation of some of its theories and explanations by indigenous alternative knowledge systems such as those from the indigenous setting of Africa. In fact, "the chief problem with appropriating the benefits of modern scientific method and integrating them effectively into indigenous African knowledge systems has been that the modern scientific tradition has typically prevented it"[147]. This defiance to integration and assimilation with non-western systems of knowledge is exemplified by the stubborn refusal of science to admit the reality of 'paranormal events' in spite of their validation by the scientific tool of probability. Consequently, modern science denies that

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[144] Ajei, M. O., 2000, *The Paranormal: op. cit.,* p 100-108
[145] Oluwole, S., 1988, "African Philosophy as Illustrated in Ifa Corpus", in *African Philosophy,* Vol. 11, No. 2, 1988, p. 159
[146] This view is sufficiently implicit in chapters 1-2 and 7-12 of Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* (1967, New York: The Free Press). Also, Whitehead, in his *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, (New York: Macmillan, p vi) strives to go beyond "modern thought [which has] been confined to the most general notions of physics and biology" and to "construct a system of ideas which bring the aesthetic, moral, and religious interests into relation with those concepts of the world which have their origin in natural science".
[147] Lauer, H., 2004, "Cause and Effect between Knowledge Traditions", op. cit., p 263

these events can provide us with genuine and reliable knowledge[148]. In view of this attitude towards diverse epistemological frameworks, it is surprising to encounter Hountoundji's optimism that science will update its paradigm by co-opting and integrating legitimate perspectives from African systems of thought. However, a number of African intellectuals recognize the urgency in rejecting this optimism.

In his *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, Ramose treats a vast number of themes. Prominent among these is his argument for African philosophy's status as a particular, fully developed way of philosophizing, which has to be understood and practised in its own way and in its own framework. *Ubuntu* constitutes the nature of African philosophy. One salient point about African philosophy through *ubuntu* is that knowledge and being cannot be separated. On this view, epistemology is as much an ontological reflection as ontology is an epistemological concern. "Accordingly, African ontology and epistemology must be understood as two aspects of one and the same reality"[149]. Further, Religion, politics and law [and presumably other sciences] must be anchored upon the ontology of ubuntu philosophy[150]. In view of these, it is legitimate to claim that *ubuntu* is simultaneously the foundation and the edifice of African philosophy.

Ramose also pronounces on the relation between African philosophy and the liberation of Africa. In his view, the philosophical character of European colonization was the intent of Europe to impose its conceptions of reality, knowledge and truth on the colonized[151]. The essence of this was to call into question the humanity of the African to the extent that it was an enterprise aimed at disproving the humanness of the African[152]. A significant consequence of this, for the African, has been the experience of living with a humiliated consciousness, even after decolonization. It needs be noted that an intransigent exemplification and consequence of this experience is the denigration and denial by Africans of their intellectual heritage. On the basis of this, Ramose concludes that the

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[148] See Ajei, M. O., 2000, *The Paranormal,* op. cit. p. 11, chapters 3 and 4.
[149] Ramose, M. B., 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* op. cit. p 40
[150] Ibid., p. 51-52. In fact in chapters 4-8 of the book, Ramose argues for Ubuntu as the basis of ethics as well as social, legal, medical and political philosophy
[151] Ibid., p. 36
[152] ibid., p. 35

authentic liberation of Africa is long overdue. A foremost aim of this liberation is the release of Africans' conceptions of reality, knowledge and truth from dominance under the European epistemological paradigm[153].

Serequeberhan, on his part, thinks that the African's condition in need of change is that of a "misunderstanding, an estrangement from the meaning of ourselves". Needless to say, this also results from the mental enslavement discussed above, to the extent that its roots are in the obliteration of the "standards and practices of our fathers".

Further, Awoonor argues that the continent's marginalization within the context of "the globalization myth"[154] can be traced to two factors. The first is the abdication of the class of African intellectuals of their responsibility to bring to the table of the 'globalized world' its side of the discourse. This abdication inheres in their acceptance of "the particularism of the Western claim to predominant superiority in all things as the foundation for the universal"[155]. Accordingly, this class of Africans "has become not only the consumer of other people's material culture *in extenso*, but more perniciously, other people's ideas"[156]. Secondly, the continent's marginalization can be traced to "the African intellectual's "pernicious refusal to take a look at our indigenous knowledge"[157].

The common thread running through these observations is that philosophy must play a lead role in the struggle for Africa's emancipation from these by exploring and resolving to decipher the sources of our abdication, confusion and misunderstanding[158].

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[153] ibid., p. 36

[154] See section 2.10 for a discussion of this

[155] Awoonor, K., 2006, "Humanities and Globalization: An African Perspective", in *Legon Journal of the Humanities: Special Edition 2006,* Legon: University of Ghana, p. 11

[156] ibid. The emphasis appears in the quotation.

[157] ibid.

[158] Serequeberhan, T., 1998, "Philosophy and Post-Colonial Africa", in Emmanuel C. Eze (ed), *African* Coetzee, P. H., and Roux, A. P. J. (eds), *Philosophy from Africa,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 125 pp. 9-12.

3.10   Concluding Remarks

The above critique of internalist epistemologies is, fundamentally, a critique of "the lies, illusions and mystifications constructed in the Western episteme about Africa"[159]. It is an exposure of the basis of the paradigmatic crisis encountered by social scientists studying Africa's development. The effects of these lies and illusions are the epistemicide and valuecide being perpetuated by Africans in their strides towards development, exemplified by the persistence, through perpetual cosmetic adaptations and theoretical reconstructions, of the Eurocentric and economistic schools of thought, in the development process in Africa.

The above critique, then, defines the need for 'a paradigmatic shift' in African development practice. It promotes the development of indigenous African knowledge systems that, in contrast to the Western 'ethnosciences' that are currently being imported through Western-controlled "development" policy, are rooted in the philosophical traditions and social needs of Africans. Success at this will help place Africa as the subject in the struggle for its liberation from the imperialist and exploitative practices of Western science and technology. It is to these foundations of the authentic liberation of Africa that we now turn in the next chapter.

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[159] Mudimbe, V. Y., 1988, *The Invention of Africa,* op. cit., pp. 142-143

CHAPTER FOUR: FOUNDATION FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

4.1   Introduction

In Section 3.9 of Chapter Three, we introduced Ramose's views on African philosophy and its prospects for liberating Africa from the *epistemicide* and *valuecide* engendered by Western ethnocentrism. In the course of this we encountered his claim that *ubuntu* is the basis of the philosophy of the Bantu speaking peoples. Particularly emphasized were his claims that African ontology and epistemology must be understood as two aspects of one and the same reality, and that the various sciences and their theoretical foundations are anchored upon these two branches of philosophy. In this Chapter we return to the ontology and epistemology of *ubuntu* as the basis of African philosophy and sciences, and consider the congruence of philosophical thinking of African cultures, using Bantu and Akan cultures as our points of departure.

The central task of this chapter, then, is to inquire into the nature of reality and knowledge in the philosophies of indigenous African societies. This is dictated by the fact that a culture's conceptions of what is real and knowable are pivotal in the formation of its values; especially of the good. And as sufficiently emphasized in the foregoing chapters, we strongly subscribe to the view that the foundations of Africa's development must be the values grown and nurtured from the soil of Africa. The discussions in this chapter reiterates our affirmation of the positions of the South Report and Maquet[1], that there are sufficient cultural features common to African societies to give them a shared identity and reason to work together for common objectives. This "family atmosphere"[2] among and between African peoples, is a prominent reason why an appropriately conceived common development framework for the continent is liable to succeed. The common ontological and epistemological features discussed will lead us, in concluding the chapter, to reflections on how they may support the basic structures of development theory and practice toward Africa's authentic liberation.

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[1] In Section vii of the introductory chapter
[2] Ramose, M. B. 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* Harare: Mond Books, p. 40

4.2.   Essential Features of African Ontology

4.2.1   The Structure of Be-ing

According to Ramose, the word '*ubuntu*' couples two words*: ubu* and *ntu*. *Ubu* concerns be-ing in general, in so far as "It is enfolded be-ing before it manifests itself in the concrete form or mode of ex-sistence of a particular entity"[3]. Oneness is characteristic of *ubu*. However, this enfolded be-ing is always oriented towards unfoldment. In other words, it seeks "incessant continual concrete manifestation through particular forms and modes of being"[4]. *Ntu* expresses this process of continual unfoldment. Thus, *ubu* as generalized be-ing has the possibility of infinite manifestations[5].

Umuntu, the human being, is one such manifestation, and the realm of humans is embodied by "the onto-triadic structure of be-ing"[6]. What this means is that this realm is constituted of three interdependent levels of existence. The first is the world of the living. This is the level of epistemic discourse, as well as the creation and organization of social structures. The second is the level of "the living-dead"[7]. In this conception of reality, the death of a human being implies the discontinuance only of the person's physical being but not the discontinuance of the person's life. The third level of the realm of the living is that of the yet-to-be-born, and these are the "beings of the future"[8].

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[3] Ibid., p. 41
[4] Ibid.
[5] The affirmation of this thesis by the Igbos of Nigeria is encoded in the igbo term for 'the world'. This is *Uwa* which, according to Osuagwu, literally means "the Unfolding". See Osuagwu, C. G. "Cybercosmos: The African Dynamic Network Universe", *The Tshwane Renascent Africa Lectures*, delivered at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, 20-31 March 2006, p. 2
[6] Ibid. p. 50
[7] Mbiti, J., 1970, *African Religions and Philosophy,* London: Heinemann, p. 25. Here, Mbiti employs this phrase to mean "the spirits of those who have recently died". This was the first time this phrase was stematically employed in African philosophical discourse. However, it is doubtful whether Mbiti can restrict the concept to only those who have recently departed the life of the living. We subscribe to the phrase's wider interpretation by Ramose (at Ramose, M. B, 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* Harare: Mond Books, p. 50) to mean "those who have passed away from the world of the living"
[8] Ramose , M. B, 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, ibid.

These reflections on Bantu ontology coincide largely with the Akan theory of be-ing, which displays the following three essential features. The first is the postulate that existence comprises visible and invisible realms, such that some aspects of reality are imperceptible[9]. Secondly, Akan thought postulates a universe containing a hierarchy of beings, with *Onyame*[10] at the top. In descending order from *Onyame* comes the *abosom* (deities) the *Nsamanfo* (human beings who have departed the visible realm of existence for the invisible one) human beings and physical objects. Subject to minor variations, this hierarchical ontological structure has been asserted alike by professional philosophers, traditional sages and anthropologists writing on Akan culture[11], and for other African cultures[12]. The third essential postulate of Akan cosmology is that the universe is endowed with varying degrees of force of power, all of which derive ultimately from *Onyame*. Gyekye reports that

> "This force or power is sunsum…in this metaphysic all created things, that is, natural objects, have or contain sunsum. Every deity (obosom) is a sunsum but not vice versa. Sunsum, then, on my interpretation, appears to be a generic concept, it appears to be a universal spirit, manifesting itself differently in the various beings and objects in the natural world"[13].

He then furnishes us with other senses in which sunsum is used. According to him:

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[9] A number of authors claim the same for other African cultures. One of the strongest defenses of this claim occurs at Bujo, B, 1998, *The Ethical Dimensions of Community*, Nganda, C. N. (trans), Nairobi: Paulines Publications, pp. 15, 16, 33

[10] The most powerful of the beings that inhabit the Akan universe

[11] Some commentators have attributed a dualistic universe to the Akans, assigning all the categories of being beyond human beings to be the immaterial/spiritual realm of existence, whereas observable entities like trees have been consigned to the physical realm. I would like to suggest here that although the Akan thinker affirms that the universe is composed of visible and invisible beings, it is doubtful whether he implies by this that these aspects of existence are two distinctly separate categories as the notion of dualism would suggest (the as yet unsolved mind-body problem in Western philosophy is sufficient evidence that interactionism is no solution to the problems that beset dualism). Rather the Akan thinker conceives of these two realms as two points on a continuum, and not distinct realms. This is because an obosom, for instance, which in a strictly dualistic interpretation of Akan cosmology will belong to the immaterial realm, is believed to be capable of physical manifestation and as such, enter into a visible world. On the other hand a tree, which in a strictly dualistic universe would be conceived as a physical entity, is believed to be constituted of non-physical properties by many Akan thinkers. This makes a clear-cut dichotomy of the immaterial/material or spiritual/physical in Akan ontology implausible.

[12] Mbiti, J., 1970, *African Religions and Philosophy,* op. cit., p. 46

[13] Gyekye, K., 1995, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 72-73

"First it is used to refer to any self-conscious subject whose activities are initiated self-consciously. In this sense Onyame, the deities, and the ancestors are said to be spirits (sunsum), that is spiritual beings with intelligence and will. Second, it is used to refer to the mystical powers believed to exist in the world. These powers are held to constitute the inner essences or intrinsic properties of natural objects, and are believed to be contained in those objects"[14].

Thus, on Gyekye's interpretation, sunsum denotes an intelligent and willful being as well as a power that constitutes the essence of all existents. This interpretation is affirmed by Minkus, who writes: "As well as designating the activating essence of particular beings and things, it [sunsum] also refers to the general power to act in non-ordinary, non-physical ways"[15].

Thus sunsum is a force that pervades the whole universe. It is embodied in particular existents and empowers them to act self-consciously[16]. A conscious being, then, belongs to that class of existents whose essence is a power (to act in the world) that is an aspect of, and contingent upon, a universal natural power. What makes any existent what it is, is its possession of some definite amount of this power. On the terms of this ontology, therefore, a physical object has the potential of self-activation. As such, it can, without external agency, be a causal agent in the world.

This notion that every existent is composed of self-activating power constitutes a difference between African ontology and other metaphysical systems. Gyekye notes this in the following passage:

"In saying that natural objects contain sunsum or power Akan thinkers mean to attribute to them an intrinsic property, namely the property of activity or an activating principle. If this interpretation of the Akan position is correct, then it rejects by implication the view held by Cartesians and others in Western

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[14] Ibid., p. 73

[15] Minkus, H., 1977, "Causal Theory in Akwapim Akan Philosophy". In *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Wright, R. (ed.)., Washington D.C.: University Press of America, p 114-115

[16] Hagan, G. P., 2000, "Modern Technology, Traditional Mysticism and Ethics in Akan Culture", in Lauer, H. (ed) *Ghana: Changing Values Changing Technologies: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies II,* Washington D. C., Council; for Research in Values and Philosophy, pp. 43-44. Hagan affirms this view here by claiming that "all things have *sunsum*" means that "both visible and invisible entities are treated as being endowed with a principle of activity that enables all existents interact in and of themselves"

philosophy and also in Islamic philosophy that matter is essentially passive or inert and that a creative divine being must therefore activate it[17].

But what, closely, is meant by the claim that *sunsum* is a 'power' or 'force' that pervades the universe? What is the nature of this force? As stated above, Akan thinkers enunciate reality as comprising of visible and invisible aspects. Most traditional Akan sages and modern philosophers alike admit that *sunsum* belongs to the invisible aspect of reality. It is posited by many of them as a force that is concealed from immediate sense experience, something shrouded or veiled, something which ordinary sense experience can access but only after the act of "removing the veil" which shrouds *sunsum* from immediate perception[18]. The capacity to remove this veil may be acquired during training toward the priesthood of the indigenous religion, or by the conscious (or unconscious) assumption of a special mental state[19].

Do all these make sunsum "spirits", as tenaciously contended by Gyekye[20]? In our view, the Akan thinker's conception of the defining attributes of *sunsum* far from justifies identifying it with the Cartesian notion of "spirit", as Gyekye does. His identification of *sunsum* with Descartes' *res cogitans* may be rightfully inferred from his claims. First, he holds that the sunsum and okra are ontologically identical though logically distinct. This, according to him, means that "they are not independent existents held together in an accidental way by an external bond. They are a unity in duality, a duality in unity"[21]. He then goes on to consider the okra/sunsum symbiosis as an immaterial entity[22], equivalent to Descartes' 'soul'[23]. The problem is that the Cartesian *res cogitans* belongs to an uncompromising category of 'spirit', and defining the ontology of *sunsum* as coinciding with it is problematic for a number of reasons.

To begin with, the concept spirit in the Western philosophical context under discussion refers to a substance which, by nature, cannot ever be accessible to sense experience. It

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[17] Gyekye, K., 1995, *An Essay* op. cit. p. 75
[18] Ajei, M. O., 2000., op. cit. p. 42
[19] Ibid., p. 44
[20] Gyekye, K., 1995, *An Essay,* op. cit., p. 88, 94
[21] Ibid., p. 98
[22] Ibid., p. 94
[23] Ibid., p. 87

is by nature distinctly detached from the system of coordinates that define the spatio-temporal schema. This distinction is categorical[24]. Such uncompromising severance of the Cartesian 'spirit' from the world of experience renders it inadequate to express fully the meaning of the *sunsum*, which is conceived of as a force capable of manifesting, and influencing events in the physical world. This latter attribute is confirmed for other cultures. For instance Mbiti writes of entities which are "invisible but may make themselves visible to human beings"[25].

Descartes and Gyekye's spirit mismatches *sunsum* because the beings that populate Akan cosmology prohibit such an irrevocable separation. Therefore, any analysis of these beings that ignores this prohibition is bound to encounter logical problems such as 'the mind/body problem' and 'the problem of other minds', two intractable problems bequeathed by Descartes to Western ontology and epistemology. The genesis of these problems is Descartes' categorical departure, in expounding his metaphysics, from the three fundamental laws of formal logic[26]. However, we cannot hope to attain sufficient clarity on many African philosophical concepts with these laws, precisely because they are primarily concerned with the form and not the content of thought. As such, they are ill-equipped to capture the content and all the ramifications of a dynamic concept like *sunsum*.

On Akan terms, *sunsum* is a force that permeates the natural world, but of which one cannot expect to have immediate sensory experience. It is as well the activating power of every being. One implication of this is that for it to be possible for beings to have agency in the universe, their activating energy (*sunsum*) has to interact with the energy of something else. Regarding this, it is worth noting that the Akan word for prayer is '*mpaebo*', a compound word derived from '*pae*' and '*bo*'. The imperative *pae* literally means split or cleave, as in "*pae dua no mu*" (split the wood). 'Bo', on the other hand, yields to a range of connotations such as call, hit, beat, sound. Thus '*mpaebo*' may be construed as 'to sound a call'. The salutary point here is that by the act of praying, you

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[24] Descartes, R., 1998, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*, London: Penguin, Second Meditation
[25] Mbiti, J., 1970, *African Religions and Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 102
[26] The Law of identity, the Law of the Excluded Middle and the Law of non-contradiction

"call to" the *sunsum* external to you. You set your life-force into vibration by the words and act of prayer, so that it may reach other forces.

Experience in this world, then, has to do with this interaction of *sunsum*. Sometimes these interactions lead to experiences of which we are cognitively, affectively, or sensorially conscious. At times we lack conscious experience of them. Yet they occur and produce real events. What distinguishes different categories of beings is the level of the potency of their *sunsum*. These levels determine the capacity of various beings for agency in the world, and of their consciousness of reality. Therefore, proceeding from this ontology, if we fail to consciously experience certain events, then this is either because our level of consciousness or activating power is weaker than is required for that level of understanding, or we are inattentive to the event.

We have seen, through our discussion of Ramose's work, that the three postulates of Akan ontology are congruent with elements of Bantu thought. This point is confirmed by Placide Temples who theorizes Bantu ontology as essentially a theory of forces[27]. This particular perspective has had an enormous ideological impact on contemporary African philosophical discourse on self-identity, and thus obliquely, on development. This for two reasons: First, Temples' work, *Bantu Philosophy*, may be claimed to have engendered active discourse on the nature of African philosophy and on conceptual directions for the African cultural future. Secondly, the work is easily interpreted as implicated in the ethnocentric emphasis of the Western discourse that it claimed to challenge. In view of its significance, we give some attention here to this work.

Against the elaborate rationalization of European derogatory conceptions of Africa stemming from Hegel's philosophy of history[28], and its influence on the sustained denigration of African thought maturing into constructions of African mentality as

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[27] Temples, P. 1959, *Bantu Philosophy,* Paris: Presence Africaine, p. 51.
[28] The upshot of Hegel's thesis was that sub-Saharan Africa is not part of universal history because world history is a rational process and sub-Saharan Africa doesn't have the capacity to contribute to this process. For a thorough examination of this thesis and its influence, see
- Ramose, M. B., 2002 *African Philosophy through Ubuntu,* op. cit.
- Irele, A. 1983. "Introduction". pp 7-32 in Hountondji, P. J, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. London: Hutchison and Co

'primitive' and 'pre-logical' by anthropologists in the early twentieth century[29], Temples defined an ontology which, according to him, underlay Bantu consciousness and action, and which finds expression in the religious and social institutions and the value preferences of the Basotho. It is an ontology which conceives force as the very essence of be-ing. Thus

> "…the Bantu speak, act, live as if, for them, beings were forces. Force is not for them an adventitious accidental reality. Force is even more than a necessary attribute of beings: force is the nature of being, force is being, being is force" [30].

Further, according to Temples, the interrelationship of forces within a wholeness of existence, as well as the hierarchy of forces, are also fundamental principles of Bantu ontology. At the top of this hierarchy is God. Then comes the forefathers, and next living human beings, who are stratified according to their 'vital power'. Beneath the living are animals and vegetation and inanimate objects[31].

But while cautioning Europeans to abandon their derogatory conceptions of African thought, Temples animatedly upholds these conceptions. First, he states that he does

> "not claim, of course, that the Bantu are capable of formulating a philosophical treatise, complete with an adequate vocabulary. It is our job to proceed to such systematic development. It is we who will be able to tell them, in precise terms, what their inmost concept of being is"[32].

Then, again,

> "hitherto we had been building on sand…..we have at length discovered the true point of departure. We shall rejoice at having found within the Bantu something to render them more noble, without feeling ourselves obliged to kill first the man already existing[33]"

It needs to be pointed out that the subjects in this quotation refer to European missionaries and colonial administrators. One legitimate inference that may be drawn

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[29] Levy-Bruhl, L, 1910, *Les fonctions mentales dans les societes inferierures*, Paris: Presses Univer-sitaires de France, pp 505-6.
[30] Temples, P. 1959, *Bantu Philosophy,* op. cit., p. 51
[31] Ibid. p. 46
[32] Ibid. p. 36
[33] ibid p. 44.

from this is that the 'discovery' of the philosophical ability of Africans makes them, foremost, candidates for Western 'civilization' and 'christianization[34]. But since Africans may not be aware of this, it was incumbent on the missionaries and colonialists to decisively impress on Africans that their way of viewing the world and their place in it should have no ultimate objective than that of the European civilizing mission. It is notable that "Temples was advocating this at a time when the Atlantic social scientists were formulating the modernization theories[35]"

These racist and imperialistic connotations of Temples' work have subjected it to severe criticism by a number of African philosophers. According to Hountoundji, for instance, Temples' attribution to Bantus of a "collective and unconscious world-view"[36] as philosophy is a contemptuous abstraction from history designed as a concrete device "in the service of a very concrete policy which is nothing less than the preservation of imperialist domination"[37]. Further, Temples' "Bantu Philosophy' is a hoax decidedly calculated to make the African a mere object for discussion. Thus

> "*Bantu Philosophy* is a mere pretext for learned disquisitions among Europeans. The black person continues to be the very opposite of an interlocutor; he/she remains a topic, a voiceless face under private investigation, an object to be defined and not the subject of a possible discourse"[38].

These are authentic and cogent criticisms. However, they de-emphasize some constructive features of Temples' work. We think a more fruitful approach to *Bantu Philosophy* may be to distinguish its elucidation of Bantu ontological concepts from the political objectives of its author. The elucidation is largely accurate, even though much of the author's objectives are misguided and repugnant. However, much of the criticism has seized predominantly on Temples' misguided objectives to discredit the whole work. We

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[34] The seventh and last chapter of the work is entitled "Bantu Philosophy and our Mission to Civilize"
[35] Chachage, C. S. L., 1994, "Discourse on Development among African Philosophers", in Himmelstrand, U., Kinyanjui, K., and Mburugu, E (eds), *African Perspectives on Development*, London: James Currey Ltd., p. 52
[36] Hountondji, P. J., 2002, "An Alienated Literature", in Coetzee, P. H., and Roux, A. P. J. (eds), *Philosophy from Africa,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 125
[37] Ibid. p. 127
[38] Ibid. p. 126

wish, however, to separate these objectives from his statement of Bantu ontology, which we think is credible.

The Akan concept of *sunsum* has strong conceptual and cultural affinity with *moya, moea, umoya*[39] in the Bantu languages. This is what enables the ontology of the Bantu and Akan peoples to stress the existence of a general, enfolded be-ing, of which specific and particular beings in the universe (visible and invisible) are aspects of. The Bantus conceive of this general be-ing as *ubu*, whereas the Akans call it *sunsum*. This notion of be-ing in general suggests that the ultimate structure of reality is exemplified by oneness, a suggestion which we now wish to consider and shed some light.

4.2.2: Holonness: the Non-fragmentation of Be-ing

Most traditional communities in Africa regard the visible and invisible dimensions of existence as aspects of a complex wholeness inhabited by a multiplicity of beings, some of which share characteristics of both dimensions. In fact in African thought, to exist means "standing in a particular relationship with all there is both visible and invisible"[40]. Ramose refers to this as the 'whole-ness' conception of be-ing, or holon-ness[41]. This contrasts with the often-quoted "holistic" world view of Africans, a misconception which, in Ramose's view, derives from Western ontological and logical categories that furthers the "fragmentation of be-ing"[42].

But what does this mean? According to Ramose, the fragmentation of be-ing occurs because the structure of be-ing in Western thought has been left to be determined by the structure of language. We know be-ing through language, and this knowledge is exemplified by the structure of a doer (subject) engaged in the activity of doing (verb) that is directed at a passive recipient/beneficiary of the doing (object). This represents the subject-verb- object (SVO) structure of language. This linguistic state of affairs has been

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[39] Ramose, M.B., 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit., p. 85
[40] Ruch, E. A., and Anyanwu, K. C., (eds), 1981, *African Philosophy, : An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa*, Rome: Catholic Book Agency, p. 124
[41] Ramose, M. B., 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit., p. 46
[42] Ibid., pp 46-47

superimposed on thought, warranting the argument that the SVO structure also determines thought. As such, thought is said to merely encode the inherent separateness of subject and object.

Ramose continues by arguing that this mode of thinking is extended by proclaiming that the subject is the moulder of reality. On this view, reality becomes moulded being in so far as be-ing is reduced to human experiences and ideas. The existence of the subject as an aspect of be-ing, as well as the subject's activity as a possibility condition for connecting to be-ing, is relegated to the background. Henceforth, the subject – the human being – becomes the center of the universe. It is this projection of a linguistic theory on to reality as an explanation of reality that represents the said fragmentation of be-ing. In Ramose's words, the "obliviousness of do-ing and the imperceptible derecognition of be-ing as the possibility condition for moulding and ordering is what we mean by the fragmentation of being as wholeness"[43].

This identification of thought with be-ing, which reached its climax in Newton's work, was already matured in the infancy of Western philosophy. In his poem *Peri' phuseos*, Parmenides[44] is guided by a Goddess to distinguish the Way of Opinion (the senses) from the Way of Truth (the faculty of the intellect). The Goddess shows how knowledge gained through sense experience must be rejected in light of a revelation from mind:

> "It is necessary that you shall learn all things, as well the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth [provided my mind] as the opinions of mortals in which there is no true belief. Nevertheless, you shall learn these [opinions] also, how the appearances, which pervade all things, had to be acceptable"[45].

The superiority of the intellect over the senses depends, for Parmenides, on the fact that only thought can know 'what is' (or be-ing). The senses offer us a constantly changing world, a mixture of be-ing and non-be-ing. However, our minds cannot think of non-be-ing, as this would amount to not thinking at all. Therefore, non-being does not exist. Be-

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[43] Ibid., p. 44
[44] Who flourished in the latter part of the 6th Century B. C
[45] Taran, L., 1965, *Parmenides*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 9

ing is the only possible object of thought and because of this, be-ing and thought are the same. This is the famous "…for the same thing can be thought and can exist"[46].

It has been pointed out that what Parmenides in fact uncovered was the form of thought when it thinks: i.e., identity with itself[47]. The necessary identity of thought while thinking, is conceived by Parmenides as the unity and identity of be-ing and the only possible object of rational thought. Because, on his terms, identity is the only thing we can think without contradiction, this form of thought becomes the only true be-ing possible for thought. In Parmenides, then, the identity of thought with itself becomes the essence of be-ing and the only necessary truth.

In celebrating this unjustified passage from a truth of logic to an ontological truth some millennia later, Descartes could only proclaim that *'Cogito ergo sum'*. What this means is that all Descartes could think with necessity and derive rationally with no doubt was the identity of thought with itself. Since, proceeding from the Law of Identity, it cannot be true that I am simultaneously thinking and not thinking, then if I am thinking, then I am while I think. Therefore in Descartes, as in Parmenides, there is only one truth that one cannot reject because it is immediately self-evident, and that is the existence of thought while thinking and, therefore[48], one's own existence as a thinking being. But this existence does not have any other specification than that of thinking. I exist 'in so far as I think'. But what about the existence of other persons? Do my hands, which do not think, also exist? What am I at the moment when I am not thinking? Therefore, how often am I?

These questions define "the mind-body problem" and "the problem of other minds" in Western philosophy, and as indicated in section 4.2.1, these are problems to which no convincing answers have yet been found. The intractable nature of these problems may not be unconnected with the overemphasis on the thinking subject in Western philosophy.

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[46] Ibid. p 41
[47] Papa-Grimaldi, A., 1998, *Time and Reality*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 9-10, 210.
[48] It is this inference that constitutes the unjustified passage from the identity of thought with itself, to the identity of thought with be-ing.

This emphasis on the subject, which manifests in the fragmentation of be-ing, is a direct consequence of a false dichotomy between be-ing and becoming[49].

4.2.3   The Rheomode and the Nature of Be-ing

This emphasis, however, is rejected by the rheomode, which is the philosophical language of *ubuntu*. As noted earlier in section 1.3.6.2, the rheomode "is a critique of a thought and language structure which assumes and imposes a strict and a necessary sequence in terms of subject-verb-object. It is an appeal for the understanding of entities as dimensions, forms and modes of the incessant flow of simultaneously multi-directional motion"[50]. Thus it is a language that acknowledges be-ing rather than 'be', and preserves the whole-ness rather than the 'whole' of be-ing. By avoiding 'whole' and 'be', it negates the fixation of be-ing and introduces motion and dynamism into the nature of reality.

Another characteristic of the rheomode is that it departs from the verb, yet it recognizes the importance of the subject by understanding the verb as a verbal/noun (gerund). Thus the action of the verb, or doing, becomes inseparable from the doer. The doer in the act of doing then becomes "at any given moment the embodiment of the potentiality for an infinite variety of an unceasing activity of merging and converging" [51]. In this way, "the incessant flow of motion as be-ing is preserved because the verb pertains to doing rather than do![52]"

Such a whole-ness or holonistic view of the universe that admits of the dynamic structure of reality is common to many African cultures.   Senghor asserts that "the African conceives the world, beyond the diversity of its forms, as fundamentally a mobile, yet unique reality that seeks synthesis"[53]. It is important to understand that in the process towards this potential synthesis, interaction of the various beings in the system, which

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[49] The Parmenidian being and non-being.
[50] Ramose, M. B., 2002, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu, op. cit.,* p. 45
[51] Ibid. p 46
[52] Ibid.
[53] Senghor, L., 1970, "Negritude", in Montgomery, G et al. (eds), *Independent Africa,* New York: Anchor Books, p. 184

occurs necessarily, allows for such fluidity that the defining characteristics of these be-ings dovetail into each other. Because reality is as an aggregate of components that interact in both determinate and indeterminate patterns, all of which are potentially capable of yielding truth, the rheomode becomes a language that simultaneously acknowledges the importance of logic and recognizes the limitations imposed by it. This language furnishes us with the ability to transcend these limitations in a deliberate and structured manner, with a view to widening the human capacity to articulate insights on nature's complexity. One such capacity is the ability to operate simultaneously at the physical and non-physical realms of reality, as well as the capacity to interact with other entities in nature whose be-ing we cannot accurately define.

A holonistic conception of reality is likewise affirmed by the Akans. Referring to Akan cosmogony, Abraham observes that "the whole forms one internally contiguous order"[54]. In our attempt to expound on this observation, we shall adopt the Akan concept of the person as our point of departure. This is because this concept has proven to be most fertile in spawning strands that can hardly be ignored in an appraisal of the holonistic tenets of Akan thought.

There is considerable consensus among authors on Akan ontology[55] that the Akan consider the human person as ontologically constituted of the *okra*, *sunsum*, and honam[56]. Since the publication of Danquah's *Akan Doctrine of God*[57], the relationship of *okra* to *sunsum* has occasioned a philosophical debate which still rages on and has produced different positions on the matter. We would like to adopt Gyekye's exposition of these concepts as the point of departure for our discussion because, in our opinion, it ranks high amongst the most recent and thorough accounts of the subject.

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[54] Abraham, W. E., 1962, *The Mind of Africa*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 51
[55] Some of these are:
- Danquah, J. B., 1944, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, London: Lutherworth Press
- Oguah, B. E., 1977, "African and Western Philosophy: A Comparative Study", in Wright, R. A. (ed) *African Philosophy*, Washington, D. C: University Press of America, pp. 196-197
- Gyekye, K., 1995, *Essay,* op. cit., p. 89.
[56] The okra is usually translated into English as 'soul', *sunsum* is held to be the activating principle in the person and the source of character, and *honam* is the body.
[57] Danquah, J. B. 1944, *Akan Doctrine of God,* op.cit

As seen in Section 4.2.1, Gyekye considers the *okra* and *sunsum* as logically distinct, but ontologically united[58]. We endorse this position, and understand it to mean that the relationship between *okra* and *sunsum* is not one of strict identity[59]. This is not the kind of relationship that *okra* has with *sunsum* because, as Gyekye points out, we can make true assertions about *okra* that will not apply to *sunsum*.

Another strand in Gyekye's exposition is his admission that *sunsum* is capable of physical manifestation. In spite of this, he maintains nonetheless that it is essentially immaterial/spiritual in the Cartesian sense of 'spiritual'[60]. His primary reason for this position is that the manifestation doesn't occur in the spatio-temporal world, "otherwise anyone would be able to see and communicate with the okra (soul)"[61]. We agree with Gyekye that the fact of the physical manifestation of *okra/sunsum* doesn't necessarily make it categorially physical. On the other hand we reject his position that this leads to the conclusion that it is categorially immaterial.

Our position on the nature of *sunsum* fully coincides with that of its Yoruba conceptual correlate, the *emi*. Gbadegesin informs us that in Yoruba thought *emi*, is the life-giving principle bestowed on all human be-ings by the supreme being. But *emi* not only supplies life and existence, "it also guarantees such conscious existence as long as it remains in force"[62] However, if we are to conceive *emi* as spiritual, then this must be understood only as referring to "an invisible entity and nothing more than that"[63].

Obviously, this is far from Gyekye's understanding of the spirituality of *sunsum.* An invisible entity does not necessarily have to be immaterial. But Gyekye arrives at the immateriality of *sunsum* because his arguments are designed primarily to refute the claim

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[58] Gyekye, K., 1995, *Essay,* op. cit., p. 98
[59] This type of identity relationship is said to exist between *x* and *y* if every non-intentional predicate asserted of *x*, if true, is also true of *y* and vice versa.
[60] Gyekye, K., 1995, *Essay,* op. cit., p. 87
[61] Ibid., p. 86
[62] Gbadegesin, S., 2002, "Eniyan: The Yoruba concept of a Person", in Coetzee, P. H and Roux, A. P. J. (eds) *Philosophy from Africa,* op. cit. p 178-179
[63] Ibid. p 179

that it is a physical entity. However, this task is rendered insurmountable by his thinking that once we admit its physical manifestation, we renounce the possibility of legitimately upholding the view of a spatially-bound *sunsum*.

The argument that Gyekye is meeting a logical one: if the *okra/sunsum* materializes in space, then it is presumably present at a specific location at a specific time, as these characterize the essence of a physical substance. But his answer to this problem, also a logical one, engenders greater difficulties: if we admit his position that *sunsum* is a spiritual entity because the modes of seeing it are not physical, then we are bound to claim that, for example, electromagnetism is spiritual because its manifestation is not perceived by anyone. However, this would be incorrect, as our discussions in section 3.3 sufficiently demonstrate. Thus we can admit the immateriality or non-spatiality of *okra/sunsum* only at the cost of ignoring its other important feature – its manifestation in space-time. If we chose nevertheless to conceive it as a Cartesian spirit, then we choose arbitrarily. To avoid such a choice, Akan thinkers evidently adopt the option of conceiving of the nature of *sunsum* in accordance with the logic of the rheomode.

Wiredu highlights some of these problems with Gyekye's conception of the person and provides his ontology of *okra/sunsum* as "quasi-physical". What he means by this is that it is not "straightforwardly physical as it is believed not to be fully subject to spatial constraints. Nor is it perceivable to the naked eye. Nevertheless, in some ways, it seems to be credited with paraphysical properties[64]". The upshot of Wiredu's position seems to be that the *okra* is, essentially, a physical entity with some accidental non-physical properties. Thus referring to the *okra*, he contends that "there is the conception under discussion only a reduced materiality and the reduction affects not its imagery but dynamics"[65]. He reinforces this view elsewhere, by relying on the Akan language[66].

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[64] Wiredu, K., 1983, "The Akan Concept of Mind", in *Ibadan Journal of Humanistsic Studies*, No. 3, p. 119
[65] Wiredu, K., 1992, "Death and the Afterlife in African Culture" in Gyekye, K and Wiredu, K (eds) *Person and Community – Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I*, Washington, D. C: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, p. 140
[66] Wiredu, K., 1987, "The Concept of Mind with Particular Reference to the Language and Thought of the Akans". In Floistad, G., (ed), *Contemporary Philosophy*: *A New Survey: Vol. 5*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Wiredu thus diametrically opposes Gyekye on this subject. But in so doing, he introduces yet more intractable problems into focus. For instance we may ask: if the *okra* is essentially physical, and a physical entity is one which occupies a volume of space that is equal to itself at any particular time, then why is it not completely susceptible to space-time coordinates?

It has been observed, and we think correctly, that the differences between Gyekye and Wiredu could be reduced to one question: "What is the nature of that being which, when it is physically observed, is sunsum and when it is not observed, is sunsum? Are we to say that it is physical or non-physical?"[67]. The one question thus becomes two in Engmann, with two purposes. The first interrogates the nature of sunsum, and the second prescribes two possible answers to the first. But taking into account the context in which the question arises, we think the only legitimate question is the first one. This question is appropriate because it is the more vigorous of the two. The second question erodes the interrogative force of the first by reducing the range of possible answers to two diametrically opposed ones. By so doing, it pretends as if the solution to this problem must necessarily conform to the Law of Identity, that we have on our hands a riddle which must be resolved in an "either/or" format. However, such a resolution cannot consistently endure in a holonistic framework upheld by indigenous African thinkers.

Regarding this, it is apposite to emphasize the point that consistency in terms of conformity to the Law of Identity is not the only test of the rationality or legitimacy of discourse. The Akan view of the universe may not subscribe fully to this law of formal logic, but coherent modes of thought that subscribe to other notions of consistency cannot be denied legitimacy merely because they are at variance with the Law of Identity. In fact a number of doctrines with firmly established philosophical credentials have been expounded outside the ambit of the identity principle. One which warrants inclusion in this category is existentialism.

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[67] Engmann, J., 1992, "Immortality and the Nature of Man in Ga Thought", in Gyekye, K. and Wiredu, K. (eds), *Person and Community*, op. cit., p. 171

Engmann's either/or resolution may have been required if the reality of sunsum was experienced by the Akans as inextricably locked under the key of Cartesian dualism. However, logic and its fundamental rules may not be capable at all of providing the standards for dealing adequately with the question about nature of be-ing as such. This is because

> "perhaps the whole body of logic as it is known to us, perhaps all the logic that we treat as a gift from heaven, is grounded in a very definite answer to the question about the essent; perhaps in consequence all thinking which solely follows the laws of thought prescribed by traditional logic is incapable from the very start of even understanding the question about the essent by its own resources; let alone actually unfolding the question and guiding it towards an answer"[68].

Judging by the attributes they ascribe to *sunsum*, it is clear that Akan thinkers consider the validity of their claims about it as transcending the laws of identity, non-contradiction, and the excluded middle. It is clear from the dynamism of their conception that they do not wish to deny themselves the possibility of asserting 'both/and' if this is what nature presents to them as real. They refuse to placidly accept the 'definite answer to the question about the essent', which is an analysis of reality in terms of the logic of western science. This logic is based upon a specific conception of space and time. Rethinking reality in other terms becomes necessary since the validity of this logic, as stated in section 3.5, has been vehemently questioned by contemporary scientific perspectives. As discussed there, there exist natural phenomena – like electromagnetic force - which, like *sunsum*, are not immediately accessible to sense experience but which manifest themselves to human sense experience under specific conditions.

4.2.4   Be-ings in a 'Network Universe'

The vitality of *sunsum* determines the relative position of beings on the hierarchical order of Akan ontology. Due to the belief in the existence of universal *sunsum*, and also that it derives from God, it is legitimate to argue that this ontological framework conceives of be-ing or Nature or God as one. The divine energy made manifest in particular and specific beings in the perceivable and imperceptible worlds constitutes the different

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[68] Heiddeger, M., 1987, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* New Haven: Yale University Press, p 25

modes of expression of God. Thus in this ontology, human beings, like all categories of being, are just part of this generalized be-ing, which in the Bantu language is philosophically rendered as *ubu*. Therefore, we cannot plausibly separate be-ing (as matter) from be-ing (as consciousness). Ultimately, be-ing is understood as being a wholeness, or that which makes everything connected into a whole.

The notion of be-ing as oneness readily leads to the view that each particular existent is merely a speck in a pattern of interactions within the wholeness. Further, its correlate, the notion of universal force, yields the view that each existing entity has the power to interact with every other entity. It is in view of this that "the world of forces (beings) is held like a spider's web of which no single thread can be caused to vibrate without shaking the whole network"[69]. Osuagwu considers this world of universal and necessary inter-relations as analogous to the intercommunicative network of contemporary Information Technology, and consequently characterizes the African world as a "cyber-cosmos"[70].

Two fundamental implications flow from this cybernetic character of existence for the quest for foundations for Africa's authentic development. The first is that each human being is a source of causal activity. As seen, in terms of Akan ontology, every being belongs to that class of existents whose essence is a power (to act in the world) that is contingent upon a universal natural power. The salient point with this is that Africans are, ontologically speaking, active sources of actions that influence life. They have an intrinsic property that enables them, even unconsciously, to influence their own and other lives and to affect the total life force of their communities by their manner of being. Thus an African has an ontological justification for rejecting the imposition of foreign-made development theories.

The second implication flowing from the notion of be-ing as a oneness is that each existent is key to the formation of "universal solidarity", which characterizes indigenous

[69] Tempels, P., 1959, *Bantu Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 60.
[70] Osuagwu, C. G., 2006, *Cybercosmos: The African Network Universe,* A lecture delivered under thew Tshwane Renascent Africa Lectures series, University of South Africa, Pretoria, March 22-30, p. 2

African society[71]. This solidarity, deriving from the perceived "wholeness" of existence, has definite implications for African value preferences and social organization. Now we wish to turn our attention to the African epistemological framework and inquire into how it may influence the quest for Africa's development.

4.3   Knowledge and Development

Undoubtedly, some of the fundamental questions a theory of knowledge has to answer are

1. Can we know anything at all?
2. If we can know something, then what is it that we can know? In other words, can we know everything or are there limits to what we can know?
3. How do we come to know what we can know: what are the sources and the pathways to knowledge?

Answers to these questions generated by theories in Western philosophy. These theories have generally been considered as standard ones to these questions. It may be worth our while therefore to conduct a brief excursus into the meaning of 'knowledge' in the Western philosophical tradition.

4.3.1   The Conditions of Knowledge in the Western Epistemological Tradition

Save the absolute skepticism of Pyrrho and his adherents, the common view among Western philosophers has been that some things can be known. I am using 'thing' comprehensively to include events, propositions and other objects of knowledge. But what does it mean to say that we can 'know' some things? What is the nature of knowledge?

It has been a central claim in Western philosophy since Plato's *Theaetetus* that to know *p* means that:

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[71] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension,* op. cit. p. 17

1. *p* is true
2. You must believe that *p* is true
3. You must be justified in believing that *p* is true

Jointly, these constitute the necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge. However, the interpretation of the third condition has posed a perennial challenge to Western epistemologists. The challenge inheres in this: if my knowing that *p* means my having justification for my belief that *p* is true, then what kind of justification will do? In attempts to answer this, a few trends of thought have emerged in Western philosophy. We would like to look at those espoused by Descartes and Locke, since these constitute the most prominent approaches in the said philosophical setting.

4.3.1.1 Knowledge Requires Certainty

According to Descartes, knowledge requires certainty. In other words to know that *p*, the evidence I have in support of *p* must be indubitable. The evidence is indubitable if the statement that represents the evidence (*s)* relates to *p* in such a way that it is impossible that *p* should be false if *s* is true. Descartes formulates this theory thus:

> "But if I did convince myself of anything, I must have existed. But there is some deceiver, supremely powerful, supremely intelligent, who purposely always deceives me. If he deceives me, then again I undoubtedly exist; let him deceive me as much as he may, he will never bring it about that, at the time of thinking that I am in fact nothing. Thus I have now weighed all considerations enough and more than enough; and must at length conclude that this proposition "I am, I exist", whenever I utter or conceive it in my mind, is necessarily true"[72].

Descartes makes it clear at the outset of his Meditations that he is setting out in search of an indubitable foundation for knowledge. As the passage above reveals, this search, after his exercise of the hyperbolic doubt, leads him to the intuitive certainty of the existence

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[72] Descartes, R., 1998, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*, op. cit., Second Meditation

of his thoughts. This, he holds, is indefeasible evidence for his existence, for it is impossible both for him to be aware of his thought and not to exist. On this view, then, the evidence that justifies your belief must be indefeasible.

Suffice it to say that the impossibility of procuring indubitable evidence in support of our beliefs was the breeding ground for absolute skepticism in Western philosophy. According to these skeptics, knowledge requires certainty, and since no one can be certain of anything it follows that no one can know anything. In fact on the terms of Cartesian epistemology, we can hardly claim any knowledge of the external world, as evidence for the truth of anything in this world is probable, at best. Therefore, as discussed in section 4.2.2, what Descartes' epistemology yields is the certainty of our thoughts and nothing more[73].

4.3.1.2 Knowledge Requires Good Evidence

The British empiricist John Locke systematized an epistemology which requires not indefeasible evidence but good evidence as sufficient justification. According to him, although the evidence of experience is always defeasible, it is nevertheless adequate to justify our true beliefs about the external world. He argues that all our knowledge is ultimately founded on experience[74]. This provides us with the grounds for probable, but not certain, knowledge; and probability, in practical life, is sufficient justification for knowledge. He rejects enterprises of the sort that Descartes undertook by claiming that "He that in the ordinary affairs of life, would admit of nothing but direct plain demonstration, would be sure of nothing in this world, but of perishing quickly"[75].

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[73] Later on, in the third *Meditation*, Descartes attempts to save his theory from such a conclusion by claiming that God guarantees the certainty of both a priori knowledge and the evidence of our senses. But for this claim to be acceptable, we must know (have indefeasible evidence) that our experiences correspond to reality because God has guaranteed that. However Descartes doesn't show us how we have such evidence of God's guarantee. Therefore, it is legitimate to maintain that on Descartes' terms, we cannot know anything about the world save the existence of our own minds.

[74] Locke, J., 1975, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Book 2 Chapter 1.

[75] Ibid., Book 3 Chapter 11, Section 10

But if experience justifies true belief, and yet it is always defeasible, then how do we decide which experience is reliable? In answering this question empiricists have often claimed that some of the knowledge acquired by experience provides the basis for the rest of our knowledge. In other words, all our knowledge is founded on one basic class of things we know, those confirmed true by sense experience. Let us recall that Descartes also founded knowledge on the certitude of thought and the guaranteed non-deceptive nature of a benevolent and all-powerful God. Epistemologies such as Descartes' and Locke's are called Foundationalist Epistemologies in so far as they postulate a class of beliefs of which we allegedly have secure knowledge, and assert that all other beliefs, if they are to constitute knowledge, must be properly derived from these foundational beliefs.

Foundationalist epistemologies ruled Western philosophy and science without serious challenge until Edmund Gettier published his "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"[76]. In this work, Gettier provided examples that showed that the justification principle in foundationalist epistemology could produce a situation where a false belief is (or, can be) justified. Two consequences of Gettier's paper are worth noting here. First, it prompted other approaches to the analysis of knowledge in Western philosophy and; secondly, they have fortified the legitimacy of the claims of other epistemological systems.

4.4   Some Features of African (Non-Foundationalist) Epistemology:

How have indigenous African epistemologies responded to the fundamental questions posed in Section 4.3? No African culture has yet been encountered that avows absolute skepticism of the Phyrric type. Accordingly, thinkers in the indigenous African setting do admit that some knowledge is attainable. If so, then how is it acquired? What can we know, and what are the sources and pathways to knowledge? I will attend to these questions now, using Akan epistemology as my point of departure.

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[76] Gettier, E., 1963, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?", *Analysis, 23, 6*

4.4.1   Levels of *Nimdee*[77] in Akan Epistemology:

In consonance with their metaphysics, Akan thinkers offer a hierarchical order of the objects of knowledge and its sources. Three levels of knowing, emanating from two broad sources, can be delineated in the Akan philosophy of knowledge.

4.4.1.1   *Nea Wohu*

The first level of knowing is *nea wohu*. Literally, this means that which is observable or perceivable. Knowledge at this level derives from ordinary sense experience and the pure activity of the mind. Thus '*nea wohu'* represents both rational and empirical knowledge in traditional Akan epistemology. Two verbs are conduits to these sorts of knowledge. These are *'hu'* which translates into the English 'see, observe'; and '*te*' which translates into 'hear'. The verb '*te*' also signifies perception by other sense organs as well. Thus, '*me **te** nka'* (I feel) and '*me **te** pampa'* (I smell) denote sense experience other than by hearing. Thus '*te*' and '*hu*' represent the pathways to empirical knowledge.

Further, they represent knowledge acquired through the pure activity of the mind. Thus, '*ma**hu** nea wokyere no*[78]' means 'I understand what you mean' and '*ma**te** ase*[79]' means 'I understand/comprehend the depths of it (i.e. of the subject matter)'. Therefore, reason and sense experience are confirmed as accepted pathways to the first level of knowledge in Akan epistemology.

4.4.1.2   *Nea Etra Adwen*

The Akan word '*adwen*' readily translates into the English 'thought'. Therefore, the phrase '*nea etra adwen'* means 'that which transcends thought'. Thus Akan thinkers

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[77] This is the Akan word for knowledge
[78] Literally, 'I see what you are showing/indicating'
[79] Literally, 'I have heard the bottom line of it'

maintain that we can access propositional knowledge at a level beyond rational deliberation.

Two reasons, at least, make this position plausible. First, it accords with their holonistic ontology. If reality comprises the visible and the invisible, and the visible is comprehensible through rational deliberation, then it is reasonable to suppose that there must be another way by which invisible reality could be comprehended. Secondly, experience justifies this strong belief in accessing knowledge at a level beyond rational deliberation[80]. In fact most modern Akan philosophers[81] affirm that besides reason and sense experience, extra-sensory (or 'paranormal') cognition is a third mode of knowing in Akan epistemology.

A widely accepted definition of a "paranormal" event is that which seems to contradict the fundamental ideas and principles upon which modern science has been based[82]. By the 1940s, psychical researches had identified two broad categories of paranormal events. These are paranormal cognition, (or extra-sensory perception) and psychokinesis. Paranormal cognition has been defined as "alleged….knowledge without the use of any known sense organ"[83]. Four main species of this have been identified[84]. These are:

i)   Telepathy: This term refers to the communication between one mind and another without the use of recognized channels of sense. In ordinary parlance, we identify telepathic ability as the ability to 'read someone's mind'.

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[80] Ajei, M., 2000, *The Paranormal, An Inquiry into Some Features of Akan Metaphysics and Epistemology,* Thesis presented in part-fulfillment for the requirements of the M. Phil Degree in Philosophy, to the Department of Philosophy, University of Ghana, pp. 94-95, 100-101

[81] Notably
  -   Gyekye, K., 1995, *Essay on African Philosophical Thought,* op. cit., p. 202
  -   Agyakwa, K.O., 1974, *Akan Epistemology and Western Thought,* Dissertation submitted to Teacher's College, Columbia University, in fulfillment for the Award of the Ph. D, p. 57
  -   Oguah, B. E., 1977, "African and Western Philosophy" op. cit. p. 204-205

[82] Mosley, A., (1978), "*The Metaphysics of Magic: Practical and Philosophical Implications*", In Second Order, Vol. VII, Ile-Ife, Ife University Press, p. 9

[83] Mundle, C. W. K., 1967, "ESP Phenomena, the Philosophical Implications of", in P. Edwards. (Ed), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Vol. 3, Macmillan, pp 49-50

[84] Johnson, R.C., 1955, *Psychical Research,* London: English Universities Press, pp. 9-57

ii)   Clairvoyance: refers to the mind's ability to acquire knowledge of physical objects or events, as distinct from mental ones, without the use of the senses. Thus, in clairvoyance the extra-sensorial information originates from physical objects. An example of clairvoyant ability would be x's ability to state accurately the contents of a closed briefcase encountered for the first time.

iii)   Precognition refers to the acquisition of knowledge about future events without the use of recognized sensory channels or cues for inference.

iv)   Retrocognition:. This species of PNC is complementary to precognitive experience. It is the non-inferential cognition of events in the past, verified later, which are outside the range of a person's memory.

Some expressions in the Akan language illustrate the reality of paranormal cognition. If, for example, *x* is able to foretell the arrival of *y* in a way that we will recognize as precognitive, and you ask *x* how he came to have this true belief of *y*'s impending arrival, he would say, '*na ne din da m'adwene mu*'[85]. Another statement which might be offered in answer to the same question could be '*onipa din ben ne ho*'[86]. How do these statements reflect the assertion of the type of knowledge we have referred to as *nea etra adwen*?

In answer to this, we must recognize, first, the significance of the notion of '*din*' or name in both statements. A person's name, for the Akan, has a direct bearing on his or her *okra*[87] through the medium of *kradin*[88]. The *kradin* signifies the day the *okra* entered the visible world in the form of a human being. Now, as seen in Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.3, the *okra* constitutes an ontological unity with *sunsum.* Therefore, 'ne din da madwene mu' means that the person (the embodiment of *okra/sunsum*) is in my mind. In other words I was consciously aware of the person, whose persistent presence in my mind was indicative of the prospective arrival. The precognized event (the arrival) was inferred from the persistence of the person's being in my mind.

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[85] Literally, the person's name was in my mind. That is, I kept thinking about him!
[86] Literally, a person's name is attached to himself/herself.
[87] The life-sustaining principle of a person
[88] The okra's name

Two things are implied here. First, that the statements '*onipa din ben ne ho*' and '*x din da madwene mu*', when used in this context, could be considered to be inductive statements from experience: each time *x*'s person persistently occupied my mind, they turned up where I am. This means, second, that there is some sort of communication between the mind of *x* and mine beyond the reach of the senses and rational thought. As such, I cannot be cognitively aware of this. My intuitive awareness of the presence of *x* represents my consciousness of this communication between our minds, but I am not cognitively aware of this communication. Although I lack this cognition, experience justifies my belief that such communication takes place and that whenever it does, there is some proscribed consequence. Thus there is awareness, but it is awareness at another level, an awareness which '*tra adwen*' (surpass thought).

Similarly, an answer to how one came to have a certain clairvoyant information would elicit the answer '*esoo me mu*'[89]! It occurred to me suddenly and without any rational deliberation or sensory cue. Such an intuitive occurrence demonstrates an important characteristic of awareness of the sort of '*nea etra adwen*'.

Another characteristic of knowing at this level is the attribution of '*ben*' to the knowing subject. The term '*ben*', in ordinary usage, means 'well-cooked', but epistemically it connotes profundity in perception or knowledge. A context in which this would be epistemically employed is this: suppose you go to a diviner for consultation and, before you speak, he tells you of your mission to his shrine. The Akan thinker will surely attribute the term '*ben*' to that diviner, and what would be meant here is not that that diviner has knowledge through the ordinary channels of *hu* and *te*. It will rather be referring to a profundity of perception which is beyond the ordinary. The diviner would then be referred to as *obenfo*[90].

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[89] It gripped me
[90] The 'well-cooked' one.

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The profundity of perception attributed to an *obenfo* reflects the view, first, that the person's knowledge ability or stock in a particular filed surpasses the ordinary. Oftentimes, however, 'the field' signifies the whole of reality, comprising as we have seen, of visible and invisible realms. In this case, the inordinate perceptiveness or 'well-cookedness' of the diviner would clearly be referring to competence in knowing events in the invisible realm. Hence the *obenfo's* knowledge is of the type which *tra adwen* (transcends thought).

P 'aben', then, would mean *p* is well-versed in the affairs of sunsum. *P* can penetrate the realm of sunsum, comprehend and perhaps manipulate events in this realm. *P* will then be held to have strong sunsum which heightens *p's* perceptive faculties and allows for the transcendence of the limitations of the visible world. The heightened powers of sunsum allow *p to* gain a deeper insight into the fundamental principles that govern relationships between things and events in both realms of reality. We maintain that this high power of sunsum refers to exalted psychic power. The activation of such power leads its owner to distinct perception of the fundamental relations in existence. The vitality of an *obenfo's* sunsum overcomes uncertainty, confusion, rashness and other hindrances to knowledge, so that the mind can reach occurrences in reality beyond the reach of cognition. The mind of such a person will be the juncture of a configuration of pathways leading to different forms of knowledge.

4.4.2   Paranormal Cognition: A Way of Knowing in African Epistemology

It is clear that the status of *obenfo* refers to the ability to have that form of knowledge which is usually referred to as 'paranormal cognition'. As seen in Section 4.4.1.2, a "paranormal" event is that which seems to contradict the fundamental ideas and principles upon which modern science is based. Belief in the occurrence of these events is common to many non-Western cultures, yet their ontological status and, with it, the question of whether they can be legitimate sources of knowledge has occasioned academic debate since the end of the nineteenth century[91].   All subscribers to

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[91] This is exemplified by the establishment of the Society for Psychical Research in London in 1882

physicalism, the ontological and epistemological framework which sustains mainstream Western science, have persisted in their denial of existence to these phenomena and the claims to knowledge made by their advocates.

There is little doubt, in fact, that many Africans recognize paranormal cognition as a mode of knowing. In fact, a salient feature of African epistemologies is their insistence that 'paranormal' cognition provides us with genuine and reliable knowledge[92]. Thus according to Agyakwa, "no account of Akan epistemology would be satisfactory which did not examine the role of divination and mediums"[93]. But is this insistence justifiable? If so, on what grounds?

We can say, on the basis of the holonistic ontology of African thought, that divination is a process by which some special people interact with the ordinarily non-sensible forces of nature. But the legitimacy of paranormal cognition is not evinced only through the resources of African philosophy. It can also be validated through conventional theories of knowledge in Western philosophy as well. This may be done by simply posing the question: if *x* claims knowledge of *p* through paranormal means, what method of validation for that knowledge can *x* disclose such that if *p* is indeed true, we will come to believe that *x* has good reason for believing that *p*? The next section is devoted to how this justification condition can be met by paranormal cognition in Western philosophy.

4.5   Paranormal Cognition and the Causal Theory of Knowledge

First we believe that paranormal cognition can be legitimized in Western philosophy via the Causal Theory of Knowledge (CT). This is one of the theories inspired by the

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[92] See footnote 81 in this chapter. The same thesis has been advanced by Ajei, M. O and Ramose, M. B. in their unpublished article "The Paranormal: African Philosophy Questions Science". Other works which are orientated towards affirming this thesis are
-    Sogolo, G., 1993, *Foundations of African Philosophy*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, p. 91-116
-    Ayoade J. A. A., 1979, "The Concept of Inner Essence in Yoruba Traditional Medicine", In Ademuwagun, Z. A. et al., (eds), *African Therapeutic Systems*, Waltham, Mass: Crossroads Press, pp. 49-55
[93] Agyakwa, K. O., 1974, *Akan Epistemology,* op. cit., p. , p 57

problems posed by Gettier's paper. The central idea underlying various formulations of CT is that in order to know that *p*

1. *p* must be true
2. You must believe that *p* is true
3. Your belief in *p* must be caused in an appropriate way[94].

Here, therefore, the justification condition is met if your belief is caused in an appropriate way. But what way is appropriate, and how do we decide on this? In addressing these questions Alvin Goldman suggests that the appropriate way of getting a true belief is to be able to distinguish the actual state of affairs for which the belief is true from relevant possible states of affairs of which the belief is false. This discrimination of the actually true from the possibly false state of affairs is best done by a method that is reliable in the circumstances[95].

From this, a few points emerge that justify our claim that CT can validate paranormal cognition. First, Goldman's theory suggests that the appropriate way by which beliefs are caused varies. A reliable method varies with the circumstances. What constitutes good evidence for a true belief is relative to the state of affairs prevalent in the belief situation. If the belief situation confirms that the evidence for the proposed knowledge was acquired by 'a reliable method' the evidence is justified. This introduces sufficient dynamism required for a framework of epistemic justifications that can validate the African's belief in paranormal cognition as legitimate knowledge. Let us take a case of precognition for illustration:

Suppose we inform you this moment of our belief that *y* will occur at noon tomorrow. We have no cues whatsoever to afford us a reasoned guess of the prospective occurrence of *y*, and you have satisfied yourself in this respect. We nevertheless insist, on the basis

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[94] Appiah, A. K., 1989, *Necessary Questions – An Introduction to Philosophy*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice Hall, p 52
[95] Goldman, A., 1978, "Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge", In Pappas, G. S. and Swain, M (eds), *Essays on Knowledge and Justification*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 124

of 'a strong intuition', that *y* is certainly forthcoming. You ask us why this strong belief and we respond we believe it is our *sunsum* dictating to us. Then *y* occurs in fact. What is the modus operandi of *sunsum*, you ask? We are unable to explain this satisfactorily to you. But suppose we tell you that in fact each time we 'have someone persistently on our mind' the person in question comes, as was the case with *y*.

Would you deny us a reliable method in forming the belief that *y* will occur? If we are able to foretell such occurrences correctly a number of times, and you find no other relevant alternative to our explanation, then what will be the basis of your denial to us of a reliable method? If our belief that *y* will happen is true, and we formed it by a reliable method, then CT confirms our knowing that *y* will occur tomorrow at noon. In other words, our belief that *y* need not be anchored to some foundational empirical or rational principle. This is because for *x* to know that *p,* by the formula prescribed by CT, *x* needs only to show true belief in *p* because s/he cannot think of any set of circumstances which can lead him or her, falsely, into believing that not-*p*. We shall notice, in Section 4. 6 below, that this acceptance of variation as a source of knowledge defines a feature of African epistemologies and introduces dynamism into them.

The second salutary point that can be inferred from Goldman's analysis is that CT considers mind as a causal system in the world because they see human consciousness and the problems it addresses as part of the wide world of nature. For these theories, the notion of a mind having a direct effect on an object in the world is intelligible because human consciousness is an integral part of the natural world[96]. As such, they are compatible with the Akan thinker's holonistic ontology, which renders an account of consciousness as an integral aspect of the natural world.

According to Rhine, experimental evidence suggests that paranormal cognition derives from "a form of energy different from all known [by Western science] forms of

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[96] This differs radically from foundational epistemological theories, which look at the relationship between mind and knowledge from the point of view of a subject 'looking out' on the world.

energy"[97]. We maintain that this 'unknown form of energy' can be identified with the Akan *sunsum* or the Bantu *ubu*. The African diviner and many ordinary persons experience the practical efficacy of *sunsum* at many instances. Although this experience (which leads to the belief that valid knowledge can be derived from the realm of *sunsum*) defies known limits of ordinary experience, they obviously do not defy the limits of possible experience. The persistence of these experiences leads the African thinker to this conclusion that paranormal cognition results from the efficacy of the activity of *sunsum*. Therefore the conclusion is legitimately inferred from this evidence, and as such, constitutes a good argument. By stressing the nature of *sunsum* as an imperceptible natural force capable, under certain conditions, of manifesting itself in the physical world, we suggest that the people capable of interacting with the ordinarily non-sensible forces pf nature are charting a path into areas which are yet to be controlled by the tools of Western science. As such, they are making contributions to the quest for knowledge and development.

4.6   Ontology, Epistemology and Development: Towards Afri-centrism

We wish now to turn briefly to how the outlined tenets of African epistemology may influence an African-centered development framework. We begin by re-emphasizing the point that mainstream ontological discourse in Western philosophy has fragmented be-ing into a mind-body and spiritual-material duality. The repercussions of this, at the epistemological level, are characterized by the SVO-structured thought process which perpetuates a number of mutually exclusive distinctions. Some of these are the distinction between rationalism and empiricism, objectivism and subjectivism and the famous 'is/ought' distinction which reached its apogee in the work of the logical positivists. In this epistemological tradition, human beings in pursuit of knowledge about nature are not only separated from nature. They are also impartial creatures 'objectively' peering into the complexities of nature to discover and describe its regularities and codify them into laws.

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[97] Rhine, J. B. cf. Mosley, A. 1978, "The Metaphysics of Magic: Practical and Philosophical Implications", in *Second Order*, Vol. 8, Ile-Ife: Ife University Press, p. 12

On the other hand, the holonistic structure of be-ing in African thought ensures that "man and nature are not two separate independent and opposing realities but one inseparable continuum of a hierarchical order"[98]. But this is not all. From the African point of view, an epistemological system is a wholeness that displays essential mutual dependence of its component parts. As Anyanwu points out,

> "The African maintains that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches himself from it…… Knowledge, therefore, comes from the cooperation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time"[99].

It is in this sense that the rheomode, the language of indigenous African philosophical thought, ensures that the epistemic distinctions in Western philosophy, noted above, do not constitute a problem in African epistemology.

Secondly, the non-fragmented be-ing in the African universe ensures the dynamism of African epistemological categories. In this order of things, a search for immutable knowledge, like the Cartesian "*cogito ergo sum*" is rendered unreasonable. Absolute and final knowledge and truth are therefore inadmissible in this epistemology. Thus, a holonistic ontology and its rheomode reveals that no method of investigation can yield a perfect truth about nature. Instead, we are encouraged to recognize and to explore the interdependence of significant elements in a whole-ness, and to appreciate the relevance of this recognition and exploration to our knowledge about nature and society. This is a prominent feature of African epistemologies.

What does all this mean for an African ontology and epistemology-inspired development framework? First, we observe that the rejection of the insistence on foundational 'proofs' or certainty means that development need not be conceived as wholly constituted of tangible and measurable features, as economism maintains.

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[98] Anyanwu, C. K., 1981., "The African World-view and Theory (of) Knowledge", in Ruch, E. A. and Anyanwu K. C. (eds) *African Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 87
[99] Ibid. p. 94

Another point worth observing raises the question of the relationship between values and the essential interdependence of ontology and epistemology in African thought. We have seen how ontology and epistemology are understood as two aspects of one and the same reality in indigenous African philosophy.

The human be-ing, as subject of knowledge, is inextricably bound to the social context. And this thrusts the subject, ineradicably, into the realm of morality. The human being is tossed into ethics because, as Ramose argues, that language directs and focuses the entire epistemological domain towards the ontology of *ubu*, and that this is done by the indissoluble pairing of *ubu* and *umuntu* through the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu nga Bantu (motho ke motho ka batho)*[100]. A humane, respectful and polite attitude towards others, then, constitutes the core of this epistemological focus on the ontology of *ubu.*

The point under consideration is that the biological fact of be-ing a human being is insufficient for one's surging forward and contributing significantly to the interrelationships that ultimately constitute the whole-ness of being. One is enjoined to be a human being (a person). The critical task then is to demonstrate, through relating to other be-ings, one's embodiment of *ubu-ntu* "because the fundamental ethical, legal and social judgment of human worth and human conduct is based on *ubu-ntu*. The judgment, pronounced with approval or disapproval respectively, is invariably expressed in these terms: *ke motho or gase motho*"[101]. However, this judgement is not descriptive, since it is otiose to affirm the biological nature of a human being, or abolish the biological fact of one's human be-ingness. Rather, this affirmation or negation of *ubu-ntu* is a normative judgement, a metaphor for ethical, social and legal judgment of human worth and human conduct. The same ethical judgement of human worth is rendered in Akan as *onye nnipa*[102], and in Yoruba as *Ki i se eniyan*[103].

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[100] Ramose, op. cit. p 41, construes this to mean "to be a human being is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them"
[101] This means "he/she is a human be-ing or he/she is not a human be-ing. See Ramose, op. cit. p. 43
[102] Gyekye, K. 1992, "Person and Community in African Thought", in Wiredu, K. and Gyekye, K., *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, I*, Washington, D. C: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, p. 109. Here, Gyekye interprets this as the person is "not a person".

For our development framework, the upshot of this moral conception of a person in the epistemological situation is that however certain the theoretical value of rules, they are subject to change or must be abandoned if their practical value does not further human life. We turn now to the significance of values for development.

[103] Gbadagesin, S. 2002, *Eniyan*: The Yoruba Concept of a Person, op. cit. p 175, translates this as He/She is not a person!

CHAPTER FIVE:

TOWARDS AN ETHICS-BASED DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM FOR AFRICA

5.1 Ethics and Africa's Development

In section 4.6, we explained the interdependence of African ontology, epistemology and ethics. This chapter proceeds from the position that a homegrown paradigm for Africa's development has to be based in ethics. This is because although the aspirations and will of the objects of development must be reflected in the principles, policies and programs of a development framework, its implementation is invariably coordinated and administered by a society's political structures. And politics is meaningless without ethics.

The main reason underlying the prominence of a political structure in the successful implementation of development goals is that the helm of the polity is the repository of the aggregate of the sovereign will of the people. As such it is proper to invest it with the responsibility to lead and guide the implementation of the people's aspirations embodied in those goals. Now, politics depends on ethics because, as Ramose points out, it is not egoistic interests[1] but rather a sense of the ethical that propels individual human beings to commune and construct a political system. Thus he defines politics as "the continuation of ethics by specific means agreed upon voluntarily beforehand in the quest for justice in human relations"[2]. Accordingly, ethics "enjoins politics to recognize, respect and protect the right to life of each and every individual" because

> "the specificity of the political relationship among human beings is that it revolves around the question of life and death. Politics in this sense is about individual and collective survival. Because its subject-matter is the life or death of another human being politics is by necessity an ethical enterprise since it must proceed from the premise that each and every human being has an inalienable and equal right to life"[3].

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[1] As claimed by Contract Theorists such as Hobbes and Locke
[2] Ramose, M. B., 2004, "Poverty: A Creature of Politics and a Question of Justice", in *International Journal of Humanistic Studies,* Volume 3, p. 39
[3] Ibid.

The right to life entails the right to access to all the natural resources necessary for the preservation of one's life. Thus the state, as a political institution and the custodian of natural resources of a country, is an ethical entity with a moral duty to mount a direct and incessant attack on poverty in order to preserve human life and dignity. As indicated in sections iii and iv of the Introduction, these should also be the overriding aim of development.

We understand ethics simply as moral philosophy. It thus involves critical reflection on morality, which to us has a double connotation. First it refers to "a set of social rules, values, and norms that guide the conduct of people in a society"[4]. The rationale for moral rules then is to ensure the harmonious co-existence of members of society through the systematic adjustment of their discordant interests[5]. Secondly, morality refers to the attitudes and responses to such rules and norms. It is thus concerned with people's beliefs about right and wrong conduct and good and bad character.

Accordingly, an ethics-based development framework involves two approaches. First, it ought to advocate the adoption of substantial moral principles and norms to underpin development theory. Secondly, it promotes ethically inspired procedures to guide the behaviour, attitude and conduct of those entrusted with implementation as well as those at the receiving end of development. What is required of the administrators of this framework, then, is that their behaviour and orientation should respond to the formulated morally-inspired principles. Their moral commitment must thus be beyond reproach, which means that they must avoid *akrasia*[6]. This chapter argues that traditional African culture contains such principles and procedural guides as can ensure Africa's development in a manner that represents its liberation from economism and its concomitant epistemicide and valuecide.

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[4] Gyekye, K., 1997, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 205

[5] Wiredu, K., 1992, "The Moral Foundations of an African Culture", in Wiredu, K. and Gyekye, K. (eds), *Person and Community, Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I*, Washington, D. C.: Council for Research into Values and Philosophy, p. 193

[6] The problem of knowing what is morally right and lacking the will to do it.

5.2   The Basis of African Ethics

As seen in Chapter Four, the concept of vital force is central to African ontology and epistemology. In the area of ethics, the notion of community occupies this pride of place. These two concepts are intimately related and interdependent, in so far as vital force can only be nourished by, and therefore thrives best in, community. A community is, in turn, nothing but an aggregate of vital forces. Increasing its vital force is thus the overriding aim of every community, and a vehicle towards this is ethical conduct. It is in this vein that "life is the highest principle of ethical conduct"[7]. Accordingly, "thou shall not kill" is the first precept of African ethics. It is in this sense that it is fundamentally different from the ethic of capitalism which, as discussed in section 1.4.1, theoretically allows for murder in the bid to accumulate wealth.

 How then, does the stated role of community manifest itself in African ethics? A salient point of departure for addressing this question is the realization that "it is not possible to achieve the ethical ideal individually or as a strictly personal achievement"[8]. This is because in indigenous African cultures, moral principles and norms of ethics are firmly rooted in two mutually dependent doctrines that shape the ideals of social organization and human relations in traditional African societies. These are communitarianness and humaneness.

5.2.1   We are what we are: The African Community-oriented Socio-political Ethic

Communitarianism is a theory of social organization that has been formulated variously by its many adherents. Underlying all these formulations is the idea that social organization should give weight to the claims of community in its relationship with the individual person. Bujo distinguishes between "communitarianism in Western thought"

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[7] Bujo, B. 2001, *Foundations of an African Ethic Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality,* Nganda, C. N. (trans), Nairobi: Paulines Publications, p. 22
[8] Bujo, B. 1997, *Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between the North and the South* Nganda, C. N. (trans)*,* Nairobi: Paulines Publications, p. 28

and the "ethics of African social organization", on the grounds that "African ethics goes beyond the concrete, visible community to embrace the dead as well"[9].

Although we share Bujo's orientation towards questioning the suitability of ascribing communitarianism to African thought, we differ from his thinking that differences in the conception of community alone is sufficient to distinguish the African theory of social organization from communitarianism. In our view, further justification for this distinction is suggested by our discussion in Section 4.2.2. There, we confirmed Bujo's thesis that existence comprises of both visible and invisible dimensions, and elaborated on Ramose's view that the idea of a "holistic" world view of Africans is a misconception which derives from the fragmentation of be-ing. We followed Ramose therefore in contrasting "holistic" from "holonness", as the proper characterization of the African world view, in the bid to negate the fixation of be-ing and introduce motion and dynamism into the nature of reality. In extending this thinking into the realm of ethics, we see the need to distinguish between communinatianism and, for lack of a better characterization, communitarian-ness, which we believe captures the African ethics of social organization

As mentioned in Section 4.6 personhood, in African thought has a moral dimension. This dimension finds concrete expression and justification in the communitarian structure of indigenous African societies, which ensures that the social identity of an African is well-defined before birth. Thus according to the Akan, "when the human being descends from heaven, he/she descends into human community"[10]. Wiredu's interpretation of this is that one is born into a community of well-defined social affiliations[11]. It also means that to be human means that one cannot live outside a human community because "since the human being does not voluntarily choose to enter into a human community, community life is not optional for the individual"[12]. The individual is, thus, by nature, an inalienable strand in a social fabric. This means that a person is embedded in a context of social

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[9] Ibid., p. 24
[10] *Se onipa sane firi soro a obesi kurom*
[11] Wiredu, K. 1992, "Moral Foundations", op. cit. p. 197
[12] Gyekye, K. 1997, *Tradition and Modernity,* op. cit., p. 39

relationships and mutual interdependence with others in a way that makes that person naturally orientated towards other persons.

The community, with its complex but well-defined social relationships constitutes the context within which the individual strives to achieve his/her goals in life[13]. Thus the Akan say that " a person is not a palm tree that he (or she) should be self-sufficient"[14]. Since no one can posses everything that one needs for full self-realization, one necessarily needs the cooperation and sympathy of others, whose lives are in turn nourished by one's success. Another proverb that may be employed to express the same thought is "a single tree left to endure the force of a windstorm is liable to break"[15]. In other words, a cluster of trees can better withstand the danger of the windstorm because each one will bear a part of a dispersed risk. The cooperation and sympathy of others, then, are prominent aspects of the necessarily social human existence. From this point of view, it is the community which enables the self-realization of the individual, whose ability to act freely as a moral agent is not impeded in any way by being naturally social. Accordingly, the central tenet of African communitarian ethics is that one cannot realize one's full potential in life in isolation.

Solidarity and cooperation are necessary requirements for human living and flourishing. This thought is most keenly expressed by the Sotho saying that "I am because we are, and because we are, I am too"[16]. As such, one must pay regard to the role that one's life may

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[13] One arena in which the ontological reality of the individual's place in community is most exemplified is the naming ceremony. Name-giving is ontologically significant to the extent that it affirms a newly born child's space of belonging (i.e., in the context of the community). Because the name is never without individual meaning, it becomes one's stamp of identity within the cultural context. Besides expressing one's belonging-ness to community, a name also encodes a clue to its bearer's possible (i.e. expected) course in life. In other words, the appellations and connotations attached to a name suggest the sort of person that the community expects one to be.

[14] *Onipa nnye abe na neho ahyia ne ho.*

[15] *Dua koro gye nframa a ebu.*

[16] Bujo, B., 2001, *Foundations of an African Ethic,* p. 24. Bujo reports that this saying: "*Motho ke motho ka batho ka bang*" is a fundamental principle on the relationship between person and community in Sotho thought. Ramose, M. B. 2002, op. cit. p. 41., also construes *"motho ke motho ka batho"* to mean "to be a human being is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them". According to him, this enjoins the human person to display a humane, respectful and polite attitude towards others. The critical task for a person then is to demonstrate, through relating to other be-ings, one's embodiment of *ubu-ntu* "because the fundamental ethical, legal and social judgment of human worth and human conduct is based on *ubu-ntu*. The judgment, pronounced with

have on the welfare and interests of others. One's conduct, preferably, should contribute to the common good because it is from this pool of good that one's own welfare can be extracted. This essential interdependence of human life is succinctly expressed in Akan, as rightfully observed by Wiredu, by the maxim life is mutual aid[17]. Hence community must be accorded primary status in determining ethical norms and conduct in African culture.

5.2.1.1: Because we are does not mean that I am not

It has been claimed that the peculiar community-oriented character of the ethics of social organization embedded in communitarianness, with its emphasis on shared ends and common goods, has led some philosophers to the view that the individual in African thought is fully engulfed by social relationships. Gyekye, for instance, imputes this view to Mbiti for claiming that "Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am' "[18]. Gyekye thinks that such construal of personhood in African thought is "overstated and somewhat misleading" because it tends to "whittle away the moral autonomy of the person – making the being and life of the individual totally dependent on the activities, values, projects, practices and ends of the community"[19]. Clearly, if Gyekye's interpretation of Mbiti is correct, then Mbiti's position is definitely overstated.

It must be emphasized that the principles of solidarirty and interdependence expressed by the ethos of communitarianness do not in the least mean that the ethical identity of the individual is wholly dissolved by community. A number of arguments may be deployed to support this.

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approval or disapproval respectively, is invariably expressed in these terms: *ke motho or gase motho*"
(he/she is a person or he/she is not a person.)

[17] "*Obra ye nnoboa*"
[18] Mbiti, J. S., 1970, *African Religions and Philosophy,* New York: Doubleday, p. 141
[19] Gyekye, K., 1997, *Tradition and Modernity,* op. cit., p. 37

First and foremost, the individual is indispensable to the ethical community, "since each person must express his ethical conviction in such a way that he includes the entire community[20]". Besides, a number of proverbs from all over sub-Saharan Africa emphasize the dignity of the individual in community. Prominent among these are those that encourage the individual's self-confidence and self-reliance. Thus a Bashi proverb says " a clever or far-seeing man increases his drink [i.e. beer] with water"[21]. Bujo construes this to mean that an industrious person who persists will always find a way to increase his possessions[22]. If a community is to survive and thrive, it will need to count on such members because the one who works to create wealth would be in a position to give help. Again, a Baganda proverb has it that "you cannot quench your thirst with water for which you have gone begging"[23]. The Akans express the same proposition thus: "the hand that begs is always beneath that which gives"[24]. The idea here is that one who continually begs or lives on the mercy of others, although not physically or mentally handicapped, is "not a person"! What this means is that a person who intentionally fails to achieve self-sufficiency or autonomy without any natural handicaps or external constraints outside his or her control does not conform to the basic ideals and norms that persons ought to display in their conduct. Such failure to use one's abilities to exploit one's potential is disgraceful for the Akan: "disgrace does not befit an Akan"[25].

This is probably why the Swahili advice that a guest must be allowed no work for two days and be handed a hoe on the third[26]. The Akans would say "one does not fan [hot food] that another may consume and enjoy"[27]. A Swahili proverb also has it that "if you want to have peanuts, get yourself a roasting pan"[28]. What these proverbs express is the idea that individuals are responsible for the course of their lives, and that individual effort

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[20] Bujo, B., 2001, *Foundations of an African Ethic*, op. cit., p 24
[21] ibid. p. 120. The statement is "*Aga nyanduma mishi gagayunjuliza*"
[22] Ibid..
[23] Ibid. The statement is "*Mazzi masabe: tegamala nnyonta*"
[24] "*Nsa a ema no wo sore sen nea esre adee*"
[25] "*Animguase nfata okanni ba*"
[26] Nyerere quotes this at Nyerere, J. K. 1968, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*: Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, p. 4
[27] "*Obi nhuhu ma obi nkeka*"
[28] Bujo, B. 2001, *Foundations of an African Ethic*, op. cit. p 120, renders this as "*ukipenda karanga ("kalanga"), upakatie gae*".

is necessary for the fulfillment of needs and achievement of goals. Infact, "it is by individual effort that we struggle for our heads [lives]"[29], and "life is war"[30].

These proverbs substantiate the view that while African ethics stresses more on the communion of persons than on their autonomy, it does not in anyway reject individualistic values and is decidedly against passively tagging onto community, for according to the Swahili, "if someone says: 'let me leap where my brother or friend leapt', he risks falling deep into the mud"[31]. Thus in the African communitarian culture, the individual cannot develop full personhood outside the community. However, the welfare of the community requires the initiative and talents of its individual members. The relationship between person and community is thus one of interdependence and mutual nurturing. This is the quintessence of African communitarianness.

5.2.2   African Humaneness and the Morally Good:

Wiredu has suggested, correctly we think, that humaneness is another foundational principle in Akan socio-political theory. Once again, we wish to distinguish the humaneness of the European and Enlightenment, especially from the "scientific humaneness"[32] that became fashionable in the nineteenth century Europe, from what constitutes the humanistic ethos of traditional Africa. In Akan thought the ambit and nuances of humaneness is best captured by the claim that "*onipa na ohia*"[33]. We affirm Wiredu's view that *ohia* in this context, has a dual connotation. It means (a) human interest is the basis of all value; and (b) human fellowship is the most important of human needs[34]. This same thought is rendered in Sesotho as "*feta kgomo o tshware motho*"[35].

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[29] In Akan, "*Tiri yeprere no koro koro*"
[30] In Akan "*Obra ye ko*"
[31] Bujo, B. *Foundations of an African Ethic* op. cit., p. 121. "*Kambuukire baaba (munnange) w'abuukidde": kwe kuywa mu ntubiro.*
[32] See Lacy, A., 1995, "Humanism" in Honderich, T (ed), 1995, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford: OUP, p. 376. , This tended to emphasize the rational powers and importance of man
[33] It is the human being that has value.
[34] Wiredu, K. 1992, "Moral Foundations", op. cit. pp 194, 201
[35] According to Ramose, (2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit., p. 114), this means that if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being then one should choose the preservation of that life.

A few insights emerge from these two meanings. First, it can be inferred from (a) that what is good is what promotes human interests. The salutary point being made by this is that moral precepts and acts ought to be grounded in considerations about human well-being. Accordingly, a fundamental precept of Akan ethics is *onipa hia mmoa*[36]. This precept follows inevitably from the stress on human sociality emanating from Wiredu's second construal of *onipa na ohia*. This humanistic ideal certainly underlies the first principle of our prospective African development paradigm which, as stated in Section 5.1, is the preservation of human life and dignity.

Unlike the situation in the Western philosophical setting, the ethical framework sustaining this development paradigm gives no paramount role to the rational ability of the individual in determining the morally good[37]. This is because reason-governed morals turn conscience into "the last internal judicial instance which renders account only to God"[38]. As such, when the individual conscience, as a last instance of moral-decision making, recognizes a particular act as right, then no human person can judge this as

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[36] A human being deserves help, or ought to be helped

[37] Since Plato, ethical thought in Western philosophy has predominantly relied on natural law. For Plato, the "Forms" are eternal and unchanging realities which embody perfect reality, truth and goodness. It is upon these that the laws and ways of life in a just state as well as the individual should be based. These Forms can only be apprehended by reason, which represents the essential feature of the nature of the philosopher. (See Plato, 1974, *The Republic*, Grube, G. M. A. (trans), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 473C-E, 484B-487A). Aristotle explicitly distinguished between conventional law and natural law. According to him, the former is law that is established by general agreement whereas the latter is ethical precepts that are derived directly from the natural order of the world and from human nature. He then insisted on these precepts as the foundation of social and political structures and institutions. (Aristotle, 1997, *Politics*, Barker, E. (trans), Oxford: OUP, 1253a-1253b). The fundamental principles governing social organization, then, are discoverable in the nature of things, and since man is by nature a rational animal, it follows that it is reason which discovers and governs these principles. This tradition of conceiving of the good as reason-governed has endured, through the works of St. Thomas Aquinas and John Locke, to contemporary times. For Aquinas, natural law refers to "the eternal law as it is revealed specifically in human nature and known by human reason....."(Miller, E., 1984, *Questions that Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy*, N. Y: McGraw-Hill p. 443). As seen in Section 2.6, Locke reaffirms this status of natural law as the basis of the good, and of its government by reason. For him, all private and public good is based on natural law which immediately displays fundamental rights and liberties. Through Locke's conception of law and rights, the status of natural law has been fortified in Western ethical discourse by inspiring not only the American Declaration of Independence (According to Miller, E., 1984, (op. cit. p. 455), Thomas Jefferson, who in 1776 drafted the Declaration, declared outright that his intent was that it should embody the social and political principles of Locke), but also the U.N Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitutions of many contemporary liberal democratic societies. Yet there are schools in Western legal theory very critical of the natural law tradition, such as the Positivist and Realist schools of law.

[38] Bujo, B. 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit., p. 62

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fallible. In this way, morality becomes privatized. But the "privatization of morality"[39] conflicts with African commutarianness with particular reference to the concept of conscience. Our understanding of this concept proceeds from "the central importance of human relationships for moral action"[40]. In this way, conscience matures by the sustained ability to talk with and listen to one another.

One concrete consequence of this privatization of morality is reflected in the position of the philosophers of capitalism who, as discussed in section 1.4.1, "gives the impression that poverty is inevitable, caused by the human shortcomings of the poor….[41]". To the extent that one has self-justification before God for "pushing the other aside as I would a material object as part of the totality which obstructs my passage"[42], one cannot be doing evil. In short, reason-oriented ethics denigrates the importance of human relationships for moral action. Accordingly, one may ask if such an ethical system "could defend itself against the accusation of inhumanity and the imperialism of reason if the person who is not able to argue does not count and the unreasonable one has to be eliminated"[43].

African ethics rejects reason-oriented ethics to the extent that its point of departure is that individualism cannot yield the ethical ideal. A virtuous life exemplified by good behaviour, is the sort of behaviour that ensures the growth of life among all community members, and of community welfare. The responsibility for leading such a life belongs to all community members; hence indigenous African communities may be justifiably described as "ethical communities"[44].

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[39] We borrow this phrase from Theophilus Okere's work entitled "The Poverty of Christian Individualist Morality and an African Alternative" The work appears as Chapter Seven in a document prepared for the workshops of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, a synthesis of the general debate on Justice in the World. A privatized morality, according to Okere here, refers to a morality "designed to have no effect on public life" and "targeted on the individual conscience". Accordingly, "its laws, and, its commandments, are for the individual to obey, its sanctions, rewards and punishments go to the individual. It is conceived to make the individual holy, not to make society just". See http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-3/chapter_vii.htm

[40] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit., p. 70

[41] Gutierrez, G., 1983, *The Power of the Poor in History*, Barr, R. R. (trans), New York: Maryknoll, p. 115

[42] See quotation of Arnsperger in footnote 120 of section 2.4.1 above

[43] Bujo B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit., p 39

[44] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit p. 27

The communitarian and humaneness of these ethical communities are reflected in social institutions and arrangements. The thesis that we proposed to defend is that the knowledge and values that sustain these institutions and arrangements are imperative for Africa's future development. Accordingly, let us turn now to an examination of three facets of indigenous social organization in order to determine how they utilize this knowledge and values. We will interweave this with a discussion of how these may be harnessed for contemporary Africa and its future.

5.3   Politics from a Communitarian-ethical Perspective

It must be re-emphasized that besides saving human life and dignity, our development paradigm will need to secure the authentic liberation of Africa from the Eurocentric and economistic paradigms that have defined its post-colonial development practice. The achievement of these aims depends on ensuring that the strategies adopted by the paradigm spring from conscious reflection on African needs and aspirations by Africans who suffer no amnesia of the Eurocentric damage to Africa or moral *akrasia.*

Politics is one arena in which such conscious reflection needs to be secured, because of the importance of political authority to development choices and implementation. This subsection argues that indigenous African conceptions of politics and political processes can provide the conscious reflection for alternatives needed for the said liberation.

5.3.1   Democracy from a Communitarian-ethical Perspective:

We suggested in Section 3.3.2 that the political philosophy of liberalism, outstandingly articulated in the philosophy of John Locke, insists on the inherent freedom of individuals *from* undue societal control, as well as their freedom *for* the pursuit of their own interests. The communitarian understanding of freedom is extremely significant for the conceptualization and formation of democracy in Africa. As seen, the individual and community are mutually dependent in the communitarian structure. The individual's identity and potential cannot be fully realized without the community's contribution, and

the community is naturally oriented towards enhancing the progress and life-aspirations of the individual. Accordingly, democracy based on indigenous African knowledge and values need not be based on the freedom of individuals *from* community. This is because freedom, in the communitarian social system, is not negatively defined, "i.e., in the sense of "liberation-from- something". Rather, it is "liberation-towards-something" – towards understanding that 'it is the human being that counts'. In other words in the African social setting, only if the "I" liberates the "we" can the "we" lead the "I" towards complete freedom"[45]. How then, does this sort of freedom reflect in the political thought and structures of traditional Africa?

5.3.2: Sovereignty of the People

The *ohene*[46] is the political head of the African state. In spite of the fact that there is no direct popular election of the *ohene*[47], the will of the people is, generally, the basis of all properly constituted political authority in traditional Africa, for in the event of the *ohene's* failure to make his rule reflect this will, his authority "falls to the ground"[48]. As such, although the chief is treated as befits the veneration attached to his office, his political authority is determined by the principle of the sovereignty of the people, which must be rightfully considered the first principle of the political system in traditional Africa.

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[45] Bujo, B, 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit., p. 75

[46] In his article "The King as Memory and Symbol of African Customary Law", (in Hinz, M. O. et. al (eds), 2006, *The Shade of New Leaves: Governance in traditional authority - A Southern African Perspective*, Berlin: LIT Verlag, pp 351-374) Ramose points to the strategies designed by the colonialists in Africa to maintain their superiority over the indigenous conquered peoples. One of these was that upon seizing their territory, the colonial conquerors "referred to the kings or political heads of their societies "as chiefs in order to avoid equating them with European kings" (p. 360). But reducing their status in comparison with European monarchs was not the only purpose of converting their titles into "chiefs". This was done also to make them "act as guardians of the law of the conqueror" (pp 359-360) and thereby establish their status as puppets and accomplices in the colonial administration in the minds of their subjects. In deepening this tradition of denigration, a number of post-colonial African authors (such as Gyekye, K., 1996, *African Cultural Values*, Accra: Sankofa Publishing; Gyekye, (1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Busia, K. A., 1968, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political State of Ashanti*, London: Frank Cass) on the traditional political system, perhaps unwittingly, have continued the trend of referring to the titular head of the African indigenous political system as "chief". We depart from this trend by employing *ohene*, the title of the political head of the Akan state in the following discussions.

[47] Most indigenous African states chose their chief from among members of a royal family, acknowledged by the people as such by history and custom

[48] Cureau, A. L., 1915, *A Study of Primitive Races in the French Congo*, London: Fisher and Urwin, p. 279

Hence in the Sesotho language, the principle of popular sovereignty is rendered as "*kgosi ke kgosi ka batho*"[49]. In other words, the source and justification of royal power is the people. The Ndebele affirm this by claiming categorically that "the king is the people. To respect the king is to respect oneself. He who despises our king despises us. He who praises our king praises us"[50].

The principle of popular sovereignty espoused in these quotations has long been acknowledged by non-African scholars, two of whom we wish to quote here for illustration. First, Campbell, in his analysis of the exercise of political power among the Bantus, writes:

> "All government is by the will of the people, whether it be the choice or coronation of a king; the selection of a man to fill a new chieftainship; the framing, proclamation and promulgation of a new law; the removal of the villages from one site to another; the declaration of war or the acceptance of terms of peace: everything must be put to the poll and come out stamped with the imprimatur of the people's will. No permanent form of negro government can exist save that based four square on the people's will"[51].

Again, Rattray, speaking of the Asante[52], makes the following observations:

> "I have already on several occasions used this word 'democratic', and it is time to explain what this term implies in this part of Africa. We [the British, and by extension the Western World] pride ourselves, I believe, on being a democratic people and flatter ourselves that our constitutions are of a like nature. An Ashanti who was familiar alike with his own and our constitution would deny absolutely our right to apply this term either to ourselves or to our constitution. To him a democracy implies that the affairs of the tribe [the State] must rest, not in the keeping of the few but in the hands of the many, that is, must not alone be the concern of what we should term "the chosen rulers of the people", but should continue to be the concern of a far wider circle. To him, the state is literally *Res Publica;* it is everyone's business. The work of an Ashanti citizen did not finish when by his vote he had installed a chief in office….. The rights and duties of the Ashanti democrats were only really beginning after (if I may use a homely analogy) the business of the ballot-box was over. In England, the government and

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[49] "Ramose, M. B. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit., p. 43
[50] Gyekye, K., 1996, *African Cultural Values*, Accra: Sankofa Publishing, p. 110
[51] Campbell, Dugald., 1922, *In the Heart of Bantuland, A Record of Twenty-Nine Years in Central Africa among the Bantu Peoples,* London: Seely Services and Co., p. 42
[52] A sub-group of the Akans of Ghana and the Ivory Coast

House of Commons stand between ourselves and the making of laws, but among the Ashanti there was not any such thing as government apart from the people"[53].

Although there is no direct popular election of the political head of the African State, the will of the people is prominently reflected in the selection of the *ohene*. This is sufficiently demonstrated by the traditional Akan political system, the defining features of which has been the subject of many critical studies. Many of these works affirm for Akan social organization a well-regulated constitutional system of government of which the principle of the representation of the people is fundamental.

Arguably, the most outstanding expression of this principle is found in the determination of the ambit and exercise of political authority, which is vested in the *ohene*, who is assisted by a council[54] of elders that comprise of heads of clans (a cluster of biological lineages) and "those intelligent men who by reason of their experience in matters political and judicial"[55] were considered desirable resources to public deliberations. As members of the *ohene's* council, these wise and technically competent community elders performed the highest legislative, executive and judicial functions in the traditional African state.

The office of the *ohene* is an elective one, and the process of this election has been elaborately described by Rattray, Busia and Gyekye, on all of whom we shall draw freely in our analysis[56]. Upon the vacancy of a stool (throne), a candidate is nominated by the queen mother[57], for the acceptance of the councilors of state (or the community). The

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[53] Rattray, R. S., 1929 *Ashanti Law and Constitution,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 406-407

[54] Rattray, R. S., 1929, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Oxford Clarendon Press, p. 407. Here Rattray notes that the Akan expression "*adwabo*", is used both for market and council (or assembly). Gyekye, (1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 123) rightfully notes that the use of that expression points to the practice of bargaining, negotiation and compromise that characterizes the decisions of political councils and assemblies in Akan communities. We will return to this in section 6.3.3 when we discuss consensual democracy.

[55] Casely-Hayford, J. E., 1911, *Ethiopia Unbound*, London: C. M Philips, p. 72

[56] See
- Rattray, R. S., 1929, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, op. cit., p. 82
- Busia, K. A., 1968, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political State of Ashanti,* London: Frank Cass, p. pp 7-11
- Gyekye, K. 1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, op. cit., pp. 121-123

[57] The highest office held by a female in the Akan state. The queen mother is the female head of the royal lineage, and arguably the most important counselor to the *ohene*. Her executive functions include policy-

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councilors may reject the nominee, and this obliges the queen mother to nominate another. She has the prerogative to nominate three candidates, failing which the right to nominate falls on the councilors.

Upon acceptance of a nominated candidate by the councilors, the body of citizens, represented by *Asafo* companies[58], must sanction the councilors' acceptance before the *ohene* may be enstooled (enthroned). This is justifiably construed as the "election" proper of the *ohene*. The principle underlying this process is that "a royal [or noble] does not install a chief"[59].

After these processes have been completed, a day is set aside for the installation of the *ohene*. The most significant feature of this process is the swearing of the oath of office by the chief elect before the councilors and body of citizens. Rattray records twelve injunctions embodied in this oath, which are pronounced by the *Okyeame*[60] and acknowledged by the new elect[61]. These are:

1. Do not go after women (i.e. do not be a womanizer)
2. Do not become a drunkard
3. Listen to our advice
4. Do not gamble
5. We do not want you to disclose the origin of your subjects
6. We do not want you to abuse us
7. We do not want you to be miserly

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making for the welfare of the womenfolk and administration of the State in times of war when the *ohene* and his officials and successors are on the battlefield.

[58] The military divisions of the State

[59] This is the literal interpretation of "*Odehye nsi hene*". See Busia, K. A., 1968, *The Position of the Chief,* op. cit. p 11. The salutary point being conveyed here is that it is the prerogative of the ordinary citizenry to do so.

[60] In the traditional Akan polity, the *okyeame* was a diplomat and counselor to the *ohene*. His other functions included pouring of libation at official gatherings as well as a mediating in the communication between the *ohene* and his audience. According to Yankah (Yankah, K., 1998, *Free Speech in Traditional Society: The Cultural Foundations of Communication in Contemporary Ghana,* Accra: Ghana Universities Press, p. 10), this exercise of editorial responsibilities over the spoken word by the chief is meant to endure their poetic quality by imbuing "the royal word with all the diplomatic and proverbial finesse necessary to befit the lofty realm he occupies".

[61] Rattray, R. S., 1929, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, op. cit. p. 82

8. We do not want one who disregards advice

9. We do not want you to treat us as fools

10. We do not want autocratic ways

11. We do not want bullying

12. We do not want beating [the infliction of physical pain]

These injunctions are easily reduced to a number of prescriptions that highlight the ideals and values that the people expect their *ohene* to live up to. The first and second injunctions clearly inveigh against profligacy and a penchant for intoxicants, most likely because the first has the propensity to create discord and dull impartial focus; whereas the second impairs reflective ability. The fourth injunction is against policies and conduct that may dissipate the wealth of the state or make it insecure. The third, eighth, ninth and tenth injunctions are statements of the principle of the sovereignty of the people. They commonly pronounce against the chief acting without the concurrence of his councilors who are representatives of the people, and suggest that such acts are liable to be set aside as unconstitutional. These injunctions also suggest the need for equitable treatment and respect for individual talent and enterprise, and hence of autonomy. The fifth injunction states the need for the *ohene* to be a role model for harmonious living, and the sixth requires the *ohene* to show respect for his subjects and Gyekye points out that what is at stake here is the recognition of their equality as human beings[62].

The acknowledgement and acceptance of all these injunctions constitutes his declaration to rule by law, and completes the process of his enthronement. These injunctions clearly define the ambit of the *ohene's* authority and the nature of the relationship that is expected between him and his subjects. Danquah maintains that flouting some of these injunctions constitutes sufficient cause for removal from office[63]; and Gyekye points out the significance of prefacing each injunction with "we do not want….". In his view, the people are, in effect, prescribing to the chief how he should rule them, and this "is an indication of the confidence the people have in insisting on the exercise of a political

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[62] Gyekye, K. 1996. *African Cultural Values*, op. cit. p 114
[63] Danquah, J. B., 1928, *Akan Laws and Customs,* London: Frank Cass, p. 115

power that will reflect their wishes; it is an indication also of the people's intention to make the chief aware that he will need to depend on his people for a satisfactory and peaceful rule"[64].

The offer and acceptance of these injunctions constitutes a contract between the *ohene* and his people, and an implicit understanding between the parties that any action by the *ohene* that flouts any of the terms is unconstitutional and makes him liable to dethronement. The *ohene*, then, does not have an indefeasible right to office once enthroned. He is liable to be unseated for reasonable cause, and each of the injunctions of the oath can constitute such a cause. The principles enunciated in the process of selection and installation of the *ohene* then demonstrate the principle of the rule of law and accountability of government to the people. Although he presides over council, the chief seldom initiates a law[65]. The people, through their councilors, do this. Hence in announcing a law or policy promulgated in council, the *ohene's* spokesman says "the chief and his councilors and elders say I must inform you that ……..".

This contract of enthronement may be considered the decisive expression of the sovereignty of the people among the Akan, a principle which, as the quotations above demonstrate, is upheld by many African cultures. . A government which failed to allow the people an effective voice in their own affairs would be considered structurally defective and unconstitutional. Thus in the nineteenth century, seven Ashanti kings were unseated for breaching various provisions of their oaths of office[66]. For his tenure as the political head of the state to succeed, therefore, the *ohene* needs to cooperate effectively with his people, and this cooperation will depend on the extent to which he is able to inspire the sympathy and loyalty of the people. This, in turn, will depend on the extent to which he is able to meet their values and aspirations.

What this illustrates is that the political head of an indigenous African state was never imposed on the people. In fact the political system supports the assertion of a British

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[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., p. 42
[66] Busia, K., A., 1968, *The position of the Chief,* op. cit., p. 22

colonial administrator that "with all the display of regal power, the [Akan] chief is little more than a puppet moved at the will of the people"[67]. This may be an overstatement of the case, but it highlights the legitimacy of the claim that the political system recognizes the people's sovereignty as a foremost principle.

5.3.3: Consensus Seeking: Democracy through the 'Palaver'

Wiredu points out that political power in the Akan traditional setting is set up for participation, and not for appropriation; and the underlying philosophy is one of cooperation, and not confrontation[68]. On the basis of this he characterizes this political system as substantial (consensual) democracy and distinguishes this from formal democracy, which is the type of democracy conceptualized and fostered by the West and pursued by most African countries today. But what does this distinction consist in? In answering this we resort to Wiredu's elaboration on it, as we can hardly do better than what he provides. He writes:

> "I would like to emphasize that the pursuit of consensus was a deliberate effort to go beyond decision by majority opinion. It is easier to secure majority agreement than to achieve consensus. And the fact was not lost upon the Ashantis. But they spurned that line of least resistance. To them, majority opinion is not, in itself, a good enough basis for decision-making. Or, to put it in terms of the concept of representation, it deprives the minority of the right of representation in the decision in question. Two concepts of representation are involved in these considerations. There is the representation of a given constituency in council, and there is the representation of the will of a representative in the making of a given decision. Let us call the first formal, and the second, substantive representation. Then, it is obvious that you can have formal representation without its substantive correlate. Yet, the formal is for the sake of the substantive. On the Ashanti view, substantial representation is a matter of fundamental human right. Each human being has the right to be represented not only by council, but also in council in any matter relevant to his or her interest or those of their group. This is why consensus is so important"[69].

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[67] Cruickshank, B., 1854, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, Vol. 1*, London: Hurst & Blackett, p. 236
[68] Wiredu, K., 1997, "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for Non-Party Politics", in Eze, E. C., (ed) *Post-Colonial African Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell publishers, p. 308
[69] Ibid., p. 307

An important feature of majoritarian democracies is the prominence given to political parties, which are coalitions of citizens with a defined ideology for governing. However,

> "many SSA [Sub-Saharan African] countries leave the financing of political parties to private individuals and organized groups of friends. As a result, political parties get hijacked by private and group interests and when they win political power; their agenda is often not in national interest"[70].

On the other hand, government "becomes a kind of coalition – a coalition not, as in the common acceptation, of parties but of citizens"[71] in a consensual democratic system. The need for consensus in political decision-making by this coalition derives from "the belief that ultimately the interests of all members of society are the same, although their immediate perceptions of those interests may be different"[72]. Hence the pursuit of solidarity embedded in the communitarian ethos, is itself "inspired by a belief in the identity of the interests of all the members of the community.... and of the recognition of the political and moral values of equality, reciprocity and respect for the views of others"[73]. It is not difficult to see why in such a political system human interest would constitute the basis of all value, and human fellowship be the most important of human needs.

Consensual democracy has been ascribed to other traditional African cultures. Thus Bujo talks of a time-consuming procedure aimed at finding a consensus, in which "an effort is made to discuss the matter not by maneuvering nor by trickery or force and taking into consideration the well-being not just of the participants but much more that of all the affected people"[74]. Likewise, Ramose affirms that "traditional African political culture embodied and invited opposition in the very principle of consensus" towards an "unrelenting quest for oneness"[75].

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[70] Mensa, C, Welcome Address at the Conference on "Fifty Years of Sub-Sahara African Independence and the Role of Political; Parties: Promise, Decline and Resurgence", held at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Accra, 4-5 May 2007, p. 4
[71] Wiredu, K., 1997, "Democracy and Consensus..", op. cit. p. 310
[72] Ibid. p. 306
[73] Gyekye, K., 1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, op. cit., p 130
[74] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit., p. 36
[75] Ramose, M. B. 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit., p. 113

The Tswanas express the principle of solidarity underlying their consensual democratic practice in the saying that "*go ya ka magoro gase go tswana, melato re a rerisana*"[76]. Akans express the "freedom of debate" in the consensus-seeking process with the saying that "*ti koro nko agyina*"[77]. This is because it is always better and more fruitful for more 'heads' (minds) minds to deliberate on matters of public concern than just one 'head'.

In spite of all these, some scholars have supposed that African political culture lacked the concept and practice of opposition, because of the absence of political parties. Thus Simiyu claims that

> "The class structure [in African societies] prevented the development of democratic tendencies. There may have been checks and balances against the absolute authority of the king, but the exercise of those controlling forces was done by the immediate members of the ruling aristocracy without the participation of the commoners"[78].

The supposition that dissenting views were absent in the African polity may also be inferred from Hountondji's talk of the "myth of unanimity" and the "myth of consensus"[79]. What Hountondji means by these is that the idea of consensus is an imaginary construct that has no basis whatsoever in truth because such an idea would imply a monolithic conception of a subject to which all thinkers in a given society give unanimous assent. However there cannot be such completely identical views, hence the "myths".

Robin Horton also traverses similar ground when he writes that in traditional cultures "there is no developed awareness of alternatives to the established body of theoretical

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[76] According to Ramose, at ibid., p. 115, what this means is that "even if we may go our own way, whenever urgent and vital issues arise we still have the obligation to come together and try to find a common solution to those issues".
[77] "One head does not go into council.
[78] Simiyu, V. G., 1987, "The Democratic Myth in the African Traditional Societies", in Oyugi, W. O. and Gitonga, A (eds), *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa,* Nairobi: Heinemann, p. 69
[79] Hountondji, P. J., 1983, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 51-55.

tenets" and that they therefore harbour "closed" systems of thought"[80]. The "lack of awareness of alternatives makes for an absolute acceptance of the established theoretical tenets, and removes any possibility of questioning them. In these circumstances, the established tenets invest the believer with a compelling force. It is this force which we refer to when we talk of such tenets as sacred"[81]. In fact according to Horton, the lack of alternatives and the sacredness of the unanimous tenets of knowledge and values in traditional Africa is so strong that any challenge to these threatens stability so much that it "evokes intense anxiety" in the culture[82].

Many arguments may be deployed, both at the conceptual and empirical levels, to deny these views on the undemocratic nature of African political thought. However, we believe deploying a few will suffice to make the point. First, as argued, the process of the selection and installation of a political head provides enough theoretical and practical expression of the democratic ideal. Secondly, if consensus is admitted as a decision-making and norm-finding procedure in these societies, then it would be conceptually untenable to simultaneously ascribe unanimous views and lack of theoretical alternatives to them. This is because the notion of consensus presupposes the existence of opposing views, for "it is the opposing views that are, or need to be, reconciled. If there were no opposition, it would be senseless to talk of reaching a consensus"[83]. Indeed, "surely, one cannot speak of consensus where there is no opposition at all"[84]. Also, as pointed out in section 5.3.2, the Akan word for council (or assembly), connotes the practice of bargaining, negotiation and compromise, and surely these cannot occur where there is no alternative or dissenting views.

Consensus seeking, as a decision making procedure, was adopted and valued at all levels of the political and administrative structure, and all citizens conceded the right to

[80] Horton, R., 1971, "African Traditional Thought and Western Science", in Wilson, B. (ed), *Rationality,* New York: Harper Touchbooks, p. 153

[81] Ibid., p. 154

[82] Ibid. pp 154-155

[83] Gyekye, K., 1997, *Tradition and Modernity*, op. cit., p 130

[84] Ramose, M. B. 2002, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, op. cit., p. 113

contribute to consensus formation[85]. It is also the pillar that supported decentralization, upon which "lay the whole success and wonder of this loosely bounded confederacy [of the Ashanti state]…A paramount chief who endeavored to centralize too much in olden times generally paid with his life for his folly in having allowed his ambitions to override his knowledge of his own constitution"[86].

5.4 Political Culture in an Ethics-based Model of Development

Consensual democracy is, among others, the institutional expression of the third and fifth injunctions which a newly elected Akan *hene* must acknowledge. For Africans, then, democracy means continuous and active participation of every citizen in the affairs of governing. The decentralized orientation of consensual democracy meant that a deliberative forum was filled by those "who share daily life with the people, so that their argumentation is concerned with the people's existential interests"[87]. Freedom to participate in debate meant that arguments are conducted by choosing people who share in the daily life of the community and are thus in a position to take into prominent consideration in their argumentation the people's existential needs and interest. Further, an effort is made by participants in council and other discursive fora to discuss issues at hand not by trickery or maneuvering or force; and by taking into consideration the welfare of not only the participants but the whole community[88]. This is because discussion aimed at discovering appropriate solutions for action, not the defeat of an adversary in argument. The business of government evokes the constant attention and interest of the citizenry, and because of the requirement that the governor become accessible to the governed.

A key lesson that contemporary Africa should learn from these institutional arrangements is the need for a unified political authority. A union government for Africa is necessary for Africa's future. This will be a "a government of the people, for the people, by the

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[85] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit., p. 36
[86] Rattray, R. S., 1929, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, op. cit. p. 405
[87] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit., p. 36
[88] Ibid., p 36

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people"[89] which rejects the party system of government because the latter "brings in its trail division, hatred, sectional and tribal strife"[90]. The necessity for a single continental government stems partly from the need to bridge this division and sectionalism initiated by the Berlin Conference[91] and perpetuated through neo-colonialist tactics like "aid", and foreign investment[92]. The recovery of Africa's political sovereignty, as Diop has argued, is a precondition for economic sovereignty and psychic autonomy[93]. This is because economic and social development requires decisive political action. Therefore,

> "enlightened [Africa's] self-interest itself argues for the adoption, before late, of a federal system. …The upshot is that only a continent-wide or a subcontinent-wide federated state can offer a safe political and economic area, stable enough for a rational formula covering the development of our countries with their infinitely varied potentials to be put into effect"[94].

As seen in section 1.4.3.2, Nkrumah also stresses the need for Africa's political unity as a precondition for its total liberation from imperialism[95]. This is evinced among others by his exhortation to Africans to "seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto thee"[96].

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[89] Kutu Akyeampong, erstwhile head of State under the Supreme Military Council of Ghana, in an interview broadcast on the BBC, 14th January 1977

[90] Kutu Akyeampong, erstwhile head of State under the Supreme Military Council of Ghana, in speech delivered at the inauguration of the reconstituted National Committee of the Charter of Redemption, Accra, 12th October, 1976.

[91] In 1884 at the request of Portugal, the first Chancellor of Germany, Otto von Bismark, hosted fourteen countries in Berlin from November 1884 to February 1885 to determine territorial control over Africa among the participants. The countries represented included Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway (unified from 1814-1905), Turkey, and the United States of America. At the time of the conference, 80% of Africa remained under traditional and local control. But the outcome of the conference the *General Act of the Berlin Conference*, formalized the Scramble for Africa and by 1914, the conference participants had fully divided Africa among themselves into fifty countries.

[92] Nkrumah, K., 1970, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London: Panaf, p. 239

[93] . Diop, C. A., 1987, *Black Africa,* op. cit., pp. 115-116

[94] Ibid., Foreword.

[95] Nkrumah, K, 2004, *Neo-colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London: Panaf, p. ix-xx, and pp. 255-259

[96] Nkrumah reputedly uttered these words in a speech entitled "Poverty versus Plenty" on the campaign trail in Northern Ghana on March 6th 1949. A record of that speech is not known to be extant, but in his book *I Speak of Freedom*, London: Heinemann, 1961, p. 16, Nkrumah acknowledges this aphorism by claiming that "Economic freedom, I told them [i.e. the audience], would follow political freedom.

In spite of these, decisive willingness and action for harnessing indigenous African political principles and practices, and forging a common political center for Africa structured by these principles, is hard to locate in contemporary African politics. This is easily evinced by conclusions reached by the 2005 African Governance Report[97], according to which "governance overall is getting better in Africa"[98]. Some of the indicators for this conclusion are that "the political space has been liberalised, human rights and the rule of law are more widely respected, legislatures and judiciaries are asserting their independence, the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process have increased, voter turnouts are on the increase, economic management is getting better"[99]. In other words the tenets of majoritarian democracies are flourishing. For us this is scarcely an indicator of Africa's progress towards liberation.

The unwillingness and inaction for continental political unity is sometimes masked by proclamations to the contrary, as may be inferred from a number of documents. One of these is the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community[100]. Article 6.1 of this Treaty declares the complete integration of African economies, over a six-phased process, within thirty-four (34) years of the signing of the Treaty. Two other seemingly union-furthering documents are the Constitutive Act of the African Union[101] (AU) and the Mission and Vision of the organization as stated in the Strategic Plan of its Commission[102]. Article 3 of the Act states the objectives of the Union whereas article 4 enumerates the principles according to which the Union will function. One would therefore expect a consistent and definite statement and the path towards unity from these articles. However, these two articles are riddled with ambiguities and inconsistencies. Thus Article 3 states the following, inter alia, as the objectives of the Union:

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[97] Prepared for the 4th African Development Forum (ADF IV) convened by the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union in Addis Ababa on 11-15 October 2004

[98] Economic Commission for Africa, 2005, *Striving for Good Governance in Africa: Synopsis of the 2005 African Governance Report Prepared for the African Development Forum IV,* Addis Ababa: ECA, p. iii

[99] Ibid. pp 4-12

[100] Economic Commission for Africa, 2002, *Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community*

[101] Adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU in Lome, Togo, on the 11th of July 2000

[102] African Union Commission, 2004, *Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission, Volume 1: Vision and Mission of the African Union*, Addis Ababa: AU

a. Achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;

b. Defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;

c. Accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;

d. Promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples.

It is clear that objectives *a, c* and *d* may be held to further the goal of eventual unity whereas *b* seeks to preserve the divisive status quo.

Further, Article 4 states that The Union shall function in accordance with the following principles, inter alia:

a. Sovereign equality and interdependence among Member States of the Union;

b. Respect of borders existing on achievement of independence

d. Establishment of a common defence policy for the African Continent

g. Non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another

i. Peaceful co-existence of Member States and their right to live in peace and security

k. Promotion of self-reliance within the framework of the Union

The incongruence between principles *a, b, g, i, k*, all of which establish "sovereign equality" and therefore detracts from the movement towards unity, on the one hand; and principle *d* on the other, which promotes unity, can surely not pass without notice.

Besides the tension within the Constitutive Act, inconsistencies also abound between the Act and the Strategic Plan. Thus according to the Strategic Plan, the first key idea underlying the vision of the Union is that "political integration should be the *raison-*

d'être of the African Union, the objective being to achieve a United States of Africa (federation or confederation) in the long run"[103]. This vision is elaborated upon in the following assertion:

> "A united and integrated Africa; an Africa imbued with the ideals of justice and peace; an inter-dependent and robust Africa determined to map for itself an ambitious strategy; an Africa underpinned by political, economic, social and cultural integration which would restore to Pan-Africanism its full meaning; an Africa able to make the best of its human and material resources, and keen to ensure the progress and prosperity of its citizens by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by a globalized world; an Africa capable of promoting its values in a world rich in its disparities"[104].

In the political sphere, therefore, a twofold exigency needs fulfillment towards a development paradigm that can contribute to Africa's authentic liberation. First is the need to streamline these documents which declare Africa's aspiration to continental unity into a consistent whole. And if the decision by the 10th Ordinary Summit of the AU's Executive Council to accelerate discussion on an "African union government" and an "African high command"[105] are indications of the direction of the Union towards this, then it is a laudable direction indeed.

Secondly, this union must be built on the communitarian ethical model. By doing so, a peculiar virtue of consensual democracy will be invoked to serve the continental government. This virtue is the sense of personal commitment to the affairs of state, "a conviction that any harm done to the state as a whole directly harms the individual[106]", which individual citizens would develop on the basis of their communitarian orientation. And this, surely, is needed bedrock for Africa's development.

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[103] African Union Commission, 2004, *Strategic Plan*, op. cit. p 22
[104] Ibid. p. 26
[105] The *New African* Magazine, March 2007, p. 12
[106] Gyekye, K., 1996, *African Cultural Values*, op. cit. p 116

5.5   Humane Economics and Africa's Development

Gyekye states emphatically that the doctrine of communitarianism in indigenous Africa was "essentially socio-ethical, not economic"[107]. He advances this view in order to reject the proposition that communalism is essentially an economic system that can evolve into a socialist economy[108]. This leaves Gyekye at pains to point out that "the notions of private property and private enterprise…. were not unknown in the African traditional way of managing the economy"[109]. We have seen in section 5.2.1.1 that ample room was provided for individualist values and talents in the communalist structure. Hence it should go without saying that it has always been the case in African cultures that "private property, such as cattle, existed side by side with communal property, such as land"[110].

However, the management of vital segments of the economy were directly inspired and sustained by the socio-ethical core of communitanianness. This section argues for the view that the pursuit of communitarian economics is relevant and worthwhile for aspects of economic development in Africa within the ethics-based development paradigm.

How was the economy of traditional Africa sustained by the communitarian doctrine? Land, for instance, an economic-productive factor that most forcefully validates the right to life[111], was communally owned. In furthering Gyekye's denial of an organic link between Marxism and communalism, we may add that the principles of acquisition and distribution of this particular economic good in African law and custom renders the Marxist dialectic inoperative. This is because the family, not the individual, was the unit for the ownership of land. And there was no social differentiation in apportioning this essential means to livelihood: all able adult members of a family were entitled to claim

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[107] Gyekye, K, 1996, *African Cultural Values*, op. cit., p. 96
[108] Gyekye, K., 1997, *Tradition and Modernity,* op. cit., p. 37, attributes this position to post-independence African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah Leopold` Senghor and Julius Nyerere.
[109] ibid
[110] Molema, S. M. 1920, *The Bantu: Past and Present*, Edinburgh: W. Green and Son Ltd., p. 115
[111] Ramose, M. B., 2002, "I conquer, therefore I am the sovereign: Reflections upon sovereignty, constitutionalism, and democracy in Zimbabwe and South Africa", in Coetzee, P. H. and Roux, A. P. J. (ed), *Philosophy from Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 473

ownership of a part of the family's land for their livelihood. In the absence of differentiation in the acquisitive and distributive mechanisms, the Marxist dialectic becomes irrelevant in land ownership in the African setting.

This non-differentiation in the allocation of commonly-owned property is an important economic value translated into a display of distributive justice that should enrich Africa's future development paradigm. It will thus ensure that laws governing ownership of natural resources are revised to display as their main aim the human and economic rights of citizens. A concrete manifestation of this revision would be to adopt as preamble to our development paradigm Article one of the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, which states that "every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties"[112].

Another aspect of the traditional economy that can enrich the modern setting is the collaborative harnessing of labour characterised as *nnoboa* by the Akans and as *letsema* by the Bantu[113]. For the African future, this collaborative pool of resources can have at least two types of merits. First, it can directly impinge on human dignity and welfare within the continent. If collaboration should become a central feature of the processes that drive the economic system, then this will blunt the 'murderous' edges of competition and its defense of selfishness as a virtue. As discussed in section 1.4.1 competition, which is a core feature of capitalism implies rivalry that makes human beings mere tools in the hands of a competitor in the quest for profit. And for this self interest justifies the deprivation of life and the subjugation of human dignity. This is what makes such a system ethically objectionable[114]. For this reason, collaborative economic processes, which better epitomize "seeking together", which is the original meaning of

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[112] UNGAR, 1974, 3346, p. xxix; cf. Ramose M, B., 2002, ibid., p 473
[113] This is the practice whereby all members of a cooperative allow their labor to be utilized by one member for a day. All the members take their turn in this utility of the collective labour until every member has benefited, before another round may begin.
[114] Ramose, M. B., 2004, "Poverty: A Creature of Politics and a Question of Justice". In *International Journal of Humanistic Studies*. Vol. 3, pp 36 – 53.

competition[115], should be preferable for Africa's future development paradigm, for it has better prospects of ensuring a humane system that dignifies the human being as an economic factor and end of economic activity.

The second merit that would accrue to the adaptation of *letsema* is that it will help improve Africa's standing in her economic relationship with the rest of the world. As a trading block sub-Saharan Africa has suffered and continues to suffer the most unfavourable terms in global trade. One main reason for this is that cash crops remain a major source of government revenue for a significant number of these countries. Although the continent's commodity price index in 2004 went up from 2003, most of the increase was due to the rise in the prices of oil, metals and minerals. Africa's key agricultural exports: cotton, cocoa, coffee (robusta) and groundnut oil recorded price declines in 2004[116]. In fact, the agricultural sector is characterised by "loss of competitiveness in world markets"[117].

This uncompetitive agricultural sector is a main reason for Africa's insignificant share in world trade. But in spite of its low share, the continent is highly dependent on this trade. Thus:

> "contrary to general perceptions Africa's markets are integrated considerably in the global economy. But, this integration is asymmetric. Africa depends on the rest of the world, whereas the rest of the world does not depend on Africa. Its shares in both world trade and FDI are only 2 per cent of the global total, a reflection of the continent's low share in world GDP"[118].

The unfavourable terms of trade for Africa due to the continual drop in agricultural prices has been attributed to bumper harvests and over-production of these commodities both within and outside the continent[119]. Collaborative economics, pursued in a united continental political framework can help to remedy this defect by presenting a common front for commodity price negotiations as well as general negotiations on terms of trade.

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[115] The Group of Lisbon, 1995, *Limits to Competition*. Cambridge: Massachusetts: MIT Press. p xii

[116] Economic Commission for Africa, 2005, *Economic Report on Africa 2005,* Addis Ababa: ECA, p. 31
[117] Ibid., p. 138
[118] Ibid. p. 205
[119] Ibid. pp 31-32

Further, the enhanced self-reliance that results from political unification and the forging of a common economic front will benefit Africa's standing in another respect. The Africa Union's 2007 budget portrays a shortfall of 36.27 million dollars on projected expenditure over income from the contributions of member states[120]. As in earlier years, the AU will most likely look up to 'foreign partners' to make up this shortfall. Now, for an organization, supposedly established to defend and deepen the independence of Africa, this is a contradiction in terms. But this is the most logical outcome of subscribing to NEPAD, and its conception of "partnership", as discussed in Chapter Three. The notion of mutual dependence and communal sharing from indigenous Africa must be adopted in place of NEPAD's decadent "partnership" which only pushes Africa further into the custody of dependence, and therewith, into epistemicide and valuecide.

5.6   Humane Technology, Ethical Ecology and Africa's Development:

The holonistic conception of existence facilitates the view that the potentials of humanity cannot be fully realized without its peaceful coexistence with other beings. This is partly because every being is endowed by God with vital force capable of strengthening [or diminishing] the vital energy of man[121]. This is clear in our discussions in section 5.2.1, which also supports the observation that "the human person and the cosmos complement each other to such an extent that they cannot exist without this interdependence"[122], for as Temples has established, "the world of forces is like a spider's web, of which one single thread cannot be caused to vibrate without shaking the whole web"[123]. In view of this necessary interdependence, humanity must view its interests not as antithetical but complementary to those of nature. Therefore the self-interested task for human beings is not the domination of nature but rather the pursuit of conduct that moves the entire cosmos into harmony.

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[120] The New African, March 2007, p. 12
[121] Temples, P., 1959, *Bantu Philosophy*, Paris: Presence Africaine, p. 46
[122] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, p. 209
[123] Temples, P., 1959, *Bantu Philosophy,* op. cit. p. 60

However, the functions and goals of modern technology seem to be diametrically opposed to this harmony. In league with capitalism and thus oriented directly toward the consumer, modern technology compels an insatiable urge always to produce and consume fast and desire for more. And in directing and responding to this orientation, "the human person [in pursuit of economistic ends] strives to deal with nature as with a slave; profit is what matters most, to the extent that one is even ready to compromise with death"[124]. This compromise with death, negotiated in a prospective annihilation of the human race, seems in fact to be accepted as the most rational apogee of technological advancement. Since the mid twentieth century, this has become evident in two main ways, at least.

The first is the endurance of the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), promulgated in the most powerful corridors of the modern world where rationality allegedly decides the fate of the world. This doctrine declares the prospect of making the earth inhabitable as its main aim. MAD avows a strategy by which a full-scale use of nuclear weapons by one of two opposing sides would effectively result in the destruction of both the attacker and the defender. Adopted by the United States and the Soviet Union, it is based on the theory of deterrence according to which the deployment of nucleur weapons is essential to threaten the enemy in order to prevent the enemy's use of the very same weapons, and as such avoid assured mutual annihilation. It is now assumed that the annihilation would not be confined to the two warring factions, but would bring about universal devastation[125].

The second possible compromise with death manifests itself in the threat of the greenhouse effect and global warming[126]. Global warming refers to the average

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[124] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, p. op. cit. 216
[125] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_assured_destruction
[126] When sunlight reaches the surface of the Earth, some of it is absorbed and warms the Earth. Because the Earth's surface is much cooler than the sun, it radiates energy at much longer wavelengths than does the sun. The atmosphere absorbs these longer wavelengths, and this absorption warms the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases, which include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone, also *emit* longwave radiation both upward to space and downward to the surface. The downward part of this longwave radiation emitted by the atmosphere is the "greenhouse effect." Greenhouse gas emissions, predominantly carbon dioxide, from anthropocentric activity dictated by economic gain (industry,

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temperature of the earth's near-surface air and oceans in recent decades. Climate models predict that global surface temperatures are likely to increase by 1.1 to 6.4 degrees Celsius between 1990 and 2010. Such an increase can cause the seas to rise to levels that will inundate many presently inhabited islands. There may also be increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, the retreat of glaciers, the extinction of species, and increases in the range of disease vectors. Within this context, the refusal of the United States of America which is the foremost contributor to global warming[127], to ratify the Kyoto treaty[128], brings into focus the malevolence of the ethics of capitalism and the need for a communitarian and humanistic based ecological ethics.

On September 4, 2006 capitalism's compromise of death was enacted when inhabitants of Abidjan woke up to the stench of radioactive waste dumped in seven sites around the city. Within a few days three people had died and 1,500 treated for various conditions emanating from inhaling the waste. Trafigura Beheer BV, the foreign company that chartered the vessel that discharged the waste said an Ivorian firm had been paid to dispose of the waste in the Ivory Coast. In response to it, Ivorians carried placards in demonstrations some of which read: "They are killing us for money," and "They sold off our health"[129]. In view of these, modern technology should indeed be "ashamed of

transportation and commercialized agriculture) are the main causes of recently observed global warming. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming

[127] As footnote 94 of Chapter 4 indicates, the United States, with 4.6% of the world's population contributes 23.5% of the global emission of carbon dioxide, which is the principal agent for global warming.

[128] According to the United Nations Environment Programme, the Kyoto Protocol is an agreement under which industrialized countries commit themselves to reduce their collective emissions of greenhouse gases by 5.2% compared to the year 1990. The goal is to lower overall emissions of six greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulfur hexafluoride, HFCs, and PFCs - calculated as an average over the five-year period of 2008-12. National limitations range from 8% reductions for the European Union and some others to 7% for the US, 6% for Japan, 0% for Russia, and permitted increases of 8% for Australia and 10% for Iceland. The treaty was negotiated in Kyoto, Japan in December 1997, and came into force on February 16, 2005 following ratification by Russia on November 18, 2004. As of December 2006, a total of 169 countries and other governmental entities have ratified the agreement (representing over 61.6% of emissions from Annex I countries, that is developed countries which have accepted GHG emission reduction obligations and must submit an annual greenhouse gas inventory). Notable exceptions to these are the United States and Australia. (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol)

[129] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5323222.stm

congratulating itself for the invention of the most complex life-destroying weapons"[130]. But this shouldn't be the only nature and purpose of technology.

A communitarian-ethics inspired technology will give substance to the notion of "sustainable development"[131], which we considered in section 2.7. This means that it must be "able to help fulfill the simple survival needs of a very large proportion of people in the world; [and be] able to conserve natural resources to ensure the decent survival of the majority of human beings in the generations ahead"[132]. Clearly, such technology will help preserve human life and dignity. It will achieve this within a framework that harmonizes humanity's needs and interests with "ecological therapy". It is this sort of technology that should drive Africa's future development. It will be a technological framework "which knows how to respect African culture, since this alone is able to humanize technology in an African perspective"[133].

Thus profit, as understood in the philosophy of economism, cannot be the driving force underlying technological inventions and transfer to Africa. What must underlie them in fact is the Sotho maxim, quoted in section 6.2.2, that "if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being then one should choose the preservation of that life". This, presumably is because, ultimately, "it is the human being that counts" in all calculations of the consequences of human conduct. And a healthy and harmonious life in human community depends on an undamaged and balanced ecology.

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[130] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, p. op. cit. p. 216
[131] Defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without endangering the opportunities of future generations to meet their own needs.
[132] Peng, K. K., 1988, "Science and Development: Underdeveloping the Third World", in Sardar, Z (ed), *The Revenge of Athena: Science, Exploitation and the Third World*, London: Mansell, p. 207
[133] Bujo, B., 1997, *Ethical Dimension*, op. cit, p. 219

5.7 Conclusion

We have argued that in the African post-colonial experience, Eurocentric paradigms have determined the nature and purposes of Africa's development and the theories and strategies for achieving them. These paradigms are sustained by internalist epistemologies that persist in advancing "lies, illusions and mystifications… about Africa"[134]. The effect of these lies and illusions are the epistemicide and valuecide being perpetuated in Africa's strides towards development. These have culminated in the paradigmatic crisis proclaimed by social scientists at the dawn of the 1990s.

The stranglehold of internalist epistemologies, with their attendant universalizing tendencies, has resulted in the impasse of rationality. By this we mean that Reason, apotheosized since the enlightenment, has advanced humanity out of barbarism to "civilization" but has now placed humanity on the brink of unredeemable barbarism. Thus Reason, through its manifestations in MAD and global warming, has blindfoldedly condemned humanity to willful but avoidable suicide.

It is precisely at this moment of delirious impasse reached by Reason that the African ethics-based development paradigm, predicated on humaneness and "life is mutual aid", can restore Reason to sober rationality and liberate Africa's development efforts from the intoxicating prison of profit making. Hence the institutions and frameworks devoted to Africa's development, such as the Constitution and Strategic Plan of the African Union as well as NEPAD, must incorporate salient features of the philosophic ethic emanating from the knowledge and ontological systems of indigenous Africa into visions of the African future.

Such an orientation is more sustainable philosophically, as it yields a comprehensive vision of development that disputes the one founded on the ethic of competition. Further, it will position Africa as the subject of the struggle for its liberation from the imperialist

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[134] Mudimbe, V. Y., 1988, *The Invention of Africa,* op. cit., pp. 142-143

and exploitative practices of Western science and technology that lead to epistemicide and valuecide.

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