

An Exploration of the Parallels between *Ubuntu*-ism and Process Metaphysics

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Abstract

Ubuntu is an indigenous African neologism that encompasses brotherhood, individuality, community, personhood, and even moral character. When it is a way of valuing the individual, it is also a yard stick for evaluating the community and even reality as a whole. Hence, there is the endless fusion of the self with the other. The implication is that there is an inherent connection among all things, even God, which makes *Ubuntu* suggestive of a process underpinning. This connection however has yet to be codified since it is almost consensual for scholars to distance *Ubuntu* from Cartesian dualism and similar speculative schemes that propose the distinction between the self and the other; the substance and the accident. If this is the case, it is not invalid to propose that *Ubuntu* rejects substance metaphysics, a tradition deriving from Aristotle, owing to its inadequacies. Through the method of hermeneutical interpretation and critical analysis, the essence of this paper therefore is to disinter the Process-metaphysical groundwork latent in *Ubuntu* by disclosing the place[s] of convergence between Process Metaphysics and *Ubuntu*.

Keywords: Process Metaphysics, *Ubuntu*, African Philosophy, Substance Metaphysics

Introduction

Since the publication of Placid Tempel's *Philosophie Bantou*, the traditional African technique of perceiving reality has garnered international academic attention. The undeniable role played mainly by Eurocentrism, which regurgitated the impossibility of the man of colour, the native, the African to have been involved in any form of intellectual reflection, got scholars, both of African and non-African descent to argue in converse. It should however be stated that in an attempt to unearth and defend the thesis that the traditional African had hitherto, engaged in critical reflection, almost *all* of these scholars

have used the mainstream and dominant metaphysical framework of Substance to give an inaccurate and porous depiction of African reality. The African metaphysical outlook therefore seems to have been compromised. Of these, three issues become evident. Firstly, when the mainstream and dominant religio-metaphysical tradition of the West has yet to settle on theodicy, the African is never bothered by this (Bewaji 1998); (Oladipo 2004). But the Metaphysic of Substance demands the African Philosopher to analyse what is not an original African problem. Secondly, the metaphysico-epistemic question deriving from Rene Descartes on the im-/possibility of the existence of other bodies seems not to concern the Africans. This is assumed in their metaphysics – the endless fusion of one with the many. But the Metaphysic of Substance demands the African Philosopher to analyse what is not an original African problem. Thirdly, the fact that traditional Africans do not regard what is static and unmoving as the perfect Being makes their outlook immune to Martin Heidegger's critique of Western metaphysics as Onto-theo-logy – 'the forgetting of the ontological difference between Being as it is in itself and God' (Heidegger 2002: 42). But even when scholars such as Kola Abimbola (2005); O. Awolalu (1979); John Ishola Bewaji (1998); Bolaji Idowu (1962); Barry Hallen (2000, 2002, 2004); Helen Labeodan (2008); Olamide Lucas (1948); John Mbiti (1969; 1970); Olusegun Oladipo (1988, 2004); Sophie Oluwole (1999, 1996); Mogobe Ramose (1999); Yusuf Turaki (2006) have argued through various themes on the unique method of assessing reality by traditional Africans, the Process-relational underpinning seems to be missing. This is the leap or gulf that this research proposes to fill.

Through the method of hermeneutical interpretation and critical analysis, this essay assesses *Ubuntu*, from a Process-relational standpoint as an explanatory justification for the assertion in the fore paragraph. To attain this objective, this essay has five parts, the first being this introduction. In the second part of this study, a concise articulation of the concept *Ubuntu*, is explored. This part examines *Ubuntu*, from the religious, political, axiological, and philosophic perspectives. The third part focuses on the inner kernel of Process Metaphysics as expounded by Alfred North Whitehead (1978). In the fourth part, the places of parallels between *Ubuntu* philosophy and Process

Metaphysics are uncovered. This is calculated to propose and endorse the view that of the two ways (i.e. Substance Metaphysics and Process Metaphysics) of lensing reality, traditional Africans seem to favour Becoming over Being and are not affected by Heidegger's criticisms. The fifth segment concludes this inquiry.

Ubuntu: A Concise Exploration and Some Deductions

The word *Ubuntu* is derived from an *Nguni (isiZulu)* aphorism: '*Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*', which can be translated as 'a person is a person because of or through others'. *Ubuntu* can be described as the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring.

Thus, the traditional understanding that one is truly human only as a member of a community is expressed in terms of *Ubuntu*. For Mogobe Ramose: '*Ubuntu* is simultaneously the foundation and the edifice of African philosophy' (Ramose 1999: 49). On a similar note, Jabulani Sithole (2001) writes: '*Ubuntu* functions as a unifying factor, bringing people together regardless of their background or access to wealth'. It is in this same vein that Wendy Luhabe harps:

Our own African culture taught us concepts such as respect, trust, compassion and, above all, that we are a collective with the success of one person depending very much on the success of all. This is a concept widely referred to as "*Ubuntu*" or "umntu ngumntu ngabanye" (what makes us human is our recognition of the humanity in others) (Luhabe 2002: 103).

From the foregoing exploration, we can possibly infer that *Ubuntu* to be characterized by: Community is bigger than an individual under. Positive behaviour is related to the *Ubuntu* philosophy. African *Ubuntu* collectivism cultivates a team spirit towards a greater good. *Ubuntu* philosophy involves recognising an individual's socio-cultural values within an African context. Respect is shown to one's elders under the *Ubuntu* philosophy. Respect for the community and corporate social responsibility are part of the African *Ubuntu* philosophy. It is therefore possible to deduce the religious, political, axiological and philosophical impressions of *Ubuntu*. The remainder of this section concerns with each of these, followed by some inferences.

While Africans may belong to different societies and have different traditions and rituals, the idea of *Ubuntu* usually has a strong religious meaning in every culture. There lies a strong religious basis as to the connective relationship between the people and the ancestors who form as links to the Divine Spirit. For this, the person agrees to respect the community's rules; they undergo initiation to establish formal ties with both the current community members and those that have passed on, and they ensure harmony by adhering to the *Ubuntu* principles in the course of life.

This idea is captured by the South African Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu as he describes *Ubuntu* 'as the essence of being human' (Tutu 1999: 31-2). It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in others'. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion. Persons with *Ubuntu* are welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, as well as willing to share. They know that they are reduced when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, lessened when others are treated as if they were lesser than who they are. In the words of Desmond Tutu: 'The quality of *Ubuntu* gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them' (Tutu 1999: 31-2).

These characteristics stated by Desmond Tutu as the attitude of the one who follows the ideals of *Ubuntu*, emphasizes the religious link between members of the society who are all part of a greater life. The religious values therein, make for the moral values also promulgated by the value theory. Its moral ideals seek to strengthen the link and bond between men so much that one becomes conscious of his actions on the wellbeing of those around him.

Ubuntu has its political dimension. In this sense, *Ubuntu* is often mentioned to bring about a stronger sense of unity. The principle of caring for each other's well-being is being promoted, and a spirit of mutual support fostered. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individual's humanity. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being though it is not perfect per se. *Ubuntu* that stresses allowing every individual to have their equal say in any

discussion and in ultimately reaching an agreement acceptable to all may lead to conformist behaviour in order to achieve group solidarity. Recently Edwin Etieyibo confirms that *Ubuntu* could be '...construed as a form of cosmopolitan theory' (Etieyibo 2017: 139). This for him is possible because of the 'duty or obligation that humans owe other humans... in virtue of humanity or the notion of *human-ness*' (Etieyibo 2017: 139).

In a true community, the individual does not pursue the common good by pursuing instead his or her own good, but rather pursues his or her own good by pursuing the common good. The ethics of a true community does not ask persons to sacrifice their own good in order to promote the good of others, but instead, to recognise that they can attain their own true good only by promoting the good of others (Lutz 2009). This is the political underpinning of *Ubuntu*.

As an axiological outline, *Ubuntu*, is non-autonomous. By this, the group seems to pass value judgments on the individual. In other words, the value-judgment of individuals is subordinate to that of the whole. Hence, a quasi-realist position is non-existent in an *Ubuntu* context. In the opening words in one of his classics, Innocent Onyewuenyi announces: '... that African aesthetic standards are different from the 'accepted' standards of uniqueness and individuality; that African works of art are created as an answer to a problem and serve some practical end' (Onyewuenyi 1984: 237). The communitarian basis for a theory of value is implied in Lovemore Mbigi who articulates that: 'Although African cultures display awesome diversity, they also show remarkable similarities. The community is the cornerstone in African thought and life' (Mbigi 2005: 75). And as Yusufu Turaki puts it: 'People are not individuals, living in a state of independence, but part of a community, living in relationships and interdependence' (Turaki 2006: 36). The communal character of African culture does not mean, however, that the good of the individual person is subordinated to that of the group even in matters of value judgment. As a consequence, traditional African aesthetics falls in line with other disciplines in the body of African view of reality. Hence, for Innocent Onyewuenyi:

Works of art are expressions of ritual and religion, as clues to the temperament of the tribe and society, as language in a culture without writing, must do all these in service to the community whose ritual and religion they

express, whose temperament they reveal, the being of whose ancestors they participate in. Hence, African art is functional, community-oriented, depersonalized, contextualized and embedded" (Onyewuenyi 1984: 243).

By functional and community-oriented, Onyewuenyi means that African arts are designed to serve practical, meaningful purpose and that beauty or appearance is secondary. The needs of the community determine the artistes' production. The art is never 'art for art's sake' (Onyewuenyi 1984: 244). The writer is responsible to society. This assertion has been corroborated by Nkiru Nzegwu who concurs that for the Africans art is intrinsically interwoven with other aspects of life. It is community focused. For her: '...the critical question in creativity is no longer what constitutes a work of art, but what is the relationship between creative objects and social life in a given society' (Nzegwu 2004: 415). It is therefore clear that the collective idea of the whole which is captured by *Ubuntu*, presents itself also in African axiology. The same may be said for the philosophic dimension.

The Philosophical aspect of *Ubuntu* links up closely with its respect for individuality. But, be it noted the individuality which *Ubuntu* respects, is not of Cartesian making. On the contrary, *Ubuntu* directly contradicts the Cartesian conception of individuality in terms of which the individual or self can be conceived without [thereby] necessarily conceiving the other. The Cartesian individual exists prior to, or separately and independently from the rest of the community or society. And by implication, the rest of society is nothing but an added extra to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being. This, structures the fundamental philosophical approach of *Ubuntu*. The 'Cogito ergo sum' is not the opposite of '*Ubuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*', because the Cartesian individuality finds its opponent in collectivism whereby the individual vanishes and only becomes a part of community without any strong relevance. The *Ubuntu* individuality encompasses the centrality of individual but with the framework of the society betterment. In other words, *Ubuntu* goes far away from collectivism or a pure Cartesian individuality. It starts from the individual capacitation, promotion and self-creativity to his or her relation with the others. The solitaire individual or the collective individual is transformed in an individual filled with sense of solidarity towards the community.

From the foregoing analysis, it is not improper to infer that *Ubuntu* is a multi-faceted philosophical system that involves logic, metaphysics, epistemology and ethics; it is a philosophy of life that is concerned with the reinforcement of unity, oneness and solidarity among the Bantu people. It is the distinctive elasticity and practical nature that makes *Ubuntu* applicable in almost all facets of human life. As such, the concept has been wisely exported as an underlying philosophy or code of conduct into business, legal system, education, theology/religion, healthy and disciplines such as African philosophy and ethics (Munyaradzi 2012).

From the foray into the meaning and nature of *Ubuntu*, the following deductions are plausible:

- (1) *Ubuntu* as a philosophic, political and axiological concept underscores interpersonal relations among parts for the progress and sustenance of the whole. This necessarily goes contrary to the notion of independence and self-reliance replete in Substance philosophy;
- (2) *Ubuntu* in the religious sphere for Africans hint at the interpenetration between the past and the present in terms of the connectivity between the living and their ancestors. This linkage no doubt shapes character and well-being of future progeny; and
- (3) *Ubuntu* makes no distinction between the self and the other as it views the entire universe as an interconnected whole. God has not been given undue and exaggerated qualities to be the perfect Substance as derived from Aristotle and prominent Church fathers like St. Aquinas (Ofuasia 2017: 149-53).

The implication of each of (1); (2); and (3) if accepted to be the case would easily be detected, even before we conclude the next section. But finally, it needs to be made palpable at this juncture, that *Ubuntu* finds a parallel in discussions of the *Yoruba* concepts of *Eniyan* and *Omoluwabi*; the *Igbo* concept of *Umu-nna*; the *Akan* notion of *Onipa*; the *kiSwahili* words *Ujamaa* and *Harambee*. For each of these terms, the similarity includes an appeal to a similar body of proverbs, and extrapolation of some conception of human beings as interdependent as well as deriving value claims from this interdependence. It uncovers that even in the face of apparent differences in geography and

linguistics, African societies, share some levels of semblances and attitudes to reality.

In the next section, the main kernel of Process Metaphysics would be given the ultimate concern before we proceed to disinter the places of connection with *Ubuntu*.

The Inner Kernel of Process-Metaphysics: A Whiteheadian Exposition.

Most process philosophers argue that the history of Western philosophy has given undue importance to Substance over Process, Being over Becoming, especially among those philosophical systems where movement, change, and transformation are nothing but attributes, effects, or derivatives of what is permanent or changeless. To a certain degree, substance metaphysics owes its success to the mode of thinking that cultivates such a mentality, that is to say, in ancient times, perfection was synonymous to changelessness (Masong 2013: 14).

Though most are wont to hold that process metaphysics derives from the thoughts of Alfred North Whitehead *alone*, a perusal of philosophy in the ancient periods reveals that "process-relational thinking has a long history stretching back at least to the Buddha and the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus in the sixth century BCE" (Mesle 2008: 4). In the words of Emmanuel Ofuasia:

Alfred North Whitehead was a proponent of process philosophy, which identifies metaphysical reality with dynamism and change as opposed to Aristotelian views where reality is based on permanent, timeless substances. He rejected the idea that an object has a simple temporal or spatial location and instead claimed that objects should be understood as having spatial and temporal extensions (2015: 27).

In the words of Whitehead: "philosophy of organism is the inversion of Immanuel Kant's philosophy ... For Immanuel Kant, the world emerges from the subject; for the philosophy of organism, the subject emerges from the world" (Whitehead 1978). Despite the rejection of speculative philosophy or metaphysics during this time especially among scholars like Bertrand Russell and members of logical positivism, Whitehead went ahead and defined speculative philosophy as "...the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system

of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted" (Whitehead 1978:3). This implies that the sole aim of philosophy is to interpret or understand our experiences.

Given that Whitehead sees a serious need to build a system that would be able to assist in the comprehension of our experience; two demands for him must be met by such a system: rational demand and empirical demand. The rational demand implies coherence and logicity. Coherence and logicity in this context means the parts form a whole rather than entities standing in isolation from each other. Incoherence as holds here is being deployed against scholars like Rene Descartes who divided reality into mind and matter, failing to explain how they 'fit'. This is what Whitehead (2004:26-48) calls 'the bifurcation of nature'. It is also echoed by Keiji Nishitani as the depersonalization of the human person and the denaturalization of nature (Nishitani 1990). Whitehead debunks the metaphysical and philosophical systems of scholars like Rene Descartes, David Hume, Gottfried Leibniz and a host of others on the ground that they failed to give a picture of experience that is coherent and logical (rational demand) on the one hand and on the other hand, applicable and adequate (empirical demand) (Wood 1986); (Mesle 2008).

To be coherent and logical could also connote that no entity lies outside the system. In many philosophical systems that had earlier been conceived, God is usually treated to be outside the system. Whitehead however, insists that "God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification" (Whitehead 1978:343). It is evident that for Whitehead, "in seeking to understand God, one must use the same principles that are used to understand everything else. He may exemplify the principles in a unique way, but he must not be an exception to them, otherwise the system would have two parts, leaving a dichotomy. This underlines the necessity for coherence" (Wood, 1986). In process metaphysics, everything is in a state of flux, a state of continuous change, a state of perishing and being transformed into other modes of existence (Ofuasia 2015: 29). This is what happens to all categories of being from inanimate beings to man and even God himself, who is part of the organic system (Omoregbe 2011:213). It is

therefore of great necessity to build a system that would take cognizance of these anomalies.

The empirical demand on the other hand insists, for Whitehead that a system of general ideas must also be applicable and adequate. "It is not enough, however, for our ideas to be rational—coherent and logical; they must be *applicable*. In other words, to be of value they must tell us about the world we experience and live in. They must tell us about *something in particular*, not just everything in general" (Mesle 2008:15). It is correct to say that Whitehead moves beyond mere speculation. He seeks for a metaphysics that would explain reality in the simplest of ways. So far as ideas explain particular situations, they can be said to be applicable. Applicability seems as obvious as the criteria of being coherent and logical. But it is precisely the failure to apply to anything concrete that has made so many metaphysical systems seem foolish and worthless. Philosophy that isn't applicable to anything is what leads people to make fun of "mere metaphysics" and to dismiss it as illogical nonsense (Mesle 2008). This is why in the early 20th century metaphysics was a candidate for elimination in the hands of the logical positivists and some analytic scholars (Ofuasia 2015: 30).

Whitehead thereby affirms that process, event, change are the basis for reality, contra Substance metaphysics. This affirms that "process is fundamental...to be actual is to be a process" (Whitehead 2004:1). The primary actualities that Whitehead terms 'actual entities' are in his own words, "the final real things of which the world is made. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real" (Whitehead 1978:18). It is evident that actual entities replace substance in substance metaphysics. Thus, Whitehead may be interpreted in this excerpt to be doing away with the traditional notion of substance which maintains identity in the face of flux. To be an actual entity, in Whitehead's cognition is to be in process. William Lawhead confirms the thesis that for Whitehead, event, change, process is the fundamental feature of all reality in the following words: "Things that appear permanent and unmoving are really abstractions from the basic reality" (Lawhead 2002:490). The tendency to think that what is permanent is actually the case leads to what Whitehead calls

the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (Whitehead 1948:51). Everything we experience and understand in the phenomena, including ourselves falls under actual occasion. This is his ‘ontological principles’. He articulates thus: “actual entities are the only reasons; so that to search for a reason is to search for one or more actual entities” (Whitehead 1978:18). Actual occasions are not ‘things’ in the substance sense of traditional metaphysics that we are used to. They are “drops of existence, complex and interdependent” (Whitehead 1978:18). He is however, quick to note that actual entities differ among themselves in gradations of importance. In his words:

They differ among themselves: God is an actual entity, and so is the trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space. But, though there are gradations of importance, and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level (Whitehead 1978:18).

All things that exist, be it illusion or real, can be explained in terms of actual occasions. Actual occasions for Whitehead are the sources of meaning and why things are the way they are. In the case of God as excerpted above, is it the case that Whitehead is referring to a theistic God who rules the world? No, God as construed in this sense by Whitehead, from our understanding is wholly immanent and not transcendent as is the case with God construed from substance metaphysics which filtered into monotheism thanks to St. Aquinas and Averroes. William Lawhead makes a similar note when he chronicles that “strictly speaking, Whitehead’s view is not theism, for he denies that God is transcendent to the world” (Lawhead 2002:495). Whitehead’s view of God has also been interpreted not to be pantheism though some (Omoregbe 2011) are willing to make such a claim. Lawhead (2002: 495) informs us about this that:

Nor is his view pantheism – the claim that God and the world are identical. In contrast to pantheism, Whitehead’s God is an independent entity that interacts with the world. Instead, Whitehead’s position is commonly called panentheism. This is the view that God includes the world in his being (since he is affected by every event within it) at the same time that he is more than the events in the world (God has his own unique aims and actions). God is an immanent presence in the emergence of every actuality.

From the above, it becomes very clear that God is a necessary part of the universe unlike the Aristotelian God that bears no relation to the universe. Whitehead also hints at this when he claims that "God is not before all creation, but with all creation" (Whitehead 1978:521). Whitehead continues categorically that:

God is the lure of feeling, the eternal urge of desire. His particular relevance to each creative act, as it arises from its own conditioned standpoint in the world, constitutes him the "initial object of desire" establishing the initial phase of each subjective aim (Whitehead 1978:522)

God affects and is also affected by the world. The notion of relational power is underscored here, unlike the unilateral power that pervades substance metaphysics. Every actual occasion (including God) is di-polar in structure. They have physical and mental poles. God as a higher actual occasion has two natures: the primordial and consequent natures. In the former, God envisages all eternal objects and their eventual actualization. The latter nature consists of the reaction of the world on it (God). The former corresponds to the mental pole while the latter corresponds to the physical pole. The implication here is that God is an active participant in the world, contra Aristotle. In its primordial nature, God is infinite potentiality and the fullness of conceptual feelings but without physical feelings. Hence, God lacks the fullness of actuality. In its primordial nature, God is the object of desire, while in its consequent nature, an expression of the reaction of the world on it. It may be gleaned that the idea of actual occasions possessing mental and physical poles replacing substance in traditional metaphysics comes closer to Leibniz monads. We must however recall Leibniz's caveat that monads have no windows and this is why Griffin (2010) claims that Whitehead simply constructed windows for his entities. It is in this vein that Whitehead's metaphysics boasts of elements of panpsychism (mental aspect of matter) and/or panexperientialism (that matter is capable of experience). In order to be able to properly grasp how actual entities relate with one another to form a causal web in reality, we shall make an investigation of the terms: concrescence and prehension. These terms are employed to better capture Whitehead's category of the ultimate, which is creativity.

Whitehead defines prehensions as "Concrete Facts of Relatedness" (Whitehead 1978:22). This means that prehensions are the causal nexus between actual occasions. Meanwhile concrescence has to do with the temporal existence of any actual occasion. There are two folds of causal nexus between actual occasions: physical prehension and conceptual prehension. The physical prehension constitutes of one actual occasion prehending another actual occasion. Conceptual prehension on the other hand, involves an occasion prehending its own possibilities for objectification. Lastly, according to Whitehead, each prehension is defined according to three factors: "(a) the 'subject' which is prehending; namely, the actual entity in which that prehension is a concrete element; (b) the 'datum' which is prehended; (c) the 'subjective form' which is how that subject prehends the datum (Whitehead 1978:23). The process of becoming an actuality consists of about four phases.

Firstly, soon as an actual entity springs forth, it prehends its immediate past. In defining what he means by 'immediate' past, Whitehead says "it is that portion of our past lying between a tenth and a second and a half a second ago" (Whitehead 1967: 181);

Secondly, the movement from the era of immediate past is taken over by that of self-creation. It is necessary to say that even though the immediate past influences the period of self-creation, it does not follow that it determines it. The objective content of a prehension is what is felt, while the 'subjective form' is how it is felt (Lawhead 2002:492). It is the case that when an actual entity prehends its immediate past it produces a kind of blend, a synthesis from it. This moment of synthesis leads to the third phase of satisfaction;

The third phase clearly signifies that the actual entity has culminated into what it really is. In this connection, it has realised its own unique identity from any other actual entity that is also experiencing these phases. Since process metaphysics places premium on event, "...nothing is static in the universe, and as soon as the present moment is achieved it immediately gives itself over to its offspring. Hence there is a creative urge within everything to thrust itself into the future as a cause of further events" (Lawhead 2002:492). This thrusting thereby leads to the fourth and final phase.

The final phase reveals the moment of perishing and fading out of a particular actual occasion which had hitherto undergone the three earlier phases. "However, the past is never completely dead and gone, for it has made a difference to the universe and in this way everything that happens achieves what Whitehead calls "objective immortality". These successive phases characterise the life span of every temporal event, including the most trivial event as well as the moments within our own stream of consciousness" (Lawhead 2002:492).

With the main kernel of Process Philosophy of Alfred Whitehead articulated, the following deductions are not misplaced:

- (4) Nothing is life-less, as all things from simple cell, thoughts, volitions, rocks and stones up to God fall under the notion of 'actual occasions' and form an interconnected whole constantly and persistently prehending one another. This being together of actual occasions is called 'nexus';
- (5) Dualism is non-existence. Rather duality is underscored (more on this in the next section). This is implied in the dipolar structure of all actual occasions, including God; and
- (6) Process Metaphysics is excused from the objections cited against Substance Metaphysics by Heidegger (2002) as the neglect of the question of Being in pursuit of God. In a related development, Chidozie Okoro harps that "the Being that Heidegger speaks of is not any particular being, it is not this or that being. Unlike Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, by Being, Heidegger does not refer to God who incidentally is regarded as being of beings. Heidegger is rather talking of a most primordial ground that sustains all other grounds, including God" (Okoro 2011: 117).

With these deductions, we are now fully prepared to unearth the places of connection between *Ubuntu* and the nexus of actual occasions. The aim is to show that African perception of reality is more of Process rather than Substance.

***Ubuntu* and Process Metaphysics: A Case of Parallels**

Hitherto, we had been concerned with the main thesis of Process Metaphysics. It is the case that even when traditional Africans did not codify their metaphysics, the way reality is perceived is opposed to what holds in

Substance metaphysics which is the most dominant style of thinking in the history of Western Philosophy.

One of the first places of connection between *Ubuntu* and Process Metaphysics is the fact of connectedness and relatedness. Nothing stands in isolation, apart from each other. The living or life of the one is inextricably bound in another's and *ad infinitum* as indicated by *Ubuntu*. But the same is the case for Process Metaphysics. We can interpret this aspect of *Ubuntu* as the "Concrete Facts of Relatedness" (Whitehead 1978:22) of which Process Metaphysics indicate. This elucidation points to (1) and (4) hinted hitherto, for the parallels between *Ubuntuism* and Process Metaphysics.

The second place of conflation between *Ubuntu* and Process Metaphysics is the indivisibility or non-bifurcation of reality into matter and spirit/mind which is redolent in Substance Metaphysics, especially Rene Descartes'. This is precisely what is captured in (5) and some aspects of (2). It would be best to commence with the knowledge that "...African thought system (be it in the area of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics or logic) operates on the law of duality, not dualism" (Okoro 2011:124). Chidozie Okoro explains further that: [t]he African metaphysical system is integrative on the ground that its dualistic nature allows for a plurality of views...Traditional Africans also conceived phenomenon in a cosmological double of "spirit force" and a "material essence" (Okoro 2011: 125). Okoro's contention finds its root in Kenneth Anyanwu's assertion when he (Anyanwu) avers that:

When the African looks at a tree within the assumptions of his culture, he sees and imagines a life-force interacting with another life-force. He sees the colour of the object (tree), feels its beauty, imagines the life-force in it, intuitively grasps the interrelationships between the hierarchies of life-forces. If he did not do this, he would not have concluded that spirit exists in the world. He does not see spirit with his eyes nor is it a rationally and theoretically postulated concept like atoms and electrons (1981: 95).

Two implications may be inferred from the above. Firstly, (4) is again vindicated as an authentically African way of conceiving reality. Secondly, Africans are not faced with the inability to explain consciousness from dead

atoms that is replete in Scientific Materialism but endorsed by a Substance perspective. These parallels are not too difficult to draw. From this parallel, it becomes clearer that the African perception of reality is Process and relational.

Another case of similitude could be deciphered from the understanding of God, the ancestors and the living in an *Ubuntu* framework on the one hand and the Process perspective on the other. Recall that in African setting, the ancestors are the past. Since nothing is dead, these constitute the past actual occasions that present actual occasions (living) prehend and relate with to attain 'satisfaction' or synthesis for a future state. Hence, we can deduce the *principle of causality* between actual occasions of the past and present towards future possibilities. Although crude, it is high time African philosophers commenced the proper codification of the African way of coming to know.

Whereas *Ubuntu* captures the essence of the foregoing outlook, a proper metaphysical framework that is consistent with an African Science cannot be swept under the rug. It is in this vein that Jonathan Chimakonam, have defended the metaphysical nature of African science. According to him, "a science which does not include the metaphysical in its map of reality is surely not...African science" (Chimakonam 2012: 35). Others such as Gyekye, and Jim Unah have affirmed that the richness of metaphysics and ontological categories of causality in traditional African science is validated. So the condemnation of it is misplaced, because it is what gives distinctiveness to the methodology of its science (Afi 2016: 68). Both Gyekye and Unah are assertive and categorical about the positive dimensions of these ontological categories of causality; as they are compatible with the story of a harmonious African society. For Unah, the African society is a world where everything interpenetrates, where the physical and spiritual conflate. There exists an extraordinary harmony in African society, one of synthetic unity and compatibility among all things (Unah 1995: 107). In relation to traditional African science, Gyekye also affirmed that the method of traditional African science has significant mystico- religious undertone because traditional African culture is greatly rich in the idea of causality, which is generally understood in terms of spirits and mystical powers (Gyekye 1997: 28).

When we place the assertion of the foregoing scholars against Process Metaphysics, there is an perfect fit. Almost perfect because the consciousness that Process Metaphysics has been the metaphysical underpinning of African reality is still at its vegetative state. It is the task of present day African philosophers to try the Process *goggle* and see if it makes any sense of every aspect of African life. This is in line with Whitehead's admonition that the goal of philosophy is "...the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted" (Whitehead 1978: 3). This implies that the sole aim of philosophy is to interpret or understand our experiences. He continues that "the elucidation of immediate experience is the sole justification for any thought" (Whitehead 1978: 3).

Lastly, it should be stated again that the ideas of Process Metaphysics are not of concern to the objections raised by Heidegger (2012) against Western metaphysics. This is captured by (6). However, it is the case that Substance Metaphysics had been the common but incoherent context employed by several African scholars aiming to counter Eurocentrism and argue for the originality of African rationality. Now, if Heidegger's objection does not affect Process Metaphysics, it therefore follows that the African world-view is spared of this attack as well.

Conclusion

African Metaphysics is necessary if there can be an authentic African science. When the latter has usually been dubbed as almost non-existence, a re-thinking of the former from the arena of Substance is therefore pertinent for an authentic rendition of the African thought system. It is for this sake that the entirety of this study has been to argue for the Process groundwork latent in African Metaphysics as opposed to the mainstream and dominant Substance outlook which seems common place yet presents an unfair and distorted account of the African reality. Through the employment of *Ubuntu's* metaphysical implications, this study disinters the parallels between African Metaphysics and Process Metaphysics. It is therefore not an error that African Metaphysics dates back into prehistory and can only have a Process rendition.

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