

# **PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICAL POWER : AN ESSAY ON INFLECTIONAL THEORY**

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Like everything in each field of existence, philosophy can be either well constructed or, on the contrary, ill-constructed. This is clear to everybody. But there is more than this easy established fact, and to my opinion it must be obvious as well. Philosophy may be useful or needless, good or bad. A good philosophy is the one which is efficiently useful to the increase of people's chances of virtue, liberation and happiness; a bad philosophy is the one which either remains indifferent to the misery of the people or, worse, causes the ruin of the people. Good philosophy is useful; the bad one is needless. Each philosophy implicitly or explicitly claims to be good. Unfortunately, each is not necessarily able to afford the ambition. Since it is not easy to produce a good philosophy, it is important to have a more or less clear idea of what a good philosophical work should be.

That is the main purpose of this essay. It may seem to professionals of philosophy to be bringing about nothing new in the philosophical discipline. I unfortunately do have to insist, to say old things in some new words, because many of us too often forget our actual philosophical duty as well as the genuine way to fulfill it efficiently. If we are too old to be able to change our academic thinking schemes, it should in any case tell something to young people whom I wish to be really a new philosophical generation.

Focusing on African context, I would try to summarize the basic principles of a sound intellectual work, capable of producing a good philosophy. But first and foremost it is necessary to insist once again on the mission of philosophy, especially within the particular context of Africa today.

## **I - THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN AFRICA**

Since about two decades contemporary African philosophy has been experiencing an important thoughtful turn. It henceforth has become possible to single out certain distinction between "dead philosophies", that is, blindly retrospective and stagnant, from those we might say are alive, prospective and

inspiring of new meanings, structures and procedures; between useful and needless philosophies.

This epistemological rupture lies in the transition from the ideological hermeneutics centered on ancestral philosophies towards intellectual enterprise of detecting and devising appropriate conditions of possibility for true philosophy in Africa. However I maintain that the rupture resides furthermore in progressive extinction of the debate about the “philosophicity” of philosophy, and its possible transformation into a fundamental search of conditions of possibility of an “efficient” philosophy. A philosophy is seen to be efficient when it is capable of inducing positive change, that is, best practical outcomes for people.

Thus it appears that African practice of philosophy let show an increasing and steady will for a specific type of thinking I might call “inflectional”. By *inflectional philosophy* I do intend to designate any philosophy that creates itself in such a way that it be able to impact, to deflect positively, to sway and lead the governance of political and social life toward more rational and ethical practices and choices for the most beneficial effects for each member of a given social community. In this essay “inflectional” defines whatever is likely to modify favorably a behavior or a practice, mostly political governance.

I firmly believe that only through such a way of philosophical production that a philosopher can actually and efficiently come to terms with his civic and political duty in the community to which he belongs. In fact it is supposed that as a highly educated citizen, a philosopher is always and already a political actor on the intellectual stage.

The issue I would like to explore is how inflectional philosophy is actually possible. In other words what effectively should be done so that every power-holder, especially political power, be somehow compelled to bring about rationality and morality, intelligence and social justice into the governance. It is assumed that rationality and morality are fundamental requirements to any inflectional philosophy. The most important and urgent task for philosophy in Africa today is to seek and imagine the ways through which we, as citizens and philosophers, might be able to compel intellectually political power to admit and incorporate wise philosophical insights in its governmental behavior, actions and decisions. Philosophy has to be an intelligent and wise thought at a very high level. It is and must be a thoughtful rational discourse.

Trying to explore the possibility of such a philosophy obviously implies the task of working out a *theory* of inflectional philosophy. Inflectional theory has to seek and create strategies and conditions of possibility of a philosophy endowed with a higher capability of power, that is, a philosophy able to have a great positive impact upon a social and political governance. In concordance with the specific, appropriate urgent mission it has to fulfill, philosophy is led to generate conditions of the possibility of an

efficient political philosophy; a philosophy which should present itself in such a way that it be more efficient than that we have been producing so far.

Inflectional theory is the philosophy's theory of maximal power, the theory of maximization of philosophical power or impact upon the way political management is conducted, in order to convert the latter toward better ways and to work out the maximum of welfare and "joy of living" for each citizen.

Academic practice of philosophy in Africa is still widely non satisfactory. In many respects it is jabbering, rhetorical and verbose. Also, on the traces of an European kind of philosophizing that is highly abstract, it is largely metaphysical, reasoning on the depth of the void.

Yet full of resentment and fierce irony, this assessment is apparently unfair and exaggerated. Nevertheless it is quite certain that African philosophical practice remains to a great extent an unimaginative renewal of the old concepts of the Western philosophy. In addition, philosophy in Africa seems to be systematically dodging politics. No important systematic reflection exists on, for instance, democracy or political governance; and too much attention has been paid to philosophy of culture as hermeneutics of the concepts of proverbs, language, tales and symbols of African traditions.

I am convinced that it is possible to philosophize otherwise, namely to make philosophical practice become a practical instrument that aimed at contributing efficiently to the installment of love, peace and joy of living for each citizen in a united, prosperous and happy community. It seems that great philosophers who introduced new philosophical turns in Western history (such as Socrates, Descartes, Kant, Marx, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, Habermas or Rawls) are those who felt non satisfactory previous ways of thinking. They therefore did their best to get to another style of philosophizing. Likewise we do have to explore other and new, theoretical and practical ways of thinking. We don't have to prevent ourselves from making possible new directions and relevant paths for philosophy in Africa as well as in whole world.

The requirement of "philosophizing otherwise" leads to the search of appropriate tools and means which may enable the philosopher to accomplish adequately the service he is bound to do for his society. In this point of view any philosophy that aims at playing a significant role in a society necessarily presents itself as a thought which has to contribute in indicating the right way, and to help it make notable progress. Obviously since Socrates, our initial Western common ancestor, philosophy appears as a theoretical effort intended to the understanding of what a society is, especially which foundational values and norms it has to adopt and incorporate in order for it to build itself, to develop and totally fulfill in the sense of transforming itself and of maximizing its potential and capabilities.

The speculative metaphysical aspect is very manifest in Western philosophy since Plato, the intellectual Socrates' disciple. It constituted a major part in the history of that philosophy. And this has led people think it was the only aspect of philosophy, or even, the unique substance of any true philosophy. So one usually forgets that Plato himself understood metaphysics as a set of ideas and values articulated to physical realities, an articulation according to which every good society is supposed to work. Lying above physical and social reality, those ideas are namely those of the *well* and the *beauty*. This implied that every thing in human society and behavior should be idealistically good and beautiful. We also know that all great philosophies necessarily came into a political thought or, at least, into an ethics related to the search of the required ways for better relationship between individuals within the society.

Following Plato's thought, philosophy must be perceived as a theoretical search, identification and appropriation of the best and the most adequate and beautiful ideas, that is, the ideas capable of yielding a good society: a fair, well organized, united, happy and powerful society. Likewise a real African philosophy has to accept the obligation of being a theoretic instance bound to help efficiently in building a good, happy and very well organized society.

Only through this way that philosophy is entitled to exist inside the community, as a social useful activity. Outside this status of social relevancy any philosophy inevitably faces enormous difficulties to be taken seriously into consideration by the government of a society whose objectives in principle reflect people's sufferings and aspirations. Every time it drives outside this way, philosophy rightly undergoes people's criticisms or, at least, is suspected of being an idle life, an unfruitful intellectual speculation; a needless luxury to an economically and socially deep ruined nation or continent. Philosophy is and must be a sound response to the suffering person, the wild society and the distressed humankind.

Philosophy that is being produced in Africa can only avoid the accusation of being needless for social life if it takes as its essential mission to efficiently contribute to the relieving of human misery, namely rehabilitation and promotion of African economy, politics and culture. There is a strong moral obligation for African philosophy, as for each philosophy or any other scientific discipline, to contribute as much as possible to collective efforts of liberating and relieving human being from suffering; a sacred obligation of creating the joy of living for all and for each citizen. This duty could only be fulfilled under four conditions.

First, for a human suffering society philosophy is needless unless it is conceived and worked out as a *dialectics of theory and practice*. Indeed as Kwame Nkrumah set it, practice without theory is blind and theory without practice is empty.

Second, a human suffering society inevitably considers philosophy as insignificant and unworthy unless the latter firmly avoids the temptation of moving about as if actual present society with its pressing needs, expectations and specific struggles for life didn't exist at all.

Third, philosophy can be taken into account and deemed relevant by political decision-makers, as well as by common people, only if it dispels the temptation of being a constellation of exotic ideas or esoteric hazy speculations situated far from actual life of human beings daily engaged in fighting for life and survival. Philosophy is quite unworthy and does not deserve any people's consideration unless it actively seeks to emerge from people's soil and pays serious attention to appeals, laments and tears of in the flesh human beings suffering from hunger, misery, discriminations, injustices, despairs, domination, and selfish political rages.

Fourth, philosophy is efficient according to its core calling only if philosophizing is to be conceived as an *emancipatory* reflection, an intellectual activity whose therapeutic purpose is the liberation of human being through maximization of knowledge, justice, life and joy of living for everyone.

In short, in order to actually and efficiently be useful to Africa's present situation - a continent which has been suffering from underdevelopment, domination and misery - philosophy is doomed to work for the maximization of its theoretic resources as well as its opportunities of power, that is, of practical impact on all fundamental orientations and guidelines of the society. To put it in different terms, in order to be useful and efficient as an inflecting force for people, African philosophy has to be both theoretically rigorous and socially practical, therapeutic and political. It has to be a political dialectics.

Africa needs political philosophy prior to any other kind of philosophy. It must be so as long as its major battle today is that to wage against crude poverty, ignorance, political violence and injustices. Political philosophy is a need as long as each citizen must contribute, to its maximum of efficiency and devotion, to collective battle against domination and discriminations generated inside as well as outside one's community by political ferocity. It is philosophically speaking a priority as long as happy (or miserable) destiny of African people to a great extent depends on the wills (good or bad) of political decision-makers. And I do feel that political philosophy is needed in non-democratic societies more than where democracy elegantly works. If philosophy is needed everywhere problems and misery exist, the kind of philosophy needed obviously is proportional to the color and intensity of misery and pains.

That goes without saying that I do not totally expel or suppress any other thinking from our philosophy longing and practice. It is rather a matter of good sense. It is indispensable to define appropriate priorities in accordance with what one's society basically needs to develop.

And everyone knows that above all Africa needs to step back ignorance, poverty, injustice, embezzlements, human rights violations, political and economic serious crimes. The kind of philosophy Africa needs today is anyway and at least a practical one in the Aristotle's sense, that is, a philosophical reflection focused on the chances and possibility of sound economics, politics and ethics within human community. It is to say that African philosophy has firmly to develop as an "engaged philosophy", a philosophy deeply committed to helping Africa to arm itself with everything necessary to get out victorious from the struggle for life and survival. It is its moral responsibility to have the sound intellectual as well as practical stature capable of inflectional power, of great influence on the run of political life, a stature that can impact on the political decision-makers in their overwhelming efforts of commanding, managing and bringing about ever more quantity of joy of living to each citizen.

African philosophy has first and foremost to put out to political power since the latter holds a very large power upon the destiny of the people and the whole society. This means that philosopher must really be aware of his civic and political responsibility as an enlightening instance for the people and their destiny. Any philosopher who insulates from the society under the pretext of so-called "scientific purity" or objectivity and confines himself in a metaphysical *tour d'ivoire* without any will to go out towards actual living life is totally mistaken about the nature and function of philosophy.

A true philosopher historically appears much less as a neutral speculator centered on ontological meditations than as an "ideologist-erudite", an engaged critical thinker, an intellectual quite aware of his political responsibility in the city. He is, with the plain meaning of the words, an ethical political philosopher. His philosophical calling is to introduce intelligence and morality into political reason. The least we may say in paraphrasing the great singer Harry Belafonte speaking about art is this: the role of philosophy is not just to analyze life and things as they are, but to let people muse and see life and things as they should be for eternity and joy of human existence.

It is under that way of thinking that political decision-makers would pay attention to philosophy, and would therefore decide and rule on the basis of strong theoretic and ethical foundations. Such a philosophical option is imperious, necessary and urgent as long as despite decades of political independence Africa is still groping its way along, making serious decisions but blindly, emotionally, selfishly and untidily.

## II - BASIC INFLECTIONAL PRINCIPLES

In accordance with this political vision philosophy, *inflectional theory* should be constructed on the basis of some interconnected principles. I do extract and abstract the principal among them. My aim is to develop a theory based on the African multiple yearnings and hidden convictions about philosophy as a theoretical servant to development in Africa.

### **1. Philosophical authenticity**

The first principle of the inflectional theory is that I might call the *philosophical authenticity principle*. It stipulates that inflectional power, or “inflectionality” of philosophy varies according to the philosophical adequacy of any claim to philosophize. This basically means that philosophy may have some impact on social life only within the framework of appropriate philosophical approaches focused on social realities, and inside the meaning one gives to one’s philosophical working. The principle constrains the thinker to the requirement of an appropriate thought’s depth on every subject he chooses to explore and scrutinize. Therefore he is bound to know the exact nature, subjects and aim of his act of philosophizing in order to be able to penetrate and discover all kinds of actual chances for an adequate and efficient philosophical practice. To be inflectional, philosophy has to begin by being theoretically well constructed in relation to its methods, its objects and its aims at the same time. Philosophy has to be built “scientifically”, that is, in such a way that it could historically and thoughtfully be identified and classified as true philosophy.

### **2. The principle of practical reason**

Philosophy must present itself as a *practical reason*. This is the second principle of inflectional theory. It prescribes the duty for philosophy to produce itself as both a theory and a practice, with yet a clear awareness of the preeminence of practical reality and finality. An inflectional philosophy is fundamentally a *theoretical practical dialectics*.

The concept of practical reason is to be seen in the sense of what appears through material senses and thus implies a real preoccupation in concrete terms. It of course should be as well perceived in the Kantian sense of a practical orientation of liberty and life, namely ethical life. Inflectional theory fully confers to philosophy its original meaning as a *word of wisdom*, that is, as a love intellectually expressed as a *logos*, a logical yearning, or a “talking yearning” which is rational and reasonable.

As a rational yearning, philosophy necessarily includes a metaphysical aspect that manifests it as a theory; as a reasonable yearning, every true philosophy absolutely bears in it a practical aspect that let it show as a wisdom.

Indeed Plato's philosophy clearly shows itself both as a theory and a practice, metaphysics and wisdom. It has both a rising way and a "downtown" way, leading down to the city. We also know that Aristotle reveals two major articulations in philosophy. According to him there are theoretic philosophy (metaphysics, mathematics, poetics) and practical philosophy, which is the field of application of the theoretical yearning for wisdom, namely *economics, politics, and ethics*. More than ever before contemporary German thought seems actively committed to retrieving and redeeming the latter aspect of Aristotle's philosophy in what they call, since the 1970's, the "Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie". Likewise, American political philosophy that originates from John Rawls brings about more consideration and respect to practical philosophy, in fact following "American pragmatism" as set up by William James.

Each philosophy that claims to be inflectional should comprise a practical identity in creating itself preferably from and about pressing human needs, yearnings and conflicts that economics, politics and ethics yield among individuals and societies. This basically is the statement of the principle of practical reason. And through an intellectual effort intended to suppress commas and conjunctions, we may say that inflectional philosophy should lead to the emergence of a new global thinking in the sense of a theory of *ethical political economics*. Thus, practical reason as inflectional principle may be as well identified as the principle of the requirement and urgency of a philosophical thought focused on the conditions of possibility of an ethical practice for political economy within the present situation in my society and in the world.

Inflectionality, or inflectional power of philosophy on social and political life, is fundamentally bound to its practical interest and orientations. An exclusively theoretic philosophy - Aristotle's ontology, or African "ontology" for instance - obviously has less chances of being inflectional than a philosophy that actively and seriously muses about social real life. While the first type of philosophy should be described as a science of generalities and "meta-materiel" definitions, the latter is a science of intellectual wills intended to the guidance of real human life of individuals and whole community.

### **3 - Emancipatory usefulness**

The third principle of inflectional theory follows from the practical option. It stipulates: in order to be entitled to deserve consideration in social life philosophy has to be conceived and produced with the firm purpose of serving as an emancipation



instrument for people. It should convert and go from the old status of a servant to theology; servant to gods or any other metaphysical Absolute, through the status of a servant of the people and society. That service must be carried out as efficiently as possible.

Inflectional philosophy is in this perspective an *emancipatory instance* for the society. In other terms a true philosophy is an intellectual contribution to the “effort for existing” for all people. This makes clearer the fact that philosophy’s inflectionality depends on the quality of the tools and strategies it does use with regard to collective efforts intended to maximize the joy of existing for everybody. This means philosophy has to present itself in such a way that it could be clearly recognized as an efficient battle strategy aimed at bringing about opportunities of maximization of the *désir d’être* (the yearning to be) and the circumstances of happiness for each citizen.

#### **4 - The principle of sociality**

African traditional philosophy is grounded on the idea that human being is never a single individual, totally isolated from other peoples. Every human being is always and already member of the society, part of the community. Every individual is at the same time a person who is distant from others and also an embedded liberty inside the community. The human being is a free person embedded in a society that shows a strong and indestructible solidarity. From birth to his death, he experiences “sociality” as a being who is never alone but always intimately surrounded by a multitude of other persons in such a way that the individual could be seen as always and already a “we”, a community of individuals. Inflectional philosophy therefore develops a self-awareness as an emerging product for social destination.

The principle of sociality seeks to push aside the metaphysical paradigms of being and conscience, and embraces Habermasian post-metaphysical paradigm of *communication*. This means that inflectional philosophy makes a bid to speak not to a private consciousness but basically to a social individual, to the society and, mostly, to the individual as a political actor, that is, to that individual whose actions, behavior and decisions are potentially of a big impact on large number of citizens and persons inside and outside the community.

#### **5. Selectional principle**

The fifth principle might be called *selectional principle*. It states the importance of a rationally enlightened choice among all relevant subjects for any philosophical enterprise. Inflectional philosophy selects discourse’s subjects that are, so to speak,

predisposed; subjects that are capable, given their inner nature, of helping find out appropriate answers to issues a social community has been facing.

In that way inflectional theory poses that everything is not worthy of philosophy. Because it is too large, imprecise and entirely abstract, what is used to be called "totalité du réel" - whole reality - to signify and designate philosophy's subject in many of Western handbooks is simply a non-operational fiction. Unlike that, inflectional theory claims preliminary selection as an indispensable step toward a good and relevant philosophy. Indeed philosophical inflectionality is tightly related to the quality of choice which is made among a multitude of possible subjects of discourse.

That goes without saying that every thinker does necessarily make a choice that appears relevant to him. However fundamental issue is here the *adequacy and relevancy of the choice*. As many works let it show over African philosophy, it is not quite easy to thoughtfully know what or where appropriate attention has to be focused in. Thus, inflectional philosophy presupposes a *theory of choice* concerned with relevant subjects for philosophy. Such theory implies a perspicacious sociological reading of the realities as well as an adequate problematization of social facts and historical events. Lucidity is appropriately upheld by an accurate intuition or an intellectual sensibility with regard to diverse appeals from possible tremendous philosophy's subjects. Inflectional theory ordains, scrutinizes and selects the only subjects which are foreseen as fertile, and the most relevant relatively to philosophy's emancipatory intention.

To avoid sterile misunderstandings and discussions I have to open a parenthesis to insist. I do understand that, as intellectual liberty and critical instance par excellence, philosophy would ruin itself if it forbade intellectuals from philosophical reflection on all things in human universe. Philosopher should be free, it is said, to work on any thing such as life, death, liberty or even on the essence of tree, stone, frog or dust. But I am afraid that one can get as a final outcome uniquely a "dust's philosophy", maybe elegantly written and constructed but inevitably dusty, just good for tree's and river's frogs. Seriously speaking, I do think that there is no historical examples in world philosophical thought on such subjects. On the contrary it is clear that philosophy, I mean good philosophy, has got its preferential objects, perhaps not more than a dozen, like freedom, justice, equality, destiny, existence. Even metaphysics that intends to *comprehend* the "totalité du réel" (one should notice the meaning's shift in the underlined word) usually focuses on cosmology or the genesis of whole being, putting aside individual essence of beings (tree, stone, table, etc) as philosophically non relevant.

With the assertion that "one should philosophize on everything" or "nothing is unworthy of philosophy" there is a hint of sophism, similar to that in "all streets lead to

Rome". It is obvious that the shortest and the less dangerous street must be preferred to any other one, given that it either prevents any waste of time or is safer. Likewise, any philosophy's subject that is able to work out and serve more rapidly and efficiently people's emancipation purpose is preferable to any one else.

This is the core meaning of the selectional principle: it is good and socially allowed to philosophize on the "dust" or on "spiders", on "sexuality at the heaven" or on the "ntu as a ntu" provided that the relevancy of these objects had been previously and convincingly established with regard to present struggles for life and survival within a pitiless selfish world. Philosophy does have to select carefully its targets and subjects in conformity to emancipation aim of a socially relevant and useful thought.

## 6. *Intimate proximity*

Selectional principle is justified on the grounds of efficiency and relevancy linked to the ultimate and well understood philosophical purpose - to liberate the people by yielding good life and joy of living to each of all members in one's social community. It also implies the compulsory aspect of absolutely taking into account social demands from present society. This methodological requirement is what I may characterize as the *intimate proximity principle*.

Inflectional philosophy is that thought that is as much as possible and constantly open, close and attentive to what should make sense the most efficiently human existence, for individual life as well as for the global society. It centers on real problems a social community faces. Is more inflectional a philosophy that is closer to vital people's preoccupations. Poverty and injustice or, to speak positively, the need for prosperity, peace, justice and joy of living, are the major problems that demand to be addressed and resolved. Every time philosophy goes away from these ultra-existential issues, it loses its chances of practical force on social destiny. The more it goes away, the more it becomes poor, socially and politically impotent. Any intellectual distance from real society makes philosophy poorer; any proximity makes it richer. Real life is not a philosophy's enemy. On the contrary true philosophy can but have birth and sense from it.

A clear distinction between selectional principle and proximity principle resides not much in the conceptual room, but rather in an affective physical distance between the subjects and the concerned society. As concepts, justice or liberty can be analytically studied and scrutinized in a global way, neutrally, by setting general principles and rules for all humankind, as theoretic ethics does. Proximity consciousness makes it necessary to speak for a particular part of humankind, for a

people of a given context and time facing justice or freedom problems with a particular level of intensity and seriousness.

### 7. *The principle of topicality*

The seventh one is the *principle of topicality* or *presence*. It states that inflectional capability varies according to the degrees of presence and urgency of problems that philosophy has to understand and to address. Philosophy increases its impact's capability, that is, it becomes more inflectional, every time it preferably focuses on the present and future, leaving aside as unfruitful unconditional rumination of our ancestors' deeds; African as well as Western ancestors, those alive-dead persons in our university libraries.

Listening to the "living dead", ancestors at cemeteries, and reading "sleeping books" on library shells must come *a posteriori*, as a foreseen opportunity of appropriate contribution to the solution of problems the society has to address presently. This supposes, as we have said earlier, a high capacity of analysis, intuition and correct comprehension of social realities. One should refer to Socrates, Kant or any other Western or African ancestor only if his thought is felt to be actually and efficiently helpful for present problems faced by the present society. Ancestors are and must be not necessary, but just subsidiary references.

Presence or topicality should be not exclusively restricted to one determined zone of existence - politics for example. It is concerned with political, economical, technological or cultural life of whole society. The importance of topicality is namely defined by the principle of intimate and social proximity. The concept of *actualité* or topicality overpasses the media's signification of the term. It means what is related to the presence of the society and mostly to what may threaten that presence in terms of the chances a society may have to get fairness, justice, peace, unity and joy of living.

### 8. *The principle of publicity*

Inflectionality depends on its philosophy's accessibility to a great number of people. Philosophy is inflectional when it is susceptible to reach, move and let people speak, think and, as much as possible, behave according to the values and principles it reveals. Philosophy must be read, spread, explained and discussed at each stratum of literate populations. This principle implies an absolute respect of tactical norms: clarity, large diffusion, "newspaperization", etc. Brief, it demands

democratization of philosophy A sound instrument for democratization for philosophy is the possibility to turn philosophical conferences into media events.

It is clear that this principle is governed by economic power availability. Cultural or ideological power of philosophy largely depends on economic power that is available. Economic underdevelopment can to a great extent handicap both philosophy productivity and large spread of philosophical ideas, be they excellent. Education is so far the usual structure of expansion for philosophical ideas. But philosophy teaching in Africa - and other countries over the world - has to be seriously rethought and remade in its curriculum in conformity with inflectional purpose.

#### *9. Educational relevancy*

The ninth principle stipulates that inflectionality depends on conformity of philosophical teaching and research to major issues people are the most concerned with. The curriculum of an inflectional philosophy is above all based on subjects and themes of courses that are, so to say, essential and central; that may help generate the most inflectional effects on students and as well as on other categories of the people. An inflectional philosophical curriculum has to be rigorous, relieved of too numerous and overall courses which have no directly confirmed link with the ultimate aim of philosophy. A philosophical curriculum aimed at maximal power should be centered essentially on teachings in sociology, politics, political economy, law, and one or another among the natural sciences (biology, physics) as "support disciplines". African curriculums in philosophy are too large, vague and overwhelming to be efficient for students, rulers and the society.

#### *10. The ideological core*

The tenth inflectional theory's principle states that any inflectional philosophy has to meet the requirement of bearing an ideological core. The latter is the set of values and ideas aimed by a good philosophy, and around which it builds itself. They are values and ideals whose aim is to give sense and a happy human destiny to whole society.

Ideological core of a good philosophy is necessarily and fundamentally ethical. Ideology is the ideal that livens up a philosophy. It is the "living spit" without which philosophy dies. Just as pure science cannot operate without technology, philosophy is a dead thing without ideology. *Ideology is the technology of philosophy.* Without it

philosophy is unable to operate on social or spiritual reality, to change minds, to stimulate and induce a deep changing action.

Philosophy cannot efficiently work on social life if it fails to bear a relevant living pit susceptible of mobilizing people's energies, efforts, and wills. Ideals like African unity, dignity, authenticity, democracy are samples of ideological pits for a relevant African philosophy. With this principle philosophy presents itself as a fight's strategy intended to maintain and uphold the values and ideals people do really need to exist, to prosper and to get a happy life.

### *11. Political requirement*

With regard to inflectionality philosophy is a political action. The principle of *political demand* implies the pressing need for political consciousness in philosophical practice. Genuine philosophy absolutely has a political calling as an effort for transforming and leading individual and collective consciences to better social and ethical ways and living conditions. Philosophy contains great opportunities of inflectionality when it mostly focuses on political power and justice.

This theoretic requirement means the pressing need for a marriage or, at least, a strong trustful constant dialogue, and a reciprocal acceptance between philosophy and politics, scientist and politician. The maximal moment of reciprocal acceptance probably occurs every time philosopher (ideologist-scientist) and politician (political leader) definitely agree about basic values, ideas and ideals to be set up in the national Constitution and in all other important laws according to which the society must be ruled.

As already seen, inflectional philosophy is synonymous of an engaged philosophy; a reflection endowed with the responsibility of inspiring and lighting up political behavior, practices and decisions. Inflectional philosophy is more than an indicative, descriptive analytical exercise. It is a prospective and normative living thought intended to bring about a better social life for all. Philosophy is likely to be heard and to be taken into account by politicians, parliamentarians and executives, every time it is theoretically close to politics and people's concerns. Thus it can be predicted that applied philosophy and ethics have a flourishing future. Philosophy maximizes its power on social life and people's destiny when it makes itself interesting for laws and decision-makers.

## 12. *The Principle of fundamentality*

The twelfth and last principle of the inflectional theory is the *principle of fundamentality*. It stipulates three things related each other.

First, inflectional philosophy is the one that, thanks to its intrinsic force and charms, is able to inspire basic institutions of the society. In all, it moves as a dialectical hermeneutics. It asks questions and builds theories; it springs from the society and organizes an intellectual space with a political purpose. It begins from an intellectual anguish and ends with sharp political awareness about what philosophy is and should be. Major questions are: Is there any problem for me or for my fellow beings in my present society ? Does that problem really threaten the reign of freedom, justice, unity, peace, good existence or any other value we rationally and thoughtfully consider as fundamental ? How do I have to efficiently address the problem so that it be satisfactorily resolved and the danger moved away ? This means a strong commitment to have a sociological-historical look on one's present society, to spot the big and deep roots that sustain and nurture fundamental problems the society faces, and to construct appropriate theory likely to contribute powerfully to uproot and eradicate people's misery, distress, and despair.

Second, it states that a philosophy that claims to be inflectional is preferable to another one if it reveals itself to be more efficient, that is, if its effects are more desirable and, therefore, are seen to be more reasonable and rational for all citizens. Radicalness regarding morality and rationality in philosophy is a precondition for inflectionality. This requires to acknowledge perfectibility in systems of thought and social organizations as an always open opportunity for digging the foundations. What is fundamental and foundational in human social life is the *excellence of life, relationship and whole society as a social community*. Philosophy has the responsibility of providing *fundamental reasons* for politics to take into consideration the voice of philosophy that stands up for rationality and morality in political and social life.

Third, inflectional philosophy is a fundamental practical philosophy in this sense that it necessarily aims at philosophical authenticity. Therefore the opinion that practical philosophy automatically stands aside any fundamental research is incorrect and must be invalidated. When it is genuine, philosophy inevitably is theoretic and, somehow, comes under fundamental thought. Whenever it is well done, practical philosophy is always and already both applied and theoretic philosophy. This strictly interwoven double aspects provides practical philosophy with a great terrific charm.

A reflection that focuses on subjects we may consider as practical - such as justice, democracy, politics, communication - can at the same time come under applied and theoretic philosophy. It is then a fundamental research.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude one must consider that principles described above are neither exhaustive nor non-revisable. They are to be completed by all other aspects developed in different parts of whole work. However they constitute a sufficient framework to let clearly understand what inflectional theory means, as an intellectual effort to summarize and show my personal vision of a sound philosophical work within the context of our actual human condition *as yearning beings for being and well being*.

As a general theory for all thinkers of all societies, this theory of production of philosophical discourse can be *mutatis mutandi* applied to any other human and social context. It brings about materials for discussion and institution of a philosophy endowed with maximal power, a philosophy whose positive impact on social life should be significant at a maximal level.

It is an attempt to indicate leads for maximization of political and social power. Thus the theory seeks to point out the political responsibility a good philosopher has to bear and keep in mind in relation with the living life, the distressed human being in a suffering society which is always awfully torn and hurt by hosts of economic injustices, social discriminations, and political stupidities.

I am persuaded that serious consideration for inflectional principles may help our philosophical practice to stay closer to social community, to be more responsible and more efficient in its intellectual-political task of forging arguments for unity, order, truth, sincerity, justice and accuracy in practical living of both liberty and power.

I have to insist on the fact that in proposing ethical political philosophy as an inflectional one, this theory does not forbid the exercise of any other forms of philosophy. We are all free to choose. We nevertheless are not allowed to choose the evil or what has no usefulness at all. Not any choice is necessarily good. That is why inflectional theory sets up the demand of a sound hierarchy about issues and problems according to their seriousness and urgency for life. Any thing that threatens human life, freedom or happiness must be considered as serious and urgent.

Inflectional theory tells that, given deep political irrationality and tremendous injustices that generate atrocious misery, rationally and morally unbearable, professionals in Africa - in each society of the world - have to work out and produce



first and foremost political philosophy. It is the most capable to impact on political reason which is the major instance in charge of our destiny, happy or unhappy, private or collective. Like every citizen, philosopher is compelled to yield to political power a large part of responsibility regarding the management of his destiny. However, he is not free to let political power manage the whole destiny of humankind, of a large part of humankind, or even of one single person.

This theoretic essay comes out from the conviction that philosophy does not have to restrict itself to interpreting ancient cultures or from time to time to denouncing present domination and discriminations. The task of philosophy is first of all *to build political theories able to induce democracy, good governance and joy of existing for all people*. It is indispensable to denounce every form of domination. Specialists of other disciplines may do so, and have to do it too. It is waited of a philosopher to build sound positive theories intended to make dry up, in our nations and from their source, all effluvioms of hatred, racism, injustice and wills for domination. Inflectional philosophy is an ethical political theory.