

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of study

Time is one of the age-long and central philosophical concepts that is analysed, critiqued and debated by philosophers of all ages. As an indication to the centrality of time, Martin Heidegger writes; “all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time correctly viewed and correctly explained.”<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson likewise collaborates the above and opined that “philosophical questions are difficult because we do not think about real time.”<sup>2</sup> This means that our day to day problems and difficulties will be reduced minimally if philosophers and the likes would conform to time. Time has a powerful and supreme influence in history through the efforts of men because through time their destinies are decided. According to Asukwo:

All the resources committed to the mission of success, the mysterious hand of time is the shoulder to soothe the disheartened in moments of sorrow, the mysterious hand of time alone can lay on the heart to comfort the sorrowful of all medical aids and drugs administered to victims of injury, time is the master healer that treats the scar of every injury. When the oppressed cry out of justice, it is the judge of time that ultimately brings every offender to book. And when our consciousness has borne testimony of all these facts we cannot help but agree that the phenomenon of time is indeed supreme.<sup>3</sup>

In African ontology, the concept of time also has its overbearing influences. The relevancy of time permeates into all African worldview ranging from their culture, spiritual and economic life. This importance of time led Mbiti that “in African worldview, time is the key to understanding the African ontology, their belief, practices, attitude and general way of life.”<sup>4</sup>

This is not surprising while African book their appointments with the high noon, cockcrow, and sundown. The high moon is a seasonal reminder of imminent planting season and a call to make ready their reasources. The cockcrow awakes them daily from sleep and stimulates them to prepare for the day's challenge. Also the sundown reminds them that the day's activity is gradually coming to a close. Often things were scheduled with human activities like begining or end of market session, the morning, the midday, or evening harvesting of palm wine. Though this type of scheduling lacked the mathematical precision of the mechanical clock, but everyone understood what was meant and complied.<sup>5</sup>

The nineteenth century western cololonial domination was foisted on hapless Africans through series of cultural conquest and invasions. The intensity of these invasions was so traumatic and psychological that Africans mindlessly surrendered their values which they once cherished and held so dear. So with the arrival of the mechanical clock, it became so difficult for Africans to adjust to this time category. Their inability to combine these seeming novel lifestyles made some visitors to feel frustrated and lay- back when they come to African. They do not know how things work in Africa and how they conceive time. Mbiti made this observation thus:

When foreigners, especially from Europe and America see people sitting down somewhere without, evidently doing anything, they often remark, "...These Africans waste their time by just sitting down idle! "another common cry is, oh, Africans are always late! "It is easy to jump to such judgments based on ignorance of what time means to African people. Those who are seen sitting down, are actually not wasting time, but either waiting for time or in the process of producing time.<sup>6</sup>

Ogunbowale decried this sentiment while writing about the attitude of Nigerians to time thus:

An event billed for 10am will happen by 1.pm if the organizers are regular Nigerians, if they are semi-serious Nigerians maybe 12noon, but if they are 'very patriotic' Nigerians with a modicum of the sense of time, the event will kick off by 11am. Rarely does

an event kick off by the time advertised/made public by the organizers. There are cases when an event billed for 10am starts by 3 or 4 pm.<sup>7</sup>

But it is not a hard thing to jump at this conclusions based on ignorance of what time means for an African. This ignorance may be traced on the difficulty of seeing African culture ‘as it is’ when one is a foreigner to African culture. According to Wittgenstein “the whole cloud of philosophy is condensed into a drop of grammar,that is “to see things as it is.”<sup>8</sup>

This divergent ways that people express their culture has led to what this dissertation terms an intercultural crisis of conceptions. Geertz's advice is instrumental here:

The truth of the doctrine of cultural relativism is that we can never apprehend another people's imagination neatly, as though it were our own. The falsity of it is that we can therefore never genuinely apprehend it at all. We can apprehend it well enough, at least as well as we apprehend anything else not properly ours; but we do so not by looking behind the interfering glosses which connect us to it but through them.<sup>9</sup>

Europeans make unfounded allegations because they did not understand African cultures and worldviews and appreciate Africa's mode of time expressions. Also they did not give regard on how Africa's time concepts and categories are used and how it can be translated and applied in their own human language situation. They did not even harken to Winch formula of being able “to see” and “make room for” the other's categories and concept that give expressions to their life.

Since it is we who want to understand the *African category of time*, it appears that the onus is on us to extend our understanding so as to make room for the *African category*, rather than to insist on seeing it in terms of our own ready-made distinction between science and non-science. (Emphasis mine)<sup>10</sup>

It is from the backdrop of uncritical conception of time that this dissertation sets out to provide an analytic study of time.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

In pre-colonial times, Africans conceive time in a punctual sense but with the advent of the missionaries, the people shifted their idea of calculating time in the modern way. In a way, some have seen this era as one of the evils in the principle of assimilation which was introduced by the colonialists, especially the French. This principle of assimilation encouraged the submersion of the people's cultural values, ideas and philosophies into the cultural beliefs and ways of life of the Europeans. In Okere's submission:

Our people were regarded as cultureless, as history-less and, if they were accepted as fully human, still toddling at the lowest rungs of the evolutionary ladder. Among the experts on the African way of life, that is to say, among anthropologists, our society earned such epithets as backward, barbaric, pre-logical, primitive, and savage and a whole battery of other derogatory qualifications. Where the European civilization was played up as the apex of human achievement, our religion was dubbed as superstition, our medicine as charlatanism, magic and quackery; our language were qualified as incoherent dialects, our music was termed rudimentary, our arts primitive, our crafts, non-existent.<sup>12</sup>

The disparity in culture and more especially in regards to time conception made it difficult for easy comprehension of the missionaries to understand the African conception and measurement of time. They hurriedly concluded that the African's have no idea of time. Achebe clearly demonstrated this view in *Arrow of God* in the discussion between Captain Winterbottom and Tony Clerk, when Winterbottom remarked about the African especially the Igbo, that "they have no idea of time."<sup>14</sup>

These outrageous armchair assumptions by missionaries and anthropologist was worsened by African scholars who concluded that time in Africa is *diadic*; with a long past, present and almost no future and that the only future that exist is what is called a quasi events. This shows that planning for the distant future is foreign to African and they have no belief in progress and does not build castles in the air.

It is in the midst of these *ibuaru* (heavy burden) borrowing Asouzu's term, that this dissertation asks:

Is time real or unreal to Africans? If real, how do Africans measure time? How do Africans transmit time? How does time flow in African culture? Is there any sense of future time in Africa or are they substantialists? Is time cyclic or linear in Africa? Are Africans fatalists? How conscious are Africans to time?

These questions will guide this work in this philosophical voyage to analyse time in Africa by looking at different cultures in Sub-saharan Africa to determine how these research questions applies to them. These questions will serve as a rudder and guide in this research work.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

Hegel and Horton had earlier committed an intellectual treason that only the western worldviews were "rational and scientific" representing a logical unity of thinking subject which unfortunately the primitive lack these rational power. Levy-Bruhl compounded this woe by believing that primitive languages were lacking in method of reckoning time and the primitive had no concept of future time and so cannot abstract from occurrences to order.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately the above conclusion was equally supported by some African scholars who helped to give this allegation the last nail in the coffin. Therefore the purpose of this study is therefore to do an analytical study of time in African philosophy.

#### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study is limited in scope more especially it is a work on metaphysical aspect of African philosophy and philosophy of time. African philosophy is the critical thinking on the African and his experience of reality.<sup>14</sup> This experience ranges from the quest for self-definition, his concept of God, mind, time, causality, destiny, freedom, and the good. This study is therefore limited in scope Africa. By African this work mean the geographical and socio-cultural entity *englobed* by the continent of Africa, more especially the Sub-saharan black Africa. This work's interest is to do an analytical study in a selected Sub-sahara culture.

#### **1.5 Significance of Study**

The subject matter of this work is the identity of the African person and his conception of time. The value of time in Africa and the world at large cannot be over-emphasized. It is a fundamental paradigm to our survival and success. This success transcend even the pre-historic times. This is why Jerry Bentley observes that:

All human societies have faced the need to measure time. Today for most practical purposes, we keep track of time with the aid of calendar which is highly and readily available in printed and computerized forms throughout the world. However, long before humans developed any formal calendar, they measured time based on natural cycles: the seasons of the year, the waxing and

waning of the moon, the rising and setting of the sun. It was necessary for human to understand these rhythms of nature so they could be successful in hunting animals, catching fish, and collecting edible nuts, berries, roots and vegetable manner.<sup>15</sup>

This analysis will position the identity of the African person in a positive light as one who has a unique way of valuing time and its consciousness. But he is not an idler or time waster as he has been tagged. This work will present anew forgotten values Africans attach to time and bring to their consciousness the original time category of the African. This is very necessary because “a considerable number of traditional African values must be analyzed anew and made relevant in an integrational stance. Not only should we not let these values be lost but also we must recuperate and make them canons for authentic, dynamic and progressive lives for Africa that is to survive”.<sup>16</sup>

Metaphysics as a branch of philosophy benefits from this work because it provides into establishing an insight on the on the nature of time and the existence of future dimension of time in African ontology. This work will wield into the controversies whether Africa operates on a diadic or triadic time orientation. This work attempts to lay to rest this dichotomy and present ample samples on her positions.

Departments of history, English, Linguistics, Religion, Physics and Cultural studies will benefit more from this work because it opens up the rich resources of time and within the African context. Perennial topics like poetry, folklores, belief systems, values, songs and riddles, time flow are some useful materials that this dissertation attempts to offer for their utilitarian end. This work will be of help in inter-cultural studies to know how other worldviews perceive and conceive time. An in-depth study of these worldviews will give us an insight and reduce

intercultural crisis of time. So this will make other worldviews to appreciate other people and never to denigrate other worldviews as barbaric or unscientific. Africans, Asians, the Jews have their conception of time conception and the West equally have theirs too.

African philosophy will benefit mainly from this work because it offers a discursive insight into African worldview and her conception of time. Since “understanding is inseparable from criticism, but this in turn is inseparable from self-criticism”, this work undertakes to open up a dialogue with African culture and experience. In this conversation some of the traditionally held views about time will be challenged, and some presuppositions about it will be exposed so that a better understanding of our society and its conservations partner will emerge. Also by comparing and contrasting Africans beliefs, values, and self-definitions, this work will unravel some limitations, inconsistencies, contradictions, lacunae or even plain falsehood associated with our own worldview as well as that of others.

The overwhelming scarcity of necessary materials in temporal discourse in Africa is a major challenge to scholars; hence, this work becomes relevant and significant not only to students involved in the study of time, but to researchers and teachers as well. From preliminary research carried out, it appears that there are few existing studies or text book on time in African philosophy. This work is expected to present a veritable option to the production of a book on the subject.



## 1.6. Methodology

The method of Analysis is employed in this dissertation because of its tenets of clarifying of ideas, words and concepts. Analysis entails breaking down complex concepts, ideas, terms and existential data into simpler forms for easy knowledge. Analysis can equally be said to be a breaking down of complexities into simpler forms. This quest for clarification is carried on by sustained, critical teasing out of hidden layers of meaning of words and the analysis of concept.

The need for Analysis arose because:

There have always been people who have been scared away by the ponderous verbiage of many philosophical systems. Others are put off by their labored attempts to fit unwilling and stubborn facts into their well-wrought cathedral of ideas. Such people have tended to see philosophy's main function as that of defining and clarifying notions and refining concepts by removing the cobwebs and clouds of ambiguity and obfuscation.<sup>17</sup>

It is to be established here that analysis demonstrates the critical character of philosophy. Philosophy thrives in analysis because we start from a confused given and analyse it into its distinct parts: we can recompose the whole in a systematic way. It is also a philosophical method which cuts across every method. The method of analysis perfectly serves the interest of this study because analysis is a kind clarification and dialogue with culture or the explanation of the beliefs of society or culture. So this study is more of clarifications of African culture with the intention of explaining their mode of time conceptions to bring out their underlying meanings.

Major materials used in this dissertation were collected mainly from the library. Besides these, a good number of data was also sourced from the internet. This work contains a total of Six Chapters.

Chapter one introduces the work. Chapter Two reviews literature of scholars on African conceptions of time. Chapter Three examines how other worldviews in the quest to demonstrate how they conceive time. These worldviews include the Western, Judaic and Hinduist worldviews, this is done to give the work a wholesome outlook. Chapter Four gives an analytical study to time in Africa by having an in-depth look at some cultures in Sub-Saharan Africa to inquire into the nature of time in Africa and attempt some of the already stated questions. Then Chapter five is a look at the ontology of time consciousness in Africa. Chapter six gives the Evaluation and Conclusions.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

The idea of definition of terms is required in this work to locate and prevent unnecessary ambiguity in this research. Operative terms that require definition in this study include.

Time, African Philosophy and Ontology.

### **1.1.1 Time.**

Time is a measured or measurable period, a continuum that lacks spatial dimensions. Time is of philosophical interest and is also the subject of mathematical and scientific investigation.<sup>17</sup> Time is seen as dialectics of event and non-event. As an event, time features as manifestations of time such as ritual time, harvest time and festive time. As non-event, time is neither of these times or their likes nor a sum of these times. As non-event or “separate reality”, time features as the unity of all times.<sup>18</sup>

As dialectics of events and non-event, time “individuates and unifies, reveals itself by hiding itself and operates as womb and tomb of everything. Dialectics through which time informs everything without itself being anything explains the absence of African terms for time.

For the purpose of this work, time is seen here as a conceptual expression, as duration of the spread of events that is only covered by the imaginative power because it goes beyond the present state. The conscious concentration does not depend in physical features but reside in the memory of successive perception. Kant agree here that we do not think about time in objective notion of a physical reality, but rather as a form of pure sensible intuition, an inner awareness that does not thrust upon external objective evidence.

### **1.7.2. African Philosophy**

African philosophy is simply a critical and reflective incursion/ inquiry into the marvels and problems that beset one in the African world, with the intention of yielding a systematic clarifications and enduring responses to them. It demonstrates on one hand a set of reflective norms grounded in culture and reason, which rigorously and critically explicate a life-world, and on the other a discipline in the university, with a set of codes, standards, recognized practitioners, and customs. As a discipline, it focuses on two aspects: philosophical and African.

As philosophy, it is a critical longing for African wisdom (*Afro-zealotism*).It is a the reflective and systematic investigation into the fundamental questions that confront human being including his use of time.<sup>20</sup>

As African, will be treated below

### 1.7.3. African

A perennial problem in African philosophy has been the nature of the personhood and identity of the African. Is being African unique in some way, different from other ways of being human or is one human first and African qualitatively (or some other particularization) second? What is African identity- who counts as African, and what does being African entail? Is race a necessary and central feature of being African or is it contingent and incidental? Who can speak for Africa? Damian Opatá, a scholar of African literature has outlined four different senses in which the adjective African can be used; geographical, radical/ethnic, ideological and epistemic<sup>21</sup>Opatá in his discourse, on what is African drew the attention to Mazrui's contention that Africa in the geographical and political understanding is a European creation. Also the racial explanation can be seen to be artificial. The ideological contention in his historical development of an Africa made by Europeans is showcased in some studies of Mazrui and Opatá. From realities and accidents of history, the traditional classification arose on what is geographically and politically termed African. What is African can be determined in space and time (Historically). What is African at a given point in history can change from what it is in another. This view comes close to the non- essentialist but rather a historically-given definition of what is African.<sup>22</sup>

Agada, reasons that the question of who the African is may be resolved in favor of the black person, and then any other human being deeply involved or concerned with Africa and its affairs and who has adopted the continent as their fatherland.<sup>23</sup>

Granted that the predicate "African" technically may not be an appropriate choice to qualify a philosophical tradition from African South of the Sahara, Ozumba and Chimakonam concludes perhaps the term "Equatorial Philosophy" might be better than "African"but the historical events

seemed to have placed the used to it and understand the usage as a “pattern of solidarity” rather than in a purely technical sense.<sup>24</sup>The predicate “African” in Africa philosophy must then be regarded as solidarity taken rather than technical concept but the philosophy itself refers to the tradition of discourse from equatorial Africa.

For the purpose of this study, by African this dissertation means the geographical and socio-cultural entity *englobed* by the continent of Africa, especially the Sub-saharan black African included in this geographical definition.

#### **1.7.4. Ontology**

Ontology as a branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature of being, reality, or ultimate substance. Ontology according to Onyewuenyi is the science of “being as such,” “the reality that is”.<sup>25</sup>

According to Onyewuenyi, the concept of separate beings, of substances, to use a researcher’s term, which are side by side, independent of one another, is alien to African thought. The African thought confirms that created beings secure a bond one with another, an intimate ontological relationship. There is interaction of being with being, that is to say of force with force. In Tempels term;

Is more so among rational beings known as *Muntu*, a term which includes the living and the dead, *Orishas*, and God.*Muntu* is a force endowed with intelligence, a force which has control over irrational creatures known as *bintu*. Because of this ontological relationship among beings, the Africans know and feel himself to be in intimate and personal relationships with other forces acting above or below him in hierarchy of forces. “The human being, apart from the ontological hierarchy and interaction of forces, has no existence in the perception of the Bantu.”<sup>26</sup>

The metaphysics of western philosophy has generally been based upon a static conception of being. In African philosophical thought, being is dynamic. Existence –in-relation sums up the African conception of life and reality.

Ontology also is a branch of metaphysics that addresses the nature or essential characteristics of being and of things that exist; the study of being qua being. Ontology is equally seen simply as what there is or a study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality as well as the basic categories of being and their relations. Traditionally listed as a part of the major branch of philosophy known as metaphysics, ontology often deals with questions concerning what entities exist or may be said to exist and how such entities may be grouped, related within a hierarchy, and subdivided according to similarities and differences. As philosophical enterprise ontology is highly theoretical, it equally has practical applications in information science and technology, such as ontology engineering.

Many classical philosophical problems are problems in ontology, like the question of whether or not there is a god, or the problem of existence of universals. These problems deal with whether certain things exist or not. Ontology also bothers on problems about most general features and relations of entities that exist. The problem of how universals relate to particulars is also within the confines of ontology.

We can say here that there are overall two philosophical projects of ontology; first says what there is, what exists, what stuff reality is made out of. The second, ontology says what the most general features and relations of these things are. Nevertheless, in this work, ontology is used from the perspective of the being of time. The way Africans understand or perceive time influences their thought pattern, their belief system and their general attitude to life

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## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The progress of human experience from antiquity to the present technological evolution of civilization like the breakthroughs in the medical terrain, legal and aviation departments has been aided by the single factor call time. It has driven all persons and experience from the start of cosmic consciousness called life. This indicates that time is a *sinequanon* in human experience. Time is a catalyst in the wellbeing of the members of every society and influences the way they live their lives.

The ontology of time needs an accurate verbal tool and technical skills to communicate the meaning orally and express the understanding not only to an African but to all humans. John Jamieson Carswell Smart says;

Learning to handle the word 'time' involves a multiplicity of verbal skills, including the ability to handle such connected words as earlier, later, now, second, and hour. These verbal skills have to be picked up in very complex ways (partly by ostension), and it is not surprising that the meaning of the word time cannot be distilled into a neat verbal definition.<sup>1</sup>

This ability to handle the multiplicity of meaning of time has been done by both Africans and non-Africans alike in explaining the meaning of African notion of time. Just like Smart above the actual explanation of time in Africa is yet to be distilled in a whole and accurate definitions. This chapter will focus in an attempt to find how philosophers deployed their verbal and philosophical skills in handling this multi-faceted concept to give it a sound definition. We shall embark on this philosophical voyage employing both a thematic and chronological review to demonstrate African conception of time. It will be observed that most of the texts were a reaction to Mbiti's

inchoate text which claimed a two dimension of time in Africa as against the three dimension of time in the West. Some other scholars countered this Mbiti's position by demonstrating a three dimension of time in their own traditional time category. Other scholars concentrated themselves in explaining only the space and time in African cosmology.

Kagame's *La Philosophie Bantu-Rwandaise de l'être*, treated space and time as a localizing being and observe that the beings are the *vitalist* conception of the universe. Kagame talks of being as possessing force that makes them act upon each other. This activity of beings on one another generally enters into the concept of movement as an important element of beings. This ontological aspect of being is traced to the category of *Ahantu*. *Ahantu* as a category of localization include the category of time and space which are interchangeable in Bantu ordinary.<sup>2</sup> The ontology of time is becoming, which designates a passage and transition from one state to another. In this categorization, time falls under *Ahantu*. It meets up with the category of space to individualize movement of being, which means individualizing Being even as its activity and internal perfection proceed. Movement is traced to being in so far as it is being, as invisible passages and transitions that characterize all beings of all categories.

Kagame also in "Empirical Apperception of Time and the Conception of History in Bantu Thought," dwells on an extensive sample of Bantu languages to promote several important thesis about the traditional Bantu view of time. According to Kagame;

In traditional Bantu culture...time is a colorless, neutral entity as long as it is not marked or stamped by some specific event: an action performed by the pre-existent [God], by man or animal, or a natural phenomenon... As soon as the action or event impinges on time, the latter is marked, stamped, individualized, drawn out of its anonymity, and becomes the time of that event.<sup>3</sup>

From the above, Kagame ascribes to traditional Bantu a conception of time as an entity that exists around it. If not, these events could not be said to 'mark' it, 'stamp' it, or 'impinge' on it. True, according to Kagame, traditional Bantu see time as 'colorless,' 'neutral,' and 'anonymous,' and so on, until it is stamped by some event, but this claim does nothing to diminish time's real independent status.

That Kagame thinks traditional Bantu see time as existing independently of events is extendedly supported by what he claims to be the Bantu's fourfold classification of being. The Bantu, according to Kagame, regard every being as falling within one of the following categories:

1. Being endowed with intelligence (man).
2. Being without intelligence (things).
3. Localizing being (place-time).
4. Modal being (accidentality, or modification of being)

In this classification, time and space constitute ontological categories that are independent from that of events, which as modifications or accidents of being must belong to the fourth category. It is indeed informative that while Kagame explicitly describes the beings of the fourth category as those "which by nature, are incapable of independent existence..." he does not extend the idea of dependent existence to 'localizing being'.

Kagame also separates three types of "place", physical place which is also seen as "locality" or "space" susceptible of being occupied by an object. Also we have what Kagame call the "localization" in so far as it is in a position in space or "internal place." The third is "the external place" for example, the hair of the body surely limits "internal place" but they are not in place" is

what is called in Latin *ubi*. This means that if what we call a corporal being metaphysically exist, being spatial in its internal constitution, then it is totally necessary that this same being be clothed by a 'place'. Also the notion of "there were" signifies 'the actual application' of bodies to the space where they are located. The 'internal' and 'external' places are metaphysical places and are different in this aspect from the physical place.<sup>4</sup>

In the seminal sections [g] and [h] of chapter 3 in his classic book Mbiti's account of time emphasizes strongly on the subjectivity of time because time is not considered real until it has been experienced. The ontological core of the traditional view of time reported by Mbiti is that "to constitute time is to be lived through." As such, "time is either present time or used time." With reference to perception, since existence in space presupposes existence in time, it should follow from the premise that "time is essentially experienced time only" that "to exist is to exist in time alone."<sup>5</sup>

Time is composed of events, so a day, month, year or whatever, is simply the sum of its events. The background of Mbiti's concept of time is based around his research on the Kikamba and Gikuyu languages, in which he analysis three verbs that speaks of the future, which covers only a period of six months and not beyond two years at most. This would imply that coming events that fall outside the range of this time frame would lie outside the interest of the African.

There is no fixed, abstract time which is independent of events, and which can be computed for its own sake. Because time is thought of as a sum of events, an African sitting in the sun is not "wasting" time in the western sense of the word. He is merely waiting for time to happen, or is in the process or creating it. Since time has to be experienced before it is considered real, actual time consists only of the past and the present partly predictable and natural events constitute potential time. Lauer neatly captured Mbiti's categorization of time in Africa thus;

Mbiti posited that Africans think about time chiefly in “two dimensions” with reference to an inchoate limitless past and a sedentary, concrete present. He proposed that African expressions diverge radically from common ‘Western’ referrals to time which is in three dimensions: a traceable historic past nesting neatly into metric aggregates by year, decade, century, and millennia, then the instantaneous present, and finally a limitless, abstract and infinitely receding future. On Mbiti’s view, African notions of the future are limited to concrete repetitions or extensions of observable events, directly related to known cycles of nature and foreseeable outcomes of immediate human concerns and projects such as harvesting fruit trees, parenting, and kinship obligations<sup>6</sup>

Before discussion is concluded on this aspect, it is expedient for us to see how Mbiti has portrayed the concept of time among some tribes in the East Africa, during the pre- colonial era. In his writing, among the Ankore of Uganda, the day in the traditional set up is reckoned according to its significant events. To the Ankore, cattle are the ultimate thing when quantifying wealth. Therefore the day is reckoned in reference to events pertaining to cattle.

According to Mbiti, the two memorable periods of African time are *Sasa* and *Zamani*. *Sasa* is Micro-Time, and is the period of conscious existence. It is the period of individual memory and present period of conscious existence. It is the period of individual memory and present experience. The ontological rhythm of individual life — birth, maturity, death — is played out in *Sasa* at the brink of potential time. As soon as events occur they move 'backwards' towards *Zamani*. After death, one begins the journey backward towards *Zamani*. At this stage he is a living-dead and is in the state of "personal immortality". He will continue travelling towards *Zamani* as long as he is remembered on earth by name.

This is perhaps the reason for the great importance of children in African society. So, when he is no longer remembered on earth by name, he sinks into *Zamani* and achieves the state of

"collective immortality".<sup>6</sup> *Sasa* which is Micro-Time feeds *Zamani* which is Macro-Time. *Zamani* is the "centre of gravity" of all life and thought; it is "the graveyard of time, termination period, the dimension in which everything finds its stopping point. All phenomena and events, the ocean of time in which everything becomes ensconced into a reality which is neither after nor before. So In the African tradition, historical time is neither cyclic nor progressively linear. Progressive linearity occurs only in the ontological rhythm of individual life, but the larger flow of history is 'backward' towards *Zamani*. Since there is no future dimension, there are no better worlds to come, no messianic expectation, no climactic end of the world. 'Becoming' is the endless rhythm of movement from *Sasa* to *Zamani*.<sup>7</sup>

Kwame Gyekye in his article *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought*, contested Mbiti's ontological thesis and its complement and opines that the view of infinite future is an objective metaphysical reality in African conception of time. For Gyekye time as a concept is related to the phenomenon of change, process and events which occur only within time. Without this phenomenon there is no effect on reality of time. In African awareness of time, not change, events, nor process constitute time but an objective metaphysical reality within which events, process and change occur.<sup>8</sup> He propagated the claim that time is independent of events through the principle which crowns upon humans their identity destiny. And through this theory he claims that time is an influence on personality and the "personal characteristics of people reveal their consciousness of time as an element in individual destiny".<sup>9</sup>

Gyekye affirmed that events, process and changes are what exhibit time within the phenomenal world even though time is both an abstract and concrete phenomenon in the African conception

as the metaphysics of personal destiny shows. Illustrations from change and motion used in the commerce of everyday expression were what Gyekye used to concretize this claim.<sup>10</sup>

Gyekye adopted the above illustration to show that there are three dimensional views of time in African cosmology. Based on linguistic considerations in his Akan culture, Gyekye finds Mbiti account both false and fallacious. False because it is not the case that Akans lacked the concept of the future time, and fallacious because Mbiti too hastily generalized from what he observed of a very small part of Africa to the whole of Africa.

The concept of the infinitude of God must of necessity include a concept of the infinite time within which God executes His acts and plans. To say someone conceives an infinite but at the same time has no concept of future is self-contradictory. According to Gyekye:

the Akans of Ghana conceives God as an infinite Being...a fact known to Mbiti. Although infinity is here ascribed to a being and not to time it must be assumed, of course, that a concept as already involved in that of an infinite being, for the infinite being necessarily (logically) exists in an infinite time. In Akan, then the future exists as an actual time.<sup>11</sup>

According to Gyekye, the belief in and practice of divination depend on the very definition of the concept as an attempt to discover future events. And the future of diviners cannot by any logic be said to be limited to a maximum of two years. Gyekye therefore suggests that perhaps Mbiti merely (wrongfully) generalized what is otherwise a characteristic of only Eastern African people's. But even the truth of this suggestion is itself unacceptable.

Gyekye says;

For if "the African concept" of time were in-fact the key to understanding of African religions and philosophical ideas, then the Akans and Eastern African peoples, holding different conception of time, must logically different in most, if not all, of their religious and philosophical doctrine; and yet this most probably is not so.<sup>12</sup>

This hasty conclusions of Mbiti is not so and cannot not be applicable to all African. If time can be held so sacrosanct as he claim, what then can we make of symbols in religion like in traditional African religion and other religions of the world. Socially, what is the place of tribal marks and languages that clearly distinguishes a person from another? When I see a Yoruba person with a visible tribal mark, you can easily distinguish him or her from a miniscule mark of an Igbo person. And the same is applicable in the case of dialect.

Masolo in his classic text *African Philosophy in search of identity*, sees Mbiti's work as one lacking direction as to aims and target of the book. He criticized Mbiti's project as merely a myth because Mbiti did not provide the philosophical analysis of the ontology that he describes. So his African philosophy is obscure, he does not say what he meant. Masolo however guessed that Mbiti may have an audience in mind that his intentions may be discerned by only African philosophy professionals. He deems Mbiti's action as an intentional ploy of mixing African religious belief and philosophy at the same time.<sup>13</sup>

On Mbiti's handling of time as key to reaching some understanding of African religion and philosophy (*Sasa-Zamani* dimensions) and its relation to Christian eschatology, Masolo thinks that Mbiti is caught up within his main intentions i.e to show the meaningless and unimportance of the Christian eschatology as taught by the missionaries. According to Masolo, Mbiti's rendition and discussion of African concept of time is a critique of the New Testament in its Hellenized representation. Mbiti believes that the time dimension of the missionaries and its oppressive dominating dimensions are incompatible with both the true eschatology of the New Testament and African representation of time.



According to Mbiti

History including the history of salvation as preached by the missionaries is a creature of western nations, as such, it oppresses people of other culture and excludes them from the rightful experience of Christ's presence in the Sasa which merges the physical and anthropocentrically concerned spirit world of the Akamba with the "spiritual" and Christocentric view of the "New Testament"<sup>14</sup>

Masolo contends Mbiti's ontological structure of time which the order of things fits. So these ontological structures are found according to Mbiti only on the domain of being, events and accomplished events but not on mere projections.

Moses Oke in his article, *An African Ontology to An African Epistemology, A Critique Of J.S Mbiti on the Conception of Africans* claims that it is safer to say that the Africans lack "time discipline" or that they show general laxity to time than to say that they do not have idea of time or future time. This however shows the over generalization involved in Mbiti's controversial assertion on African's lack of three dimensional time orientation. If it is true, says Oke that East African languages do not have linguistic expression for futurity and infinitude, in as much as they did not claim that or live as if the world must come to an end with their concurrent experience, it should not suppose that they do not subscribe to the infinite continuity of the external world in which they live.<sup>15</sup> The general observation is that;

Most African nation lack the foresight to institute enduring foresight to institute enduring economic programs; hence the continuous cycle of poverty, bad government, monumental backwardness and a seemingly perpetual over-dependence on other peoples of the world for minimal survival. This however, cannot be read to mean that Africans lack the idea of infinitude. The best we can say is that they lack 'time discipline'.<sup>16</sup>

Oke accused Mbiti of invariably committing the fallacy of composition. This happens when a general conclusion is derived from particular instances of observed phenomena. This for sure is not the case for all Africans. Oke also explored Mbiti's claim by associating the epistemological angle in relation to the ontological thesis, which says that time is a long past and present and for time to be real, it has to be experienced. This view of Oke is shown in the interconnectivity between existence knowledge and external reality. This presupposition presents Africans as epistemological idealists in the realm of Berkeley's *esse est percipi* since the external reality is mind dependent there will be no transcending perception or the knowledge among Africans. This will result in self-contradiction if we place it within the belief system of Africans where recognition is placed to the idea of infinity God and deny the idea of future time. For these people, only God exists infinitely and can know what happens after now, so they are comfortable with short term ambition or expectation in life.

Kalumba Kubijjo in *A New Analysis of Mbiti's 'The Concept of Time'* hinges on Mbiti's originative claim and concluded that there are two reasons why Mbiti regards traditional Africans as having a two-dimensional concept of time; firstly, time should be experienced in Africa for it to be real. Secondly, only the past and the present have been experienced by anyone. Kalumba now observes that Mbiti's two-dimensional view can be derived from two premises which do not explicitly involve the empirical thesis. One, which Kalumba labels the ontological thesis, is explicitly presented by Mbiti: "time [for traditional Africans] is simply a composition of events which have occurred, those which are taking place now and those which are inevitably or immediately to occur." Kalumba observes the other thesis which "is not explicitly stated in the text." Rather, it is "a necessary step" in using the ontological thesis to derive the two-dimensional

concept of time: "events (singly or collectively) must be experienced to be actual." Kalumba calls this the *event thesis*. What is notable is that Kalumba emphasizes that the *empirical thesis*, on which he previously focused, can itself be derived from a combination of the ontological and event thesis. Thus, even if the two-dimensional concept can be derived from the empirical thesis, the ontological thesis is more fundamental to that concept. On the analysis of Mbiti's two dimensional conception of time African and future time Parker writes:

Mbiti is sometimes clear about the status of future time and events for traditional Africans, but sometimes not. His discussion of future events will therefore not definitively support any explication of the problem identified in his ontological thesis. Rather, we seem left with a traditional African concept of time as three-dimensional, roughly like the contemporary Western concept. The primary difference is that the contemporary Western future extends much further than does the traditional African future. Of course, no future event actually exists in the way present ones do and past ones have—neither for contemporary Westerners nor for traditional Africans. But Mbiti thinks traditional Africans are actively interested in events which will occur within two years, while they are not actively interested in those which will occur beyond two years unless these seem inevitable. According to Mbiti, then, traditional Africans regard the next two years with significantly more interest than the years beyond.<sup>17</sup>

However, Kalumba rightly emphasizes that, according to Mbiti, traditional Africans think a cycle of events such as the seasons will "continue forever". Mbiti thus seems wrong to maintain that "if the event is remote, say beyond two years from now, then it cannot be conceived". Rather, by Mbiti's own account, traditional Africans seem to conceive of a remote- future while having no active interest in it. Likewise, of course, contemporary Westerners conceive of a remote-future while, typically, having less interest in it than in the near-future. Again, by Mbiti's own account, traditional Africans have a three-dimensional concept of time, more or less as do contemporary Westerners, in which the past is distinguished from the present, and each of these from the future, whether near or remote.<sup>18</sup>

Iroegbu in *The significance of time in the African socio-cultural context* was critical about Mbiti's claim that African languages lack word to convey her future realities. He opined that in cultures where there seemed to be poverty of future words or terms, the people still live and have projections into the future. He advised that Mbiti would have gone on an intensive field work to dig out these words. He queried the need for the Ankore people to feed their cows, wait for the season, get married, give birth, If they do not have a sense of the future. Even the Ankore cattle rearers which he (Mbiti) analyzed leave some pasture land for some time get greener. That shows they have a future orientation. Even African communalism equally helps expantiate African idea of a long future. Time is long because it is part and parcel of African nature of belongingness because time is there as part of human experience.<sup>19</sup>

Opong in his article, *Two versus three dimensional conception of time in Africa* posits that African time can be correctly assimilated in cultures that give attention and first place to narrative knowledge. He made this assertion because philosophically speaking it is a difficult task to ascertain the condition for future dimension of time in Africa. Narrative knowledge was chosen by Opong because of apparent poverty of language in some African cultures.

Also the difficulties associated with identifying a definitive verb tense for future in East Africa is the informing factor for Mbiti's arguments. Time, conceptually does not require a single vocabulary item to exist as Mbiti argues. The fact that no definite verb tense exist to convey an idea does not negate its existence. Nonetheless, the debate reveals one of the difficulties attempting to incorporate some of the African's latent concepts into writing. Opong refers to this as "anthropological poverty of language." This is because of the difficulties and inability to translating African thought and concepts in writing, we can equally say that some African

languages do not have written form and so cannot be studied in a scientific manner at a higher level. In translating and codifying African oral philosophy into a written text, he advised that we should not neglect the element of specificity, generality and local peculiarities that underlie metaphysical and epistemological concepts as they appear in African languages.<sup>20</sup>

Izu in his work *The problematic of African time*, he observes that Mbiti's position does not place Africans in advantageous and progressive position. He laments that the concept *African time* as a metaphor is a preposterous concept. In Izu's claim:

It is both an insulting misnomer and counter value. The metaphorical concept of African time is one in which tardiness, lousiness and a total disregard for schedules and programs are made out to characterize all Africans. ...Traditional African as well as conventional Africa, places a high premium on scheduled activity, punctuality and precision in the performance of activities.<sup>21</sup>

In what seems to be the persistent over-generalization, Izu noted that tardiness is a universal phenomenon and to criminalize Africans because of it is not fair enough. I think it would have been fair to acknowledge that tardiness is in degrees among culture because there are some cultures that frown at it in *toto*. Izu also turned back to concretize his later claim by going down to the pre-colonial era to justify African time-consciousness by observing that Africans kept time with the cockcrows, high moon and sundown. Even human activities like commencement or end of market session, the morning, the midday or evening, harvest of palm-wine were ways of scheduling time. He however noted the lapse with these media, according to him, though this type of scheduling lacked the mechanical precision of the mechanical clock, everyone understood what was meant and complied. Equally those who could not adhere to the schedule were negatively sanctioned through fines and other types of penalty. It is still a well-known fact

that this time precision is still prevalent in African worldview. This might be unconnected to Hamminga's submission that Africans rely on emotional mark of time (rather than precise mechanical method) like when you were born.. But as far as the future is concerned these marks are still to be made. They have no idea of every person.<sup>22</sup>

Oliver Onwubiko in *African Thought and Culture*, saw emergence of the question of the African sense of time as a result of some dangerous claims of some writers and unfortunately, these claims were championed by scholars of African descent. The linear concept of time which Mbiti ascribed to the westerners is unfortunately not 'western' but Judeo-Christian. The cyclic notion of time according to Onwubiko, was part of the pre-Christian western culture. Also when Mbiti talks of time as being of no academic importance among the African people, he is thinking of time in terms of "education" which he, in this context, must be considering as purely western cultural academics. He forgot that time, within our African culture was socialized. By being socialized he means:

Time apart from being reckoned by such events as the first and second cock-crow, sunrise, sunset, overhead sun, or length of shadow, is also reckoned by meal-times, wine-tapping times, time of return from the farm and so on. These factors are not arbitrary. For instance, the use of meal periods does not imply that all eat their meals at exactly the same time, but that everyone has a reasonably accurate idea of what is meant<sup>23</sup>

He refers to a serious fallacy the assertion that "African time" connotes Africans not having any sense of punctuality. This African time syndrome was originated by some *de-Africanized African andhalf-Europeanized* who do not understand African idea of time. Onwubiko pointed out that Africans do have and conceive of time in the punctual sense. That is, at a particular time things

must happen, have effect, or must be done. This can easily be discovered in African religious concepts. There are specific times sacrifices must be offered and no more. On the other hand, the African use of time does not sacrifice social duties and human relations on the altar of the clock time punctuality.

Kanu in an article *J.S Mbiti's African Concept of Time and the Problem of Development* makes it frank that even though Mbiti may have been criticized in all front but he still want to point out that one of the main reasons for continuing underdevelopment of Africa is her non-chalant attitude to time. According to Kanu, "a cursory glance at Mbiti's African idea of time as backward very much explains why Africans are more concerned with how Europe underdeveloped Africa than with how they are themselves destroying the future of Africa through corruption. He further noticed that Africans are so much interested with the history that has passed than with future opportunities that abounds. If our employs is on the past rather than future, it means that there will be no development".<sup>24</sup>The problem of punctuality has become so endemic that lateness to any function is accepted and explained off as "African Time"<sup>25</sup> According to Kanu, If Africa must be at par other civilization that have taken advantage of temporal conditions that have taken advantage of temporal conditions to build artifacts that have stood the test of time and the vicissitude of human history. She must change her mentality towards time. African development is tied to her management of time.

From scholars examined so far, their works are mainly reactions to Mbiti's assumptions, they equally gave their own version of time in their various ethnic cleavages. Also from the works of Mbiti and Kagame, there is one tread that runs through their works. It was Iroegbu who observes that many African scholars that have written on African theory of being (time) one negative

trend is noticed among them all. This trend is the absence of individual, personal critical and systematic interpretation of what reality means for the author in question, as an African.<sup>26</sup>

In this line of thinking also, Oguejiofor categorized Kagame's work, "Bantu philosophy and Mbiti's African Religion and Philosophy" as unfit to pass as African philosophy. Oguejiofor's contention is that their works lack individual contribution. Though culture is the foundation needed for philosophy to flourish, but on the final analysis has to be the individual's self-understanding or appreciation or appreciation in the context of his culture.<sup>27</sup> Okere acknowledged this personal and individual feature as a major mark of philosophical authenticity, he however added that culture and philosophy are both individual and communal. It is the rational thought that is commonly behind a given culture or cultural trait. It is individual thought communalized, accepted and lived by a people.<sup>28</sup>

Mbiti and Kagame's works adopted some western categories to appraise African philosophy, but Mbiti's stance on time is more or less a cultural betrayal with some form of philosophical and intellectual segregation. For him and other scholars of like orientation as Kagame and Mbiti, Ramose warns;

Colonialism is therefore, regarded as a veritable moment of epistemicide as far as indigenous conquered people are concerned. To urge for the protection of standards in these circumstances is another way of asking for the dominance and perpetuation of the colonial epistemological paradigm.<sup>29</sup>

Iroegbu in *Enwisdomization and African Philosophy* sees time in traditional Igbo Africa as part and parcel of nature and they see time as event which is experienced naturally and rhythmically. This rhythm of life is demonstrated within time to be natural human and humane one. According to Iroegbu, this is based on the African wholesome ontic conception of time as a human datum.



This suggests that time combines with other realities in complementary way to make life livable even in unpleasant periods. So time resolves within human activities to achieve his purpose. Time according to him was not pushed to rush things in or out because doing so may result rushing out of existence. Africans do not allow time to be their boss but rather, they use time to serve their purpose. He did not live to work rather man works to live.

The present, future and past are rhythmic and not disjointed but relational way of realizing his being in a community (moment) was always there as the future was ever unfolding into the now. The past was behind, the realized and the achieved via its mirrors, progress into the future continues until the ancestral and spirit-future (infinite-time) is reached.<sup>30</sup>

God gives man time to achieve his potential in this here and now and the potential is achieved if man adhere strictly to the rhythms of nature so things are done in their proper way as prescribed by the *omenala* (custom/traditional way). Time does not manipulate man as noticed in the west where man is hectically oppressed by it rather;

The African concept of time brings in the element that in technological development, man is not to be rushed into a mere instrumentalist calculative notion and use time, nor is being to be reduced to the pure form of elemental manipulative functionality. Time is in function of being, especially in function of the being of the human being; the Madu, (*Dasein*).<sup>31</sup>

The triad dimensions of past, present and future are the basis of African endeavors. African also are tied to natural rhythms like the sun, moon, stars, and cock crow in their life events such as the rising in the morning in a fairly regular harmonious fashion. Africans have a more relative, humane and co-existence conception of time. They have close ties to the land as life-means and ancestral contact locus.

Kebede Messay, in his work *The Ethiopian Conception of Time and Modernity* points out that we can understand Ethiopia's conception of time when we grasp that time unravels the meaning of life. This knowledge is gotten from Ethiopians style of arriving at the meaning of their life by conceiving time as a repetitive occurrence. The condition of nature is what enabled them to attain this cyclical idea. According to him, the day is replaced by night and the night is replaced by the day. After the winter, summer arrives, when summer leaves, winter replaces it. The warm becomes cold, the cold warm. Life changes into death and death into life.<sup>32</sup> Kebede used Mikael's poem *Everything is Déjà Vu* to reflect and bring to mind the Ethiopian understands of time. From the poem he deduced that everything is cyclical and nothing is new in the world. The changes we witnessed are replaced by the one we initially witnessed and so bring nothing new. The cyclicity of time also brings to bear the vanity of things. Since there is no permanence in the world and everything is relative.

If the totality of our personal time were circular as Kebede posits, then in the future we would be born after our death. If time is circular, then the future at least this part of it –is also the past, and every event in that past occurs before itself. If our entire personal time were such, then the question would arise as to whether we were born an infinite number of times or only once.

Sophie Oluwole in her work *The Labyrinth Conception of Time as Basis of Yoruba View of Development* explains that the idea of time in the Yoruba culture is entrenched in their communal worldview often transmitted through proverbs, folklores and other means. She based her discussion of time on oral text. According to her, the Yoruba conception of time is Labyrinth, complex and multidimensional, even though not seen as something aloof or irrelevant to man's day to day experience in the world. She used proverbs to justify her conceptions bordering on the

reality of changes as constant feature of existence and how the vicissitudes of life affect variation in epochal time characterization. But while she noted the complexity of time in Yoruba culture in terms of circularity, relativity and interconnectedness, she did not show further analysis that will clear the air around people's idea of time. Based on the perception of time from the traditional outlook to modern perception in contemporary Yoruba culture, it could be said that certain yardstick of time measurement and reckoning among the traditional Yoruba's are lacking in Oluwole's explanations.<sup>33</sup>

John Ayoade gave a detailed analysis of time in Yoruba culture in his article, *Time in Yoruba Thought*. He used the Yoruba geographical environment as a determinant to their conception of time. For him, time is constituted by events whether those events have occurred, occurring or yet to take place. So time is real as it has been experienced.<sup>34</sup> The Yoruba culture has regard for history and so express the connection between the past, present and the future and the measurement is done through a non-causal association of two events, whether or not they are isochronous.<sup>35</sup> Time is either measured individually or environmentally. Individually, the biological growth circles of humans are observed as determinant of a given period, *asiko*. They periodize the age of the individual and this periodization is meant to be of universal application within the Yoruba community.<sup>36</sup>

Fayemi Kazeem in his work, *Time in Yoruba Culture* critique the submissions of these two Yoruba academic giants and observes that caution need to be exercised in avoiding western standards in their analytical process. For him, there is this tendency to label the Yoruba as subjectivists and non-objectivists and non-universalists going by the fact that composition of events plays a major role in conception of time. The two means of time measurement can be

argued as problematic in time precision, discipline and appropriate planning. Another criticism he leveled against the Yoruba mode of measurement of time is that in those olden days, communication was poor and time was localized and only relative to structural space.<sup>37</sup>

Mesembe Edet in his work *Space and Time in Efik Metaphysical World-View* notes that the Efiks see space and time also as a continuum of *Ufang* and *Ini*<sup>38</sup>. He observes that the Efik conceptualize space and time as real dimensions of history. That there is a fusion of the notion of physical space, (*Ufang*) and time (*Ini*) in Efik metaphysics with the idea of a transcendental or spiritual space *ererimbot* which refers to an area of a place that is empty. This emptiness is a reality and exists actually and concretely. According to Edet, it is the reality of *Ufang* that makes it possible to observe processes, events, phenomena, regularities and other aspects of the physical world. Time for Edet simply means a measure of cyclical relations between the beings in the physical and spiritual world and that the cycle of *ufang* and *ererimbot* provide the measure of time. But Abakedi raised a puzzling question for Edet on how the beings of *ererimbot* in the cycle occupy *ufang* or how do the material beings occupy the material concrete *Ufang* and how is the spiritual space (*ererimbot*), is it a formal replica of the concrete space?

In Abakedi's opinion, Edet should really reinspect for the Efiks, whether *Ufang* should suffer such an absolute reduction to empty space. Also, is there no possibility that there is some kind of material or spiritual being in *ufang* or does the fact that a subject has not identified a material or spiritual being in a space, mean that another cannot or would not?<sup>39</sup>

The writing of these scholars were born out of Mbiti's assumptions but they undertook the task to concentrated on their particular ethnic group in order to showcase their specific ethnic

conception of time. They took this posture in order not to foist on general Africans the time conception of a section of people as Mbiti has done.

Asouzu Innocent in his book *The method and Principles of Complementary Reflection In and beyond African Philosophy* sees time in Africa as a framework to articulate the idea of complementary unity of consciousness of totality of the world. This flow of consciousness in space and time connects the real and ideal, material and immaterial, the spiritual and physical. Asouzu therefore presents space and time as a continuum of complementary missing links. Time for him unifies the real world with the ideal supernatural world in a complementary harmonious manner. This fusion helps to strengthen the unity between phenomena and *noumena*. Africans see all dimensions of physical world as platform to feel time and space in a more concrete way. According to him daily everyday experiences like the rising and setting of the sun, the emergence and receding of the moon, the rise and fall of the tide. Others are seasons with the attendant changes in vegetation and atmospheric conditions, the behavior of certain animals and plants. These natural phenomena and occurrences for him aids in regulation of everyday experiences.

Asouzu joins his voice with other African writers to note that time for Africans is an experienced events but adds that this time relates both in ideal and yet real manner in a complementary harmonious manner. According to Asouzu:

.....and in a way that relates them necessarily to time and space in an abstract and yet concretely perceptible manner. This way events, regularities and processes become lived experience, show of the totality, as it becomes evident in human consciousness. The mind for this reason seeks harmony based on the regularity and processes observed in nature like commonplace experience; working, eating, wedding war, relaxation, hunting, farming, fishing and other personal and communal affairs.<sup>40</sup>

Asouzu stance is that connection of the physical and the abstract subsists the transcendent dimension of space and time in a complementary unity of consciousness which unites the subject with the totality of the world in extraordinary moments and places. He draws inspiration from the traditional African worldview, and clearly reformulates the method and principles of complementary reflection to a systematic methodological philosophical trend with a universal appeal. Asouzu deviated from the Kantian abstract and non-relational forms to show that even the conception of space and time are an important dimension which is not only physically plausible but also spiritual plausible. Asouzu by implication tries to show the reality of transcendent space as a dimension of a space-time continuum, which the human consciousness perceives as plausible and necessary for positioning the reality of beings-missing links in necessary relations, irrespective of their categories, which may be physical, natural, supernatural or spiritual.

Chimakonam collaborates this view of Asouzu when he opined that this idea of a missing link wraps the state of reality as an esplanade of all existents where everything that is a being somehow factors in, this way; all being has a place in this web. Its absence automatically constitutes a missing link both as a reality and as a conceptual being. What Asouzu meant by missing links is the diverse units that make up an entity within the network of the whole and as they are complementarily related. What this shows is that all being in existence is a missing link in the framework of reality as whole. This goes to show that individual beings constitute missing links of reality in time and space. As units, they each factor in the network of existence, each needing the other. The inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of reality is made to appear in this whole. This unity of every being serves a missing link of reality, accounts for the necessary

complementarity that should exist among them. Thus a missing link captures a central mode of expression of being. Hence, to be is to be in a mutual complementary relationship.<sup>41</sup>

Asouzu's unity in complementary has been criticized as a perfectionist theory where the dialectical interplay is expected to yield a harmonious complementary synthesis<sup>42</sup>. Asouzu is also accused of meddling with what someday might be a monstrous one-valued logical system, since the rejection of ontological dichotomy translates to the rejection of contradiction. Asouzu responds to this critic that the logic of his work is dynamic and recognizes the intermediate value. It is rather a logic of conjunctive reasoning rather than that of disjunctive reasoning as found in Aristotle.<sup>43</sup> The point of Asouzu is that even though his logic is conjunctive, it is so on account of the intermediate value of say a three or many-valued system – and never a one-valued system that his is based<sup>44</sup>.

Dukor Mmaduabuchi's work, *Scientific Paradigm in African Philosophy...* conceives time as one of the theoretical elements and philosophical presuppositions for the propagation of African scientific thought and practice in traditional African philosophy. According to him, In African scientific thinking, the spirit and the familiar concepts like forces are construed as intelligent energies which are reducible to matter. God is believed to be the highest force which gives life in Africa, the concept of space and time are realities. There is the physical space time which means the same thing as the Euclidean space and time as well as the spiritual space and time. The Africans according to Dukor believes in the three physical three- dimensional world as opposed to Mbiti's, as well as the spiritual three dimensional worlds. Events that take place on the earth occur within space time where the flow of time cannot be reversed.

African time perception according to Dukor is informed by African cosmological worldview or framework that is geocentric like the Ptolemy wheel within wheel model of the universe. African perception of time is cyclical and its space is compartmented into the heaven above, the earth below it and the underworld beneath the earth, all concerned as contiguous and continuous in a cyclic continuum.

Dukor observes the cyclic and irreversible nature of African time, this explains why it does not have the precision and accuracy of the linear European time that is measured by a mechanical device. He toed the line of Mbiti to observe the anthropocentric nature of the African worldview where man is the measure of all things. In his view “in African notion of time, man is the measure of all things and so time consciousness is an outcome of the experience of the occurring rhythmic cycles of day and night and sensations of heat and light from the sun. This rhythm is experienced by all forms of life on earth in their irreversible cycle of birth, death and rebirth.”<sup>45</sup>

Dukor tries to bring about through mathematical scientific configuration the reversibility of African time. This thesis that African time becomes reversible when mathematically and scientifically merged with European time is different epistemologically from the thesis that African time is practically and conceptually reversible. It may not seem possible to a greenhorn but to the African alchemist it is reversible and how one knows African reality determines the possibility of this. Man has two sources of knowledge in African reality, knowledge of contact with the Euclidean space-time and the soul which lives in spiritual space time (i.e three dimensional worlds). The spiritual space time is the fourth dimensional where the epistemological and metaphysical puzzles are resolved. Dukor observes that if the African metaphysician can forecast future or recast past episode it then means that these events occurred within a space time of past, present or future. The cyclic African time is essentially important in



the development of African science because it is existentially significant and also it could be in reality reversible.

Henry Maurier took another dimension in relation to time; he looked at time with the intention of changing the face of Africa. He intends to bring out the role of time in Africa as she tries reorganizing and reasserting her 'world'. Maurier considers the importance of time in Africa's daily and practical life. Due to the role of seasons and their practical and existential impact on Africans, it is needful for them to develop and plan their routine and time. This time development should be both the combined effort of the community and the individual alike. Maurier noted that 'in fact if the present consensus were rendered null and demystifies the relation to the past, the relational life would become an invention which is presented only by the individual. There would be anarchy which would be often created.'<sup>46</sup> Maurier contends that time-present must look backward to time past. This will then lead to an establishment of time in Africa. This also authenticates the relational basis of time in Africa as was thought by Maurier because for him, time is simply a mutual relationship that should exist for authentic human existence.

From the review of available literature, it is observed that most of the works reviewed are mostly reactions to Mbiti's postulations and assumptions. Some agreed with Mbiti that in Africa, time must be experienced for it to be actual but some use examples from their worldview to counter this claim. Some works reviewed are also works that discuss space and time in African cosmology while most authors interpret time as cyclic. This work attempts to build on the ideas of these philosophers and hope to provide an analysis of time that enhances a wholistic African view of time.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT OF TIME IN OTHER WORLDVIEWS**

Time is like a language and since people from different cultures 'speak' in different ways; the result often generates a lot of misunderstanding. Differences in assumptions as to the nature and significance of time are among the reasons for the poor communication which exist in the world today. It is so simple a concept used in commerce of our everyday usage but sometimes this simplicity makes us to be carefree for the meaning. It can be embarrassing that the mind cannot with intellectual ease showcase this ubiquitous concept. If asked about what we believe time to be, our individual reports will vary with each of our individual abilities to articulate the sporadic flow of images and impressions that may sometimes accompany our reasoning about what to do. Such report may reflect learned ways of expressing beliefs about time, or they may reflect the influence of learned myths or dogmas to which we have been exposed at any stage of our educational, religious, social or family life. Even a revered scholar like Augustine was caught in this trap of confusion when he said “but what is time? Who can explain it easily and briefly or even, when he wants to speak of it, comprehend it in his thought? If no one asks me, I know; if they ask and I try to explain, I do not know.”<sup>1</sup>

The concept of time is as elusive as it is mysterious. This elusive nature has given rise to opposing schools of thought. Sir Isaac Newton on one contending camp holds that “.....time is a part of fundamental structure of the universe, a dimension in which events occur in sequence...”<sup>2</sup>

Gottfried Leibniz led another school of scholars to hold that “time.....a part of a fundamental intellectual structure (together with space and number) within which humans sequence and compare events.”<sup>3</sup>The Isaac Newton camp creates an objective view of time, giving it a universal status; the Leibniz camp builds a subjective notion of time and brings the concept within the purview of human mental creation.

The conceptual dimension of time links human as they relate their ideas to the changes in physical properties. So here we analyze life’s experiences occasions and seasons: a mental perception of events in motion.

Pickover sees time as a conscious experience of duration, the period during which an action or event occurs.”<sup>4</sup>Here the conscious experience of duration is a relation between the world of action and the world of notion (understanding).

Kraft in his book, *Christianity in Culture*, offers a reliable definition of a worldview;

Cultures pattern perception of reality into conceptualizations of what reality can or should be, what is to be regarded as actual, probable, and impossible...The worldview is the central systematization of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their value system. The worldview lies at the very heart of the culture, touching, interfacing with, and strongly influencing every aspect of culture.<sup>6</sup>

Worldviews are necessary in the upholding and formation of cultures. Worldview helps in explanation of how and why things are as they are and how and why they continue or change.

Kraft notes that these explanations are passed from generation to generation through folklore, myth, stories. A worldview equally serves as a yardstick of evaluation in judging and validating experience. This judgement is used to measure events and circumstances in the culture, providing criteria of acceptability. Also worldview provides psychological reinforcement for a society’s way of life. Through worldview people identify with their society as opposed to all

other societies. Worldview creates what John Wimber calls a 'we-they' dynamics.<sup>6</sup> A sense of community and membership in the clan, tribe, or nation is a byproduct of this psychological reinforcement. As the worldview is continually reinforced, the community is strengthened.

A worldview functions as an integrating function for new information, values, philosophies and experiences. Not all new experiences that violate a culture's worldview are rejected outrightly. Some alter the culture, eventually creating a change in worldview. In this respect, worldviews are always evolving.

It is at this point that we shall look at time in these worldviews to gather informations on their attitude to time, how much they value time, their experiences and philosophies. This section shall consider the conception of time in Christian worldview, Western Contemporary worldview of time, Judaic conception of time and Hindu conception of time.

### **3.1 CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF TIME**

The rise of Christianity created one of the major changes in ancient notion of time by dwelling extensively on the Crucifixion and the anticipated climactic return of Jesus. Here unique and unrepeatable events in historical time, the view of time as cyclic repetition gave way to the view of it as linear progression. St. Augustine was the first western thinker to make this Christian inspired linear, irreversible and inevitably climactic view of historical time an important feature of his philosophy of time. Spengler, the German historian, rooted to a variation of the cyclic view with respect to the 'life-history' of individual cultures observes that Hegel believed that history allowed some repetition, but that they were to be seen as progressive stages within the larger movement towards the final realization in the Absolute spirit.<sup>7</sup>

Conceptions of time in Christianity need to be historically grasped in relation to the historical developing conceptions of God and creation, of the meaning and significance of Jesus Christ, and of physical cosmology. In the ancient world, *eternity* was more an object of religious interest than time. Or more exactly, time and eternity were thought of together. This surely holds for Christianity in the ancient world and down through the Christian medieval period in the West. The temporality of historical existence could not be conceived except in close connection with eternity.

Christian theology today is in a position to return to issues of time and eternity and formulate conceptions that on the one hand can retrieve the ancient images now as broken symbols and on the other hand feed the contemporary imagination with positive symbols attuned to the vastness of the cosmos conceived by late-modern science.

In Christian perspectives of time, there are three modes of time i.e. past, present, and future, and that each has two kinds of features: essential and conditional. The essential features are those that define the uniqueness of the modes, and the conditional ones relate the modes to one another so that time "flows".<sup>8</sup>

The essential features of the past have to do with actual, fixed achievement. Those of the present have to do with decisive becoming or actualization, with decisions made among alternative possibilities. The essential features of the future are those having to do with pure form.

The present functions conditionally in the past by actualizing more possibilities into conformity with what had previously been actualized, so that the past is always growing and extending, as it were. The past functions conditionally in the present by providing the potentialities for becoming that the decisive, creative present has to integrate in its becoming; when a present moment has fully become, it is past and incapable of further change. The future functions conditionally in the



present to provide possibilities for integrating the past potentialities for becoming. The past functions conditionally in the future by providing the actual things that need to be integrated and thus require pure form to be determinate, limiting purely logical possibilities to real ones. The present functions conditionally in the future by actualizing new things so that the structure of real possibilities is constantly shifting. Time's flow requires the togetherness of the three kinds of dynamism, the steady growth of the past, the creative decisive novelty of the present, and the shifting kaleidoscope of real possibilities of the future. Nineteenth-century scientific imagery emphasizes the growth of the past, minimizing or denying creative novelty and alternative possibilities. Existentialism, process philosophy, and many kinds of Buddhism emphasize the present mode of time as becoming, minimizing or denying the reality of the past and the normative structure of the future. When present experience is emphasized, with the intentional structure of consciousness, change itself is minimized or denied as in some forms of *advaita* Hinduism.

In Christianity God's time (or eternity) has been depicted as a gaze covering all times as if they were present. The optional structure of shifting or shiftable future possibilities is emphasized by some artists and moral thinkers, though usually without losing sight of the different dynamics of the present and past. Time's flow requires the togetherness of all three. A situation with a future date and containing alternative possibilities is rendered wholly definite by present decisions and added in fixed form to extend the past.<sup>9</sup>

Man's reality of time's flow in the present captures a real future constraining and rushing toward us, and a real past into which our present actions are enjoyed qualities pass. Human moral identity requires the togetherness of all moments of life as future options to be decided, as

present acts of decisions, and as pasts for which the deciding presents are or were responsible. Thus true temporal human identity is eternal, requiring that one eternally be the one who as a youth had a wide-open future, who as middle-aged was committed to a way of life, and who as old was almost wholly definite.

The actual structures of the three kinds of dynamics and their interconnection may not be as commonsense has them. Modern physics suggests some structures that are hard to imagine and perhaps counterintuitive. This abstract hypothesis about the dynamics of the three modes of time allows for anything that science might suggest as time's structure relative to space, mass, and motion. What is the togetherness of the three modes of time such that time flows? It cannot be a temporal togetherness: the past is not before the present, nor the future after. Only the togetherness of the modes, ordered by the linear order of dates whereby present moments come to actualization, fixing the past and reordering the future, makes it possible for some things to occur in time before others, conditioning them.<sup>10</sup> The linear order of dates and simultaneity are complicated notions in modern physics; but however the causation works, temporal flow can be understood according to this hypothesis.

### **3.1.2 AUGUSTINIAN THEORY OF TIME.**

St. Augustine is among the first scholastic philosophers to have speculated about the nature of time. Time for him, is something that everyone experiences and is familiar with. We feel the passage of time throughout the day, we observe the lengths of time that it takes for things to happen, and we can separate between short and long amounts of time. However, once we try to

explain exactly what time is, we are confused. “What then is time? If no one asks me, I know. If I wish to explain it to someone that asks, I do not know.”<sup>11</sup>

There are two main ways that we can view the nature of time. First, we might think that it is objective, and part of the external nature of the world itself. Past, present and future are realities. Second, we might think of time as merely subjective, existing only as a product of our minds. While it is tempting to go with the first interpretation, Augustine goes with the second: time has no meaning apart from our minds. The reason is that the past no longer exists, and the future is not yet here. Augustine writes,

These two times then, past and future, how can they exist since the past is gone and the future is not yet here? But if the present stayed present, and never passed into time past, then, truly, it would not be time, but eternity. Suppose that time present (if it is to be time) only comes into existence because it passes into time-past. How, then, can we say that it exists, since its existence is caused by the fact that it will not exist? We can't truly say that time is, then, except because it tends towards non-being.<sup>12</sup>

It is as if everything that happens will instantly dissipate with the passing of the present moment. The extent to which the past and future are real at all, they must be contained in the present moment since the present is what really exists:

It is now plain and evident that neither future nor past things exist. Nor can we properly say, “there are three times: past, present, and future”. Instead, if we might properly say “there are three times: a *present-of-things-past*, a *present-of-things-present*, and a *present-of-things-future*.”<sup>13</sup>

When we talk about the past, present and future, we need to bring them all to the present moment. The past involves only memories that we have in the present, and, thus, we should call

this the present-of-things-past. The future involves only mental anticipations of what might come, and we should call this the present-of-things-future.<sup>14</sup>

For Augustine, as for Plotinus, eternity is a different state of being from time; but, whereas Plotinus contempts time, since for him it "fell" from eternity, Augustine is obliged by his theology to regard time as important. God is eternal and the material world, temporal; therefore time is inferior to eternity, as the creature is below the creator; yet it is in regard to temporal life on earth that human destiny is determined for all eternity. Each soul attains salvation or is damned in its own temporal span, while in the total history of the race a divine plan unfolds. Augustine gives a complete Christian history (past, present, and future) from creation to the Last Judgment, in the *City of God*.

From Augustine's notion of Time, Feiser observes that whether one accepts Augustine's theology or not, one can acknowledge the level of its moral superiority over Greek metaphysics in regard to its view of human personality. For him, Christianity, the worth and dignity of the human being are such that it deserves an individual destiny. In all Greek philosophy, the soul is assigned no more than a cosmic function: souls are the originators of all motion in the universe (for matter is inert), but the souls of men are allowed no personal destiny beyond life on earth.<sup>15</sup>

Fieser holds that, Augustine has his own reasons for being concerned with the problems of time and eternity. His life was a singularly violent conflict between the lusts of the flesh and the longing of the soul; the opposition of matter and spirit is, for him, the tension between time and eternity. In his *Confessions*, a narrative of his search for truth and of his entering upon the way of salvation, he adverts to the problems which had agitated him along his route. Greatest among these are the nature of God and the justification of creation. There we find a theory of time in

connection with an account of the creation of the world, here according to Moses. The last three books of the Confessions are a commentary on the opening chapter of Genesis. In this commentary, the discussion of time appears as a digression<sup>16</sup>. Augustine explains (chs. 7-13) that God created the heaven and earth out of nothing by His word, and with them created time. It stands in contrast to eternity: time, in which there is a succession of events, has past, present, and future; in eternity there is no change or passing away, the whole being present. An ever-present eternity precedes the past and follows the future. After this exegesis, the theologian temporarily gives way to the philosopher; St. Augustine was thrilled by the problem of empirical time, given his keen wits and free rein. What then is time? He starts. We talk about it familiarly, yet when challenged to analyze our concept of it, we cannot. Plotinus had begun his treatise in just this way in regard to eternity and time. Augustine appeals at once to experience: we know that past events have occurred, and future ones will occur, and present ones are occurring. He brings up Aristotle's question as to the existence of time. How can past and future exist, when the past no longer is, and the future is not yet? The present, moreover, is continually passing away. His argument interchanges continually between these two points of the un-doubtability of immediate experience and the logical necessity of analysis. We speak of "a long time" or "a short time," What do we speak of as "long time" or "a short time," he continues. What is long? Not the past or the future, for neither exists. "Let us see what is long? Not the past or the future, for neither exists. He uses human soul to measure whether present time can be long. On length of the present, he narrows it continuously from one hundred years to a year, a month, a day, an hour, an instant. The present is shortened when analyzed to a mathematical point; it has no duration; if it did, it would be divided into past and future. Here he follows Aristotle again. But we do notice intervals of time and measure them, he quickly asserts; we measure them as we are experiencing

them. Augustine is conscious of the difference between the phenomenal present and the mathematical present; veritably, he shows a sample of the analysis wherein the former is reduced to the latter.

Now past and future events must exist. If not, how could we talk about them at all? Then where do they exist? Wherever they are, they must be present. When we talk about the past, e.g., our childhood, we have in our memory, not the events themselves but images of them; and when we predict future happenings, e.g., the sunrise, we do not perceive the events themselves, but their signs or causes which lead us to expect them. It now becomes evident and clear that neither future nor past events exist, nor can it properly be said that there are three times, past, present, and future; but perhaps it may be said properly that there are three times, the present of past events, the present of present events, and the present of future events. These three exist in the soul, so to speak, and elsewhere I do not see them: the present of past events is memory; the present of present events, awareness; and the present of future events, expectation.<sup>17</sup>

Having come to this conclusion as to the nature of time, Augustine focuses to the problem of its measurement. It is a fact of experience that we measure the stretches of time. Not past or future ones, for we cannot measure what does not exist. Present time, then? But how, since it has no duration? But we steadily measure time, he maintains; the process is familiar, yet obscure. Then he introduces the traditional material with engaging casualness: "I heard from a certain learned man that the motions of the sun, moon, and stars are times themselves; but I did not agree"<sup>18</sup>

He criticizes this opinion in careful detail and with originality, going far beyond both Aristotle and Plotinus. He demonstrates clearly and concisely that by time we measure the motions of bodies, so the motions of the heavenly bodies are not time. As Plotinus had quoted Plato, he also quotes Moses: the celestial lamps are for signs and for seasons, and for days and years. He explains further that time is not the motion of other bodies either. They move at various and varying speeds, or they remain at rest; their motions and their rest are all measured by time. His

explanation is given from a consistently subjective point of view; there is no recourse to an objective metric, and no surreptitious introduction of absolute time. He points out that we measure the motion of a body by time, and we measure the time itself; indeed, we cannot measure the motion unless we measure the time it occupies. Here he cuts through Aristotle's confusions with easy penetration.

Augustine returns to his problem again: How then do we measure time itself? Do we measure a longer time by a shorter one, as we do space? How can we measure, say, the recitation of a poem? Analysis demonstrates that we can measure neither future, nor past, nor present, nor passing time; yet experience convinces us that we do measure stretches of time. How, in reciting a verse, do we judge some syllables long, and some short? Since they succeed each cannot be juxtaposed. Still we do compare them. We do not measure the syllables themselves, but something imprinted in our memory. "In you, my mind, I measure my stretches of time.... I measure that present impression which passing events make in you, and which remains when they have passed, not the events which, in passing away, have made it; this is what I measure when I measure stretches of time. Therefore either these are time, or I do not measure time"<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, Augustine goes back to the nature of time, taking as an example the recitation of a psalm which has been memorized. While the recitation is in progress, some of the psalm has sounded; the others will sound. Present perception conveys the future into the past, the past growing by diminution of the future, till the future is consumed, and all is past. But how is the future, which is yet to exist, diminished or consumed, or how does the past, which no longer exists grow, unless the three are in the operation of the mind?

To this Augustine writes

The mind expects, attends, and remembers, so that what it expects passes through what it attends to, into what it remembers.... And what occurs in the whole psalm does also in its individual parts and single syllables, and also in the longer action of which this psalm may be a part, in the whole life of a man, action of which this psalm may be a part, in the whole life of a man, of which the parts are all the man's actions, and in the whole era of the of which the parts are all the man's actions, and in the whole era of the sons of men, of which the parts are all human lives.<sup>20</sup>

In conclusion, we may disagree with Augustine's theory of time; but we cannot waive away the merits without admiring it. Notwithstanding its ancient paraphernalia, it has freshness of viewpoint and originality of treatment. His effort far more outweighs those before him. In Feisler's estimations, a Plato presentation is a handsome myth; Aristotle's incoherent physics confused by a little psychology; Plotinus, rapturous metaphysics. But Augustine presents an adequate, clear, fully argued, critical theory one not limited to solipsism, of course, for "private" times can be correlated to construct "public" time. Furthermore, Augustine is interesting because his is the first serious attempt at an account of time in seven centuries, and the last for fourteen more. He anticipates, everyone knows, Kant's subjective view of time as the a priori form of sensible intuition, but with this difference that he is far more lucid, coherent, and consistent than Kant. And, finally, though Saint Augustine now belongs to eternity, he has anticipated the relativism of the theories of time of twentieth-century physics.<sup>21</sup>

### **3.1.3 MC TAGGART THEORY OF TIME**

Mc Taggart was one of the most important systematic metaphysicians of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who is famous for arguing for the western conception of time. Mc Taggart argued that there is



nothing as time and the appearance of temporal events in the world is just an appearance. Mc Taggart distinguished avenues in which positions in time can be streamlined. Positions in time can be set according to the properties which they possess. One is the **A- Series**, in which Mc Taggart holds the modern western conception of time as linear and triadic consisting of three phases, past, present and future. An event is first future, then present, and then past. The second order is the **B-series**, in which times are related as 'earlier than' as, 'later than' or 'simultaneous with.' Here time is permanent if X is earlier than Y, it is never later.<sup>22</sup>

The question that comes to mind here is, which one correctly describes time? Mc Taggart's claim is that the A series is essential to time – without it there could be no time. His argument is based on the fact that we cannot have time without change, and the only possible change is from future to present, and from present to past.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, until the terms experience change, they cannot be taken be as in time. Change is essential to time; that is, if there were no change, there would be no time. In the B-series, there can be no change, no ceasing to be of events, no coming into existence of events. Therefore, B-series alone cannot be required for time to exist (or can account for real change). Consider any event, the death of Queen Anne. Does this event ever change? Mc Taggart said 'No' it was, is and will be a death of a monarch. There is no way it could change from future, to present to past. The change can only occur with an A-series.

However, there can be only be B –Series if there is an A-Series. Mc Taggart put it as follows. Until the terms are taken as passing from future to present, and from present to past, they cannot be taken as in time, or as earlier or later, and not only the conception of *presentness*, but those of *pastness* and futurity must be reached before the conceptions of earlier and later and not vice versa.<sup>24</sup>

The essential point concerning Mc Taggart's positive conception of time is that while both the A-series and the B-series are essential to our ordinary thought and experience of time the A-Series and the temporal becoming is more fundamental to the real metaphysical nature of time. Despite this positive view of time, Mc Taggart's main argument is that time unreal. This is because there can be no time without change, there can be no change without the A-Series. But the A-Series is contradictory. For this main reason, time is unreal.

Mc Taggart argues also that A-series is by nature contradictory. According to him, the different A-properties are not marchable with one another because no one can both be future and past. Mc Taggart maintained that each time in A-series must have all of different A-properties. (Since a time that is future will be present and past and so on).Mc-Taggart hopes some reproves from his argument especially where it is claimed that it is not true of any time, *t* that is both future and past. Rather, the objection goes, we must say that *was* future at some moment of past time and will be past at some moment of future time. This objection does not hold water because

the additional times that are invoked in order to explain *t*'s possession of the incompatible A properties must themselves possess all of the same A properties (as must any further times invoked on account of these additional times, and so on ad infinitum)<sup>25</sup>

Thus according to Mc-Taggart, the supposition that there is an A-series leads to contradiction and since (he says) there can be no time without A series; Mc-Taggart concludes that the time itself, including both the A-series and the B-series is unreal. Mc-Taggart claim that time is unreal are conscious of the seemingly paradoxical nature of their claim. All appearances suggesting that there is a temporal order to things are somehow illusory.

The problem he pointed out in the A-series is that the term, past, present and future is incompatible. He explains

If E is present, it is not past or future  
If E is past, it is not present or future  
If E is future, it is not present or past  
But all events have all three.<sup>26</sup>

This is what it means to say time passes. But this is impossible, according to Mc Taggart. No event can have all three properties at the same time. So what the A-series says cannot be. It can rather be, ‘E is present, will be past, was future, E is past, was present and future, E is future, will be present and past’.<sup>27</sup>

Here, we have higher order of A-series properties- ‘was present’, ‘will be present’, etc. Mc Taggart introduces higher order predicates- was past, present, future, is past, present, future and will be past, present, future; which he called C-series to eliminate the contradiction of A series. He suggests that this gives us an ordering but not a direction because examining the C-series of ‘was past and is present’, it creates problem of infinite regress. Thus, Mc Taggart concurs that there must be something more to change than an ordered series of qualitatively different terms. He puts it this way

More is wanted, however, for the genesis of B-series and time than simply the C-series and the fact of change. For change must be in a particular direction. And the C-series, while it determines the order, does not determine the direction. If the C-series can run M,N,O,P then the B-series can run either M, N, O, P ( so that M is earliest and P latest) or else P, O, N, M (so that P is earliest and M latest). And there is nothing either in the C-series or in the fact of change to determine which it will be.<sup>28</sup>

The main argument by which Mc Taggart attempts to prove is that time is unreal, which may be stated as; if the application of concept to reality implies contradiction then that concept cannot be true of reality. Time involves (stands or falls) with the A-Series and temporal becoming; that is, if the A-Series involves contradiction then time is a contradiction. The application of the Series

and temporal becoming to reality involves a contradiction. Therefore, neither the A-Series nor temporal becoming can be true or reality; thus time is unreal.

Edward Freeman objected to McTaggart thesis and imputed that the A/B series is most time watered down to show that it is no more than a mere phenomenological/ ontological divide. He used Melor as philosophers in this category, who takes it to be the distinction between subjective and objective times, “between the time of our lives and the time of reality. Yet it is quite clear that Mc Taggart takes the difference between his two temporal series to be wholly ontological.

In Mc Taggart theory unlike in Kant’s time category, the phenomenology plays second fiddle to the metaphysics. Because of this, his main objective is through and through metaphysical; he sets out to show that neither the A – nor B –theory of time (and by extension, none of their amalgamation) has foundation in reality. To think otherwise is to misconstrue Mc Taggart’s project altogether.

### **3.2. TIME IN JUDAISM**

Jews keep time in a unique way from the rest of the world. This uniqueness informs why the calendar begins with Creation, the month with the new moon, and the day with sunset. There are no two hours alike. Every hour is unique and the only one given at the moment, exclusive and endlessly precious. The major ideas of the Jewish religion, even though they are intangible, are made accessible by being embedded in time. They are celebrated on specific days in a yearly cycle of feast and fast and anchored in space -- by palpable substances such as a hut or Matzah or candles. Anything that can be done at any time by anybody will be done at no time by nobody. Judaism preserves the exalted principles and the cataclysmic events of its history through a

structured, well-defined, and specifically timed system of practices that it requires of its adherents. The religious calendar has therefore been referred to as "the catechism of the Jew."<sup>35</sup>

### **3.2.1 THE YEARS**

Ancient peoples started to count their calendar years anew with the reign of each new monarch. When Christianity rose to dominance in the western world, it began to date history from the birth of its own "king," later according to the Gregorian calendar. Hence, history was divided into BC and AD, before the advent of the king's birth and in the "year of the lord." Judaism could not consent to divide history along these lines; it did not divide universal history even to make a fulcrum of Abraham's or Moses' birth. Therefore, the Jewish religious calendar was never oriented in this manner.

For many centuries, the Jews counted the years from one event, that is the formative event of its existence as a people -- the Exodus from Egypt. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, that cataclysmic event for a while replaced the use of the Exodus as the inaugural date. But the sense of the Jew in this regard, which came to expression only after centuries, was that even an event of such magnitude was not critical enough to draw a line through time and to re-start counting world history. Only one occurrence could serve as a beginning for history: the beginning of history. Judaism determined to count the years of the calendar on a universal scale-- from the creation of the universe. But exactly how old is the earth?

According to Lahmm, Judaism determined to count the years of the calendar on a universal scale from the creation of the universe. Even scientists with their most advanced and exacting instrumentation are sure of only one answer: there can be no precision in this matter. The only

method for the Sages was to count the years according to the literal account of creation in the Bible itself.

Hence, what the Hebrew date 5751 implies is 5,751 years of God's sovereignty over the world according to the counting in Torah, and that is its timeless significance. But this presented a problem: Jews everywhere were a minority and, while they could count time according to their view, they were living in an alien world where the overwhelming majority differed in this common legal practice. Jews, who inhabited over the face of the earth, could not ignore the way the world keeps time, the basis of a human being's daily life. While Judaism is not "of" this world -- in the sense that it strives ideally to transcend this world -- it is very much "in" this world, and therefore, the Jewish community needed to accommodate its secular calendar to global usage.

As a result, it had to live its secular life according to "the nations" and to divide global history according to the exact dates of the Gregorian calendar. But it could not accommodate itself according to the Christo-centric terms of the historical divide -- BC and AD -- and referred to them instead as BCE, "Before the Common era", and CE, the "Common era".<sup>36</sup>

According to Heschel, there is a cycle of religious festivals and observances through the Hebrew Year. He enumerates the most essential parts of the year below.

The New Year (*Rosh Hashannah*) of the Jewish year begins on the first day of the month of Tishri, which usually falls in September or October. Heschel notes that Rosh Hashannah starts on the ten days which are called the Days of Awe. It is during this time that Jews re-examine their actions and thoughts over the previous year, ask God for forgiveness and mercy, and if

necessary, make amends to anyone they have wronged. They will also seek out ways to improve themselves in the coming year.<sup>37</sup>

Then comes the Days of Awe which culminates in the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). This is a day of fasting and prayer, during which Jews humble themselves before God and passionately seek his forgiveness for their sins. Long prayer services are held in the synagogues in which the worshippers seek through prayer to atone for the wrongs they have done. The ten days from *Rosh Hashannah* to *Yom Kippur* thus serve to cleanse each person's sins from the "slate of life" so that they can begin the year in the right relationship with God.

Heschel also maintains that the oldest three religious holidays in Judaism are called the Pilgrim Festivals. This title stems from the biblical expectation that all Jews would go up to Jerusalem as pilgrims to celebrate these festivals. The three are: *Sukkot* (the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles), *Pesach* (Passover), and *Shavuot* (also known as Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks). Each of these were originally eight-day observances, but only the feasts of Booths and Passover continue that practice.<sup>38</sup>

The Feast of Booths commences on the 15th day after the New Year. It commemorates both the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years and the fall harvest. The distinctive feature of this festival is that Jews build temporary booths, usually large enough to hold a table, and take some of their meals in the booths during the eight days of the festival. The day following the end of the festival, *Simhat Torah* ("The Rejoicing of the Torah") celebrates the completion of the year-long cycle of reading the entire Torah.

The Festival of Passover happens in the spring, on the 15th day of the seventh month, exactly middle of the year after Sukkot. It commemorates the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt as well as observing the early spring harvest. On the eight days of this festival, Jews eat no leaven in their food to remind them how quickly the Israelites had to leave Egypt when Pharaoh ordered them out. The stricture against leaven means that they eat no bread, only *matzah* (sort of a big cracker), and will not cook with any ingredient that makes food rise or ferment.

The main Passover commemoration is the Seder meal on the first night. This meal is prepared around the reading of a text called the Passover *Haggadah*. It is a teaching and discussion work that retells the story of the Exodus and helps explain to children (and adults) how God rescued the Jews from their Egyptian oppressors.<sup>39</sup>

The festival of *Shavuot* (Pentecost) has gone down in importance over the centuries. It now celebrates the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, but is limited to only two days. The name Pentecost comes from the fact that it is fifty ("pente-") days after the start of Passover.

*Rosh Hashannah* and the first day of three Pilgrim festivals are celebrated for two days in the diaspora. This is because it is the time itself that is holy, and that time is determined by its occurrence in the Land of Israel. So to ensure that the proper time is sanctified in countries outside Israel, two days are celebrated.

Hechel also observes that Judaism commemorates a number of minor holidays and fast days, two of which are worth mentioning here. The first for him is Purim, usually celebrated in February. The central activity of the day is the reading of the book of Esther, which tells the story of how wicked Haman tried to persuade King Ahasuerus to kill all the Jews in his kingdom and how



beautiful and good Queen Esther saved them. The festival is sort of a clown's day, with children dressing up as the heroes of the story, with hissing at the villains and cheering for the heroes during the reading. It is also the one day of the year in which the drinking of large quantities of alcoholic beverages is approved.<sup>40</sup>

The second minor holiday in Hechel account is *Hanukkah*. It is an eight-day festival of lights that takes place in December. It is the remembrance of the Maccabees regaining of the Temple from the Greeks and re-sanctifying it. This holiday is the only one that commemorates an event that is after the time of the *Tanak*. It has taken on increased importance in modern America because of its nearness to Christmas. Candles are lit each night and children are given a present on each of the eight days.<sup>41</sup>

One of the most distinguished words in the Bible is the word *kadosh*, holy; a word which more than any other is representative of the mystery and majesty of the divine. Now what was the first holy object in the history of the world? Was it a mountain? Was it an altar?

It is, indeed, a unique occasion at which the distinguished word *kadosh* is used for the first time: in the Book of Genesis at the end of the story of creation. How extremely significant is the fact that it is applied to time: "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy." There is no reference in the record of creation to any object in space that would be endowed with the quality of holiness.

This is a radical departure from accustomed religious thinking. The mythical mind would expect that, after heaven and earth have been established, God would create a holy place—a holy

mountain or a holy spring—whereupon a sanctuary is to be established. Yet it seems as if to the Bible it is holiness in time, the Sabbath, which comes first.

When history began, there was only one holiness in the world, holiness in time. When at Sinai the word of God was about to be voiced, a call for holiness in man was proclaimed: “Thou shalt be unto me a holy people.” It was only after the people had succumbed to the temptation of worshipping a thing, a golden calf, that the erection of a Tabernacle, of holiness in space, was commanded. The sanctity of time came first, the sanctity of man came second, and the sanctity of space last. Time was hallowed by God; space, the Tabernacle, was consecrated by Moses.<sup>42</sup>

While the festivals celebrate events that happened in time, the date of the month assigned for each festival in the calendar is determined by the life in nature. Passover and the Feast of Booths [Sukkot], for example, coincide with the full moon, and the date of all festivals is a day in the month, and the month is a reflection of what goes on periodically in the realm of nature, since the Jewish month begins with the new moon, with the reappearance of the lunar crescent in the evening sky. In contrast, the Sabbath is entirely independent of the month and unrelated to the moon. Its date is not determined by any event in nature, such as the new moon, but by the act of creation. Thus the essence of the Sabbath is completely detached from the world of space.

The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation, from the world of creation to the creation of the world.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.2.2. MONTHS

Jews count the months by the moon contrary to western worldview that patterns its calendar after the sun. That presents a dilemma. It is predicted that the moon travels more slowly than the sun - - by approximately 48 minutes a day. At the beginning of the lunar month, she sets in the west shortly after sunset, and each day 40 to 45 minutes later. She continues to lag further and further behind the sun (each lunar month being 29-1/2 days) until, at the end of 12 months, the year of the moon is 11 days shorter than the year of the sun, every three years losing a full month of time.

This introduces a special predicament for the religious calendar: Passover needs to be celebrated at the vernal equinox -- springtime and harvest are its natural hallmarks, the resuscitation of nature coinciding with the redemption of the people. But, if the lunar calendar loses a month every three years, Passover would move further each year and fall successively in every season of the year. That is exactly what happens to the Muslim festival of Ramadan.<sup>44</sup>

The sages ingeniously devised a perpetual calendar that would keep the holidays in the right season. The teachers of the Talmud made the adjustment by adding seven leap months (called "Second Adar") in the course of each 19-year cycle, and thereby ingeniously devised a perpetual calendar that would keep the holidays in the approximate season for which they were originally conceived.

The first day of the lunar month, called *Rosh Chodesh*, was originally proclaimed by the central court in Jerusalem after the new moon was visually sighted. After the destruction of Jerusalem,

*Rosh Chodesh* was calculated by the astronomical calendar and it determined on which days the holidays fell.

The Torah designates certain days of the month as beginning the holidays. As people cannot manage 29-1/2 day months, some months are 29 and some are 30 days. The 30-day months have two days of *Rosh Chodesh*, those of 29 days have one day.

In a replaying of the ancient tradition of the court's proclamation of the New Moon, on the Sabbath prior to *Rosh Chodesh* the new month's arrival is now proclaimed during the synagogue service, replete with an announcement of the split second that *Rosh Chodesh* begins. Jews celebrate *Rosh Chodesh* primarily by prayers added to the service.

A marvelous Jewish tradition records that *Rosh Chodesh*, the renewal of the monthly cycle, celebrates womanhood. It is not only a toast to women and a reminder of gratitude due them, but is actually declared a holiday on which women should not work.<sup>45</sup>

This monthly tribute was initiated as a special reward because at Mt. Sinai, unlike the men, women refused to contribute their jewelry to the fashioning of a golden calf -- the starkest demonstration by the recently freed slaves of their lack of faith in God and His servant, Moses.

### **3.2.3 WEEKS**

Jews count the week from Sabbath to Sabbath. The Sabbath is the crown of the week; the crown of Jewish Holy Days; the crown of the Jewish spirit; the crown of the Jewish imagination. The Sabbath is a Queen. It is a foretaste of the very world-to-come. The Day of Atonement, Yom

Kippur, is the one day holier than the weekly Sabbath and its extraordinary sanctity gained it the appellation "Sabbath of Sabbaths."

"More than the Jews have kept the Sabbath," a great writer once said, "the Sabbath has kept the Jews." The sanctity and Sabbath as the stronghold of the Jews was echoed by Heschel thus

It is so rooted in the human condition that no matter how many societies have tried to uproot it, they could not. Some have simply moved the day: Christians to Sunday, Muslims to Friday. The Sabbath stamps its mark on the individual, on the nation, on the week. The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals; and our Holy of Holies is a shrine that neither the Romans nor the Germans were able to burn; a shrine that even apostasy cannot easily obliterate: the Day of Atonement. According to the ancient rabbis, it is not the observance of the Day of Atonement, but the Day itself, the "essence of the Day," which, with man's repentance, atones for the sins of man.<sup>46</sup>

The importance of Sabbath in Judaism, continues Lamm, makes all weekdays to be defined in the Sabbath. In fact, the days do not have names, only numbers, and these numbers all look to number seven, anticipating the arrival of the seventh day, the Sabbath, *Shabbat*. The days from Sunday to Friday are conceived, psychologically as well as physically, as steps leading up to the Shabbat, the "palace in time." He continues, new clothes are worn first on the Shabbat; special foods are prepared for it; important guests are invited to join the family for it; meaningful discussions are delayed until the Shabbat.<sup>47</sup>

Friday, because of its proximity to the Shabbat, virtually loses its own identity; it is simply *Erev Shabbat*, the threshold of the Shabbat, on which even the most important scholars help in the kitchen. Also Friday is a day of tedious work in expectation of the Sabbath.

At sundown on Friday evening, the Sabbath is welcomed in with the lighting of candles by the female head of the house. This is a time of great joy and of God's presence, for it is on this holy day especially that God is with his people Israel. The main observance of the Sabbath is refraining from work. While this clearly means that a person does not practice their weekday job on the Sabbath, it can go far beyond that, depending on a person's level of observance. It may include refraining from driving a car, not cooking food (the special Friday evening meal is prepared before the Sabbath starts), not writing, and in some Orthodox houses, refraining from using electricity.<sup>48</sup>

The Sabbath also provides the time when the family attends services at the synagogue. There are three services that coincide with the three times of prayer: Friday evening, Saturday morning, and Saturday afternoon. The Saturday morning service is the most important because it is then that the reading of the Torah takes place. This is a joyous time, for the Torah contains God's revelation to the people Israel. The readings are arranged so that the whole Torah will be read in just one year. Alongside the Torah, selected readings from the Prophets and the Writings will also be read.

Following the analogy of weekdays as steps leading up to the holy day, at the close of the Shabbat, Jews witness a precipitous drop of excitement -- the Shabbat departs, and life on the lowest rung of the first day of the week has to begin the climb again.

#### **3.2.4. DAYS**

The Jewish day does not begin and end at midnight as does the secular calendar day. Midnight is not a distinguishable astronomic event. In the era before the modern clock, a specific hour of the night could not be precisely known, whereas an hour of the day was easily determined by sighting the location of the sun. Thus, the day had to begin by precise, simple and universally

recognized standards. This meant that the day had to be reckoned either from the beginning of night or the beginning of day.

In Jewish time, the day begins with the onset of night (the appearance of the stars) followed by the morning (which technically begins with the appearance of the North Star). According to some Jewish teachers, night and morning begin with sunset and sunrise respectively. For that is how the Torah describes it: "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day."

For this reason, the Sabbath begins on Friday night and ends with the appearance of the stars on Saturday night. The same is true for the major holidays such as Passover, *Sukkot*, *Shavuot*, *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, the fast day of *Tisha B'Av*, and *Hanukkah* and *Purim*.

Beginning the day with the night is, in a sense, a metaphor of life itself. Life begins in the darkness of the womb, then bursts into the brightness of the light and eventually settles into the darkness of the grave, which, in turn, is followed by a new dawn in the world-to-come.

Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year. Jewish ritual may be characterized as the art of significant forms in time, as architecture of time. Most of its observances—the Sabbath, the New Moon, the festivals, the Sabbatical and the Jubilee year—depend on a certain hour of the day or season of the year.

Jewish daily worship centers around prayer. Fixed prayers are said three times a day: in the morning shortly after rising, in the afternoon, and in the evening shortly before retiring. These are considered to be the times when the Temple once offered sacrifices, and the prayers are now considered replacements for the

sacrifices (for further discussion, see the Religious Life Page). The main elements of the prayers are the *Shema* and the Eighteen Benedictions. The prayers can be said by oneself, or one can join in a *minyan*--a group of at least ten men--which will permit certain additional prayers to be said.<sup>49</sup>

In a well-composed work of art an idea of outstanding importance is not introduced haphazardly, but, like a king at an official ceremony, it is presented at a moment and in a way that will bring to light its authority and leadership. In the Bible, words are employed with exquisite care, particularly those which, like pillars of fire, lead the way in the far-flung system of the biblical world of meaning.

### **3.3. THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN HINDUISM**

Different religions have their own way of history and perhaps predictions of human destiny. Hinduism like other religion also has its history, but Hinduism also has a unique edge in its own unique sense of time and cosmology. It is not just about human destiny, but the destiny of the universe. Hinduism conceives time in almost circular way unlike the Westerners tend to think of time as a straight line going forward forever. Hindu thought sees the universe and time as having been going on beginninglessly (*anadi*). There is no notion of an absolute first creation or beginning to time. However, within this beginninglessness, there are cycles of creation usually thought of in terms of the seed-plant metaphor. Each cycle of creation begins from a seed which sprouts, grows, flowers, withers, and dies, but leaves behind (from the flower) a seed from.<sup>50</sup>

Hinduism has traditionally divided time into units as small as microseconds to units as large as several trillion years. It is a very complex and detailed system, and too much to cover all at once. We are just going to look at a small part of how Hinduism deals with the concept of time. But,



our examination will help us begin to understand how ‘time’ functions into Hindu cosmology. We will start with the *four yuccas*.

The four *yuccas* are blocks of time. Each *yucca* gets consecutively shorter to the first. As one moves from the first, longest yoga, to the next, there is a sharp decline in morality. According to Delhi, each *yucca* is depicted as a bull or a cow which stands on 1, 2, 3, or all four of its legs. In his categorizations, each *yucca* is the block of time which represents and humanity’s place within that period of time:

### **3.3.1 THE SATYR/KRITA YUGA**

The Satyr Yuga, also known as the *Krita Yuga*, is depicted by a cow standing firmly on all four legs. Morality and righteousness are at their apogee in this yoga. Everything is pure and every being acts exactly as they should. The lifespan of human lifespan in this yoga is 400 years, and the yoga itself lasts for 1,780,000 years.

### **3.3.2 THE TRETA YUGA**

In the *Treta Yuga*, the cow is strengthened on its three legs. This foundation makes it quite stable, but less sturdy than it was before. The state of the *Tetra Yuga* is still one of goodness and morality, but in a declining state. The human lifespan is cut down to 300 years, and the yoga lasts 1,296,000 years.

### 3.3.3 THE DVAPARA YUGA

The *Dvapara Yuga* perceives the cow standing precariously on only two legs. Some strong pillars of *dharma* and morality remain, but there are now many things wrong with the world. The human lifespan is half of what it started at, at 200 years. This yoga lasts 864,000 years.

### 3.4. THE KALI YUGA

The *Kali Yuga*, is represented by the cow with only one leg, is unfortunately the age we are said to be living in right now. It is the age of vice and strife, with all virtues degenerating. The human lifespan has dropped to 100 years. This yoga is the shortest of the four, lasting 432,000 years.<sup>51</sup>

According to Janet Delhi, these four yuccas together make a *mahayuga*. A *mahayuga* spans for 4,320,000 years. There are 71 of these *mahayugas* in a *mahavantara*. *Mahavantara*'s are important units of time because they show an age that is ruled over by one *Manu*, the father of humanity. We are currently said to be living in the 7th mahavantara of this cycle of creation.<sup>52</sup>

A *kalpa* is another very important and very large unit of time in Hinduism. One Kalpa is 1000 mahayugas (or 14 mahavantas). One kalpa shows the first 12 hours of the day for the creator god *Brahma*, it takes a second Kalpa to represents the next 12 hours, or the night. *Brahma*, the Creator and Creation, has a life span of 100 "years". Since two Kalpas represent only one day and one night for him, this brings Brahma's life span in human years to an astounding total of 311 trillion years.

Brahma is considered the all and all in everything both in the universe and more. However, Brahma, just like every other being, is also subject to reincarnation. So, even he must come to an

end in this grand cosmic dance. Why? So he can begin anew again. Brahma is always reborn from the naval of the god *Shiva*, the destroyer, often depicted as explosion and fire ... and Brahma's destiny is to create the universe, a new universe, once again.<sup>52</sup>

The Vedas also offer their own speculations regarding time. Time (*kala*) is described in one hymn as the first god, existing in many forms. Time produces the sky and the earth and sets in motion the past, the present, and the future. Time is the king of all and the father of Prajapati. The universe is set forth in motion and reinforced by time. Indeed in the *Atharva Veda* 19:53 and 54, time (*kala*) is celebrated as the primordial power and unifying principle of the universe. In *kala* lie the worlds and the sun. By *kala* was the universe urged forth. *Kala* is Brahman. "Time contains and conquers all, and still continues onwards.

However, the exalted place accorded *kala* in the *Atharva Veda* is always repeated in the Upanishads, and in the *Svetasvatara* the view that everything came out of time is regarded as a heretical doctrine.<sup>53</sup>

In the *Maitri Upanishad*, though, time is given the same high status as in the *Atharva Veda*. In *Maitri* 6:15, it reads,

There are, assuredly, two forms of Brahma: Time and the Timeless. That which is prior to the sun is the Timeless (*a-Kala*), without parts (*a-Kala*). But that which begins with the sun is Time, which has parts. Verily, the form of that which has parts is the year. From the year, in truth, are these creatures produced. Through the year, verily, after having been produced, do they grow. In the year they disappear. Therefore the year, verily, is Prajapati, is Time, is food, is the Brahmaabode, and is Atman. For thus has it been said: 'Tis Time that cooks created things, All things, indeed, in the Great Soul· (*mahatman*).<sup>54</sup>

In what, however, Time is cooked - Who knows that, he the Vedaknow. As in the *Atharva Veda*, time is here given the highest status of being identified with Prajapati, but now also with Brahman and Atman. Verse sixteen goes on to describe embodied time as the great ocean of creatures, planets, and all things. The sun is fittingly identified as the symbol of time.

The discussion of the levels of language in the *Vakyapadiya* is Bhartrhari's notion of the dynamic limiting function of time (*kalasakti*). After setting forth the absolute nature of Brahman as being the one eternal essence of word and consciousness, Bhartrhari then introduces the notion of time as the power or means by which this one unchanging absolute (*Sabdatattva-Brahman*) manifests itself as the dynamic diversity mankind experiences as creation. Time is the creative power of Brahman, and thus is responsible for the birth, death, and continuity of everything in the cosmos. Time is one, but when broken or limited into sequences appears as moments or actions. These segments of time are mentally categorized as seconds or minutes. Such limited segments of time are then mentally unified into day, week, month, and year.

In the same fashion, notions of past, present, and future are developed. When time is thought of as action not yet completed, the notion of the present is established. An action that has been completed is time as past; and an action yet to be completed is time as future. All of ordinary life is sequenced by these three powers of time. Yet all the while, declares Bhartrhari, there is really no sequence at all. From the ultimate viewpoint all three powers of time are constantly present. Time is one. Although the effects of the three powers of time (i.e. past, present, and future) are mutually contradictory, they function without causing any disorder in the cosmos. They are like three paths on which objects move about without any confusion.

Bhartrhari enters into this deep discussion of time in relation to the absolute, not as a fascinating metaphysical aside, but to explain how the unitary Word (*Sabdabrahman*) manifests itself in experience as the diversity of words called language. As a grammarian, he is also providing a metaphysical basis for the experience of the tenses past, present, and future in language. And, it is past and future that have the veiling function of keeping one apart from the absolute eternal present. In religious terms, union with the eternal present is union with the Divine and for Bhartrhari this is the inherent goal toward which all language, all grammar, is reaching. In this way, Bhartrhari offers one philosophical analysis of time from the Hindu viewpoint.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### AN ANALYSIS OF CYCLIC TIME IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

#### 4.1 AFRICA AND CYCLIC NATURE OF TIME

This particular section is spurred by the beliefs of many people, especially of some western scholars that Africans do not have an idea of time; neither do they possess the equivalent time consciousness. A look into the past, even in the pre-colonial time in Africa will go a long way to help to dig out the facts about these assertions. What is the general thought pattern of Africans about time concept?

In contemporary African philosophy controversy has tended to be more about traditional African philosophy itself than in it. Among the issues that have invoked discussions of the latter category, pride of place belongs to the debate about the question of “the African conception of time.” This circumstance is thanks to Mbiti’s treatment of the subject in his *African Religions and Philosophy*. The issue concerns his claims as to the shortness of African prevision.<sup>1</sup>

Levy-Bruhls had previously made a scathing remark on Africans that the primitive languages were lacking in ways of reckoning time and rendering the relations of time. Bruhl also observed that the primitive people had no idea of the future because they cannot abstract from the series of events of experience in-order to conceive a linear order of succession in which such events occur. They cannot abstract from occurrences to order. In his words:

(.....) the primitives’ minds do not represent time exactly as ours do. Primitives do not see, extending indefinitely in imagination, something like a straight line, always homogenous by nature upon which events fall into position, a line on which foresight can arrange them in a uni-linear and irreversible series, and on which they must of necessity occur one after the other. To the primitive time is not, as it is to us, a kind of intellectualized intuition, an ‘order of succession.’<sup>2</sup>

Bruhls like Hegel and Horton before him wanted to show that western concept of time, space, experience and beliefs are scientific and rational which unfortunately the primitives could not. So Mbiti wanted to counter this belief that Africans have a primitive or pre-industrial notion of time witnessed in western mode of thought. He wants to bring to bear the fact that African notion of time; space and being are closer to the original teachings of the bible than that of the western interpretations of the bible.

Achebe, in *Arrow of God* in the discussion between Captain Winterbottom and Tony Clerk, Winterbottom remarked about Africans, the Igbos in particular, "They have no idea of time."

#### **4.1.1 THE REALITY AND UNREALITY OF TIME IN AFRICA**

Africans are said to be reductionist because they believe that if you take away the matter and motion (events), you have taken away space and time. Africans do not allow empty time. Time requires change and time cannot be measured without there being changes. We measure time by observing changes in some properties such as the physical location of the hand of the clock. As reductionists they believe that time exists only if there are some events to fill it. It was the likes of Aristotle and Leibniz that argued that time does not exist independent of events that occur in it. This position somewhat suggests that time in Africa is relational because all talks that appear to be about time can be somehow be reduced to talk about temporal relations among things and events. Africans may have adopted this reductionist posture of because of its conceptual and epistemological relevances.

According to Markosian, conceptually, time is nothing more than a system of temporal relations among things and events, so that the idea of time without change turns out to be incoherent. Also epistemologically, we could never have any reason to posit a period of empty time and even if

there was such a period, we could not have any way of knowing about either its existence or its length.<sup>3</sup>

Classical relationists like Leibniz are of the notion that time emerges from events and if there were no events, then there would be no time. This view in my understanding is what drew Mbiti to opine that "For the Akamba and (other Africans), Time is not an academic concern; it is simply a composition of events that have occurred, those which are taking place now and those which will immediately occur."<sup>4</sup>

The intention of Mbiti here is to establish that the African does not perceive time in an abstract manner like the European. It is events and not mathematics which constitute time in Africa.

Africans apprehend time differently. For them, it is a much looser concept, more open, elastic, and subjective. It is man who influences time, its shape, course and rhythm (man acting, of course, with the consent of gods and ancestors). Time is even something that man can create outright, for time is made manifest through events, and whether an event takes place or not depends, after all, on man alone. If two armies do not engage in a battle, then that battle will not occur (in other words, time will not have revealed its presence, will not have come into being). Time appears as a result of our actions, and vanishes when we neglect or ignore it.<sup>5</sup>

A survey of some of cultures in Africa shows that time is simply a composition of events. This work will take a look of some selected cultures to establish this fact.

#### **4.1.2 REALITY OF TIME IN IGBO CULTURE**

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, is replete with a lot of references to time concept on Igbo African thought. According to Babalola and Alokun; "in page 11, he observes that during the planting season, Okonkwo plant daily on his farm from *Cock crow until chicken went to roost*. In page 19, he noted that "the drought continues for *eight market weeks...*" In page 22, he wrote that

Ikemefuna was sick for *three market weeks*. Again, in page 23, he wrote that Ikemefuna was at Umofia at the end of the *care free season, between harvest and planting*. He also opined in page 27 that, “yam, the king of crops, was a very exacting king. For three or four moons, it demanded hard work and constant attention from cockcrow till the chicken went back to roost”.<sup>6</sup>

Achebe’s use of reference to time is unique. His apt use of language with references to time was phenomenal. He showcased the people’s consciousness of time. For instance emphasis to moon, harvest, planting seasons and so on. An observation one could see in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is that in *Africa, time is tied to events*.

Onwubiko in *African Thought and Culture* collaborated with others to observe that, the Africans also make use of market days to indicate definite time and use of weeks to denote cyclic time, he observed succinctly that historic time is determined by reference to landmarks in the life of the community, to contemporaneous events or by recourse to a genealogical chat. The African can make allusion to any period in their history, no matter how distant especially wars, famine, celebrations etc. When events that took place in the "infinite past" are referred to, the Africans use symbolic expressions such as "when lizards were few and far apart" or *mgbe ezi di n'ukwu ukwa*. The Igbos has a proverb that says “he who has no house has no lizards”. Therefore, the saying - 'when lizards were few and far apart' refers to when there were few people on earth.<sup>7</sup>

The Igbos also categorizes time into human and ecological times. The human category of time involves the social moments of man’s life span like birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, title taking, death, burial and funeral. Under the human category of time, there is subdivision of the community time which is marked by community collectively. This periods are marked by

activities like New yam festivals, Masquerade outing, deity ritual and so on. The ecological times are observed by different seasons which by religious activities example of this period are *izumuo* (ritual week) *Onwaolu* (period of farming) *Onwairiji* (the yam festival period).<sup>8</sup>

#### **4.1.3 REALITY OF TIME IN YORUBA CULTURE**

John Ayoade in his article, *Time in Yoruba Thoughts* made a more critical analysis of time in Yoruba culture. According to Ayoade, time is made up of events whether they have taken place, occurring or yet to take place. Time is real only when experienced. “A Time without events makes little sense.”<sup>9</sup>

Time is seen as a property of things or events. Time is meaningful to the traditional Yoruba when “it is related to whether, seasons, natural phenomena around them.” In this sense, Ayoade observes that time is relative to a person’s reckoning of it. This element of subjectivity of time is understandable, especially, because traditional Yoruba society was a non-industrialized society, agrarian, communal and peasant oriented. Time in such a society was reckoned in tandem with the socio-economic conveniences of the societal structure. Hence, the traditional Yoruba society hardly possessed the mechanical time measurement devices that give precise time measurement as mathematically given in clock. Time in this sense is an objective phenomenon determinable by what the clock accurately measures. Time in traditional Yoruba societies was neither mathematical nor numerical. “It is simply time as experienced by the people in relation to events around them.” Time is either estimated individually or environmentally. Individually, the biological growth circles of humans are observed as the determinants of a given period (*asiko*)<sup>10</sup>. “The Yoruba periodize the age of an individual and this periodization is meant to be of universal application within the Yoruba community.” For instance, the periods are identified as *ikoko* (new

born), *irakoro* (crawler stage), *omo irinse* (toddler), *omode* (child), *odo* (youth), *agba* (elderly youth), *arugbo* (old age). Across these stages of humanbiological development, an individual's biological growth state is used as a measure of time. Human time reckoning is cyclical. Its beginning leads to an end and each end, through transformation, leads to a new beginning. The starting point is conception then to death and finally to being reborn or ancestor hood. The Yorùbá believe that death is not an end in itself; rather it is a means. Death is a means that permits life to degenerate and regenerate either in a new life as a newborn or in afterlife as an ancestor. Thus, besides the idea of time in past and present forms, the Yoruba understands "time-future even extends beyond the end of this life to an afterlife."<sup>11</sup>

#### **4.1.4 REALITY OF TIME IN TRADITIONAL ANKORE AND NILOTIC TRIBE OF UGANDA.**

Before discussion is concluded on this aspect, it is expedient for us to see how Mbiti has portrayed the concept of time among some tribes in the East Africa, during the pre- colonial era. In his writing, among the Ankore of Uganda, the day in the traditional set up is reckoned according to its significant events. To these people, cattle are the ultimate thing when quantifying wealth. Therefore the day is reckoned in reference to events pertaining to cattle:

6 am – Milking time

12 noon- Time for cattle and people to rest

2pm – The time for cattle to drink water

5pm – The time when cattle return home

Time, to this people, makes meaning when attached to these events, for example, the statement that "I will go out as early as milking time". Another example is that, "the elders of the village

will meet at the time when cattle return home. Mbiti also made reference to the Latuka tribe of Sudan to show how events govern the approximate reckoning of months:

1. October is called sun, because the sun is very hot at that time.
2. December is called give your uncle water, because water is very scarce at this period.
3. February is called let them dig because it is this time that people begins to prepare their field for planting.
4. June is called "Dirty Mouth, because children can now begin to eat the new grain, and in so doing get their mouths dirty. Every month of the year is named by the people in the like manner. It makes it convenient for them to reckon time in relation to events that way. For example, my daughter's wedding will take place during the "dirty mouth" period.

Accounts of other African groups support this view. Of the Neur tribe, Pritchard says that "time is simply a relation between activities."<sup>12</sup> For the Nuer "the daily timepiece is the cattle clock;"<sup>13</sup> that is, their day is divided up in accordance with the activities relating to their cattle. Much the same thing has been said of the Logbara (Lugbara), a "Sudanic" people of north-western Uganda and north eastern Zaire. For them time is composed of events, which exist apart from anything that happens in them.

In traditional Africa "time" does not really exist apart from human activity; time is created by human beings. Thus it is frequently measured in terms of social and economic activities such as the market cycle of four or five days. Each of these days is named for the location of the market that is held on that day. Longer periods of time are counted by some African groups in terms of successive "age sets," and are given the names of these sets.

But how true is the fact that Africans are reductionists and that time is simply a composition of events. Is it only events that should determine time?

From available literatures, it shows that it is not only event that constitutes time. According to Gyekye, time is not only constituents of events but rather time as a concept is associated with the phenomena of change, process and events. He explains that the phenomena of change and events occur only within time. The absence of these phenomena or any one of them has no effect on the reality of time however. Neither change nor process nor events can therefore constitute African awareness of time. Time is not a composition of events in African conception rather, it is objective metaphysical reality within which events, process and change take place. Thus, “Time is distinct from and independent of the events that occur within it.”<sup>15</sup>

Gyekye advances that through the principle which confers upon the humans their destiny, and through this theory he claims that time is an influence on personality and the ‘personal characteristics of people reveal their consciousness of time as an element in individual destiny’<sup>16</sup>

Gyekye justifies this claim with some everyday expression that result from change and motion. For instance, in Akan language, “Time flies” and “Time changes”<sup>17</sup> point to the abstract dimension of time, while “no one reigns forever on the throne of time” points to time as a concrete reality. Gyekye employs these to support his thesis of a three dimensional view, as well as the existence of infinite future. Opong observes that the objective existence for the African is to talk about some events as before, now or after. According to him, Gyekye supports this claim with an example from the use of language. Akan language has definite verb tenses for different dimensions of time. Akans have precise vocabulary items such as before, now or after. Akan date



events as earlier than (*ansa*) now or presently (*sersei*) and after or later than (*akyi*). By inference from Akan's precise verbs tenses modes, Gyekye concludes that three dimensional view of time is an existential reality in the African conceptual scheme.

#### **4.2. MEASUREMENT OF TIME IN AFRICAN CULTURE.**

Songs, software, and words are not empirical objects but their effects are felt in physical objects and processes. Likewise time is not empirically seen but it can be found in the process of physical objects. When times are measured, it is not intended to just measure an object or substance. Time is composed of times, but time is neither a process nor an event. This is actually contrasting to African conception. If time actually is real, then we are measuring something that is abstract in the sense of being pervasive or global. It occurs everywhere. But it not universal, it is not the same for each person, which is a surprising implication of the theory of relativity.

According to Dowden, there are five important characteristics of time.

- 1) For any event , time fixes when it occurs
- 2) For any event, it fixes that event's duration
- 3) For any event, it fixes what other events occur simultaneously with it.
- 4) For any pair of non-simultaneous events, it fixes which one happens first.
- 5) It has an arrow pointing from past events toward future events.<sup>18</sup>

The first four of these five features are all relative which the implication of the special theory of relativity is. They can be different in different reference frames. But within a single reference frame, these are still major characteristics of time.

#### 4.2.1 MEASUREMENT OF TIME IN IGBO CULTURE

From the legends there are four corners of the earth-represented by the four market days. Eke corresponds to the East; Orié to the West; Afo to the North and Nkwo to the south. These names came from the mythology of Nri Kingdom. Eri, the founder of Nri kingdom who was said to have come down from the sky and went to break the mystery of time and on his journey had to salute and counted the four days by the names of the spirits that govern them, hence the names of the spirits *eke*, *orie*, *afo* and *nkwo* became those of the days of the week. These days are in tandem with the four cardinal points, *Afo* corresponds to North, *Nkwo* to South, Eke to East and Orié to West. These spirits, who were fishmongers, were sent down by Chukwu (Great God) in order to establish markets throughout Igboland which they did by selling fish.<sup>19</sup>

Okodo has a counter etymology to the above, according to him, before the Eze nri found the four market days; history has it that there were no names for the days in the Igbo tradition. It was God that sent Eze nri four strangers who refused to tell him their names. Each of the four men carried a basket. The Eze nri, however, in his nature of love allowed them to pass a night. In the night he (Eze nri) sent supernatural rat, and the rat jumped into the basket of the first among them and one other called him *Eke* to inform him of the rat, and the rat jumped into the second one's basket and another called him *Oye* to tell him of the rat in the basket. It was in the same way that he learnt the names of the third being *Afo* and the fourth being *Nkwo*. In the morning the stranger asked him to give the names of the days of the week and that markets would open on those days. It was stated that the Eze Nri named the names of the days of the week serving as names of market days since 1889.<sup>20</sup>

The sun and the moon go through the earth in different directions (across the length and breadth of the earth). The meeting point between the movement of the sun and the moon symbolizes the center of the earth-the meeting point of all forces (natural and supernatural). This center which is a constant symbolizes cosmic equality. Also in Igbo traditional setting, time is reckoned in an abstract terms. They do not see time in numerical and calendric manner of the western calibrated form of 12 noon, Monday nor 2017. They use experienced or empirical terms like sunset, when chicken return to roost, at cockcrow, during new yam festival last year, at the beginning of raining season two years ago. The Igbos measure time with motion-the moon phase, the season, night and day, shadows across sundial, ocean tide among others. It is not uncommon for children to use evaporation of drops of water or spit. The motion associated with these events is regular and orderly and therefore constitutes index of time associated with science. Space is measured with foot lengths, strides, landmarks or time of journey (similar to using light year as an estimate of distance). According to Osuji, the Igbo concept of time is both linear and cyclic. She used the age grade system and the idea of reincarnation or cyclic agricultural seasons to buttress the indication of both linear and cyclic conceptions of time. But she was quick to point out that this concept of time is in contrast with the atomistic nature of time popularized by Newton's calculus which conceives of time as a sum of infinitesimally small but discrete units. Within this linear or cyclic dimension, it is interesting to note that points or periods in time are regarded as intervals along the linear continuum or the four corners of earth. On the Igbo space, she believes that space is associated with continuity, dimensionality, connectedness and orientability. These are especially manifested at cross-roads, market places, and the interaction of the sky (elu), the earth (Ala) and the underworld (Ala Mmuo). Osuji's assumption that time is both linear and cyclic must have also arisen from this notion;

The Igbo also hold the view that things/events/people move through space-time while space- time remains constant-hence seasons come and go, people live and die, the sun rises and sets but there is *Ndudu gandunile, ebebe ebebe* (world without end).<sup>22</sup>

Also Igbos have their own version of Calendar which is contrasted to the western standard, this calendar is known as *iguaro* which is based on the lunar cycles where each complete circle is one month calculated of twenty eight days by which thirteen moons (months) plus one extra day make up one year. What the calendar indicates are natural movements. The day is determined by the rotation of the earth on its axis; the month represents the time or period the moon moves round the earth; while the year follows the revolution of the earth around the sun. All time reckoning is based on these natural phenomena since their movements are constant.<sup>23</sup>

The exact number of months that sums up Igbo calendar year is another burden unresolved among Igbo researchers. Achebe is of the opinion that there are twelve months in Igbo calendar year. This he pointed out when he talked about Ezeulu the chief priest who eats one sacred yam every month for the year. According to Achebe, “Ezeulu went into his barn and took down one yam from the bamboo platform built specifically for the twelve sacred yams”<sup>24</sup> Achebe also said that it is the twelfth sacred yam that ends the year and welcomes the New Year marked with new yam feast in Umuaro community. According to him, “the new yam feast-‘by our reckoning’, Obiesili took up, present moon is the twelfth since the last feast.”<sup>25</sup>

From Achebe’s writing it shows that the twelfth months is one year because he wrote “twelfth month since the last new yam feast. New yam, and after the feast, the Ulu’s priest Ezeulu would be eating one yam till the twelfth yam which ends the year. After the twelfth yam comes another new yam feast that begins another new year.”

Ekwunife contrasted his view with the above by noting that the Igbo traditional year is made up of ten months. According to Ekwunife, “the year is divided into ten major lunar months; each month being dedicated to one or more Igbo spiritual beings.”<sup>26</sup>

These ten months are the ones that are backed or marked with ritual feast to the spiritual beings.

This spiritual backing was adumbrated by Idigo in his writing thus:

It should be noted that on every month of the year there is a feast celebrated in most communities in Igboland especially in Aguleri. They count ten months in a year and discount the first two months (January and February). Which are called “onwa ntufu” (lost months) There are no important feast kept.<sup>27</sup>

Osuji meanwhile alluded that there are thirteen months in Igbo calendar, and these calendars consists of a week (*IZU*) made up of four (4) days (*Ubochi*); a month (*Onwa*) of 28 days or seven native weeks (*IZU asaa*); a year or *afo* made up of 91 weeks (*IZUS*) or 13 months (*Onwa*). Incidentally, *Onwa* means moon in the Igbo language so the month is a lunar month. Below are the Igbo week (*Izu*), month (*Onwa*) and year (*Afo*, or *Eye*):

The Priests of each community are the time keepers, and the process of time keeping is called *iguafu* (also called *aro* or *eye*). The lunar months dictate major feasts and celebrations in Igboland as it is in most other African ethnic groups.

No	Months	Gregorian equivalent
	(Onwa)	
1	Onwa Mbu	(February-March)
2	Onwa Abuo	(March-April)

3	Onwa Ife Eke	(April-May)
4	Onwa Ano	(May-June)
5	Onwa Agwu	(June-July)
6	Onwa Ifejioku	(July-August)
7	Onwa Alom Chi	( August to early September)
8	Onwa Ilo Mmuo	(Late September)
9	Onwa Ana	(October)
10	Onwa Okike	(Early November)
11	Onwa Ajana	(Late November to December)
12	Onwa Uzo Alusi	(January to early February)

Aside the calculation of time according to months, Igbo's also calculate time according to the four market days matrix. This view is shared by scholars like Ufearo who also shared that the Igbo year is made up of thirteen months,

The Igbo four market days are vital tool as far as the knowledge and calibration of time in Igbo land is concerned. The four-market days share as the matrix upon which the Igbo calendar is built. Unlike the Roman calendar, the Igbo calendar has four days in a week, seven weeks in a month and thirteen months in a year. However, the overall synchronization of the calendar in Igbo is still an object of debate.<sup>28</sup>

There is equally a spiritual dimension in Igbo traditional setting which is observed from the names that parents give to their children as a mark of the market days when that particular child was born. Names like *Nweke, Nwoye, Nwafo, Nwankwo, Afoka, Oyeka, Nkwoka, Okoye, Okeke, Okafo, Okonkwo*, etc. are given to the male folks whereas names like *Mgboye, Mgbeke, Mgbafo, Ekemma, Oyemma*, etc. These names are sometimes gotten from the market days on which the child was born which is believed has a spiritual root in the life and destiny of that child.

#### **4.2.3 MEASUREMENT OF TIME IN YORUBA CULTURAL SETTING**

In the dimension of environment, time is measured either through celestial-cosmic cycle, the terrestrial ecological cycle, or both. While the celestial-cosmic time mechanism is used in adding up the day and the months, the terrestrial-ecological time consists of mechanism for knowing smaller units of time such as minutes and hours of the day. According to Ayoade, the day is based on the cosmological facts of the sun and the moon. The sun is used in guessing the time in the mid-morning and afternoon by interpreting the length and shape of shadows. The size and position of the moon is used in telling time in the evening and mid-night. Also in terrestrial-ecological time, some ecological catalyts are used in measuring time. The twinkling of the eye of a crab is the smallest unit of time similitude to seconds (*iseju kan*). The twinkling of the human eye is used in estimating a minute, which the Yoruba called *iseju*. While there is no ecological agent designating an hour, the crowing of the cock is a sign of a new day while the early sound of the dove is an indication of morning. The perching of the chicken is a sign of the end of the day.

The day in Ayoade's estimation is divided into seven time periods: *oru* (late night), *afemojumo* (dawn), *owuro* (morning), *iyaleta* (noon), *osan* (afternoon), *irole* (sunset), and *ale* (early night).

It is important to note that day greetings in Yoruba culture correspond with these time periods.

According to him, *eka a'ro* is a social greeting after early sunrise which is usually referred to as morning. *Eku iyaleta* is a greeting during the noon. Good afternoon is called *eka a'san* while the greeting between the roughly period of 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. is known as *eku irole*.

Unlike the timing of a day that is cosmologically and ecologically interpreted, the Yoruba understanding of week days is a social construct having much to do with economic, social and religious intimations. In his exact words;

a Sunday is called *Ojò-àìkú* (day of immortality'); Monday is *Ojò-ajé* (day of profit); Tuesday is *Ojò-ìṣégún* (day of victory); Wednesday is called *Ojò-rú* (day of sacrifice); Thursday is known as *Ojò-bò* (day of creation); while a Friday is called *Ojò-ètì* (day of deadlock) and Saturday is *Ojò-àbáméta* (day of consociation).<sup>29</sup>

Ayoade observes that there are some salient points to note in the traditional Yoruba understanding of the days of the week. One, names of week days is an indication of some of their most fundamental beliefs such as immortality, industriousness, rituals and sacrifice, cosmology, and solidarity. Second, the names of Yoruba week days are not correspondingly concomitant to greetings as it is the case in the time of a day. Relatedly, it is less known among the traditional Yoruba naming their children according to the specific day of the week which such child was born. Rather, events and circumstances surrounding a child's birth are the signposts of what name a child bears. The situation is, however, different in contemporary Yoruba societies



as children are named on the basis of the days that they were born, if so wished by the parents or family members.

The next unit of time which the Yorubas derive from celestial cosmic factors is the month, which is based upon the waxing and waning of the moon. A month is called *oṣù* (a word derived from *oṣùpa*, moon). The months in Yoruba culture are: *Oṣù-ṣeṣe* (January), *Oṣù - erélé* (February), *Oṣù -erénà* (March), *Oṣù-igbe* (April), *Oṣù-èbìbì* (May), *Oṣù-okúdù* (June), *Oṣù-agemo* (July), *Oṣù- ògún* (August), *Oṣù-owéré* (September), *Oṣù-owàrà* (October), *Oṣù-belu* (November), *Oṣù-òpe* (December). Some of these months are named after some deities and some type of crop farming. Thus, religious motivations and activities of deities such as *Oṣù- agemo* (the month of *Agemo*), *Oṣù- ògún* (the month of *ògún*) are important factors in month-tagging and in the activities that are undertaken in such months. Yet, some other months are named after economic intimations, e.g. *Oṣù-òpe* (month of surplus palms) while some are effects of social constructs.

According to Ayoade also, a lunar-phenomenological year that contains twelve months is used in traditional Yoruba culture. The Yoruba recognize two seasons: rainy and dry. The rainy season is a season of planting and growth. This planting season for him is subdivided into maize season and yam season. The dry season is a season of harvesting and storage. The year in Yoruba culture, therefore, consists of the completion of these seasonal circles. Such an understanding of year is not strictly determined by the completion of day's numbers and it is therefore incognizant of the leapful year dichotomy in Western culture.

Ayoade writes:

Harvest and the crop seasons do not correspond to the Judaeo-Christian year, which definitely is a very recent innovation. Neither do the Yorubas have any means of distinguishing a leap year from the other years. The operative distinction which they

have is between a male year (*Odun ti o ya ako*) and a female year (*Odun ti a ya abo*). The point of difference between these two types of years is in the level of peace and safety to life during the particular year. Thus, a year in which many disasters happen and many deaths occur is regarded as a male year, while a year of relative peace and plenty is a female year.<sup>30</sup>

It can be seen that the in Yoruba traditional societies just like the rest of Africa, that time is based on historical events important to them like famine, wars, births and deaths. There is creativity and originality that is lacking to invent an alternative means but they are contented to make due what nature has provided. This is evident to the fact that the traditional Yoruba people were not educated to read and write and this was a serious impediment to their creativity.

#### **4.2.4 MEASUREMENT OF TIME IN LUGBARA TRADITION**

The Lugbara's live on the watershed between the Nile and Congo rivers in Northwest Uganda And Northeast of Congo. They belong to the Madi-Moru group, an eastern Sudanic people. Their language is monosyllabic and tonal. Like all other African traditions reviewed, the Lugbara mode of time measurement is mainly by means of events. They use regular or events as a reference point to objectively mark day to day assignments.

The Lugbara use certain expressions of time to refer to days, months, years and periods beyond the year. Some cosmic structures are used to measure the day or night, these can be through the use of the sun, or through the activities of animals like the cock, the goat, the buffalo, the termites and the flies. Other ways of measuring the day among the Lugbara are through human behaviors mainly through eating where specific temporal terms like *obuti* (morning) and *ondre* (evening).<sup>32</sup>

The process of using the sun to measure daytime is seen in some questions about such time like;

Etu ca si ya?( How far has the sun arrived?)

Etu ca ngopi ya? (which position has the sun reached?)

Etu atu ngopi ya? (how far has the sun ascended?)

Etu aga ngopi ya? (how far has the sun  
gone?)<sup>33</sup>

The verbs used here like *ca* to arrive, *atuto* ascend, *aga* to pass are implied. The question should be *etu si ya?* Or *etu ngopi?* namely, how much sun? Contemporarily, the question refers to the number on the watch dial. The temporal expressions used to mark the period of a month use the moon to designate it. Equally some expressions of the year employs some of agricultural activities like rain and events characteristics of dry season like the heat, the ashes of the plain and some stars.

The traditional time among the Lugbara can be said to be anthropocentric i.e it pivots on the human person, but it is on the person who has to be understood not as an isolated individual but rather as a social being. Hence time is essentially personal and communal. It is time that requires the attention to the person and to the community for it to be understood and managed.

The meaning of event and the temporal expression is understood both from the event and from the person referring it.

The reference to the person is easily understood when one considers for instance that the sunrise or sunset, the phases of the moon, the fall of the rain, and the agricultural activities are not taking place always and everywhere at the same time. Consequently, they cannot be perceived by everyone in the same manner. Harvesting is not an objective exercise in the sense that weather condition and agricultural tradition vary from place to place. Hence, one has to know the person and his/her place and traditions in order to understand the temporal expressions that such a person is using. This personal knowledge is particularly

essential when a temporal expression is not established but newly constructed by the interlocutor at the moment it is used.<sup>34</sup>

The temporal expression among Lugbara shows that they are not uniformly spread in the daytime, monthly and yearly times. A particular period of the month or of the year used some expressions more than the other periods. Expressions marking daytime is concentrated at the beginning and at the end of the day especially at sunset and sunrise especially between 5.00 and 8.00am and 5.00 am and 8.00pm respectively. Also in relation to the year, greater number of temporal expression relate to the month of March from rainy season begins and month of August when the rainy season begins after a short lull and the month of November and December marking the end of the rainy season and beginning of dry season. The time of the year that has more temporal expression are those that feature “intensive activity”. Here lesser number of expressions occur in April and May, when work in the fields is coming to an end but harvest time is still ahead. This season is marked by hunger. Months of September and October repeat the situation of May but without threat of hunger. Months of January and February have a low number of temporal expression because they are the height of dry season, when human activities diminish.<sup>35</sup>

From this, it is seen that temporal expression goes with greater activity. Greater activities generate more temporal expressions. Human activities influence the sense of time. Increase of works needs more time to accomplish it, time is measured and managed in terms of action.

#### 4.2.5 MEASUREMENT OF TIME IN BASOTHO TRADITIONAL SETTING.

The temporal analysis of time in Basotho was reflected in Mohatlane article as a life-view and the socio-cultural situation of the Basotho community. Mohatlane used a Moshoeshe le Baruti which is a historical drama which shows how the missionaries arrived in Lesotho and how their actions have relevance to actual time and future time. In that drama, there are characters that create time, or whose roles were governed by time. Act 1: scene 5. Page: *Kaotla. Letsatsi le hlahlamela dithaba*.<sup>36</sup>

This assertion was made at the court which means that the “sun is setting”. Here there is a specification of time in the stage direction. The time specification in Sesotho shows that *kgotla*(court) holds in the morning and not any other time as introduced by the missionaries. This event is used to create time communication among the Basothos . Time is employed here to show the culture and the worldview of the Basotho as African people. Time is bound up and utilized in the culture of the people. The sun is setting can be a time indicator, *letsatsi le hlahlamela dithaba* this is to show that it was not morning but afternoon that the sun starts to set.<sup>37</sup>

Act 3 scene shows a character expressing displeasure of the non- utilization of the passing time. Mosadi (Kolbe): in page 38 remarked: *Efela e se e le bosiu ha e se ele hora ya borobong tjena*. Kolbe’s wife (it is indeed very late as it is already nine o’clock). It could be deduced here that there is departure of past ways of experiencing time. She demonstrated the importance of time in their attitude. Time here reflects the specificity of time and shows why other events in the sense is possible. Also a modern character here pursues a linear dimension of time. i.e from

one point to the other. Two set of people here are the modernist who are more concerned with future event and the traditionalists who are conservative in the use of social time.

Also among the Tiv's of Africa, "time of day" is usually indicated by the sun or by the activity carried out at that time. The day is not, separated into units which may be counted. According to Bohannan, Tiv who are acquainted with the use clocks use the word ahwa for "hour," which, outside the fact that it resembles English word, is the plural of ihwa, meaning "mark" or "tally." So, when they count "hours" they are actually counting marks on the watch rather than artificial units of time. Longer periods of time may be measured by the cycles of the moon and the sun. Actually, many African peoples have counted in terms seasons rather than of "years," because the former are more concrete, more definitely connected with noticeable changes in activity.<sup>38</sup>

It is true that the exposition done above is all about time measurement in traditional African setting. But a closer look at African modern society, there seems to be more or less an emergence of new system and a clear departure from the past. It is now evident that cock crowing and the early morning bird songs has changed baton with watches and clocks. The culture of estimated timing gradually transfuse into time accuracy afforded by the foreign medium of time measurement. Cyclical time is now being replaced, and sometimes, adapted to linear time. The shift from cynical and phenomenological perception of time to the linear view of time now allows the use of calendar and other advance means of time calculation for retrospection not only into distant past but also project into long future. In the process of adaptation, contemporary African society has invented a system of observing time in accordance with the traditional numerical language.

### **4.3. TRANSMISSION OF TIME IN AFRICAN CULTURE**

Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior or a system for transmitting or exchange of information.<sup>39</sup> For time to be understood there must be a communication or transmission of it for it to be understood. Different cultures in Africa have a unique way of communicating this important key concept for easy comprehension and application. It means that Africa is doomed if she can not transmit her precious value. It then becomes an urgent task that time is clearly understood for express communication. Where there is no clear expression of time, people perish and grope in darkness. This work attempts in this section to review some cultures to know how time is expressed in their individual culture and then synthesize on what will be obtainable for the whole of Africa.

#### **4.3.1 TRANSMISSION OF TIME IN TRADITIONAL YORUBA CULTURE**

Traditional Yorùbá view of time is replete with complexities and there are some words that needed to be understood which expresses the idea of time in Yorùbá culture. Words like *àkókò*, *ìgbà*, *asiko* are often to refer to time without any conceptual contrast. But when analyzed atomically, it is possible to decipher some distinctions among them.

*Àkókò* means a time-around 'T', where 'T' represents an event of thing. Such time, it must be noted, is not specific but an approximate. *Ìgbà* means a period or era while *asiko* simply means a definite season. Each of these conceptual categories is seem same with time, and could be sometimes overlapping; the scope of each differs according to the contexts in usage.<sup>40</sup>

The Yoruba notion of time is usually transmitted through proverbs, folklores, which represent the communal nature of the Yorubas. Sophie Oluwole used oral text to discuss the complex nature of time in Yoruba culture. For her, the Yoruba conception of time is labyrinth, multidimensional and complex though “not seen as something aloof to man’s day-today experiences in the world.” For example she provides the following proverbs on the Yoruba notion of time:

i. *Ti won ban pa oni, ki ola tele won ki o lo wo bi won o ti sin*

(When today is being dispatched, tomorrow should be in attendance to see where the corpse is laid)

i). *Ogbon odun ni, were eemi* (wisdom this year is folly next time)

ii) *Igba o lo bi orere, aye o lo bi opa ibon* (no life span extends ad infinitum; a life time is not as straight as the barrel of a gun).<sup>41</sup>

The first proverbs indicate the circularity dimension of time among the traditional Yoruba. The understanding is that the future will continue to repeat the present and that the knowledge of the present is important for the knowledge of the future. This network of present and the future shows that the Yoruba do not necessarily have nostalgic attachment to the past, it stresses that today’s experiences are lessons and a direction for the future.



Proverb (ii) stresses the fluidity of time and the reality of changes as a constant feature of existence. It acknowledges the continuum of time from the present to the future and does not necessarily indicate the idea of time circularity.

Another similar and related proverb on the non rigid perception of time among the Yoruba according to Oluwole is: *Akoko ko duro deenikan; mu'ra si ise, ojo nlo* meaning time speeds; do what is needful at its prime because the day awaits nobody.

This proverb for her is a motivational call charging the maximum use and value of time. The proverbs show that “without a fixed end point, the relationship between past, present and future in the Yoruba reality shifts in a specific, yet fluid manner.”<sup>42</sup>

Proverb (iii) is a slight demonstration of how the challenges of life affect variations in epochal time characterization; it is also a paradoxical expression of the Yoruba belief in eternity without a linear cosmic end of history.

Fayemi observes here that if we critically view proverbs (i) and (ii) They tend to be incompatible as the former emphasizes circularity and that the later stresses fluidity; but, proverb (iii) expresses an awareness of relativity of time with its implicit inspirational calmness in the face of life difficulties and challenges.<sup>42</sup>

Among the Yoruba also, poetry is also used to transmit time for lucid and clear understanding. Discussed below is a traditional poetry found in Yoruba funeral song from Abeokuta in Western Nigeria. Here is the old man and the river of time. But the young have become the big palm-fruit, bright and golden, which bow down the parent tree with their weight and growth, and at last kill it. The whole poem according to Moore is a gentle and lovely parable of death and renewal:

I had three friends. One asked me to sleep on the mat.

One asked me to sleep on the ground.

One asked me to sleep on his breast.

I decided to sleep on his breast.

I saw myself carried on a river.

I saw the king of the river and the king of the sun.

There in that country I saw palm trees

So weighed down with fruit

That the trees bent under the fruit

And the fruit killed them.<sup>43</sup>

It is exactly this kind of concern with images of death and renewal that necessitate the gathering up everything of him in the moment of death, so that he may carry it beyond and leave the world completely as he entered it. Even the could cut from him and buried at his birth, the foreskin cut from him at circumcision, are part of his living self. The poet longs to be present at his funeral so that he may await, in completeness, the renewal of life which gives death its meaning:

When we make our grand finale

Will there be souls in this side of eternity

Who will wish us fulfillment

and watch the holy prostration

and bend and anoint the sinning heads?

Cannot we join the ceremony of our death  
and partake of the rituals?  
Cannot we carry the remainder of our circumcision  
away with us beyond?  
The wind blows on the graves  
sweeping the sparky debris away  
cannot we find where they buried our birth chord ?<sup>44</sup>.

#### **4.3.2 TRANSMISSION OF TIME IN IGBO WORLDVIEW**

A very important human obligatory activity that shows how time is transmitted in Igbo land and Africa at large is the activities of village town Criers. They are one of the traditional medium of communication to relay the exact period, time and seasons of an event. The voice of the town crier or village Gong man is more often heard in the early hours of the morning preceded by the sound of a gong or twilight of the day. He announces important meetings, ceremonies, messages and imminent troubles. The town crier is “a significant village “broadcaster’ who invites the elders to decide and make policies for the progress of the society. They make available their decisions to the village masses for implementation. The town crier is always a man “overflown” with news and also serve as traditional communication link between the legal head and the villagers. He is being regarded as the society’s journalist and time keeper. The effectiveness of the town crier usually lies in his oratory skills and thorough knowledge of the community norms, times, values and heritages.

Among the Igbos he is traditionally called *Onye Ogene* and information are sent across the town by *ogene* or *ekwe*. The town criers went from village to village and town to town beating the *ogene* to get attention and delivering messages at the same time. Sound of *ogene* early in the morning usually means that there is something very important which requires the attention of the whole community summoning men and women, young and old to assemble in the town's central square or *Igwe's* palace for various announcements. According to Umeogu, they are the official legal and the traditional announcers of information or any other issues of importance to the community as a whole. They are more or less be likened to the broadcasters of their **time** with their gong and voice as their broadcasting station.<sup>46</sup>

To show the seriousness of time that is attached to time here, sanctions are attached to anyone who did not harken to the summons of the town crier. The time specified for events are repeated over and over to make sure that people are kept abreast of the time of the events. Events that coincided with market day and which also falls on Sunday is referred as 'Uka orie.' So if Igbos and Africa as a whole is seen as primitives, who has no knowledge of time is true, then they would never have imagined creating the office of the town criers to guide them in their planning and compliance of the people to their decisions.

Folk tales was also prevalent in Igbo traditional setting to showcase the existence of time then. Here elders pass stories about great events, men and occasionally women who left their footprints in the sand of time, war and its aftermath; and explanations for natural phenomena. The art form in folk media includes festival, storytelling, myths, proverbs, parables and a host of others. In Igbo worldview, a folktale has a special time by which it is told. During the moonlight tales people gather at the feet of elders to hear the giant deeds of hero past. After supper at the

sight of moon light, all children will gather in house of the most enlightened elder and good story teller who tells the story. The emphasis of time is noted here because the children and other elders will rush to the folk teller's house at the sight of new moon to hear tales that will educate and entertain them. Stories always told are the stories of the bravery of *odum* the lion, the treachery of the *mbe* the tortoise, the foolishness of *aturu* the sheep and the heftiness of *enyi* the elephant. So in Igbo cosmology, folktales are time bound and it is best told at night. After the folktales, what will follow is the moonlight dance and moonlight "hide and seek" mostly done among the youths.

#### **4.3.3 TRANSMISSION OF TIME IN LUGBARA, NILOTIC AND LANGO CULTURE.**

In Lugbara land proverbs are used to transmit time and their analysis shows that most of them are framed within the future orientation of life. These proverbs encourage diligence in the present and the danger of not envisaging future problems for those who disregard the present. Proverbs like *gapi kuri nya ku*, (one who does not dig does not eat). *ebu aku abiri ma ayiko ni* (the absence of the hoe is the happiness of hunger) *anya faa I cent ku-* (millet does not sow itself).<sup>47</sup> These proverbs stress and transmit and convey the need to cultivate one's field in the present so as to guarantee one's sustenance in the future.

Other proverbs like *ali ndandari abe ose* which means 'that looking for problems is a big stick' namely, the one who creates problem ends up being beaten. This proverb conveys the consequences of misbehavior.

Some proverbs relate also to a distant future like the one indicating or transmits that a bad person who seem to have goodluck today will get his retribution in the person of his/her son: *ondraka ni omvo li ru ku* (the orphan of malice does not survive).

Equally here is a proverb in Lugbara that encourages the education of the young ones. Evil tendencies not corrected early will not be remedied in the future. They will “protrude like the teeth of the warthog” that, the proverbs assumes, have grown out of the mouth not having been controlled in their early stage: *E yo amale ku ri si, ozoo ma si fu kala*, (“for not having corrected them, the teeth of the warthog have grown out sideways”)<sup>48</sup>

In Lugbara culture, riddles are used for educational and recreational purposes to indicate future time. A riddle may ask; Do you know the name of the fat rat in the house finishing our groundnut? The answer is the name of the boy that has stolen some edible. Another may likely ask for the name of a cat unable to catch rats or of a dog unable to chase anything. The answer is the name being that of a lazy boy. The intention of riddle is to shape the conduct of those that the is addressed in the future especially boys and girls.

Aside riddles, stories and fables are also used to transmit future ideas in Lugbara worldview. Examples are stories of rabbit *otoa or Anira* who is a protagonist in most of the stories, a mischievous and resourceful character. Otoa is always noted for engaging in some hard undertaken which always has success at the beginning. If the action of Otoa is good, the initial success continues until the end of the story. But if Otoa’s resourcefulness becomes insidious or malicious, his negative behavior is discovered and has to pay for it by having usually to run away humiliated. The moral of the fable is always teleological. It takes into cognizance the result of the actions and the bad action will lead to a serious problem for its performer. This shows that peoples action extends into the future.<sup>49</sup>

The conveying of time, especially the future time underlie most of the songs in Lugbara, these songs emerge from performances occur on occasions like funerals and anniversaries. *ongois* used to express the words 'song' and 'dance'.

Songs are intended to celebrate the death that has just occurred and they are an overt reminder of one's death in the future, a future that is obviously expected to be very distant. The future and the past meet in a song when the composer lost his mother, addresses his bereaved wife, telling her that he cannot believe his mother's death. She must have gone on a visit to *Aliba*, her clan of origin. If her mother were really dead, who would start the lamentations on the day of his own death? The song celebrates both the past death of the composer's mother and the future death of the composer himself. It says: *oku la! Mindre ni 'dii enjo li. A' di ni ma owuu edo ri ya?* "Woman ! Tears lie. Mother is at Aliba. Who will start lamenting for me? Tears lie."<sup>50</sup>

Also in song; *Omiadako la! Mi adri Oluvu ma aa de cika. Adro 'du ma ni Babua ni Babua ni aroro drialo ka. 'Ba ma a 'bi nzeepi yo. 'Ba ogupi ma side dra nde ma ra,* "oh *Omiadako!* Here also, the past and future deaths converge in another song *Babua*, who should have instead continued to narrate the history of the composer's family when the later died. The English translation goes thus; you here among the people of *Oluvu*. The spirit has taken *Babua* prematurely. There is no one to narrate the ancestral history. The people laugh at me, death overcomes me"<sup>51</sup>

In his writings, George Moore used poetry to transmit time in his Nilotic people of Northern Uganda. In his poem, he sees time as pragmatic and man-centered. Examples of its expression in traditional poetry may be taken from the funeral dirges (Lyel) of the Acholi.

According to Moore, In Acholiland death is seen as a monster against whom everyone must eventually fight alone, with no brother to help him. Although these funeral dirges are usually sung several months after the death and burial of the loved one, they almost always sing of this battle as something which is actually going on at the time of the ceremony, which is thus a ritual enactment of it. The poignancy of the songs dwells especially in their ambivalence and air of false expectancy, Death is recognized but not yet accepted in its finality:

I heard the flute of my lover

Ato Cura will soon come

His flute sounded early in the morning

Or

My brother goes with a battle-axe Beloved of my father<sup>52</sup>

Expressions of this frail hope will be followed immediately by others full of the sense of absence and loss:

I searched for him in vain on the pathway, oh!

And

Where does the son of my brother stay?

Beautiful one of Amo

Fate has knelt upon me.

Intermingled with these expressions of hope and loss are pictures of the lone battle itself:

My brother fights with barbed-headed arrows

Fights with no brother beside him

Today he has left the homestead fearful



Here is a complete example of an Acholi funeral dirge in which all these elements are present within a few lines:

There is a great dance yonder

My beloved I cannot see

The Bull fights alone

The Bull takes his death in the wilderness

The one of my breast takes his death in the wilderness

My beloved I cannot see among the crowd.<sup>53</sup>

The first line touches the note of expectation, here is a big social gathering such as her beloved always attended. She seems to scan the crowd, half hoping to see him, but she cannot. Then comes the abrupt recognition that he is battling alone with death, a conflict which is generally envisaged as taking place outside the homestead, in the wilderness. Then comes the piercing complaint of the last line, which has the whole weight of the song's complexity behind it. Another funeral dirge contains a brilliant image of the beloved's simultaneous presence and non-presence:

My brother walks like the wind

She can feel his presence but she cannot see or grasp him. It is by songs such as these, by a controlled explosion of anger and sorrow, that the fact of death is socially adjusted. There is no pretense that it is not a loss or that death itself is not an evil and an enemy. Yet death is not conceived of as the end of all which also indicates the existence future time in Acholiland. The energy which moved through a particular man lives on and will inhabit his successors. Only the

physical presence of a particular person is gone. Hence the sadness of dying without a son lies especially in the frustration of that process of energy. In such circumstances the song will say:

My brother has died without his head

for it is in the head that a man's individual share of energy resides.

But it is not only in its attitude towards death, in its assertion of the primacy of energy over matter and form, that the sources of this fluid concept of time in traditional African poetry must be sought. There is a sense in which, despite recognition of yesterday and tomorrow, of birth and death, of past and future action, all experience is seen as having an imperishable existence. That means the imperishable experience here has to do with future relevance or eternal consciousness. And since whatever has happened or will happen to the living man exists within him at the present moment; there is a sense in which all experience enjoys a simultaneous reality. Hence, in the Acholi funeral dirge, the beloved may indeed come upon the pathway, for his presence is still felt; at the same time he is fighting death with spear and shield; and at the same time also he is lying dead in the grave which is the center of the funeral ceremony.

In the poetry of a neighboring people, the Lango, the age-grade songs often convey an image of time as a river which at once unites and divides the generations. Here again time is functional; not the master but the servant of human institutions. It is the decision to initiate another age-grade that creates the living stream of time. In this particular song the buffalo is the totem of the age-grade. Note how beautifully, yet without insistence, the attributes of young man and buffalo are married and move side by side through the song:

Ah, ah, buffaloes! They travel in herds,  
They travel in great companies.  
Buffalo goes with his head swaying this way and  
that.

Apela Alo,  
Behold, buffaloes travel in different kraals.  
It has spattered mud on its forehead.

Young man, ah, ah, young man!  
It goes towards Amongolem.  
Behold the cattle egret sitting on its ear  
And it sways its head this way and that.  
It has spattered mud on its forehead.

Young man, eh, eh!  
It is looking for the East  
The cry goes towards Nyara Hill.

Buffaloes, they go to the hill,  
They go in herds.

On one side the young man,  
And the elder of the clan on the far side.<sup>54</sup>

Here the physical movement of the buffalo, swaying his powerful shoulders and looking this way and that across the plain evokes a troop of young warriors moving like- wise. The cattle egret on the ear hints at the nodding white plumes of the head-dress. The whole poem is filled with

strength, movement and youth. Then comes the still and serious image of the last lines, which places the whole surge of energy in its social and temporal context.

#### **4.4 THE FLOW OF TIME IN AFRICA**

Time people say flows. The present seems to flow into the past and out of existence. Downen Bradley likens this flow to a boat that shifts and overtakes us on the river bank and then recedes farther from us. In the opposite way, we flow into the future and leave past events ever farther behind us<sup>54</sup>. In the opinion of George Santayana, the essence of newness runs like fire along the fuse of time.

To delve further into the flow of time in Africa, it is necessary that we establish some salient theories that will aid the comprehension of this flow of time. Philosophers have been debating whether past is part of reality or whether future is part of reality. There is this general division on the ontological question of reality of the future, present and the past. Three leading theories have emerged on the attempt to unravel this puzzle.

The ontological theory of presentism states that the only present physical object exists. It then means that if something is physically real, then it exists now. According to the presentists if we are to make an accurate list of all the things that exist-that is the of all the things that our most unrestricted quantifiers range over – there would be not a single non-present object on the list. Proponents of this theory maintain that unlike the present, both the past and the future are not real. Heraclitus, Dons Scotus, Thomas Hobbes are presentists.

The ontological theory of growing-past are in agreement with the presentists that the present is fundamental ontologically, but they argue that, in addition to the present, the past is also real and is growing bigger all the time. Put differently, Growing past theory posits that the temporal location does matter when it comes to ontology, because only objects that are past or present- but not objects that are future-exist. It was William James who remarks that the future is so unreal that even God cannot anticipate it. Philosophers in this category are Micheal Tooley, Richard Jeffrey, George Ellis, D. Broad,

The ontological theory of Eternalism states that there is no objective ontological difference among the past, present and future, just as there is no objective ontological difference between here and there. Object from the past and the future exist just as much as the present objects. The threat to people's safety is there not here i.e it is past not present. Bertrand Russell, J.J.C Smart, W.V.O Quine, Adolf Grunbaum and Paul Horwich are all proponents of Eternalism.

From the above theories it is trite to assume that Mbiti borrowed the growing past/block theory in his justification of African conception of time. Mbiti suggests by his exposition that there is a strong sense of the past and the present but "the future is virtually absent ....<sup>55</sup>

Mbiti prove this with an example from his own language, Kikamba. Even though it is possible to speak of a distant past, one can only speak of a limited future, "stretching to about six months, and in any case, not beyond two years from NOW."<sup>56</sup> The Kikamba language, according to Mbiti, is not able to deal with a more distant future. Mbiti suggests that in African thought time moves not forward but backward. That is, to live in the present is not to be moving toward the future, but rather toward the past.

Some critics have opined that Mbiti just expressed the time perception of the culture which he grew up from. He may be right or he may have presented his view poorly. But Mbiti has come out to say that it is not time that move into the past, but events. In one of his books, he has disclosed that "Time as a separate reality does not 'move' only events come and go .... " But just a few line below, he states that time as succession or simultaneity of events 'moves' not forwards but back- wards."<sup>57</sup>

These statements are not inconsistent; when we place them side by side it is clear that he is using "time" in the two sentences separately. But it would have been clearer if he had avoided saying that "time moves backwards," because that leaves him open to the charge that he is representing the African view of time as the "mirror opposite of the Western notion."<sup>58</sup>

African time has to do with a succession of generations which faces toward the past instead of the future, then the major orientation here is toward the world of ancestors. One question that philosophers are bothered with is whether time travel is permitted by the law of logic and metaphysics. Many absurdities may likely result if allowed. An example of such argument is this.

- 1) If you could travel back in time, then you could kill your grandfather before your father was ever conceived (for what is to stop you from bringing a gun with you and simply shooting him?)
- 2) It is not the case that you could kill your grandfather before your father was ever conceived. ( because if you did, then you would ensure that you never existed, and that is not something that you could ensure)
- 3) Therefore  
You cannot travel back in time.

If past time travel were possible, then you could be in two different bodies at the same time, which is metaphysically impossible.

If we were to go back to the past, then you would have been fated to go back because you already did, and this rule out free will, so travel to the past is metaphysically impossible.

Moreau likened time in Africa to a man standing in a river and facing downstream. The current of the river may be considered as the flow of time, with the intention of the man in the river including primarily that which is peripherally around him and secondarily on that which has already gone past him (downstream). *Sasa* time is seemed as that which directly around the water, *zamani* that which has already passed him by. The future is only what can be seen in peripheral vision, and so the 'upstream' time holds no or little importance in the perceptions of the man in the water. It will pass when and how it passes, and then it will become of consequence to him. Only what is presently passing or has already passed is of significance, for it has become part of his concrete reality and is therefore important. "History moves 'backward' from the now moment to that period beyond which nothing can go," "that period" being the horizon in the distance. The cycles of nature (seasons, years, hours of the day, etc.) may be thought of as debit floating along on a recurring basis; not always exactly the same, but always comfortingly familiar. An African allows the future come to him by remaining stationary unlike the man going upstream to meet the future. Since he knows it will reach him eventually, there is no need to focus on it, and he cannot speed its advance.<sup>59</sup>

Hendrick Barnard noticed that an idea of future which was fuelled by Christianity's idea of the world to come helped Europe to forget on how to live in the present. He observed that if Europe

had the two-dimensional time conception, they would not have been able to move beyond the horrors of the second world. Irrespective of the deaths and properties ruined, yet they were able to form the European Union twelve years after which bounded Germany, France and Italy together and ushered in an economic boom.

If planning and thinking for the future has helped Europe to forget to live in the present then Africa has a serious problem move beyond the specter of the long shadow of past horrors. In

Barnards words

...black Africans have suffered for centuries. This is an undeniable fact of history. Furthermore, if Mbiti is correct that Africans only have a past and present and that the past makes up most of 'Sasa', I find it difficult to see how South Africa is going to move beyond the specter of the long shadow of past horrors. If it were true that Africans cannot conceive of a golden future which will be better than the present, the current climate of discontent is self-explanatory. Furthermore, the past being so pivotal in the African conception of time, it is clear that forgiving and forgetting is not an option for many not until the last survivor of the Apartheid period has finally passed over into the realm Zamani.<sup>60</sup>

If Mbiti's thesis is truth about Africans' concept of time, it means that they will be trapped on "revengeful expeditions" and so they will more or less be incapable of conceiving a "perception-transcending" or "knowledge-transcending" world. This is because a conception of time that excludes the future cannot be compatible with a conception of a world that is self-subsistent or a world of things, processes and events having "an enduring identity of its own."<sup>61</sup>

But how true are these deductions? Are these assertions only valid in Mbiti's Kikamba clan or is it a general phenomenon all over Africa? Or can we then say that future oriented or an idea of future time.



#### **4. 5 EXISTENCE OF FUTURE TIME IN AFRICA**

Substantivalism implies that space and time are like a container in which matter exists and moves separately from the container. Or it can be said to be a thesis that space and time exist independently of physical material and its events.<sup>62</sup>

The theory of reductionism/ relationalism is different from substantivalism and both cannot be true. Substantivalism implies there can be “empty time,” time without the existence of physical events. One classical theory of substantival is to be independent of observer or reference frame.

There is this saying that the future belongs to those who prepare for it and also another saying has it as “tell me how a man thinks of time and I will tell you the kind of person he is”. As much as some men may not agree as to what the future will bring, they at least agree that it is important and worth arguing over. Many who are currently undergoing some unpleasant situations have succor on the better future. So the importance of the future in any race cannot be underestimated, that is why the experience of the past are always documented in a book and this will in turn serve as a means of restructuring the present and also have a strong influence of the future. Then the future is painstakingly planned so as to quicken the progress and sustainability in the economic and social life of the people.

Mbiti as we have seen already has stimulated considerable discussion by his suggestion that in African there is a strong sense of the past and the present but "the future is virtually absent at least, beyond two years. This by implication follow that the whole races of African people have no belief in progress. But to what extent is this correct? We are going to x-ray Igbo world view and other African cultures to ascertain the veracity of this statement of J.S Mbiti.

**4.5.1 THE IDEA OF FUTURE TIME IN IGBO COSMOLOGY**The Igbos has traces of indefinite future time in their day to day events especially in their proverbs and names and daily

conversations. Proverbs are oil through which the Igbos consumes their words. Igbos have the saying *atuolu omalu , omalu mana atuolu ofeke, otinye isi na ofia*(literally meaning, when you communicate with proverbs to the wise, he learns but when you do same to a fool, he or she will jump into the bush).

This indicates that the Igbos communicate their cherish sayings as proverbs. So the issue of future time is ingrained in Igbo proverbs, names and monuments. On the issue of proverbs such saying as:

*mgbaraka mgba afo gbuo mmadu gbabaohia, mgbela mgbe ona awula anoro n'uzo chere ya.*

Which means if one year escapee kills a human being and runs inside **WHENEVER** stays on the road to wait for it. From the foregoing, the notion of *mgbelamgbe ona awula* – Whenever implies a concept of a distant future.<sup>64</sup>

Tortoise is credited to have a saying that portent to futuristic undertone in Igbo worldview. The tortoise says that those anxious to attain old age go ahead, all that he wants is to survive each night- *mbe si ya noobola chi ndi nka karawa-* this idea bring the idea of immediate futurity. This could be understood from the point of *izu agwu agwu* – ie weeks reoccur and it also shows that days make up the weeks to survive a week means first to survive a day.<sup>65</sup>

Apart from sentences and utterances, there are names that indicate that Igbo's have future dimension and consciousness in their parlance. Names like *Nkiruka* which means that the future is greater (this shows a brighter from the present unpleasant situation). Another name that has future consciousness is *Ndubuisi* which means life is the ultimate ( probably to address the unpleasant anomalies) There is *Amaechi-* which literally means who knows tomorrow ( because tomorrow is full of possibilities, faith in tomorrow.) *Odinihu* (our expectations) lies in the

future- or ( my faith lies in the future). *Echi d'ime*- tomorrow is full of possibilities (literally means “pregnant”) – we should be cautious in life.

In Igbo setting, the hen says *okuko boo n'iru ya oboo n'azu, juo umun ya si, ole nke kanu*- the response was *Nkiru* ( the hen scratches in front and scratches behind and asks her chicks, which one is greater- the response was “the one in the front”).

In his thesis, Opata observes that since the Igbo word used to fashion this future is *echi* meaning tomorrow – never ending, then the life of man is a never ending anxiety about the future. Here the future, an indefinite one, is very real for the Igbo person.<sup>66</sup>

#### **4.5.2 THE IDEA OF THE FUTURE IN YORUBA WORLDVIEW**

In the traditional Yorùbá setting people are conscious of both near and far future time. The Yorùbá sense of time recognizes both the near and distant future. Contrary to Mbiti's conviction that Africans have no knowledge of distant future, the Yorùbá people believe that the future is ad infinitum as we have seen from Oluwole's proverbs and Ayaode's examples.. Like the rest of Africa, proverbs are the proven source of Yorùbá philosophy, drawing on some proverbs that bear on this point is pertinent.

*Oni l'ari, a ko ri ola* (we only know today; the possibilities of tomorrow remain unknown).

This proverb stresses an epistemic awareness of the present moment without an attenuation of distant future consciousness. A strong cultural basis of this proverb is evident in the Yorùbá belief in divination. Divination includes an attempt to discover future events by extraordinary or supernatural means. Though this example is mythical and beyond modern science, yet it remains relevant when examining Yorùbá conception of distant time. Through divination, Yorùbás inquire into the far future.

(ii) *Ibaje ojo ko tan l'ogun odun* (the misconduct of one day sometimes hunts for two decades).

This is another proverb attesting to the Yoruba awareness of a moderately distant future. The proverb warns against questionable human character because of regrettable future consequences.

(iii) *Ogorun odun kii se titi laye* (a century is not eternity). This proverb captures the Yorùbá knowledge of a far distant future. This proverb is often used to advise somebody who regards an activity as interminable; thus, they express the certainty of the future as an eternal truth and thereby caution prudence.

The above futuristic conception of time is not unconnected to the past and present time. Indeed, the Yoruba believe that “the future co-exists with the present without being co-extensive with it.”

In further showing the overgeneralization

Also some of the remarks made in the commerce of our everyday life especially in politics shows this future oriented tendencies. The Yoruba people have written down orders to restrain any power drunk personality from clinging to power more than necessary. To this end, they made sure that the good of the common man is made paramount in their political structure. For instance, when we look at the power-politics in old Oyo Empire 1754- 1796, Oguntomisin remarks that;

Old Oyo had a delicate constitution which is built on checks and balances which prevented the monarch (Alaafin of Oyo) from being either despotic or autocratic. The constitution made it mandatory for the Alaafin to consult the Oyomesi council of chiefs before taking decisions on the affairs of the state. <sup>66</sup>

As a result, the Alaafin could be compelled to commit suicide if he mismanages the power entrusted on him for the good of the people. Obviously, the check and balances in Old Oyo Kingdom of the South West Nigeria is to ensure a good future of peaceful atmosphere for the

Oyo kingdom. All check had been put in place to check the excesses and abuses of the monarch, even in the distance future. With this, we would see that it is wrong to conclude that Africans cannot conceive time in the perspective of the future as Mbiti had done. Also going by Mbiti's assumption that Africans would be comfortable with short-term expectations and ambition in life. But what is on ground betrays this assertion because it does not hold any water. Rather Africans aspires to be better as individuals and strive for the good of their societies by anticipating for a better future for themselves and their children and even their children children. They may not have had the tendencies to accumulate material things for their future well-being even for their unborn children if they do not have the future in sight. Oke observes that what is presently manifesting in African society run contrary to this claim.

This is, however, very sharply contradicted by the observable lives of many Africans in the home, in politics, and in business, both in traditional and in contemporary times. Many of them procreate profusely, acquire property voraciously, engage in cash crop plantations laboriously, have inheritance procedures, embezzle in public life excessively, engage in several forward-looking sharp practices in business, play hard rough 'sit-tight' politics, struggle for education and strive to be in good health, traditionally and contemporarily.<sup>67</sup>

To suggest that Africans do not traditionally plan for a distant future is to debit them with incapacity that some of them at least do not deserve. How then did great empire-builders of African history have accomplished such objectives in total innocence of long-term planning?<sup>68</sup>

#### **4.5.3 THE IDEA OF FUTURE TIME IN AKAN CULTURE.**

The notion of infinite being exists in African cosmology. But the existence of an infinite being involves the concept of an infinite future. The infinite being necessarily abides in an infinitely distant future. It logically follows that the notion of infinite future is not foreign but integral to

the African conceptual scheme. Gykye supports this argument with evidence from the use of everyday language. The everyday expressions he offers shows that the infinite future is an abiding reality in African thought system. For instance definite expressions for “future tense” exist in some African languages. *Daakye*, meaning “future or in the future” and *Dabi* meaning “someday”, an unspecified day, a day as yet unknown, some time to come are the equivalent expressions for the English tense “future” in the Akan language. The inner meaning of *Da bi* attests to “an indefinite time.”<sup>69</sup> Gyekye assumes the notion of time as that which exists as an objective, continuous reality. The linguistic analysis of beresantene substantiates the affinity with the western idea that time moves in linear fashion.

The concept of the infinitude of God must of necessity include a concept of the infinite time within which God executes His acts and plans to say someone conceive an infinite but at the same time has no concept of future is self-contradictory.

The Akans of Ghana conceive God as an infinite being...a fact known to Mbiti. Although infinity is here ascribed to a being and not to time, it must be assumed of course, that a concept of an infinite time as already involved in that of an infinite being, for the infinite being necessarily (logically) exists in an infinite time. In Akan, then, future exists as an actual time.<sup>70</sup>

Also the belief in and practice of divination depends on the very definition of the concept as an attempt to discover future events. And the future of diviners cannot by and logic be said to be limited to a maximum of two years. Gyekye therefore suggests that perhaps Mbiti merely (wrongly) generalize what is otherwise a characteristic of only eastern African people’s. But even the truth of this suggestion is itself unacceptable.

Gyekye equally used events that are not yet realized to support his own notion of future time and

these events have no specification on when it will occur. Some examples of these events with future references is when an elder in the community says to a child A, “You will be a chief in the future” (*wo bedi hene daakye*) and turns to child B, “You will be wealthy in the future” (*wo bedi yie daakye*).<sup>71</sup> These sentences indicate a time in the future which is more or less a ‘prophesy’ and the elder that prophesied may or may not be alive during the fulfillment of such prophesy. The first future shows action in the time to come while the second future or proximate future indicates future marks action in the next future. This by implication demonstrates that future tenses make no arrangement for the periods within which action is to take place. In other words poems, proverbs, folktales and dirges shows the continuing existence of the infinite future as something which is thought to be real and true. It is always ‘there’ as a foundation of hope and expectations.

#### **4.5.4 FUTURE DIMENSION OF TIME IN LUGBARA**

The entire reality of Lugbara when analyzed from language, oral literature, beliefs and general way of life provides evidence of the existence of the future time in their thinking and culture. The linguistic expressions like adverbs, prepositions, postpositions and propositions referring to the future including the distant one. Two set of adverb can express the future *dru* and *drusi* meaning ‘tomorrow’ and *drozi* meaning the day after ‘tomorrow’ showing a near and definite future, the second (*drile* and *drilea*, literally “ahead” and *ndo*, literally ‘after’) refers to a distant and indefinite future, the later *ndo* being the preferred one to express the future.

Some temporal expressions that indicates the distant future are future stages of human life, examples are “when you will have children” or “when I am old.” Changes or the abandonment

of one's house is an interesting way of indicating the distant future. Such abandoned house is called *andru*.

In Dalfovo estimations;

The cause of such abandonment is the deterioration of the house itself, mainly through the work of termites, and also because of the decreasing fertility of surrounding soil. Hence, the expression, "when I shall have abandoned the house three times" could mean some fifteen years ahead. The Lugbara language has ways to express the future, including the distant one.<sup>72</sup>

Also proverbs in Lugbara land and their analysis shows that most of them are framed within the future orientation of life. These proverbs encourage diligence in the present and the danger of not envisaging future problems for those who disregard the present. Proverbs like *gapi kuri nya ku*, (one who does not dig does not eat). *ebu aku abiri ma ayiko ni* (the absence of the hoe is the happiness of hunger) *anya faa I cent ku-* (millet does not sow itself).<sup>73</sup> These proverbs stress the need to cultivate one's field in the present so as to guarantee one's sustenance in the future.

In some traditional aspects of life, it generally believed that the fear of misfortunes make up a powerful incentive to correct attitudes. These misfortunes are the *adra*, *nyoka* and *enya*<sup>74</sup> *Adra* protects the owner from enemies by striking them with serious illness. The fear of such death protects the owner of *adra* and his property from thieves and wicked persons. *Nyoka* manifest in misfortunes, it kills individuals especially the families and clans leading to their extinction. *Nyoka* strikes the descendants and does not strike the author of misconduct. Thus future dimension makes *Nyoka* one of the most dreaded misfortunes. *Enyata* is translated 'poison' which leads to sickness but not to death. *Enyata* is feared because the person can be innocent but



end up being poisoned. People fear being called a 'poisoner' than being 'poisoned'. The poisoner is being equated to the *Oleo* (an evil man). People dread such behavior of the possibility of being one day accused of being "poisoner."

Luck shows the perception of the future which can be remote, omen is another perception that relates to luck. In Lughara *O'du*, is the word for omen. Events like being a particular snake, hitting a foot against a stone, yawning at a particular time, seeing a dove resting on a house. These sights takes one's thought into the future. When certain events shown by some omen is going to befall. Behavior to disease (*azo*) and the relative cure (*aro*) postulates the future. Diseases are to cure has moral dimension, meaning that a person's moral attitude could cause a disease or leads to its cure i.e have a future effect on health. Promise making has equally future dimension to it and it's done in two ways. One is called *ecara* meaning just a simple assurance without anything at stake, maybe a person's good name. Other form of promise termed *oyoso* is a promise a person makes with a sanctioned by a threat of a misfortune in case it was not honored. Here promise making entails the idea of the future. Also life after death has a vision of future implication in Lughara traditional belief. The *orindi*,(soul) survives the *rua* (body). Later some *orindi* could slowly become an *ori*, "ancestral spirit".

By acquiring the status of ancestral spirits, the memory of a person lasts far longer than that of others living persons especially influential ones like the elders, relish the future ideal of becoming ancestral spirits, the attainment of which requires of them a wise and prudent behavior in the present. Also the Lughara people are mainly agricultural people. A survey of their general way of life and of ordinary activities highlights future perspectives. Agricultural activities entails various stages such as preparing the site of fields by clearing it of vegetation, digging the field, clearing the soil of weeds, stones and other unwanted materials, sowing the seeds, looking

after various stages of their growth, harvesting the crops and finally the storing of food which envisages also the storing of some of the seeds for the next sowing season.

These stages demands planning in view of the next one up to the final result and also in view of perpetuating this exercise in the future seasons. The life of a farmer requires a constant planning for the future. Equally house building and maintenance and in some areas a relatively frequent total replacement by a new building. A good house needs its spaced periods for preparing, erecting and completing it. A proverb confirms this, *aria o' be jo tizo coti ko*, namely, "birds do not build all of a sudden a nest to lay their eggs in it." A similar saying goes, *ba a'a amvu ditti de coti ko*, "people do not dig a field and finish it at once." Both proverbs imply that a proper work takes time and foresight to complete.

Marriage consummation also aims at future relations. Home education of the young or mainly education for married life and motivation for correct behavior is often the future vision of a proper marriage. When marriage is contracted, the vision of future goals continues. Future expectations arise for the birth of children, their growth and their eventual marriage. Hence the family cycle continues, crowned by offspring, wealth and respect for which one works throughout one's life.<sup>75</sup>

Naming of person equally has a future appendage on it, a personal name is intended to reflect and perpetuate a situation existing at the time the child is born. For instance death, tragedy, embarrassing situations, a tension in the family are fixed in the name given to a child and they are externalized and publicized. A name can thus serve as a psychological outlet, a public punishment, a social challenge or moral prevention. Sometimes names may reflect a positive context and meaning, perpetuating happy memories, gratifying praises and remunerative

references. So the idea underlying the naming of a person is that of perpetuating a present situation into the future for as the life and the memory of the bearer of that name will last, which is expected to be very distant.<sup>76</sup>

#### **5. 4. 6. THE FUTURE REFERENCE TO TIME IN BASOTHO CULTURE**

The Basotho time involves a future dimension even though it has been contended that it only retrogrades from the present to the past. With Mohatlane drama text, Moshesh and the missionaries, he shows that Africans have a future dimension of time. This future references are represented by these actors as shown in the drama.

In act 2: scene 3

A forthcoming event was demonstrated in page 27 where Rampai said; are you not yet convinced that I know the knuckle bone! However, you will learn more from me. (Rampai-Ha le eso kgolwe hore ke tseba ditaola ee! Feela a re tholeng, le tla mpotsa)<sup>77</sup>

This shows that the characters are aware of the future as suggested by the event that will soon happen. Also Rampai persuaded his men that he was an experienced and professional power-doctor, it was quite relevant for him to mention that *le tla mpotsa*(you will ask me) because such a remark (time speculation) builds on the side of characters and generates more interest on the part of the readers or the audience.

Also in Acts 3: Scene 4 shows the future oriented actions taken by the king in page 47: lemue said “I will arrive next week on Tuesday... please expect me on Tuesday between six o’clock in the afternoon. Lemue: *Monghadi! Ke tla tla ba teng moo ho wen aka veke e tlang, ka Labobedi...o ntebelle ka labobedi, mahareng a hora ya botshelela le ya bosupa, mantsiboya.*<sup>78</sup>

Moshesh intentions for his country were plans for the future and not for the immediate. This is clearly shown in Act 1: scene 5, page 19, *Mosheesha: wa ekaba le ke ke la ya fili lisa molaetsa w aka ho bona hore ba nthomelle e mong , kapa ba bang ba bona, ho tla ruta le ho hlalefisa setjhaba sa ka, haholo ho re tlisetsa kgotso, hobare ke yona eo re e lebellang haholo?*<sup>79</sup>

Moshesh ; ( could you be so kind as to convey my message to them that they should send me one missionaries to come and educate my people; more especially to bring about peace as it is this that we are opting or ‘crying for?)

The temporal categories in mosheshoe La Baruti ( Moshesh and the Missionaries) shows that there are different temporal varieties in the text. There are present, past and the future dimensions of time here and some events happen frequently because time was determined by events in traditional society. Africans have an idea of the future even though they do not put more emphasis on the future. Equally time in the text typifies character as transitional because there is an influence of modernists and the traditional system. This influence was based on the understanding that knowledge among Africans based on shared social dimension of a collective majority of citizens within a particular society.

Time in the text characterizes itself as cyclic (event oriented) and also linear (mathematically determined). Time then involves a continuum and a combination of time as based on events and also time based on movement in a linear structure and moving from one point to another. Time among the Basotho is viewed holistically, the Basotho people experience time according to their social needs and therefore time should be understood within context of social experience within the areas in which they find themselves.<sup>80</sup>

#### 5.4.6 FUTURE TIME IN LUO TRIBE

Giving example with the Luo tribe who has expression that shows that knowledge of distant future like.

*Oru wuod aming'a; and*

*Aming 'a ping nene ochiego apindi e thim.*<sup>81</sup>

*Oru* expresses “day and night are the father and son of each other”. This means *aro* unending adjustment between day and night. This change is seen as a single phenomenon. The *oru* is “the son of duration (*wuod aming'a*) – The above says demonstrates the effect of time on certain stubborn behavior and circumstances. This shows that duration, the endless alteration between day and night, more often brings about change even to the shows order which outlive the event that happened within it.

Here, time and space are concerned by *Luo* as two intertwined concepts. *Oru* is thought in connection with the world, *ping*. It is this *ping* according to Masolo which endures time. No one compete with *Ping*. This power makes *ping* possible to dominate all. The *Lowo* (soil) which Masolo describes as the material aspect of *ping* does not decay. It endures the tyranny of time. So it shows here that it is only the world that endures through time.

Also the proverb which translates, the (endless) endurance of the world forces even the stubborn *apindi* (*vangueria acutiloba*) to ripen”. This shows that the world endures the longest among everything in the world. *Apindi* has long life and taken longer to mature and bear fruits that is why it is used here. Here the *Luo* employs an idealist notion of time which is endless duration where many things happen.

These two proverbs are more of instructive in outlook because it warns people against pride and complacency. We should not be proud for our achievements. It is only one who can control time and determine the future that can be proud.

From the above submissions, the future is restricted by events of any particular moment. The average Luo is reluctant to accept long term schedules because they belong to the *ji ma oru*(people who will endure, because the future for them cannot be determined. The Luo use this saying according to justify their stance *ano ma ichamo e mari, gi modong kik igen*(Count on what you have, not on what is to come).<sup>82</sup>

A particular culture may have a concept of infinite future but may lack word that can march its exact translation in English vocabulary

Masolo also adds that, since Africans can conceive of a God that is infinite, it is contradictory to say that they only have a two-dimensional notion of time, which goes backwards

Masolo obviously does not differentiate between a God which is eternal and also external of time, and eternal time in the temporal sphere. However, to say that people can conceive of an infinite Being does not necessarily mean that they would consider a future beyond a two-year time space in their own subjective existence to be of any importance.<sup>83</sup>

Byang Katoequally observes from his own culture that African lives a life which shows an awareness of the future. According to Kato, almost every traditional African male excitedly look forward to his initiation to manhood with a definite future outlook. There is of great importance a specific "financial" planning on the part of the boy's family so that he will be able to afford the bride-price necessary for marriage and full tribal responsibilities. Also, because of the fact that children are such treasured possessions because they secure the future continuation of the family

line also indicates a future awareness. Kato concludes that these things would not be seriously looked into to that extent that they are if there were in reality no concepts of the future. In a very real sense, the African must anticipate the future in order to become a meaningful part of the past.<sup>84</sup>

## **5. 6 AFRICA AND CYCLIC NATURE OF TIME**

Most Greeks and Roman philosophers believe time to be cyclical, equally some Pythagoreans and Stoic philosophers believe on this cyclic nature of time. Circular time was promoted in Ecclesiastes 1: 9: "That which has been is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun." It was even believed that Nietzsche propounded the idea of circular time to be used for moral lesson about how we should live our lives if each of us believed we would have to live it over and over.

In Africa, surveys of some cultures show that Africans believe time to be cyclic. In Ethiopia for instance, time is seen as a repetitive occurrence which is observed both in nature, individual and social life. On the natural platform, the day is replaced for night and night for day. When winter elapses, summer arrives; when summer leaves, winter substitutes it. The warm turns cold, and the cold turns warm. Life transforms into death and death into life.

The life of an individual and also the social life of the community conform to this cyclicity of time. A good example is manifested in a person who is joyful today is unhappy tomorrow, and goes back to become happy again. When a father gives birth to a son, the son turns to a father. The one who has been elevated will be replaced tomorrow by the one who has been demoted.

When the rich can turn to a poor man tomorrow while, the poor man becomes rich the next moment. When a king dies, another king comes and replaces the dead king.

Equally, day to day experience shows that there is an application of cyclical time in every societal undertakings. In Ethiopia for instance, the individuals' social placement is not permanent and guaranteed, but they are also subject to reversal. The reversal is witnessed in the wealthy replacing the poor; the weak becomes powerful. In a society that is stratified into fixed classes, it is amazing to claim that there is no permanent rule and social position. To say that people's social status is reversible is to say that there is no high or low position that is held permanently. This view directly reflects Ethiopia's understanding of society. Even though there are permanent classes, there is no position that one inherits by birth. Higher positions are occupied by individuals who come from lower positions. Ethiopians have called this ability to be move from one class to another "luck." Luck reveals Ethiopia's social mobility. Talent demands being chosen by God, since it is bestowed by Him. And we can think of what we receive from God only as a gift or allotment, and not as something we deserve, the right view is the one that speaks of luck. It is clear that the concept of fate is interlinked with the Ethiopian conception of time. The cyclicity of time opens doors for opportunities. There are varying higher and lower social positions. However, these positions are held by individuals not permanently, but in turn. Because the law of rotation demotes those who have been promoted, permanent positions do not exist. Thus the opportunity for a person in a lower position to replace someone in a higher position is made available.



Kebede summary of the implication of cyclical time is

that everything is vain. Since nothing stays permanently and even changes into its opposite, everything is relative. Since there is nothing absolute in this world, our lives should not be limited to chasing transient and reversible conditions. Therefore, what the cyclicity of time exposes is not only that things do not have independent existence; the fact that things change into their own opposites also shows that they do not have the capacity to direct themselves.<sup>85</sup>

Some cultures in Africa believe this cyclic nature of time to come in the form of continuation of life after death which is manifested in continuation of the individual through procreation. Here the children bear exactly the traits and character of their progenitors. On the form of transition, African believed that reincarnation occurs only if the deceased is the head of the family, thus the son's life is a prolongation of the father or a grandfather's life. But this can happen when aged have lived well and died well and the families have performed the required funeral rites which help to arrive the spirit land. The dead ancestor is said to be reborn into the newly born child; men come back as baby-boys, women as baby-girls.

There are some undeniable proofs of reincarnation like physical resemblances between the newborn child and the ancestors that is assumed to have reincarnated in the child. Features like pointed nose, shape of legs and hands, physical marks and strictures on given parts of the body are reported to be identical in both. Also some noticeable behaviors are manifested later in life. Also evidences of the recalling of past events of one's former life are quoted.

This seems to defy logic since that son is somehow deprived of his life since he is believed to perpetuate the life of another person. The first question could be: how many lives are involved when one is prolonging the life of *sekuru* while at the same time he will be living? Secondly, if

this happens only to the male family heads, how will we explain this reincarnation to non-family head members who died?

Since all persons in the family are reincarnations of one ancestors or another, it then means that the family tree must be static, not dynamic. And any purported increase is illusory. Not only in this family, but in all families and deductively in all humanity.<sup>85</sup>

But the statistics of phenomenal growth in population goes contrary to this belief. Because if there are new souls created that account for the new populations, these new persons would fail to be reincarnations, a deduction which contradicts the igbo believe that all new born children are reincarnations of departed ancestors.

If any dimension of time were circular, it then means that the future is equally past and all events in that part happens before itself. If your whole personal time or proper time were such a part, then the question would arise as to whether you lived through the circle an infinite number of times or only once.

### **5. 7. GOD AS A GUARANTOR OF TIME IN AFRICA**

In Africa, they are seen as fatalists because of their deity-phenomenalist notion of time, where an African see God as the guarantor and sustainer of time and nothing can be done to alter it.

The African believe that God is not far away from them and He has the full charge of the world. The African sees God as the sustainer of the universe (*Osebuluwa*). That means he sustains the world he created and direct the affairs of men. He is neither a remote God (*Deus Remotus*) or a withdrawn God (*Deus otiosus*). He is both transcendent and immanent.<sup>86</sup>

As a creator, he delegates some divinities to carry out some assignments as regards the creation of the world. Africans equally see God as omnipotent that is limitless and every being acts

according to its nature, his power is without limit He does everything possible. As there are divinities that are responsible to God for whatever act they perform in their relationship with human beings. These divinities do not disturb God for small problems but take charge in carrying them out. In Yoruba culture, *Orunmila* or *Ifa* is believed to be a divinity of wisdom, prognostication and foreknowledge, and infact the oracle of divinity. According to Kanu, after God made human soul and sealed its destiny and *Orunmila* was present and knows its secret, that is why he is always consulted before the time of say marriage, war or a journey to give information about the past, present or future of man. His priest is called *Babalawo*, which means “the father who has secret”.<sup>87</sup>

In Igbo land, there is an equivalent of *Agwu*, which is the God of divination and healing. He is the chief messenger of God. *Agwu* holds the key secrets of creation which man is expected to know and reveal such secretes as necessary for the advancement of mankind. He equally offers intelligence, wisdom, knowledge and power on those whohave received the almighty God.<sup>88</sup>

Africans ascribe God as the guarantor of their time and owner of their future existence/ endeavors. Time therefore exists for God but not to human beings and He (God) execute his council at his will. This deep religious nature of the African was stressed by Mbiti when he observes that “Africans are notoriously religious...” and “...for Africans, the whole of existence is a religious phenomenon, man is deeply religious being in a religious universe.”<sup>89</sup>

Oke acknowledges Mbiti’s claim of Africans being notoriously religious and living in a religious universe and also observing that we can suppose that Africans are more or less Berkeleyan “deity-phenomenalist.” So matter for African in a special way is the permanent possibility of sensation, actual in human minds and possibly in God’s mind. Oke points out that for Africans to

leave time solely in the hands of God can be used to explain some of the ways in which many Africans do things in private as well as public. He also points out that since time especially future time exist only for God, it can be used to explain most African peculiar free attitude to time, to work and to development.<sup>90</sup>

This to me is a false assumption that refers to the half Europeanized and half de-Africanized Africans who are finding it very hard to fit into the “clock time category.” Africans are committed to time but not in a “hurry mood” arrangement of the west. The western lifestyle is characterized by empirical immediacy which was powered by utilitarianism and empiricism school of thoughts. These schools are known for their result oriented approach. The west live in the now and always lose patience in waiting for the best turn of event later. To the Africans, they believe everything, including time to be is God’s hands. While describing the western lifestyle, Obiajulu opines that “it is now or never, unjust or unprincipled, the best happens when he gains access with urgency. So when they cannot comprehend our mode of life, they term Africans as barbaric.

Yes we were called barbaric because they refused to understand our traditional civilization, their new civilization which was anchored in empiricism of consciousness, quantification, and immediacy. Industrialization massified everything and created the culture of availability which ultimately replaced that of hope, despondency or waiting for God’s time. .... Now our actions and values are measured by their success.<sup>86</sup>

In African cultural setting suggests that Africans are deeply religious and God dependent especially in the aspect of time. Everything in the world is directed and sustains by God and nobody can alter the course of nature. Going against nature by exploiting nature in the name of industrialization is desecration the decorum of Mother Nature. Seasons and times belong only to

God and functions at his will. Some of the names that are borne by the Igbos are good testament to these God dependent assertions. Names like (God's time), *Mgbechi* (God's period) *Ogedinakachukwu* (Time is in the hands of God). *Chinweoge* (God's own time), *Chinweizu* (God owns the week), *Etuodichukwu/ Ogeomasirichi* (As and When it pleases God), *Chimaoge* (God knows my time), *Amaoge* (I don't know what the future holds (but God knows). *Amankedinihu* (who know what the future holds (Response- God), *Onyemaechi* (who knows tomorrow), *Ogechukwukamma* (God's time is the best).

In traditional African society, time which means *Oge or mgbe* is believed to be part of nature, an event where people live their lives naturally and rhythmically. They believe that *oge* is an ingredient of reality that combined with other entities to make life livable even in hard times. What was done was done, and what has not been done could still be done or dispensed with. Time was not to be rushed in life because to rush in life could mean to rush out in life. The African believe in the conviction that God's time is the best (*oge chukwu ka mma*).

According to Iroegbu, one lived with the gradual unfolding of the day (to work) and night (to rest). One considered the progressive coming of the seasons; the rainy, to plant and fish, and the dry; to harvest, dry and stock. One waited for, and enacted the feast and market days in which various celebration of life, love, worship, births and deaths were done.<sup>87</sup> So time was not the mechanical clock tickling here and there which is characterized by the hurrying from one venture and endeavor to another.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0AFRICAN EXISTENTIAL EXPRESSION OF TIME

Persons are self-conscious mental beings and this trait separates man from other mental beings. This is verified when we consider on how much of what matters in man's mental life and social interactions presupposes the self-consciousness of man and others. This would be impossible if we were not self-conscious. Or again, we praise and blame other people because we take them to be self-consciously aware of their own responsibilities. If other people were not self-conscious, the rationale for most of our attitudes to others would simply be lost. Hence, the best short answer to the satisfaction question is that persons are self-conscious mental beings. But how true is this assertion in relation to Africans.<sup>1</sup>

Senghor in attempt to distinguish European mode of from African mode of consciousness observes that European first of distinguishes the object from himself and keep it at a distance. He freezes the object out of time and space. He fixes and kills the object. He dissects it in a pitiless factual analysis with his precision instruments. He makes use of the other that he has killed in this way for his practical ends. He makes a means of it. With a centripetal movement he assimilates it<sup>2</sup>

The African on the other hand does not conceive reality like their European counterpart; Senghor describes him as one that lives in primordial night and shut up inside his black skin. He turns an object over and over in his supple hands and fingers and feels it. The African is one of the worms that are created on the third day... a pure sensory field. At the end of his antenna, he discovers the other. He is moved by his bowels, going out in centrifugal movement from subject to the object on the waves sent out from the other.<sup>3</sup>

The African reason is intuitive and so participates in the object. He is moved not so much by outward appearance of the object. What moves him in a dancing mask is a new vision of the “god.” What moves him in the flow of water is not that it flows, or it’s liquid and blue but that it washes and purifies.

The distinction of Senghor above must have supported David Hume believe that “the blacks [are] naturally inferior to whites. Hume ascribes this superiority of the whites by noting that there never was a civilized nation of any complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation.” From the above, Hume attempts to deny Africans and other continents outside the West of this important consciousness which justify their share in humanity and commonwealth. Hume projects Africans in particular as having no consciousness of time and development. The burden of this chapter is to determine the validity of this claim that Africans lack time consciousness or put succinctly that an African is relaxed, tardy or not faithful to keep to time schedule. How conscious are Africans to time?

Writing on African on Africans consciousness to time, Coles writes

It is a much looser concept, more open, elastic, and subjective. It is man who influences time, its shape, course and rhythm (man acting, of course, with the consent of gods and ancestors). Time is even something that man can create outright, for time is made manifest through events, and whether an event takes place or not depends, after all, on man alone. If two armies do not engage in a battle, then that battle will not occur (in other words, time will not have revealed its presence, will not have come into being).<sup>4</sup>

The traditional African made use of time to serve his needs. He does not allow time to make use of him by becoming a slave of hectic temporality. The human remains the criterion of time, it’s unfolding and it’s living. He lives in time and does not simply use it and is never hectically

oppressed by it. He waits for time though time may not wait for him. But the African has time to wait for time. An African is a master of time and time is life to be lived well.<sup>5</sup>

Kanu narrates this ordeal of a British journalist in the hand of a Ghanaian king this way “on Tuesday, 28 October, 2003, 16:03 GMT, BBC NEWS reported that international journalists in the UK were kept waiting by the king of Ghana's largest ethnic group who was visiting Alexandra Palace in north London at the climax of a Ghanaian trade exhibition, Ghana Expo 2003. The journalists had been informed that Otumfuo Osei Tutu II from the Ashanti would arrive at the exhibition at 1100. The time was changed to 1400, but the king did not show up until two hours later when the journalists had already packed and left”. The incident made the whites to remark that “Africans are terrible time-keepers.”<sup>6</sup>

Some authors believe that one of the reasons for this seeming loose and relaxed consciousness of time is the believe that Africans are blessed and endowed with almost everything, i.e., land, mineral and other natural resources are in abundance, so much so that they do not see the need to be in a haste to do anything or develop the habit of being on time. One of this authors went a little further to suggest that Africans unlike their European counterpart who would risk their lives just to be on time, are laid back and relax when it involves keeping up with time. But Izu was unabashed to disagree on the above position when he writes:

The metaphorical concept of African time is one in which tardiness, lousiness and a total disregard for schedules and programs is made out to characterize all Africans. Tardiness is a universal phenomenon; it should not be made to hang around Africa's neck like a millstone meant to drawn a criminal. Traditional Africa as well as conventional Africa, places a high premium on scheduled activity, punctuality and precision in the performance of activities.<sup>7</sup>

Talking about the consciousness of time of the former slaves of Liberia of African origin, Nyanseor believe that Africans as a people were conscious of time even during their interaction with their colonialist. Rather than attribute tardiness to Africans Nyanseor maintained that African's assumed tardiness is a form of "passive resistance" which has nothing to do with Africans alone.<sup>8</sup>Nyanseor observes that contrary to expectations slavery, colonialism and ward system could have prevented the Africans from being time conscious since observation of time was key to the progress of these systems but it never did.

According to this account, during the time of slavery and colonialism, Africans were at the mercy of their masters and these masters controlled time and designed schemes where Africans were regarded as means who should work from sun up to sundown. These slaves defied all odds and diligently carried out their tasks and time consciousness was a fundamental factor in this arrangement. In this arrangement, time was of essence because without Africans being on time regularly, their master's agricultural, domestic and industrial works would not have prospered.

Also through the ward system, Nyanseor shows that Africans were also conscious of time. In this ward system, the wards were expected to carry out all of the domestic chores and related services from sunrise to sunset and the working periods are longer in some of the homes. So it is impossible for Africans especially of African origin not to be time conscious, when in fact their very existence was, and is still regulated by Time<sup>9</sup>.

This dissertation however has established some humano-centric-ontological traits of Africans that made it seem as if they are not conscious or non-chalant to time. The fact is that they are conscious of time but in African culture, they produce time. This worry was expressed by Mbiti about the Africans seeming tardiness and lateness thus; "When foreigners especially from

Europe and America see people sitting down somewhere without, evidently doing nothing, they often remark “These Africans waste their time by just sitting down idle”.<sup>10</sup>

The anthropocentric characters and traits of African which are inherent among Africans are the some of the ontological basis which this dissertation considers to have resulted to this lax attitude to time. These traits are not negative in a sense but when looked at from African perspective they are some of the core values of African which are not so much esteemed in other cultures. This intercultural class when not properly understood by these cultures often results to what this work refers to as “crisis of conception.”

## **5.1 TIME AS EXPRESSED IN COMMUNAL TERMS**

Living in Communal term informs people how to become real persons or to exhibit *ubuntu*, i.e ‘through other persons’. This can be said to mean prizing *community*, or sometimes *harmony*, with others because African ethic is said to be communitarian. ‘Harmony is achieved through close and sympathetic social relations within the group’. Nhlanhla Mkhize, remarks, ‘A sense of community exists if people are mutually responsive to one another’s needs. ... (O)ne attains the complements associated with full or mature selfhood through participation in a community of similarly constituted selves. ... To be is to belong and to participate ...’<sup>15</sup>The I subject abandons his I to sympathize and identify himself with the THOU. He dies to himself to be reborn in the Other. He does not assimilate, he is assimilated. He does not kill the other life; he strengthens his own life through it. He lives with the other in a communal life, in symbiosis: he is born with and thereby knows the Other.<sup>16</sup>One of the most influential African political theorist, the Ghanaian Kwame Gyekye notes, ‘The fundamental meaning of community is the sharing of an overall way of life, inspired by the notion of the common good’<sup>17</sup>The humanistic attitude in inter-personal



relationship is what Africans call communalism. The need for communalism was necessary because of the difficulties to survive alone and a demand for full personhood.

Not only was it an imperative on account of the harshness of weather and nature, the threat of savage beasts and invading tribes, not only because of the need to work out the necessities of life; food, drink, etc together but equally communalism is a fact that flows from man's nature as animal communalis.<sup>18</sup>

The reality of individual is fully realized in a community or group. The community makes an individual and without it the individual is nothing and valueless. There is a saying in Africa that says 'a person is a person through other persons' is imperative in African worldview. According to Metz "when African says that "a person is a person" they are not expressing a tautology, instead what they have in mind includes the idea that someone who is a person, in the sense of a deliberative agent such as a normal human being, ought to strive to become a *real* or *genuine* person, that is, someone who exhibits moral virtue"<sup>19</sup>

To integrate into this community takes time and there is no shortcut to it. Just like a child of eighteen (18) year old cannot turn out to be a mathematical giant overnight. The more of a past one has, the more standing as a person one also has. I am looking forward to my past would be the thought within the African thought system. The unavoidable role of community to an individual was couched by Menkiti for him to attain the full excellences as a person.

In a stated journey of the individual towards personhood, let it therefore be noted that the community plays a vital role both as catalyst and as prescriber of norms. The idea is that in order to transform what was initially biological given into full personhood, the community, of necessity has to step in, and since the individual he or she cannot carry through the transformation unassisted. But then what are the implications of this idea of biologically given organism having first to go through a process of social and ritual transformation so as to attain the full complement of excellences seen as a definitive person.<sup>20</sup>

From the foregoing it goes to show that an African looks at the community to know how a single decision he takes will benefit the community. He is to a large extent not self-willed in any of his undertakings. Before any project is started, there are consultations from family members both extended and nuclear family. The choice of person is deliberated by near and far kinsmen and genuine approval given before one proceeds with his decision. This consultation is time consuming unlike in the western system where individualism is their approved way of life. In African setting, an African is always conscious of his root and this consciousness is to remind him that he belongs to a community; this informs names like *nwaoha* (the child of the community). It is not an individual that matters in Africa, rather it is the collective decisions of the *umunna* (clan) that is supreme. This is done to make sure that all processes are duly followed. When a child/daughter is to be given away in marriage by the parents, it is a time consuming event. It is a community affair and not merely a contract between two persons. It takes a long time to prepare and consummate. According to Iroegbu

It is properly speaking a covenant between two (extended) families, kindred, villages. Marriage, like all good and serious things takes time. It is so time consuming and elaborate that when fully accomplished, it stays and endures. There is stability in relationship. Arising problems are effectively treated in that elaborate context of family-kindred-village relationship. All are involved for all are concerned and all do care.<sup>21</sup>

Marriage processes are time consuming and as such not hurriedly done like in the western hemisphere where waiting is not a treasured commodity. Processes involved before marriage, involves a thorough inquiry by the families involved. The focus of these inquiries are to ascertain the blood line of the families. Other abnormalities like belonging to any caste line, having insanity running in their generations, infertility, prostitution and other bloodline related vices are thoroughly inquired into. Diligent and hardworking of the spouse's parents are sought

after to know if he can actually take care of his would be groom. Ilogu explains marriage in Africa thus: "Marriage for the African is a drama where no spectator is admitted because of the rigors and time processes involved. Each party plays her own role because marriage is an avenue through which individual shares in the group life of the African community.... This involves a familiarization process which goes between the families of the boy and the girl. His major characters including bride's wealth which is presented by the families of the boy to that of the girl and various gifts from the girl's extended family to the girl on the day she goes finally to settle down in a new home with the husband. Such gifts could be in form of land, livestock, and /or in the olden days, slaves to work for the new bride. Some call this dowry, bride wealth, pride price or bride gift".<sup>22</sup>

To show how time consuming marriage is in Igbo land, Ikwuagwu observes that before marriage is contracted, the boy or girl have to perform the puberty rite which welcomes her into adulthood and qualifies them for marriage. The girl also observes fattening period, which changes from lengths of time follows the appearance of girl's first mensuration period with the accompanying sacrifices of chickens to various gods. Sacrifices and prayers offered during this puberty rite observance and intended to secure the goodwill of the gods to grant happy home life to the young man, especially through the gift of children. The market parade of young maidens at the end of various puberty rites and ceremonies are great social occasion. The girl's ceremony eventually ends with the celebration of marriage with marriage songs and expressions of good wishes and hopes.<sup>23</sup>

The African communalism agrees that any project that marginalizes the community is heading towards doom. Such adventures will definitely results to failure because true liberty is not liberty

against community; it is liberty in the community that transcends all forms of liberty in Africa. So when the west accuses Africans of lack of urgency to time, they are not acquainted with the ontological believe systems of the Africans. An African longs for an enduring legacy such that is withnessed in African marriage.

This ideal of interdependence in Africa strengthens our communal existence because everyman need others; even those who live in isolation still make use of tools and items in which other men have invested their labor and time. In this network of interdependence and its result-orientedness lies the power in integrative resourcefulness which eschews divisiveness and truncates the noble ideals of living together.

## **5.2 TIME AS SHARED IN HOSPITALITY**

Africans are highly receptive when the issue of welcoming visitors is corncerned. They visitor is imidiately classified as member of that family without any form of discrimination. The experience of this hospitality led Blanc to label Africans as the most hospitable people one will ever come across.<sup>24</sup>When you pay a visit to an African, you are given an utmost attention and what you expect to hear is “you are highly welcomed”.Strangers are welcomed wholeheartedly with food and kola in the house of an African. When necessary, they are given lands to stay and tillfor their shelter and sustainance, if their visit is on a long term basis. In traditional African setting, when there is food to be taken, everyone present is invited to partake even if the food that was prepared were far less the number of people anticipated. It would be a height of incredible bad manners for one to eat anything however small, without sharing it with anyone else present or at least expressing the intention to do so.

A chunk of time is expended in welcoming visitors because of African sense of brotherhood. That is why it seems as if time is not considered a treasured commodity for Africans. They are relaxed among their hosts and are ready to attend to or receive all that their host provides. There is no form of suspicion and there is high level of trust among Africans both within their folks and kinsmen.

Africans have a symbolic way of expressing welcome. They introduce kola-nuts, traditional gin, coconuts, etc. in various places and they are offered to the visitors to show that he is secured and welcomed. Processes like libation of the gin and breaking of kola nut are the prerequisite symbolic hospitable gesture in Igbo African worldview. Obiajulu and Nnajofofor acknowledge this vital utility of kola nut to visitors when they submit; “Oji Igbo, cola acuminata is quite distinct from others in that it is used traditionally for rituals, for marriage ceremonies, title taking, offering of prayers at traditional ceremonies, to welcome a visitor and to introduce very important discussion and requests”.<sup>25</sup>

Another time gulping angle which is rarely noticed in other cultures is to seek the protection of the living dead on behalf of the visitor on his way home and pray that he departs in peace and meets more fortune as he departs. *Ukwu onye ije jiri bia ga akari nke oga eji wee naa*( his departure will be more glorious after his stay more than his entrant).

In performing this act the living dead is invited to play a protective role on behalf of the visitor, to this Okonkwo avers that “Anytime a person considers it expedient to offer sacrifices to his departed parents, he will first of all bring out sacred object called okpesi on which he will make epiclesis with pieces of cola while raising up his eyes in thanksgiving to his parents. (Mgbe

obuna mmadu choro inye nna ya, ma o bu nna ha nwuru anwu ihe, obuputa okpesi ha goo oji wee mpekere oji togbochaa n'elu ha kelee ha".<sup>26</sup>

Unlike in the western milieu where appointments are religiously kept and observed, in Africa there is spontaneity in welcoming of strangers in general and to visitors in particular. No appointment is needed for one to visit a distant relation or neighbors. No special rendezvous is required to join in a meal in another family one has just visited during meals. On arrival, once there is food, the visitor is invited to eat. He or she is treated kindly like another self, just as one would like to be treated when visiting another home. During meal is another phase of discussions on issues at hand especially matters arising in the community. The meals are not hurried one bit to the extent that any future schedule is sacrificed on the altar of that meal. There is general believe among Igbo African that hospitality is life itself and by implication, refusing hospitality in favor of other schedule is a bad omen. He who brings Kola brings life, *onye wetara oji wetara ndu* (kola here signifies any act of hospitality).

Achebe painted this picture too well in things fall apart when Okoye came to pay Unoka a visit. Unoka rose immediately to shake hands with Okoye who unrolled the goatskin which he carried and sat down. The posture of Okoye indicates that he was never in hurry to go home. Unoka went into the inner room and came out with a disc having a kola nut and some alligator pepper and a lump of white chalk. The formalities began when Unoka offered him a hand of hospitality when he said, "I have kola" and passed the disc over to Okoye, his visitor. Okoye replied "Thank you. He who brings kola brings life. But you ought to break it", passing the disc back to Okoye. They later argued on who it is the responsibility to break the kola until Unoka eventually accepted the challenge.<sup>27</sup>

The time consuming aspect witnessed in the hospitality of the African can be depicted by Okoye and Unoka in their actions. Achebe writes

Okoye meanwhile took the lump of chalk, drew some lines on the floor, and then painted his big toe. As he broke the kola, Unoka prayed to their ancestors for life and health and for protection against their enemies. When they had eaten they talked about many things: about the heavy rains which were drowning the yams about the next ancestral feast and about the impending wars with the village of Mbaino.<sup>28</sup>

Unlike in the West where time is allocated to each meal but it is not so in Africa. Breakfast is served when the food is ready because the cue in the stream may have delayed the serving of meal on time or an unforeseen rainfall may have wetted the firewood for the meal or any other unforeseen circumstances. So the breakfast can be ready at any time of the morning and African has to eat before embarking on any journey or any schedule but what is not certain is the time of the meeting. Since hospitality is life, no sane African will abandon such a favor for an uncertain appointment where such kindness is under probability. This is in line with African proverb that enjoins one who climbs an iroko to fetch all the firewood he can muster because such feat is not a routine affair.

### **5.3 TIME AND RELATIONSHIPS**

An African is not just a human but simply a “being-with”, a self-in-relation-to-others, a being-with-others. The African conception of man unlike the European concept of individuated things existing in themselves and isolated from others. The reality of individual is in relationship with others in a community or group. This relationship is ingrained in a child early during his or her upbringing to buttress the fact that it is a core trait of an African. In the words Jacques Maquet

This begins very soon after birth. For the first month of his life and often or more than a year, the African baby is in constant physical contact with his mother. She carries him, often skin to skin on her back, she gives him the breast whenever he is hungry... This contact with the mother, the source of warmth, food and comfort, gives the young African a much greater sense of security than the western child enjoys alone in his crib, fed on schedule and, if he is bottle-fed, in amounts determined by impersonal formulas.<sup>29</sup>

As a result of seeming lax attitude of the African in handling their affairs and concerns, some of the Europeans who came to Africa to get things done get frustrated at the end of the day. These Europeans wonder continually how Africans manage to survive on this kind of environment. In Blanc demonstration, “they wonder what makes Africa *thick*, what and how things are done...of what is the heart of Africa, its people and how is everything get done”<sup>30</sup>

Africa functions first of all on a relational basis. For an African, functions are undertaken on relational aspects of life and also those things are completed to aid the family, the clans, the village and the tribe. When one walks around Africa, one notices people sitting, waiting and chatting and unperturbed about life. When one arrives at another time from thence and notice that those people have not moved, they are not even bored. The truth of the matter is not that they are lazy or wasting their time, they enjoy savors and cherishes the time and the relationship before them. There is no anxiousness to get this done or fulfill a project or keep an appointment or meet a deadline when one is with his loved ones.

Among African, keeping and cherishing relationships is an avenue of acknowledging the worth of each human person as an end and not a means. African believes that each one has something to contribute to his welfare and vice versa. In Africa, the art of conversation and dialogue is a nurtured value in human relationship. With open mind they share their problems and look for suggestions and solutions together. The Igbo believe in the saying *mmadu ka eji aka*. If anyone



fails to willingly talk about his private affairs, it is seen as a bad manner or sign of enmity. African believes that he who discusses his affairs with others hardly runs into difficulties or makes mistakes in the execution of his plans.

The philosophy of the African community is the philosophy of “live-and-let live”. This principle is based on the concept of the “clan vital” and applies to a concrete community. The principle of “live and let live” also known as “the eagle and kite” principle emphasizes the obligation to cater for the widow and orphans or the children of the dead relative. An African misfortune was a common misfortune. A living example is the practice by which a person’s house is burnt, immediately and spontaneously the whole community gathers to work and rebuild the damaged house fully. This is not only spontaneous; it is also *gratis*.<sup>31</sup> A brother’s success was equally a common success and it is celebrated as such, “we have made it in you” is echoed among his community and well-wishers.

Greetings are relational traits that are so much cherished among Africans that gulp time in an extensive way. The politeness of greeting people is a test of character among Africans. People of the same category greet each other and it is a norm that one should greet his neighbor every morning to make sure he /she survives the previous night. In Igbo land, part of time consuming ritual is that one must undergo is to go round the neighborhood to inquire on their welfare and greet them accordingly and no age is limited to this greetings. The Aguata people of Igbo extraction call it *iju oha*. Here one visits his neighbor and asks: *unu aputakwara* (hope you survived previous the night?) and the response will *anyi putara o ma unu*(we survived, what about you?). By the time the ritual is over, greater chunk of time is consumed. This is a relationship that must be maintained by all. Children are required to go round and greet their

families, extended and neighborhood. A child who refuses to greet his/ elders is classified as bad-mannered.

An African will put aside all his pressing engagements and planned schedules to focus on his visitor without minding the outcome of those fixed appointments and the reactions of his appointees. His temporal focus does not mean he will not attend to them later but his preoccupation is his belief that *mmadu bu chi onye* (human is your another god).

*Mmaduka* is another name that denotes the supremacy of man over things, time included. He is not in a hurry to pursue his targeted schedules even at his own expenses because he believes that *mmadu* is an end and not a means. Time for him is a means while human is an end to be treated right. An African cherishes relationship more than tasks and appointments. It is not even the clock that rules in Africa but relationship. It is being a human being that rules instead of the clock. Works are relevant and people do come to work but even at work there is an interaction and relational approach to the task at hand. African values relationship more than any other thing because your relationships will nurture you when the chips are down. That is why Africans love to celebrate almost everything. They enjoy each other and celebrate the relationships which they have. They celebrate one both in life and in death. It is on this end that Blanc observes “ours (Africans) has been a man-centered society. Westerners have in many occasions been surprised at the capacity we have for talking to each for the sake of arriving at a particular conclusion but merely to enjoy the communication for its own sake. Intimacy is a term not exclusive for particular friends but applying to the whole group of people who find themselves together whether through work or residential requirements.”<sup>32</sup>

## **TIME EXPRESSED IN POLYCHROMOUS ACTIVITIES**

In Africa, there is a general believe that if a public meeting should begin at a scheduled time, that meeting will eventually begin long after it was fixed. The convener's of such meetings will quickly categorize such lateness to "African time" for such lateness. One of the things that critics who will always see African as people who do not adhere to this fix time refuse to acknowledge is that African have a sense of time and urgency as her values but the dichotomy is that there is a way Africans observe time their own mode of time. The arrival of mechanical precision lack the scheduling activities of the Africans but everyone understood what was meant and complied accordingly. One of the ontological explanations to African understanding of time is that time is polychromous. Here a person can engage in two or three or more things within a given period all at the same time. Combining responsibilities is a part of African culture which has its foundation in African communal lifestyle. Multitasking makes it difficult to maintain the clock time/western version of time which makes things to be done successively. African prioritizes time based on what they feel is most cogent at that time. They spend their morning gardening/farming and breaking firewood at the same time and at the same time they roast yam that they will eat after their task. Then he shows up to the meeting when he had completed his works in the field or he takes time to finish his meals regardless of his commitment at that time.

This scenario was aptly painted by Sarah this way;

A guard is on duty 24hrs a day. One day I left the hospital compound to go on a long walk. I happened to return when the guard was enjoying his launch break less than 20 feet from the gate. The gate was locked and there was a group on both sides of the gate waiting to either enter or exit the compound. Ordinarily, the guard would be expected to interrupt his or her lunch to unlock the gate and proceed with his duties monitoring who enters and leaves the hospital, shoving a bite of food in his mouth whenever he got the channel. The guard continued to eat his launch, while everyone patiently waited for him to finish.<sup>33</sup>

The guard was supposed to take his lunch during his spare time but he chose rather to combine his responsibility with his personal need. Elsewhere he will be seriously queried for negligence to duty but in Africa, they are highly engaged in multitasking activities and this can be regarded as one of the ontological ground for African non-chalant attitude to time.

A woman in a typical Igbo village could be doing her cooking, at the same time cracking her palm kernel, she may still within this period attend to her baby and would prepare to attend to anything that may come up.<sup>34</sup> Polychromous concept can also depict the image of an African woman who could be pregnant while at the same time carrying a baby on her back and at the same time carrying a load on her head and bags on her hand.

Africans do not wait for time, rather time wait for Africans and they produce the time. Since our ancestors did not have watches, they waited for the sun, the moon and the stars to tell them time.

An African can be late and his cogent reason is that everyone knows he will get there not minding the time of arrival. This is because there are many uncertainties that may occur on the way like transportation inefficiency, bad roads, an unexpected mishap etc. So an African know that he will get to where he is going but when he gets there does not matter at all to him. Rephrasing Blanc's words, if you have an appointment to meet an African, enjoy the wait. Africans are often late not because they are rude or indifferent but because they were tied up by multiple events.

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## **5.6 TIMEAS SOCIALIZED CONCEPT**

Time for the African is reckoned by events. These events can stem from cock-crow and the second, sunset, sunrise, overhead sun, length of shadow etc. African equally counts time by meal-times, time of return from farm and other events. These events are strictly adhered to

because it is African lifestyle and routine. Any attempt to change it will be seriously met with resistance. Onwubiko emphasized that these factors are not arbitrary. Being arbitrary here means that the use of meal periods does not imply that all eat their meals at exactly the same time but that everyone has a reasonably accurate idea of what is meant.<sup>33</sup>

Iroegbu gave this hint more when observes that one went to eat, not because it was 1pm (Lunch time in most western societies), but because one was hungry. One went to work and continue to work not because of the economic calculus of 8 hours' work-day for a bigger salary and more earnings via overtime, but because it was day, announced by the early morning cock-crow. And one worked because one had the energy and the work to do whose fruit is for sustenance and development of the family and the community.<sup>34</sup>

Africans use market days to indicate definite time and use of weeks to denote cyclic time. The market days in Igbo culture are *Eke*, *Orie*, *Afo*, and *Nkwo*. In Igbo calendar the *Izu* (week) is made up of four days (*Ubochi*), a month (*onwa*) of 28 days or seven native weeks (*izu asaa*), a year or *afo* made up of 91 weeks (*Izu's*) or 13 month (*Onwa*).<sup>35</sup>

To get the specific Igbo days, we hear statements like *uka nkwo*, *uka eke*, *uka oye*, *uka afo*. Three weeks time is translated *izu uka ito* in Aguata local government area, to avoid miscalculation when it is three week and say five day, an Aguata man or woman would prefer to be exact and he would say *izu uka ato na uma* (the *uma* here means "remaining").

Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* observes that people sit down doing nothing, waiting for time: ie the planting time, the harvesting time, the festival time etc. Before planting season begins it seems as if people were idle, doing nothing, the waiting for the planting time to come. At the period, they sit down to discuss their personal matters and the affairs of the community. This

situation has been observed by many people who do not understand the socio-economic set-up of the people as lack of idleness and time consciousness.

Among the Latuka tribe of Sudan use events to govern the approximate counting of months. October is called the sun because the sun is very hot at that time, then comes December which is called “give your uncle water” because water is very scarce at this period. February is called “let them dig because it is this time that people begins to prepare their field for planting. June is called “Dirty Mouth,” because children now begins to eat the new grain and in so doing get their mouths dirty. Every month of the year is named by the people in the like manner. It makes it proper for them to count time in relation to events that way. Statements like my daughter’s wedding will take place during the “dirty mouth” period.<sup>36</sup>

Historic times is known by reference to landmarks in the life of the community, to contemporaneous events or by recourse to a genealogical “chat”. In Igboland, a landmark event is the 1967-1970 Biafran-Nigerian civil war. This has been a landmark event among the Igbos and anybody that was born during the said period is seen as onye amuru n’agha (war children). Things are classified either as before the war or after the war.

In the contemporary times, time in socialized setting like a village meeting or organized meeting, the characters here portrays some ontological reasons for Africans seeming lax posture to time. it is narrated thus; When an African wants to go for a meeting, there is this cultural restraint of never arriving early to an event. Psychologically, Africa considers the person that arrives very early to an event as an idle and jobless, to that effect African have high regard for the person that shows up very late to an event. This attitude naturally portray an African as a hard working

person who was probably was delayed while coming to the meeting by the traffick or by some over zealous police men.

African seems to regard highly a personality or a boss (Oga) who arrives late to a function rather than a personality that arrives early. There is usually an ego associated with a boss who arrives late to a function because he loves to be admired, weighed, and waived by the onlookers whom he had kept waiting. An African enjoys the paraphernalia of the office and titles they worked so hard to get. The chanting and name calling from the crowd turns a serious tonic in the vein of a highly placed African. If they arrive to a function very early, their worth will not be appreciated by the yearning crowd. This is noticed more in political and religious functions and even academic functions. In an African functions, a greater chunk of time is dedicated to recognizing dignitaries and their potfolios. This Nigerian scenario captures my intentions better

When you are having a big meeting with an 'oga' ( or oga-madam) it is safer to cancel all other appointments for the day. Because the oga will saunter in three hours late and you have to smile and say "No, not at all!" when he asks: "Did I keep you waiting?". If you are an Oga, you should never, ever show up for a meeting on time. This is Nigeria. People disrespect Ogas who don't keep them waiting forever. They will think you are equals and before you know it one ordinary person will call your name without adding Chief or Prof or Honorable or Your Excellency. God forbid that after hustling to get those titles, some idiot forgets to mention them, all because you came early to a meeting.<sup>37</sup>

African spends a lot of time in the place of prayer just to begin and end an event because such social event or ceremony will not start or end without committing the function in the hand of God. In a christain populated area, as many denominations as were present had to be accommodated before a meeting or a functions starts or ends. "You never know which of the Gods will answer favorably. It does not matter if you will be discussing how to steal from other people. God sees the heart and He knows that deep down, all you want to do is to succeed."<sup>38</sup>

A typical African will like to accommodate everyone present when given an opportunity to speak in a meeting. To show his wealth of knowledge, An African will want to do a recapitulation of all that had been said during the meeting, this is done deliberately to announce his presence in such a meeting. To achieve this, an African will be polite and grateful to the moderator for giving him opportunity to speak. He will begin by observing all the protocols present as a sign of respect and to demonstrate to them that they became what they are by share hardwork. He will extend the time and greetings by showing how much a privilege it is for him to be at the meeting by using phrases like 'it is a singular honor' and 'rare privilege'.

He takes another bunch of time to thanks the conveners for having the wisdom to organize the meeting and so had to show understanding by explaining how important the meeting is to him and to everyone present.

For this African speaker not to be selfish he should show regard for the last speaker saying "just like the last speaker has said' or 'I totally agree with the last speaker' or 'I want to align myself with the last speaker'. Having noticed the uneasiness on the faces of the people, the speaker would promise to be considerate and not to speak too long. Finally, the speaker will always provide a summary of all that has been just said by using phrases like: 'so, what have I just said?' or 'What am I trying to say?' to introduce the summary.

An African is always observant because If he still have more things to say and sensed that people are tired of hearing him speak. He will use the words like 'in conclusion' to give them hope that you will soon end, after which you can continue to speak freely. As observed earlier, the meetings must end in closing prayer in order to avoid unnecessary fracas, however, care must be taken to remember whether it was a Christian prayer or Muslim prayer or traditionalist began the



prayer. When the African is not sure, he will allow all the religious sets to perform their rights so that peace can reign.

There is only an acceptable way of answering a phone call during an African meeting. That impactful way is to simply shout: “Hello, please I am in a meeting, let me call you back.” People will smile, seeing how important this meeting is to you.<sup>38</sup>

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## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.1 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

In traditional African life, time is not the clock, tickling here and there with mathematical precision that is fast and on going, hurrying from one activity to another. Time is tied to life and is part of nature, an event that is lived daily, naturally and rhythmically. An African lives with the gradual unfolding of the day when he works and night when he is expected to rest. An African sees the successive seasons ranging from the rainy to dry season<sup>1</sup>. An African waited and enacted the feast and market days where the various celebrations of life, love, worship, births and deaths were done. These values African hitherto treasured necessitated their authentic development and guaranteed their health and longevity.

This dissertation sees authentic development wholesomely in the light of economic, social, moral and technological development. So it is an error to regard development solely on material angle without regard to other forms of development. The moral angle of development is not given any pride of place in today's technological and infrastructural revolution. The age-long scriptural commandment to subdue, expand and replenish the earth is used as a justification of this technological revolution without regard to other hermeneutical considerations. Time for the west is summed up in money where the ticking of a clock is solely the catalyst. The western mantra which says that "any time wasted can never be regained" is also used to justify this claim. However it is not so for an African, Africans value relationship and communion of brethren more than money. *Mmaduka-aku* is an African Igbo name which means that human being is far greater than wealth. An African prefers to abandon his being and time in the hand of nature to dictate and manage rather than the mechanical time where boredom and stress is the end result.

*Onye buru chi ya uzo, ogbagbuo onye ya na oso*<sup>2</sup> is the response of an Igbo African who pays defiance to the instructions of the supernatural to engage his own self-willed venture.

We established that an African conception of time is tied to their life because it lays bay the meaning of their life. This is Mbiti's earlier position that time is the key to understanding the African ontology, their belief, practices, attitude and general way of life. If this is actually the reality then Africans need to jealously guard this most important aspect of their lives. They need to know the dimensions of time ranging from its length, breath, height, depth, nature and scope of time. The fore-most task of the African is to teach and instruct generations both born and unborn the nature and features of time. The implication of Mbiti's assertion is that African's underdevelopment and backwardness is hinged on their negligence of this pearl called time.

Unfortunately this key to African worldview has been abandoned because of the unexamined madrush to imitate the economically rich and culturally poor west<sup>3</sup>. Even though the Europeans are blessed abundantly in material resources but they are seriously lacking in humane power characterized by relationships and community spirit. Time and money have not equipped the West with their desired joy and happiness. They are wealthy but they kill themselves in the pursuit of this material well-being which time is the catalyst. The world is like a mega-machine set to run in mechanical time dictation. The society is presently perceived as the machine and humanity is its part. The human person is regarded less a subject and rational person. He is regarded more as a means and not as an end; he is classified more as an elemental and atomistic entity rather than a holistic being. Workers who follow blindly the dictates of scheduled mechanical clock appointments "are robbed of creativity, affectivity, spontaneity and

responsibility, making them mere clogs in the industrial mega-wheel or turning them to what Yablonsky has called Robopaths”<sup>4</sup>

Africa surrendered her leadership in history with the arrival of modernity. Through this wholistic embrace, all her fundamental values and identity were regarded as backward and outdated. The open, relational and relaxed African dimension of time has given way for undue urgency and slavish overbearing of time on individuals. An average African is now a slave to time and no longer a master of it. African initial watchword that man should not be rushed into a mere instrumentalist calculative notion has been abandoned. He is presently reduced to a pure form of elemental manipulative functionality.

Africa should be educated to know to fully realize her values and resources. Africa must develop from what he has and not from careless borrowing from others which in the end leadsto technological servitude.

## 6.2 CONCLUSION

Africans exist in time, not for time. Africans are not defined by seconds, minutes and hours like machines and robots. Even though we are not denying the merits of the mechanical time, as a matter of fact, its merits abound, so does its demerit abound much more. This work recommends a humanization of time which will restore the human face in our already technical society where authentic being in freedom, creativity and spontaneity, personal and socio-communal human existence is sold for the mess of pottage of luxury, comfort and painless existence. This humanization will restore Africa from this mad rush to keep appointments which has dehumanized them. There should be less dependence and emphasis on machine and “clock stifling schedules” and more emphasis on inter-personal and divine guidance. Authentic developments of Africa come from the marriage of material progress and human progress which is summed in complementarity. Anthropology must have precedence over technology (mechanical clock), humanism over materialism, integralism over departmentalism and African roots over technological transferism.<sup>5</sup>

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