# INTERROGATORY THEORY: PATTERNS OF SOCIAL DECONSTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION AND THE CONVERSATIONAL ORDER IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Jonathan O. CHIMAKONAM, Ph.D
Department of Philosophy
University of Calabar, Nigeria

## Abstract

Africa is in economic and social terms widely regarded as an underdeveloped continent even though we in interrogatory theory (IT) would prefer the term developing instead. Its societies are characterized by unstable institutions. Societies ride on the wheels of institutions. Institutions are social structures or building blocks of any society. Repressive colonial times replaced traditional institutions with non-compatible ones ignoring any usable part of tradition and admitting without censorship every element in the imposed modernity. My position in this essay is that social structures in postcolonial Africa are ramshackled hence the massive retrogression of the continent's social order. To get Africa on its feet and moving in the right direction requires the reconstruction of the social structures of Africa's modernity and the construction of its futurity. I postulate interrogatory theory (IT) as a conversational algorithm that would provide the theoretic base for the authentic African renaissance. It is constructively questioning rather than being exclusively critical i.e. it questions to reconstruct rather than being merely critical to deconstruct; dialogical rather than merely individualistic; rigorous rather than merely informative; yet radical rather than being conventional.

**KEYWORDS:** Interrogatory theory, deconstruction, reconstruction, conversationalism, African philosophy

## Introduction

Africa is in dire need of a viable social philosophy. As massive institutionalization characterizes modernity to which the colonialists roughly led the Africans into with neither their consent nor adequate preparation; it is imperative that Africa develops strong and viable institutions. In interrogatory theory, we hold that for Africa to develop, strong and viable institutions are preferable to strong individuals which is a rogue legacy of repressive times. Suffice it to say following Ivan Illich (1971) that Africa as a result, has made the most of the confusion between institution and process. In superimposing a squarish peg in a roundish hole, what ought to be a regular social order of modernity has become not only distorted but inexplicably disfigured in the Africa that emerged onto the global matrix from the womb of colonialism. In this essay,

we shall take as examples the institutions of "education", "religion" and "democracy".

To do this, we shall use the tool of Interrogatory Theory which is a dialogical engagement or questioning of the societal structures and cultures using a reflective method.  This occurs at two levels: one with "tradition" to discover some of its elements that will be usable or valuable for "modernity"; the other with modernity to discover some of its elements that will be usable or valuable for the futurity.

The purpose of Interrogatory Theory is reflective assessment or interrogation of social structures (tradition and modernity) in order to deconstruct, construct/reconstruct or synthesize where necessary in pursuit of the future which contains the ideal. This exercise can also be cross-cultural, intercultural besides intra-cultural. The Calabar School of Philosophy recognizes the fact that Africa is a developing continent that needs serious efforts to facilitate its development in different fronts; as a result, the deconstruction is to identify usable or valuable elements for reconstruction/synthesis not strictly to fault-find as is the case in critical theory of the Frankfurt School developed principally by Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin and Erich Fromm.

Europe of the twentieth century in which these theoreticians thrived was already developed beyond comprehension. Technology and overtly strong institutions riding on the backs of ideologies such as capitalism, socialism and communism, etc., were thought to have encroached on human freedom beyond tolerance. For this, some ideologies like Marxism or even humanism were preferred on the ground that they could recapture human freedom. This is perhaps re-echoed in the famous definition which Horkheimer provided for "Critical Theory". For him, any theory is critical if it aspires "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (HORKHEIMER 1982, 244). These circumstances could be the subliminal technology or the ideologies that manifest themselves in the mode of social institutions. Hence, the focus of critical theory (CT) is in part, to fault-find or deconstruct institutions and ideologies which have engendered pitch-high development in Europe at the great cost of human freedom. In doing this the critical Theoreticians favour the Marxist ideology as a working tool or method understandably because of its revolutionary and deconstructive temper. Indeed, it can be concluded that critical theory aims at deconstructing domineering social structures so that human freedom would on its own see space to thrive. There is hardly any serious emphasis on reconstruction.

Interrogatory theory on the other hand, has a different framework altogether. It is here developed for a twenty-first century Africa that is still aspiring to shake off the repressive conditions of colonialism and develop like Europe. That quest for unabated human freedom is absolutely not necessary for a

yet to be developed Africa. As a matter of fact, that freedom which critical theory wants to *uncage* in developed Europe is what interrogatory theory wants to cage in undeveloped Africa. It seems to me that there are two important stages in the history of human civilization namely: the pre-development and the post-development stages. The roles which human freedom has to play in these two stages are staggering. In the pre-development stage, if humans are allowed free expression of their freedom, the human society inevitably would at best develop in cyclical form, and at worst in utter retrogression. This is because humans are mercurial to say the least; the human freedom when uncensored would breed disagreement, rancor, conflict, sometimes anarchy, war, pogroms and destructions in the society. No society would ever develop if its inhabitants are free to live the way they please. A developed society is one that has *means* to offer and sustain appreciable quality of life for at least, the greater number. Non can a society acquire these structural paraphernalia without whittling down the freedom of its inhabitants. That is what the laws and constitutions of nations do—to dominate humans and repress their freedoms.

To do this effectively, strong and viable institutions are imperatives for any underdeveloped or developing societies. This is what interrogatory theory advocates—positive repression of treacherous human freedom in Africa. This does not include non-treacherous freedoms like "freedom of inquiry". The repression of treacherous human freedom is positive if it translates to building strong institutions. It is negative if it translates to building strong individuals. But even a negatively repressed freedom is far better than unrepressed freedom in underdeveloped or developing societies. Many Sub-Saharan African nations in the postcolonial era dangle between negatively repressed and totally unrepressed freedoms. While nations like Uganda, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, etc., at the time of writing this essay experience negatively repressed freedoms others like Somalia, Central African Republic, D. R. Congo to name a few experience unrepressed freedoms. Freedom in a nation might still be negatively repressed even though such a nation has a democracy just as in another, it may be totally unrepressed even though such a state has a government. The indices can be assessed based on the statistics of crime, violence, injustice, conflict, political gangsterism, social instability, economic retrogression, unpredictable regime change and corruption, etc.

The other stage of civilization is the post-development—this is a stage at which a society attains commensurate development in different front. At this point, inhabitants experience so much comfort and luxury—this includes the luxury of time to engage in pastimes. But there is a certain abnormal feature of this stage that always almost promises to upset the apple cart from time to time. This can be called the "gulch factor". It simply entails that no matter how stable a society is, there is always a gap yawning to be filled from time to time. This

factor is often caused by economic, political, sometimes religious and social problems orchestrated mainly by movements in world's population. The situations in USA, Greece, Ukraine, etc., are cases in point. While racism in USA translates to economic, political and social decision making index, economic instability and political maneuvers have taken a huge toll on the Greek and Ukrainian societies of late. It is in times like this that the gulch factor manifests in developed societies.  Inhabitants who are used to certain standards of daily living suddenly realize that there is a shake up. Usually, adjustment to the new social reality is hardly an option for people who know that they have been caged for far too long. Now if the same society which has restricted their freedoms can no longer sustain the standard of living it constantly promises in exchange for their freedom then it is right about time that they reclaimed their freedoms. This is the cause of riots, protests, demonstrations in all developed societies in the world today. In all this, neo-revolutions are not out of place. Neo-revolution is a term I would like to use to describe revolutions in developed societies. I call it neo because it is not like revolutions in poor societies that demand for development; rather it makes use of the free expressions of human freedom to demand for social stability. The post-development era therefore is an anxious period of human civilization where neo-revolutions or at least the threat of it would force through serious programmes of social stability. For the great danger which the *uncaging* of human freedom portends, I reckon that the critical Theoreticians are attempting to stir the hornet's nest—to cause pandemonium in the world. Had they any idea of the consequences of their advocacy, they would rather device more subtle ways of caging the treacherous human freedom. But it also does appear that in some sort of fatalism, human freedom is bound to leave the cage to which it has been imprisoned in developed societies just one day.

Africa however, is at present not threatened by this "gulch factor" but rather has to worry about what I shall call the "arroyo effect" which is the sort of gap orchestrated in underdeveloped or developing societies by non-correspondence of social policies and action patterns of inhabitants of such societies. This sometimes creates economic, religious, social and political frictions difficult to handle in the society. I shall dwell more on "arroyo effect" in the next section.

The aim of interrogatory theory therefore is to understand and identify the factors which retard Africa's growth and to continuously assemble those that will enhance its progress from stage to stage through the dynamics of deconstruction, construction/reconstruction and synthesis. The deconstructive process in interrogatory theory as stated earlier does not merely aim at identifying or critiquing the faults in a social structure but emphatically, it aims at identifying the gains or the positive points which can be harnessed in the ever rolling chains of reconstruction. This process in turn is expected to terminate

only when the ideals of futurity are met. But every future carries the present in its womb and the present carries yet another future in its womb.

Accordingly, we shall in this essay interrogate the social institutions of education, religion and democracy in the postcolonial Africa's "modernity" to see what we can take and what must be dropped in forging better systems for the "future".

**Background to Interrogatory Theory (IT)**

Social deconstruction and construction/reconstruction of the interrogatory theory (IT) consist in radical questioning of social structures of tradition or modernity for futurity in Africa. Where tradition represents the precolonial Africa, modernity represents the postcolonial Africa and futurity represents a renaissance period after the progress of modernity became stunted. Interrogatory theory sees any organized human society as resting and running on the wheels of institutions. The native institutions that remarked precolonial Africa were toppled by colonialism and replaced with Western brand institutions most of which have proved quite flabby in modern Africa hence, the call by Interrogationists for future reconstruction of the flaccid social structures. These institutions are regarded by Interrogationists as social structures or the building blocks of the society that characterize its functionality. Here, we want to interrogate those of modernity. To do this effectively, it requires that we put the social candidate in a "rack" and compel it through decisive interrogation to bear witnesses for and against itself. During interrogations, questions are guided to discover not only the positive aspects but the ones that are usable or valuable for possible reconstruction. Also, questions are also asked to uncover the discrete negative aspects which must be overcome in the reconstruction. To the positive aspects, the interrogator harnesses only the ones that prove to be valuable or usable for reconstructive purposes and to the negative aspects, he takes the lesson of the shortcomings which are to be forestalled in the reconstruction.

Interrogatory theory rides on three hypotheses namely; (1) the social behavior hypothesis which states that action patterns of humans ought to determine the type of social structures put in place in the society. (2) The Structural behavior hypothesis which states that the type of social structures in a society ought to determine the action patterns of humans in the society. These two hypotheses are jointly called "nne n' nna" hypotheses to highlight the thetic and antithetic structure of male and female patterns they have.

On the first hypothesis, it can be deduced that when social structures are established uninfluenced by the action patterns of humans in the society that there would be a gap between humans and the society. The same could invariably be deduced from the second hypothesis. This can be called the "arroyo effect". The arroyo effect bespeak of unbridgeable gap that often characterize policies of

social structures in the society and the action pattern of humans in it. This supposes that without some measure of agreeableness between social structures and action pattern of humans in the society, progress or development of specific form would be unlikely.

To overcome the arroyo effect that would naturally arise when either of the two hypotheses is unfulfilled, a third hypothesis known as (3) the structural reconciliatory hypothesis is here put forward.  The structural reconciliatory hypothesis states that action patterns of humans should first determine the type of social structures to be set up in the society (as a way of establishing human freedom as the formational foundation of the society) and in turn, the social structures set up should determine the action patterns of humans as governing principles (as way of repressing the treacherous human freedom). For its reconciliatory character, this third hypothesis can be called "nwa" hypothesis to highlight the synthetic property it has. This demonstrates the presence of my Ezumezu three-valued logic model which sees the nne n' nna hypotheses as "necessary links" (OZUMBA and CHIMAKONAM 2014, 11) in the formation of the "nwa" hypothesis.

The logical process of interrogatory theory is therefore dialectic. This dialectic however, is somewhat different from the Marxist or the Hegelian dialectic because thesis and anti-thesis are not treated as contradictories but sub-contraries. It is for this that Ezumezu three-valued logic rather than the Lukasiewicz' or the Kleene type three-valued logic is the background logic of interrogatory theory. In the section to follow, we shall employ interrogatory theory and its tools to deconstruct and reconstruct some selected social structures.

**Patterns of Social Deconstruction and Reconstruction**
Here, we shall interrogate three selected social structures in modern Africa namely; education, religion and democracy with the aim of first, deconstructing their modern structures and then reconstructing for futurity.

What does education consist in? What should determine the type of educational structure to be set up in African societies? Do those factors actually determine the structure of education in modern Africa? What are the problems of the type of educational structure in modern Africa? How can we set up a better structure for futurity? Are there usable or valuable elements from the positive aspects of the structural order to be deconstructed? What are the lessons to be gleaned from the negative aspects? To what extent can the usable part of the positive aspects and the lessons from the negative aspects be appropriated for future reconstruction? These are the questions we can use to deconstruct the social structure of education in modern Africa. "Education" has had its meaning broken and is confused in the modern Africa with schooling. The young who represent the future of the continent are put through the system of school and

curriculum which lay emphasis on certification rather than learning. Proficiency in colonial language is in the same system confused with expression of new thought where craftiness is effectively taken for creativity and the static individualistic ontology replaces morality. Character formation which has been overshadowed in the school curriculum due to the overemphasis on certification, now favours a tilt toward Nietzschean Ubermensch and individuals are supposed to attain this on their own and at their wills. The postcolonial Africa therefore becomes a "modern jungle" where beasts clad in modern attire re-enact on daily basis the Hobbesian state of nature—this calls for the positive repression of human freedom.

The succession of bad leadership since colonialism ended, the thriving corruption in all sectors, intentional enactment of bad policies and poor implementation of good ones, etc., are all evidences of systems of education that have consistently failed to educate postcolonial Africans. Education not only liberates one from the strangle hold of another man's will by stuffing up his head with some details, it opens his eyes to the knowledge of good and bad; it gives him the ability to see the future; it endows him with the capacity to discern the future consequences of actions or inactions taken today; it provides him with good understanding of the world; and above all, education rescues a man from his ego which is the greatest enemy of the uneducated and the miseducated. In confusing schooling with education, the systems in postcolonial Africa do not offer these to the young, hence the broken social order.

Education is a tool for civilization and civilization is supposed to wean man off his beastly nature encoded in his ego. Massive modern institutionalization brought into Africa by colonialism effectively eroded cultural institutions which served as guides for the education of the young. Yet, in their places there are no commensurate replacements in the new order. This has in the last fifty years led to the constant production of generations of guinea pigs taking turns to run systems and determine Africa's future, each with their trademark over-bloated egos. The job of the human ego is to consistently ring the bell of self-interest which effectively blinds one to the true nature of things. Civilization is supposed to encapsulate a process that relieves humans of the burden of the ego. This, the so-called civilization has not been able to do for the postcolonial Africa because "education" has been bastardized.

Education as I have stated, is in the postcolonial Africa confused with schooling hence certification takes the place of learning and fluency in colonial language replaces expression of new thought. Craftiness replaces creativity; distortion and copycatism take the places of originality and innovation. In this way, the postcolonial African waters down the essence of education by breaking its traditional meaning. The consequence is that a society that does not educate its young in this institutionalized world is abusing them and they will in turn take

revenge on that society in the future.  How may we then deconstruct and reconstruct this distorted idea of education?

A society where the majority lives their live under assumptions does not have a proper system of education. Proper education entails the transmission of reasoned knowledge to citizens and the demolition of basic pillars of societal assumptions. Assumptions are simply too dangerous to constitute a people's mode of living in this modern world. Hence, an education system that directly or indirectly transmits or tolerates assumptions as tenets of living rather than knowledge is not good enough for Africa. In such a system, massive authority is placed on hearsay and bandwagon to the detriment of informed individual convictions. Because of undue emphasis on certification, people are less interested in proper learning that results from critical engagements with teachers, colleagues and books. For this, rumors and gossips gradually become regular and acceptable sources of information among postcolonial Africans. How often does one see such group exchanges in the bars, market places, squares, roadside canteens, churches and even in schools, where ill-informed individuals misinform others who simply listen and believe rather than question? This misinformed people in turn carry the news to other places where again people are all too happy to hear than to question its authenticity. Because of strings of curricula that emphasize certification rather than learning, African people develop phobia if not sheer indolence for reading since there are shorter cuts to passing exams which is the ultimate requirement for certification. In the end, those coming out of school are too lazy and uninspired to read even the newspapers. Generally, monies spent on buying books are considered waste in the sub-Saharan Africa. More than ninety-five percent of University graduates in sub-Saharan Africa never read a single book again in their lives. This might not be scientifically generated statistics but it is not too far from the truth from daily observations. The result is that in the sub-Saharan postcolonial Africa, there is what I call "foolish majority" which constitutes an overwhelming percentage of the total population. This is the reason why an ideology like democracy which rides very strongly on the idea of "majority principle" has failed in Africa. How can a foolish majority produce proper democracy? Proper democracy is most times called "liberal democracy" to emphasize the individual posturing at free expression of his informed convictions. With foolish majority there is no such thing as informed convictions, there is rather a dangerously misinformed orientation riding on the wheels of deep-seated band-wagonism. Hence, transplanted to African soil, liberal democracy germinates as non-liberal and as a result, non-democratic to say the least.

In the spirit of interrogatory theory, as we deconstruct to reconstruct we have to identify what has been called the "valuable past" (JAHN 1961, 16) or "usable past" (JEWSIEWICKI 1989, 1–76) or elements of the given order for

prospective reconstruction. In the postcolonial education systems in Africa and Nigeria in particular, we have seen many a good policy whose implementations

failed due to inherent structural weaknesses. We must discard the faulty structures and take along some of the good policies like the nomad education, bia-lingual education, liberal education, creative education, etc. The point on emphasis here is that some education policies may be good but fail due to the poverty of internal structure chiefly that of implementation, curriculum, output evaluation/confirmation and curriculum delivery techniques. It is these faulty internal structures that must be discarded and reformed in a new reconstruction of education systems in postcolonial Africa. As viable policies and ideas of education are taken along from Africa's modernity, some of the identified faulty elements would be discarded.

To this end, we should have a system of education that (1) develops a curriculum that encourages creativity, originality, innovation and aspiration to learn rather than simply to pass among students. (2) A system that encourages and inspires students to discover, invent and get well-informed as output evaluation/confirmation of learning method rather than a system that places undue emphasis on certification. (3) A system that emphasizes liberality, freedom of enquiry/expression and critical engagements between teacher and student and between student and books rather than a banking method of teacher delivery technique. (4) And above all, a system in which implementation of education policies is on time and not compromised, including regular curriculum assessment and reviews.

Also, religion (Christianity and Islam) another institutional import of colonial or foreign powers is in the postcolonial Africa confused with morality. Membership of any is erroneously taken to canonize one into a moral paragon. Whatever he does in the name of the governing deity is not only moral but the very wish of the deity. There are two painful consequences that result from the transplanting of these foreign religions to Africa: (1) the cultural embers of morality were easily over-run as the attendant reinterpretation of concepts such as "baptism" and "born-againism" provided the leeway for immorality to thrive under the cover of belongingness or membership. The unbelievers condemned for eternal punishment in both Islam and Christianity are no longer those found wanting in character but have shrewdly become those who are yet to belong. For this, most postcolonial African societies are mired in deep moral decay in the midst of overwhelming theism—an immoral society can hardly make progress. (2) Again, for the misinterpretation of the actual role of religion in the society, most postcolonial Africans through the passage of time have unwittingly surrendered their ingenuity to the gods. The scientific concept of "chance" is now confused with miracle. Working hard gradually became unfashionable as praying hard receives televised promotions backed up by fictitious testimonies. In the

face of this senseless yet, stupefying revolution, ex-criminals and celebrated failures reinvent themselves in the mold of prayer warriors, prophets, miracle-workers and seers to cash in on people's ignorance and misery. The outcome is

that postcolonial Africa stopped working, stopped thinking and wastes fine human industry, generation after generation, attempting to pray the continent out of poverty and the general decadence orchestrated by entrenched moral decay. So we see that religion is further confused with enterprise just as praying hard has come to replace working hard. How did this distortion of religion occur and how can it be remedied?

Some have argued that the trouble with the postcolonial African societies is squarely leadership. Others think it is corruption. I clearly do not agree with either. Yes, these are some of the unnerving challenges Africa face in today's world but the ultimate trouble with the postcolonial Africa is "religion". The colonial religions are the root of all the evil that plague Africa. In the postcolonial Africa religion has effectively come to become the opium of the people (MARX 1844/1976). Sociologically, as August Comte categorized; it has relegated Africa further down in the rung of social progress and civilization.  It is only a badly informed people that after reading about the miracles in the scriptures would be inspired to sit and pray rather than stand and work. Would the racist Europe have offered Africa religion if it were convinced that it guarantees morality? Would it have offered Africa religion if it were certain it holds the key to heaven? The same racist Europe that does not even in this modern time, want to share this wicked earth with black Africans, if it were truly convinced that religion issues entry visas to glorious heaven, would it truly have given it to Africans? Would a black African be elected Pope? No, instead the European in Diaspora, somewhere from Argentina would be elected. So, even the masters of the religions (Europeans) do not practice what they preach—is that not strong enough to tell Africans that the whole thing is fake? Over fifty years after colonialism ended and neo-colonialism began, the European exploiter has not had the milk of human kindness to share some of his little technologies (technology transfer) with the exploited Africa, could he really have given Africa religion if it were of any discernible value? Indeed, in no place of the world and in no portion of human history has religion been fully utilized as instrument of repression than in the Sub-Saharan Africa. A religious person is a mere pun in the hands of the master of the religion. This was ruthlessly done by the colonizer in keeping with Karl Marx's declaration that: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creatures, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of the spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people" (MARX I884/1976). Thus the religion that the European brought to Africa is nothing but a cleverly contrived hoax—a big scam.

This is a point education intersperses with religion. Like I argued above, the education system in the postcolonial Africa has failed to inform and educate. It has failed above all else to free Africans from the strangle-hold of the colonizer's will and ruse. Education and religion were used by the colonizer as instruments of domination and control rather than as instruments of liberation and development. While education was effectively used to under-inform and misinform, religion was used to sedate and indoctrinate, perfectly as opium not only to steer Africans away from reality but to embed discord among Africans. When a people cannot agree, they cannot move forward.

The point on emphasis here is that Africa took what I call "religious plunge" following the massive indoctrination of the colonizer's missionary arm. The stunning effect of this ungodly religious brainwash meted out on Africans is unmistakeably obvious in this postcolonial times. J. G. Donders reports that Africa fell for the trickery of colonizer's religions partly because of their addiction for the commune which the foreign religions offered in interestingly new way (1985, 32). In his [The Invention of Africa] V. Y. Mudimbe (1988, 52-58) recounts the statistics of some research conducted ten years earlier which show the massive growth of Christianity in Africa. Some of the research including that of World bank (1984), Barrett (1970) and Meester de Ravenstein (1980) suggest that Africa would be home to the world's largest Christian population by the year 2000. The question is; if religious indoctrination is essential for survival in a tough and unfair world as they made the African to believe, why does Christianity keep shrinking in the West and expanding in Africa as Mudimbe statistically shows? (1988, 54-55). Why do the missionaries leave their continent where there are many atheists to come to Africa to evangelize? Is it sensible to suggest that they want more Africans to go to heaven than Europeans? Ignorant of the motive of the colonizer's missionary, Africa followed their guided indoctrination and took a massive "religious plunge" that today cost Africa a lot in history and a place in world civilization. An average African commits over eighty percent of his daily time attempting to conquer some fantasy place in the great beyond described to him by the European as being most important whereas he has not conquered the world he lives in. There in now religious houses on every street, village, town and city where cottage industries and business outfits should be in the Sub-Saharan Africa most of which summon their members to meet on work days and during working hours. In Nigeria, which perhaps leads the pack in this religious plunge, former factory buildings and warehouses are being converted to religious houses. And so the continent is lost chasing shadows in a world where reality bites deep.

To obtain a radical break from this scenario we need to understand (1) what religion truly is. (2) And its place in this world. To do the reconstruction, we must identify what is valuable or usable from the decadent modernity.

Religion is nothing but one of the ways of life. Religion primarily is supposed to
teach adherents upright or moral living with fellow humans and additionally, because most religions believe in some governing deity and its promise of eternal bliss, a consistent practice of its code of upright living with one's neighbors would at death earn one's soul a ticket to paradise.  In the postcolonial Africa however, religion is not perceived as a way of life but as a sort of embassy or visa issuing house to paradise whose only requirement for getting a visa is to be within the embassy. The role of teaching upright living for most religions in Africa has long become trivial hence, the confusion of religion with morality or uprightness. The prophet or the preacher is a righteous man and his actions are moral simply because he is a prophet or a preacher. His morality is guaranteed by his position in the religious assembly and not by the quality of his conducts. Similarly, adherents in Christian parlance are "born agains" who are guaranteed heaven not by their conducts but by their membership of a bible-believing Church. The result of this decadent social structure is the disintegration of moral fibre at both the individual and institutional levels in the postcolonial African society.

Following this deconstruction should be a posturing for reconstruction of the social structure of religion. Interrogatory theory requires that we identify valuable or usable elements from this decadent modernity which would be needed for the reconstruction of futurity. Besides the telling deception, misinterpretation, distortions and faulty internal structure of what religion is and its role in the society there are apparently some good elements which could be sifted from that modern conception of religion in postcolonial Africa. Some of these include dogged believe in the system, hard work in the religious house, incessant interrogation of non members, unbridled gratification of prophets and preachers. These are all good attributes of religious practice in Africa's modernity even though they are misguided in the mode of *squarish* peg in a roundish hole. In a future reconstruction, we recommend a turn-around for example: hard work should be proportionate in both the religious structure and the other social structures. This eschews a scenario where many Africans devote all their productive time working in the religious houses. Again, the culture of always seeking to gratify religious leaders with all sorts of charity should be proportionate. The religious man must understand that charity must go round. Most importantly, it must be directed to the less-privileged in the society and not always to the well-of religious leaders in exchange for blessings. Also, members of religious groups in the postcolonial Africa incessantly interrogate non members by questioning their candidature for paradise. This interrogation should in a new structure be directed to religious leaders and members. It is only in so doing that the moral decay which has permeated the religious structure of modern Africa can be exposed and addressed. Finally, the sort of faith members of

religious groups in the postcolonial Africa demonstrate in their religious systems is to say the least awesome even when it is obvious that such systems fail in capturing the correct role and interpretation of religion in the society. In the new structure, this faith would play important role when redirected to uphold only the correct institution of religion in the society. In doing so, this faith would have to rise from the understanding that there is a vital connection between the religious structure and the society. Religion must be seen primarily as a social structure which has roles to play in the stability and growth of the society.

The third social structure we are going to interrogate here is "democracy", a popular political institution transplanted to Africa from the West held promises as the very LCM of good governance and leadership. This again, has become a farce in postcolonial Africa. "The government of the people" easily became confused with "the government of the selected few", so if you could organize a sham of an election and declare results in your favour, the system is democratic and you have the people's mandate. With failure of dictatorships across Africa in three or four decades following independence; taking the likes of Congo's Mobutu Seseseko, Uganda's Idi Amin, Nigeria's Gowon, Muritala Muhammed, Olusegun Obasanjo, Mohammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and of course, Sani Abacha; other dictators and would be dictators reinvented themselves in the mold of democrats by sprinkling in fake elections. Yet, have we not seen many of them in the last three decades or more still dictating and hand over mantles to their sons in their dying beds like Congo's Cabila, Uganda's Museveni, Burkina Faso's Blaise Compoure, Cameroon's Paul Biya. These are some of Africa's dictators putting on the toga of democracy. Is the problem then, with democracy or with the postcolonial African distortion of the social structure of democracy?

One can argue for the later but if the social structure of democracy was watertight as assumed perhaps there would not be room for its convenient distortion as we observe in postcolonial Africa. So there is probably more to the assumption of distortion. Democracy itself must have internal structural lapses that only became apparent as it was transplanted to the African soil. It was Aristotle who in the Ancient Greece intuited that democracy must be a form of mob system of government (COPLESTON 1962, 96) and Plato capped it up by describing it as the worst form of all lawful governments and the best form of all lawless ones (COPLESTON 1962, 260). These learned opinions point to the observed structural lapses of the system which was to tower above every other in modern civilization until recently. The transplantation of this system from the West to Africa and Asia which signals perhaps, a ricochet off one compatible thought system to a non compatible one must be responsible for this. It has been argued that the thought systems of the races of the world vary considerably (HEBGA 1958, 222-23; CHIMAKONAM 2012, 13-18; HUNNINGS 1975, 4;

OMOREGBE 1985, 6) and this has implications on the compatibility of alien social structures.

To start with, the idea of democratic institution is not alien to African native thought system (OLADIPO 2000, web page 1; WIREDU 1996, 182-90) what is different is that in native African societies, "consensus principle" rather than the Western "majoritarian principle" undergirded the system (BUSIA 1967, 28; NWALA 1985, 168). With the consensus principle it is difficult if not out-rightly impossible for the "government of the people" to be confused with "government of the select few". The torpedo of the social structure by disgruntled opposition is also absent because everyone is in the boat. Nwala, therefore, likens this to the unanimity principle in Igbo-African version of traditional democracy. In his words "*Unanimity* and all the rigorous processes and compromises (igba izu—period of consultation) that lead to it are all efforts made to contain the wishes of the majority as well as those of the minority. In short, they are designed to arrive at what may be abstractly called 'the general will of the people of the community' (NWALA 1985, 168)." This same system which Nwala presents is also found in many African societies notably the Kenya people and the Ashanti of Ghana (BUSIA 1967, 18-22).

Corroborating Nwala's position, Kwasi Wiredu bemoans the failure of liberal democracy in Africa and blames it on the incompatibility of the system with the native political order and orientation in Africa. This is because, the multi-party system based on majority rule does not produce a reasonable system of democracy anywhere in the world how much more in African political order characterized by multi-ethnicity. Busia writes that for some people, it was the European Colonial Powers that destroyed African traditional democracy (1967, 17). Little wonder Wiredu recommends that we build an alternative democratic system for Africa resting on the democratic potentials of the traditional African political order; such potentials he says include the consensus principle and all-inclusive decision making processes (WIREDU 1996, 182-90).

Kwame Gyekye also holds that there was a functional democratic order in pre-colonial Africa prior to colonialism whose basic orientations are couched in community spirit and consensus principle. The traditional African system features a democratic order where dependence on dialogue and effective consultation were means of decision-making. According to K. A. Busia, "so strong was the value of solidarity that the chief aim of the counselors was to reach unanimity, and they talked until this was achieved (BUSIA 1967, 28)." A viable democratic alternative for Africa therefore must be constructed on these traditional democratic principles that have worked for Africa for ages. Writing in support Olusegun Oladipo states that:

> The goal…is to show that a currently viable adaption and transformation of the African democratic heritage could help to consolidate Africa's multicultural societies. A central task in this process lies in the reconciliation of democracy and justice via the establishment of a consensus-oriented dialogue for decision-making,

> a constitutional legitimation of the rule of ethnic groups, and a decentralisation of political power, so that local and regional autonomy becomes possible (OLADIPO 2000, web page 1).

On the issue of reconciling democracy and justice, it has been mooted that this is one of the stumbling blocks of Western-styled liberal democracy in Africa. As a result of the principle of majority rule, Africa's political class takes undue advantage on others. An alibi that was not present in Africa's traditional political system. Expressing this correctly, Mahmood Mamdani echoes that the Western-styled liberal democracy practiced in Africa today has created a scenario in which "the minority fears democracy; the majority fears justice" (MAHMOOD 1998, 11). This issue, it is safe to say is central to all the crises in Africa's democracies today.

It is therefore easy to observe that (1) the majoritarian principle (2) the idea of the opposition (3) the instrument of election (4) the multiparty system to name a few, in different ways short-change the practice of liberal democracy in postcolonial Africa. In the precolonial native African idea of democracy as Wiredu, Busia and Nwala showed above, there is no room for opposition—every interest is duly accommodated, hence the only unaccommodated interest is the non-interested party. If such non-interested party does not behoove the interest of the commune it is then regarded as an enemy and treated as such. In this light, the idea of opposition brought in by liberal democracy is not received well in postcolonial Africa. He whose interests cannot be accommodated for any reason at all whether he is called opposition is simply an enemy of the commune and should be treated as such. Thus we see liberal democracy in postcolonial Africa that behooves the principle of unanimity rather than that of checks and balance which the opposition brings. We also see the traditional preference for selection dominating the idea of election in postcolonial Africa. The elections which bring people to power have been mutilated to wear the toga of selection instead and the idea of multiparty system has sparked off massive divisions and discriminations along ethnic lines. Parties somehow bear the reflection of communities (in accordance with African communitarian ontology) who must protect its interests absolutely. To cap it all, the majoritarian principle has provided leeway for ruling parties or powerful groups to perpetuate themselves in power through fake elections. All these have a direct connection with Africa's communitarian ontology. One could see that the friction between the entrenched communitarian ontology and the imported Western liberal democratic ideology undergirded by individualistic ontology cannot be resolved without tampering with the structure of liberal democracy itself. This adjustment is not because liberal democracy is faulty in itself but because it is faulty in Africa.

In interrogatory theory we always look out for lessons to take from negative elements and the valuable or usable elements to take from the positive ones that emerge from the interrogation. Here, it must be admitted that there are structural weaknesses in liberal democracy as far as its practice in Africa is concerned. So we should look out

for structural adjustments in our reconstruction of the institution of democracy in Africa. Wiredu's call for a non-party consensual democratic system is based on the motivation for all-inclusive decision making system. Perhaps, we must observe, a one party system might be better since in the absence of the lure of community-life which party system provides, political actors almost involuntarily in keeping with Africa's communitarian system of thought would create communities and which is worse, along ethnic lines. J. G. Donders in writing about the missionary successes in Africa corroborates that Africans are naturally and strongly attracted to communitarian ontology and would only leave one community for another if the new one offers greater promises of congregation (1985, 32). Hence, I reason that a non-party system might have grave consequences on social cohesion. Africa's new democracy should offer a community in the form of one-party system that would strive to overcome exclusions and strengthen inclusions. In this way, the responsibility of checks and balances provided for in the idea of the opposition would be transferred to and captured in what T.U. Nwala calls "the general will" (1985, 168). The line between the majority and the minority would fade away naturally. In the absence of the negative influences of the idea of opposition and majoritarian principle, democratic elections in Africa would become truly democratic, characteristic of the Igbo maxim "nwa mmuo emegbuna nwa mmadu, nwa mmadu emegbuna nwa mmuo" meaning "let the son of the spirit not cheat son of man and let the son of man not cheat son of the spirit" this injunction is given in the understanding that there is continuum of life from physical to spiritual. Figuratively, though we may speak in different tongues, we are one and the same people nonetheless. It is in this way that the idea of unanimity or consensus principle as harped by K. A. Busia, T. U. Nwala, O. Oladipo and K. Wiredu would return to take the place of the notorious "majoritarian principle" in democratic systems in Africa. Such an alternative democratic system may be called "Ohakarasi" or "Ohacracy" meaning "all people (not some or most) have the say". In 1974 in his [Igbo Political Culture] one named E. N. Njaka described the Igbo brand of democracy as Ohacracy (1974, 13). F. U. Okafor in his 1992 [Igbo Philosophy of Law] also fine-tuned the concept as a democratic system (1992, 9) and further stretched it as a jurisprudential concept in the form of "ohacentrism" (1992, 59). However, in his 1997 University of Louvain lecture, the brilliant Pantaleon Iroegbu gave the concept further rigorous conception as an alternative democratic system for Africa (1997, 3-7).

So we see the positive elements of modern democracy such as electioneering, party system, representational system, constitutional order to name a few can be absorbed in our reconstruction of the social structure of democracy to yield an alternative system called ohacracy. In another vein, the negative ones supply invaluable lessons which crystallize to: "non can you fit a square peg into a round hole if you did not first trim it to size".

**Inaugurating the Conversational Order in African Philosophy**
The New Era or Contemporary Period of African philosophy began in the late 1990's and took shape by the turn of the millennium years. The orientation of this period is conversational philosophy hence, the conversational school becomes the new school of thought to which all who grant the synthesis of "usable" tradition and modernity, rigour, individual creations, futuristic synthesis and critical conversations among practitioners belong. So, conversationalism is what I call the movement that thrives in this era. In the Calabar School of Philosophy two prominent theories have emerged namely, Ibuanyidanda and Njikoka philosophies. By conversational philosophy I mean the rigorous engagement of individual African philosophers in the creation of critical narratives through the fusion of relevant elements of tradition and modernity for the construction of future. There is also critical conversation among practitioners, critical synthesis, theoretic evaluation, re-enforcements and purifications of the thoughts of other African philosophers in ways that upgrade them to metanarrative of African philosophy. These also make such thoughts universalizable although with the primary purpose of solving African problems. In this era, the synthesis of the later period evolves into critical synthesis and the degraded critical analysis returns in full force.

Some of the noisy proponents of conversational African philosophy in this era ironically have emerged in the Western world notably in America.[1] The American philosopher, Jennifer Lisa vest is noted principally for this campaign. Another champion is the brilliant Bruce Janz, ironically, a white American philosopher whose essays re-echo the importance of conversational detour. He too, is an ardent scholar in African philosophy or should I say a dogged African philosopher. These two to name a few, posit that the highest purification of African philosophy is to be realized in conversational philosophizing.

However, it was the Nigerian philosopher Innocent Asouzu who going beyond the earlier botched attempt of Leopold Senghor and transcending the foundations of Pantaleon Iroegbu erected a model of modern African philosophy. The New Era therefore, is the beginning of modern African philosophy[2] and

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[1]. Tsenay Serequeberhan in the Introduction to his edited collection *African Philosophy: The Essential Reading,* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), was therefore wrong in excluding foreigners from the business of constructing African philosophy or to even call them such names as meddlers, xviii.

[2]. The modern African philosophy as extrapolated by Olusegun Oladipo (ed) *The Third Way in African Philosophy*, (Ibadan: Hope, 2002), 11–15; and Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay in African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11–12., were in terms of orientation and not in historical demarcation as we employ it here in fulfillment of some of the conditions stipulated by Marcien Towa in his

Innocent Asouzu[3] according to the young Nigerian philosopher Ada Agada, arguably could be regarded as the father of modern African philosophy.[4] I do not dispute this and I believe he must have beaten his compatriot, the imaginative Pantaleon Iroegbu to this honor, whose career was cut short by death. The exceptionally brilliant young Nigerian philosopher Ada Agada believes Asouzu also beats the illustrious Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu to this honor simply by the dense constructionist flavor of his works. I do not think this is lacking in Wiredu but I quite agree it is more pronounced in Asouzu. The importance of Wiredu in African philosophy cannot be fully captured in an expression, perhaps the most prolific; one can add that without a Wiredu there may never have been an Asouzu in African philosophy. Yet, there is this touch in Asouzu's works that stands him out. Wiredu may be properly regarded as a forerunner or probably something more glorious, I do not know which. Maybe as John de Baptiste of African philosophy who for decades identified problems and suggested ways of constructing authentic African philosophy. He was preparing the mind of Africa for the arrival of authentic African philosophy. It is in the same light that Ngugi wa Thiong'o spoke of decolonizing the African mind[5] and Amilcar Cabral the Guinean nationalist recommended what he called "return to the source"[6]—a sort of re-africanization of the colonized people of Africa through philosophical re-education. This re-education is necessary for the recovery and re-integration of Africans brainwashed through the colonial

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"Conditions for the Affirmation of a Modern African Philosophical Thought" Tsanay Serequeberhan (ed) *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 187–200.

[3]. Most of Innocent Asouzu's works were published in Switzerland by publishers who are little known elsewhere and this may have accounted for the slow diffusion of these important parts of modern African philosophical literature in places where they ought to be read and evaluated. Thus it may come as a surprise to those who may never have heard of this philosopher to see him declared father of modern African philosopher as Ada Agada has done elsewhere. From a personal perspective I think there is merit to this declaration.

[4]. See Ada Agada. *Existence and Consolation*: Reinventing Ontology, Gnosis and Values in African Philosophy. 3rd Logic Option Publishing, 2014 [forthcoming]

[5]. See Ngugi wa Thiong'O, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,* (London: J. Curry and Portsmouth, N. H: Heinemann, 1986); *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Toward a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1998.

[6]. See Cabral Amilcar, *Revolution in Guinea: An African People's Struggle* (London: Stage 1, 1969).

education or one should say, mis-education to borrow the favored concept of Ivan Illich in his [Deschooling the Society] (1971) The colonial mis-education which consisted in the transfer of foreign system of thought and the denigration of the indigenous one eventually created out of the so-called Africans what the writer of [Bantu Philosophy] Tempels calls *évoléus* (1958, 13) or the deracinés. These are those Africans who have been torn away from the traditional ways of life and thought of their own ethnic group and have taken over those of the West which they have been made to believe represent civilization.[7]

Iroegbu in his [Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy] inaugurated reconstructive and conversational approach in African philosophy. He engaged previous writers in a critical conversation out of which he produced his own thought, (Uwa ontology) bearing the stain of African tradition and thought system but remarkably different in approach and method from ethnophilosophy.[8] I regard him as the father of conversationalism. Franz Fanon has highlighted the importance of sourcing African philosophical paraphernalia from African indigenous culture. This is corroborated in a way by Lucius Outlaw in his [African Philosophy: Deconstructive and Reconstructive Challenges]. In it, Outlaw advocates the deconstruction of the European-invented Africa to be replaced by a reconstruction to be done by conscientized African free from the grip of colonial mentality (OUTLAW 1996, 11). Whereas the Wiredu's crusade sought to deconstruct the invented Africa, actors in the New Era of African philosophy seek to reconstruct through conversational approach.

Iroegbu like we have stated inaugurated this drive but it was Asouzu who has made the most of it in the very recent. His theory of Ibuanyidanda ontology or complementary reflection maintains that "to be" simply means to be in mutual complementary relationship (ASOUZU 2007, 251–55). Every being therefore, is a variable with capacity to join a mutual interaction. In this capacity every being is seen as a missing link serving a missing link of reality in the network of realities. One immediately suspects the apparent contradiction that might arise from the fusion of two opposed variables when considered logically. But the logic of this theory is not the two-valued classical logic but the three-valued African logic.[9] In this, the two standard values are sub-contraries rather than

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[7]. Tsanay Serequeberhan (ed), *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, has described these people scornfully as Europeanized Africans, 8.

[8]. Recall that this was the direct advocacy of Kwasi Wiredu and others who followed him after. Members of the modernist school of thought like Olusegun Oladipo, *The Third Way in African Philosophy*, 12; Kwame Gyekye, 11; Tsanay Serequeberhan, 19; Odera Oruka, 47–62.

[9]. The variant associated with J. O. Chimakonam called Ezumezu logic. See Chimakonam Jonathan, "Outline of African logic for the Development of Thought, Science and Technology in Africa," Paper Presented at the *Sixth*

contradictories thereby facilitating effective complementation of variables. The possibility of the two standard values merging to form the third value in the complementary mode is what makes ezumezu logic a powerful tool of thought.

Other emerging theories of conversational and reconstructive African philosophy are those that came after. These include, Njikoka philosophy or integrative humanism credited to Godfrey Ozumba (the chief proponent) and J. O. Chimakonam; consolationism credited to the emerging Nigerian philosopher Ada Agada; Afrizealotism developed by G. Ekwuru are some of the theories that have left their domains and are spreading.

Njikoka philosophy sees the question of being as central in African philosophy. "To be" therefore, is to be in mutual integrative relationship. Njikoka meaning integration maintains that being is being only if it is in a network of other beings. Isolated from this network, there is strictly no being because true beings depend for their existences on the mutuality and on the network to which they inevitably belong. This prompts the Integrativists to regard every being as a necessarily link of reality (CHIMAKONAM 2013, 79). Within the network of reality, every being therefore is necessary. The human being is a necessarily being whose endeavor in the world is to actualize the status as being unto eternity. He is nwa-mgbe-nta in this world but he aims at transforming into nwa-mgbe-ebi-ebi in the continuing next world. The same logic which undergirds Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy is the driving principle of this theory.

Ada Agada's consolationism is an existentialist theory which reflects on African experiences. In a way, it seeks to answer such existential questions already raised in Western philosophy but from African perspectives. The melancholy man is the $21^{st}$ century human beleaguered by existential problems some of which are beyond him and leave him seeking consolation as the only remaining option. The emotional man whom Senghor erroneously announced as

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*Annual International Conference on Research and Innovation for Sustainable Development: Prospects and Challenges in the Third World*, (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Oct. 25–28, 2011); "Building African logic as an Algorithm for Africa's Development" Presented at African Studies Institute Conference, The University of Georgia (*USA* Nov. 8–10, 2012); see also "Ezumezu: A Variant of Three-valued Logic—Insights and Controversies." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (Free State University, Bloemfontein, South Africa Jan. 20–22, 2014).

the Negro was in fact according to Ada Agada, the universal man. The much taunted reason or rationality of the modern man emerged from emotions. Thus, science, art, religion and philosophy find their bearing in the immanent spaces of human joy and sadness. The goal of being in the world is a struggle to avoid sadness and achieve joy. Consolationism therefore, subverts the Western category of being and replaces it with the category of mood. For when man fails to achieve joy and is rather sad, he finds consolation by finding God or anything that serves this purpose.

E. G. Ekwuru is the proponent of Afrizealotism. This is a social theory which seeks to reconstruct the African being or humanism. In the post colonial era, the African emerged distorted not purely African and not purely Western. This is due to the colonial contamination of African system of thought. Afrizealotism therefore, seeks, not to purge the Western influences totally, and certainly not to admit all of African tradition without censorship; but to produce a viable synthesis by sifting modern and relevant variables from the Western system that is sufficient without making the new synthesis Western; and retaining just enough and relevant African traditions that will ensure that the synthesis is African but not archaic. This presupposes a logic that is dynamic and at least three-valued. Like Iroegbu, Asouzu, Ozumba, Chimakonam and Agada, the champions of Afrizealotism are building the new edifice by reconstructing the deconstructed domain of thought in the later period of African philosophy and the central approach is conversation, i.e. engaging other African philosophers in critical and positive discourses to reconstruct the deconstructed edifice of African philosophy. Hence, the New Era of African philosophy is safe from the retrogressive perverse dialogues which characterized the early period (1920-1960) and middle periods.

Also, with the critical deconstruction that occurred in the middle period (1960-1980) of African philosophy and the attendant eclecticism that emerged in the later period (1980-1990); the stage was set for the formidable conversational encounters that marked the arrival of the New Era of African philosophy.

Interrogatory theory therefore aims at taking conversationalism to a purely synthetic level through the three modes of deconstruction, construction/reconstruction and critical synthesis. Africa at this level of discourse is approached as a backward continent with so much confusion within its social structures. I see the primary goal of Philosophy in Africa (whether African or Western philosophy) to be the interrogation of decadent social structures in order to force through an interrogatory program of social reconstruction sifting valuable or usable elements of tradition or modernity in constructing futurity.

**Conclusion**

In this essay I inaugurate my thought on Interrogatory Theory (IT) which I define as the conversational questioning of social structures in postcolonial Africa for the ultimate and desperate purpose of forcing through a progress and growth-sensitive African society. I reason that the domain of reflective discourse on African social structures has either not been properly charged in the postcolonial era or efforts have for the wrong reasons been derailed. The undeniable result for me is the ever growing retrogression and the widening gap between Africa and the West. Recourse to the tools of interrogatory theory as I articulate them holds a great promise for the authentic African renaissance. The later being the only and inevitable goal a backward people and an underdeveloped continent must pursue. Interrogatory theory provides this exotic wheel of promise that would ride Africa out of squalor.

In this essay, I provided a brief background to interrogatory theory, its focus, promise and mechanisms. I also interrogated three prominent social structures in the mode of education, religion and democracy as a guide to the functionality of this philosophical method of enquiry. I also inaugurated conversationalism not only as a new school of thought or movement in contemporary history of African philosophy but as the next stage of the development of African philosophy. Finally, I showed that the grand aim of interrogatory theory was to take conversational philosophy beyond reconstructive level and properly to critical synthetic level.

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