

Reflection Paper

uMunthu and the Decolonising of Education in Malawi

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Abstract

This paper attempts to embark on a task of analysing what has been wrong with Malawi's education system and what might need to be done to rescue it from its lethargy and in the hope that many others would enter into the discussion until a consensus emerges as to the way forward with a sense of dynamism. We need this consensus because that is the way our traditional societies have operated for peaceful co-existence, cultural flourish, economic sustainability, and political stability.

Key words: *uMunthu, Malawi, Ubuntu, education, Philosophy, anthropology, Malawi*

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Introduction

Since independence education in Malawi has remained colonial, elitist, mostly irrelevant to our culture and development. Education in Malawi can be divided into four phases of development. The first phase is the pre-colonial traditional phase marked by uMunthu, wisdom traditions, and oriented towards skills development within our own worldview, this was an education for uMunthu; the second phase is the missionary-colonial phase characterised by the introduction and dominance of western education traditions through schooling and their roots in the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian worldviews, this was a capitalistic education for evangelism and *thangata*; the third phase is the secular post-independence phase in which various unfulfilled reforms were undertaken to meet

developmental needs, this was education for substitutionary employment to replace the expatriate cadre and not for visionary development; the fourth phase is the democratic phase in which free education was introduced without a clear philosophy of education to guide it and to address the teachers' crisis that had taken place. Through all the last three phases, education in Malawi has remained colonial, elitist, culturally irrelevant, and often moving from one crisis to the next. All reforms were more often than not patchy and hence inadequate.

This paper is an attempt to embark on this task of analysing what has been wrong with Malawi's education system and what might need to be done to rescue it from its lethargy and in the hope that many others would enter into the discussion until a consensus emerges as to the way forward with a sense of dynamism. We need this consensus because that is the way our traditional societies have operated for peaceful co-existence, cultural flourish, economic sustainability, and political stability.

The reasons for this lethargic state of affairs are many and Malawi is not alone in this. Most African countries are going through an educational crisis. A few reasons can be listed. (1) The marginalization of the African educational systems grounded in uMunthu within the context of the African world view. (2) The colonial interlude through the missionary enterprise imposed its own educational system oriented towards the evangelization of the African people, an enterprise that oriented the African outlook towards the future coming of the reign of God away from their material security and looking to the past. Prof. John Mbiti¹ has asserted that this has disoriented the Africans when it comes to matters of development. This new form of education introduced its own philosophical understanding based on western cultural traditions. It related negatively to the African worldview and its educational ethos which it called informal as opposed to formal. (3) Upon independence, the government adopted a secular mindset and continued with the same colonial form of education, an education that was meant to serve colonial interests and not African interests. Now that the elite had inherited the colonial mantle, they perpetuated the same education because it also serves their adopted interests better rather than undertake a radical overhaul that made education culturally relevant and appropriate to our stage of political and economic development based on uMunthu and in service of people. The capitalistic profit bug was made manifest among the elite leading to massing corrupt practices. (4) There was only one person who thought for everyone thus creating a herd mentality and personality cult of what the Germans called the *Fuehrer* or leader who demanded human sacrifice, and no wonder we ended up in the same way. Building a personality cult is a temptation for every ruling party, but which has devastating effects on the development of education in Malawi. It goes against the very thought of introducing tertiary education which is supposed to empower people to think for themselves and together for national development. It tends to stifle critical leadership development. It became education for *napuse-napuse*². (5) The secularization of education compromised on moral development of a people in which moral education as a subject became an end in itself for the sake of passing examination and not reforming character. It became education for facts only to be reproduced at examination time. (6) The consequences are that in spite of Malawi being over 86.9% Christian, 12.5% Muslim³, religiosity and morality are kilometres apart and have little in common. As St. Paul once put it, "People have a form of religion, but without its power." Both politics and religion are now driven by money and individual self-interest, the capitalist

bait. (7) There is also our failure to take ourselves seriously as to critically think through issues for ourselves. In over fifty years we have not been able to develop a relevant philosophy of education to guide our educational planning for the future of our nation. We have been like a water plant driven all over by the wind. We simply cut and paste ideas from western seminars and classrooms and global organizations without first digesting them and making them relevant to our cultural and developmental context and vision for lack of a philosophy to guide their application.

Capitalism with its focus on profit making through exploitative mechanisms and in all its expression as colonialism, neo-colonialism and currently globalisation is a might force that is messing up the world driven by greed, self-interest which is personal, national and corporate, insisting on free-market trading when there is no such free market. It is these capitalistic forces that also are affecting our education reforms adversely being depended on western donors who dictate most of the time what forms reforms should take. Our education systems are captive to their demands and we get messed up.

The critical question has to do with how as a nation we confront all these challenges so as to develop for ourselves a culturally and developmentally relevant philosophy of education that could provide a solid foundation for the future education of our children that is existentially meaningful. In order to embark on this question, we need to start from who we are as a people in this space called Malawi. This will have to do with our worldview and its relationship to our cultural identities which are in danger of ripping us apart as a nation and as a people into our various tribal identities. We need a philosophical basis that could lift us beyond these identities, without denying them, but rather acknowledging and celebrating them as part of who we are. U Munthu education is being proposed as a possible master-key to the realization of this vision. This perspective on education has to be founded on our own life-worldview, our own self-definition and self-understanding based on the concept of uMunthu, an integrated character, literacy, numeracy and skills-based training as foundational, then science, technical, language and literature during the intermediate phase, and then scientific research, technological innovation, and humanities in the tertiary phase.

The African Worldview

Every civilization has developed from its own worldview that has distinguished it from other civilizations. Its philosophical developments have their roots in it as philosophers wanted to understand it better and respond to the critical issue facing them. Thus, we have English philosophy, French philosophy, Greek philosophy, Indian philosophy and Chinese philosophy and all with different flavours. Therefore, there is need to recapture our own worldview as a background to the articulation of our education philosophy and development matters under the perspective of uMunthu.

It is the cultural worldview apart from our shared history in which all Malawian groups share, differences notwithstanding. The African worldview is anthropocentric, that is, humanity takes centre stage while God is at the periphery overarching all that he has created and thus sustaining the universe with life-power. As such, it is not a humanistic worldview, but rather a theo-anthropological worldview. The western worldview is theocentric, that is, God is at the centre and is

meant to be acknowledged through worship by all his creation. In Christianity people relate to God through Jesus, the Christ. However, in the African worldview, there is a hierarchy of beings that are inter-connected and relate one to the other. All levels of being are concentric circles around the human centre and each circle has a higher power in its horizontal relationship and so too in its vertical relationship. This being the case, all relations are mediated. Living communities can relate to God only through the living-dead and ancestors as John Mbiti describes them.

Philosophy and worldviews are not antithetical since worldviews are the raw stuff of philosophy and philosophy is the means of getting to the essential character of any worldview.⁴ Every philosophical tradition has arisen out of its own given worldview and has died and been buried in it. Clifford Geertz explains,

In recent anthropological discussion, the moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture, the evaluative elements, have commonly been summed up in the term "ethos," while the cognitive, and existential aspects have been designated by the term "world view." A people's ethos is the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style, and mood; it is the underlying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects. Their world view is their picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains their most comprehensive ideas of order.⁵

It follows that a worldview is the philosophical articulations based on their continued traditions of wisdom that arise from time to time and having practical implications that constitute a given cultural civilization. External influences notwithstanding, there are no people anywhere who made significant and meaningful material progress without it being rooted in their own worldview. All indigenous knowledge and its traditions of wisdom are based on a given worldview which has been developed over time out of their interaction with and perceptions of the world on the one hand, and their interaction with other peoples on the other. It is these traditions of wisdom that eventually form the philosophical understandings that guide any cultural progress. Without such contacts there would be much floundering, just going in circles, and heading nowhere. Such a community would leave itself vulnerable to other stronger cultures and civilizations to define it as they wish or else it would stagnate and be left in its past as the rest of the world moves on. This is what has partially happened to us as a result of colonization and neo-colonization. Our decolonization is not complete until our worldview become the context in which we determine our own future progress. Therefore, it is imperative as we have discussed above that any philosophy, let alone educational, should take its own worldview seriously and integrate it in their own existential, that is, "constitutional founding principles" because any meaningful change must radically affect any people's worldview appreciatively. Since education becomes the means of managing any change, such a philosophy become critical for any positive progress.

Therefore, in our search for a Malawian philosophy of education and what developmental change would mean through that education, there is need to look at what our own worldview consists of. However, first, it is important that we consider the significance of worldviews for human existence and progress.

In his book⁶, Paul Hiebert identifies functions of worldview for human existence. The first is that "worldviews are our plausibility structures that provide answers to our ultimate questions."

Answers to ultimate questions stabilize our existence and condition our life meaning. Secondly, worldviews provide emotional security. Paul Hiebert writes,

Faced with a dangerous world full of capricious and uncontrollable forces and crises of drought, illness, and death, and plagued by anxieties about an uncertain future, people turn to their deepest cultural beliefs for comfort and security. It is not surprising them that worldviews assumptions are most evident at births, initiations, marriages, funerals, harvest celebrations, and other rituals that people use to recognize and renew order in life and nature.⁷

Thirdly, worldviews validate our deepest cultural norms which we use to evaluate our experiences and choose courses of action. For instance, worldviews provide our ideas of righteousness and sin and with ways to deal with them, worldviews serve as a map to guide behaviour, and worldviews serve both predictive and prescriptive functions. Fourthly, worldviews help to integrate particular cultures and in the case of Malawi, it means all the ethnic groups. This means that all our ethnic identities in which we pride ourselves and use to discriminate others are superficial since our true unity is deeper than that and is found in our worldview. Ethnic identities are variations on a common existential theme. Fifthly, worldviews are used as monitors of cultural change as to whether it is superficial or radical change. Finally, worldviews provide psychological reassurance that the world is truly as it is seen, a sense of peace, and being at home in the world we live in.

However, more often than not, we often take worldview for granted, know them superficially, and allow them to be undermined by new modern outlooks without them being integrated into it. The result is that we become children of two worlds without belonging to any and thus being not at home in them, instead we are alienated from both. The result is an education that alienates and is alienating. The way a worldview functions should provide significant content as the manner in which our education philosophy is to be constructed and even the content of the learning to be imparted to learners.

On the surface of things, we are ethnical very diverse groups that are occupying this space called Malawi and that leads to much discrimination as we fight over the national cake in terms of jobs, appointments, power distribution, and land occupation. We despise each other's cultural practices without even understanding them. We use the cultural standards that we have learned partially from foreigners for fighting the battles of our up-oneship game. However, when we examine the situation at a deeper level, the level of worldview, we have much in common, not only within Malawi, but throughout the Sub-Saharan region. The other dimension of this shared worldview is the linguistic one. Ours are bantu languages that have arisen from the same stock of languages in the past. Languages are the means in which our worldviews are expressed and convey their meaning. Therefore, it is important for us Malawians to re-appropriate our worldview for our own identity, appreciation of a deeper meaning, and future progress. What are the characteristics of this worldview?

A Shared Worldview and Its Characteristics

Culturally, Malawi shares a basic worldview with other countries south of the Equator or generally what is called Sub-Saharan Africa. This should not come as a surprise since some of the major ethnic groups in Malawi trace their origins to as far west as the Democratic Republic of Congo, as far south as the Republic of South Africa, as far north as central Tanganyika, and also from Mozambique in the

East. Linguistically, its thirteen or so languages (ChiChewa, ChiTumbuka, ChiYao, ChiNgonde, ChiTonga, ChiSena, ChiLhomwe, ChiNyanja, ChiLambya, ChiNdali/ChiSukwa, ChiNyika, ChiSenga, ChiMambwe, ChiNamwanga, and ChiNgoni) share some words and concepts with languages spoken in some of the countries in the region. As a result of this shared linguistic connectedness and worldview, this discourse will engage insights from some of these countries in discussing cultural perceptions of reality among Malawi ethnic groups. It is important that we now look closely at the underlying worldview shared by all the ethnic groups in and outside Malawi with the exception of the Asians and Europeans.

A worldview, as we have seen, is a cultural grid through which a given people encounter the world in a meaningful way. It locates their place, identity and value in the universe. It provides a vision for their future not only in this life, but also beyond the grave. It is a construction based on the accumulated wisdom of best practices in responding to all reality and challenges that have been encountered in a people history. Such a grid is often referred to as cultural outlook or belief systems, but it is basically a philosophic vision. This philosophic cultural grid is based on inter- and intra-personal and communal relationships with other beings on the one hand, and other realities of an impersonal nature, both living and non-living, in the universe on the other. A worldview is, more often than not, supported by myths of origin of things, concepts of deities and their activities, ancestors and their traditions; indigenous knowledge of how nature operates, its felt mystical powers and functions derived from it; an understanding of life and human nature, history, symbols, rituals, and taboos. All these are meant to serve and preserve life, both material and spiritual. Kevin Vanhoozer defines worldview as

[A] comprehensive interpretation of individual, social, and cosmic reality. It is a comprehensive interpretation of “meaning” of life: its origin, its nature, and its destiny.⁸

The challenge for us is to discern the wisdom that informs this worldview in view of the many other competing challenges that are claiming our allegiance and leaving us confused and culturally enslaved.

Bishop Tharcises Tshibangu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo gives the following description of the basic principles of the African or Bantu worldview as being bound up with: (a) Cultic veneration of the ancestors; (b) firm belief in the existence and power of mystical forces that operate in the universe and on human beings and that give direction to the destiny of both; (c) a vitalistic philosophy that finds particular expression in the realm of marriage; (d) an intensely felt sense of solidarity between the members of the family, a community, and today, a nation. This solidarity has a real impact on the organisation of the religious life in the strict sense, on societal life in general, and on relationship between the members of the nation.⁹ This should form the philosophic, religious, and cultural foundation of our existence and hence of our education as well. The critical question in relation to education in such a worldview would be, What type of education would such a worldview need that focus on living meaningfully in the cosmos, realizing being a community-in-communion, promoting social solidarity with justice and guided by wisdom, and celebrating our relationship with the ancestors and their traditions of uMunthu consisting of integrity and hard work?

Existential Perspectives of a Bantu Worldview

These principles are also easily recognisable in the cultures of Malawi. Let us look at how each is recognised and expressed in our country. Structurally, our worldview is a vision of the universe based on our sense of being and, or on a vitalistic understanding of who we are in the universe. As it has already been pointed out, the African or Bantu worldview is anthropocentric, that is, humanity, and not God, occupies the central point of cosmic relationality. Each level of reality represents an ontological or vitalistic point of power in a hierarchical and also at once concentric order. Each level is greater than the one below it and lesser than the one above on the one hand, and horizontally the one further outside or inside it in its ontology, vitality, and power. As significant as humanity is, it shares in the glory of the most powerful and the vulnerability of the least powerful on account of its life-form. The primary relationship is based on the presence of being and the form of Life that finds expression in it. It is a vital cosmic inter-relatedness in mutual service and support. Bishop Patrick Kalilombe explains,

For Africans, life is a totality; culture is holistic. What one might isolate as the spiritual dimension is embedded in the whole of the people's way of living. It may be valid to distinguish different aspects, such as the economic, social or political spheres, or again the individual and community aspects. . . . But in real life all these are held together and given shape by an underlying outlook.¹⁰

We need to keep in mind what Bishop Kalilombe is saying as we embark on the analysis of an African worldview as lived by those living in Malawi. The following is the cosmic structure in which we find ourselves embedded.

Hierarchically, starting with ourselves, we have the communal-munthu, that is, the community of the living in the here and now. John Mbiti captures this by the dictum: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am." It is also captured in our own saying, "*Munthu ndi munthu kamba ka anzake*" in ChiChewa/ChiNyanja or "*Munthu ndi munthu chifukwa cha banyake*" in ChiTumbuka, meaning a person is one on account of other persons. Since we are not self-originated, we come as a gift and everything else also come as a gift to us. Giftness and giftedness is the nature of our cosmos. In other words, the life of love and mutuality is the cosmic essence. We are a gift to our parents and they to us, together we are a gift to our communities and they to us, and together we are a gift to the land and the natural resources and they to us, and finally, we are children of the universe, hence the parenthood of God.

The above is followed by what John Mbiti calls the living-dead who have died but still in the living memory of the living community; these are then followed by the ancestors who are barely remembered based on clan and kinship identity and collectively as a community. The ancestors are followed by territorial spirits, for instance, Mbona, Makewana, Chikang'ombe, and others. They have their central shrines where rituals of respect are performed by appointed personnel and are supplicated in times of great crises. Finally, there is Namalenga, the creator God. Below the communal-munthu are the animals, the vegetation, the water, and the soil and minerals. This is the cosmic reality that forms our home. We are born in it and die in it, and go on to live as spirits in it world without end. Amen!

Already we can see certain themes emerging from this discussion of the principle characteristics of our worldview as being significant for the development of a Malawian cultural

philosophy and that of education, that is, an outlook to inform our views on education as we move forward into the future because fundamentally this is who we are. While the western cultures acknowledge their ancestors, but they do so historically in the form of Western Civilization 101 and 102 which are compulsory courses for all undergraduates. Our worldview is basically based on spiritual relationality and the language of myths, parables, fables, proverbs, song and dance and ritual would become dominant over and above the literal language. It is not surprising that most of our preaching and rhetoric use allegorical method in communication. This means that hermeneutics which is the science of interpretation and literature would become major subjects of study. Story-telling by the fire would develop into the reading and study of the African novel, the *zila*pe would leading to the reading and recitation of poetry.

Therefore, the following themes that would contribute to a philosophy of education and hence contribute to the crafting of a culturally relevant curriculum begin to emerge.

- The centrality of the reality and meaning of life for human existence within the cosmos as overarched by Namalenga who is the source of life, and hence the significance of life itself and its struggle with death.
- Self-defining and self-understanding as creaturely and cultural selves among many other creatures and cultures, hence the significance of the concept of uMunthu
- Identifying the characteristics of uMunthu, for instance, human dignity that cannot be reduced to animality and yet raising the problem of evil and moral accountability, love, wisdom, respect, freedom and peaceful co-existence, love, truth, righteousness
- Community-in-communion and political stability, the significance of marriage, *milandu* (palaver), the significance of sacramental or ritualistic meals to obtain forgiveness and reconciliation
- Principles of social solidarity related to justice and reconciliation
- Work and work ethic for economic productivity and food security
- Peace and conflict management
- Parenting and giftness
- Character formation and development
- History and traditions
- Aspects of traditional spirituality and other spiritualities
- Problems of personal and communal security and the understanding of salvation through procreation, abundance of food and wealth, medicinal immunization, and protective charms
- Evil, witchcraft and death
- Relation to the environment: water, air, soil fertility, forests, mountains, animals.

It is not the purpose of this paper to go into details of all this, but simply to show the rich resources that can be tapped into in order to create a philosophy of education. One cannot talk of any aspect of life, for instance, education, social, economic, and political development and let alone spirituality and theology without taking into account all this knowledge of our own worldview, and yet, for most of

us, this is a strange territory that we know little about and especially its importance for any meaningful existence.

UMunthu Under Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

Another point that needs some clarification in our effort to decolonize our education system and with a view to establishing our own culturally and philosophically based education is that philosophy is not something exotic, but very endemic to all cultures. The adoption of western philosophies of education have instilled in us the idea that philosophy is a western enterprise. The word philosophy consist of two Greek words, *philos* meaning love and *sophia* meaning wisdom, hence the word meaning love of wisdom. Each civilization has its traditions of wisdom and its logical arrangement which depends on an existential organizing principle. For the Greeks, it was *logos*, meaning reason, for the Buddhist it was suffering and how to overcome it, for Africans it has to do with life or vitality and its thriving. Everything else becomes secondary. Therefore, how each philosophical tradition is developed in relation to the central logical organizing principle is a different matter. Due to our being still mentally colonized, it is often thought and believed very strongly that philosophy is and can only be a product only of the West. Nothing could be so far from the truth as it is currently being realised that the West has no monopoly on any field of knowledge. When it comes to philosophy there are no "primitive cultures" since all cultures are engaged with the same existential questions and in providing answers to these questions for their own life meaning. This is done in different ways from different perspectives, and using differing epistemologies and methodologies. Philosophy, as the love of wisdom, is the one thing that is common to all peoples just as folly is equally common to all civilizations. Wisdom is both the most basic, not only of human intellectual activity, but rather of all lived activity, and also the highest and greatest life's challenge and pursuit. It is not only a challenge, but also a source of inspiration to the search for answers in every culture and in every generation. This is so because philosophy has to do with the fundamental issues of life and all peoples are thinking beings and not simply thinking minds. Therefore, fundamentally, philosophy has to do with what it means to be truthfully human in the cosmos. This is what Jesus was driving at when he personalized truth by saying, "I am the truth." This is the essence of integrity. The opposite of this is being a hypocrite.

As living beings, human bodies too have an epistemological function, that is, they are means for knowing and understanding reality. Knowledge is more than simply a matter of rationality and empiricism to which the West has limited it, it is also spiritual, emotional, psychological, sociological, theological, as other cultures have understood it simply because we are thinking bodies that are in relation to the rest of the cosmos. Different body parts share in this function interactively in conjunction with the mind and hence there are a variety of epistemologies and local knowledges. Only dead people do not philosophise. For most cultures, thoughts begin from the heart and then go to the head and then back to the heart because love as the principle of knowledge is lodged in the heart and links it to the head.

Love as giftness and giftedness is the cosmos power of life. It is in love that humanity is created and for love. It is the humanizing power otherwise we degenerate into beasts with a human face. For Rousseau (1712-1778), a French philosopher, love is goodness that works for and has its origin in a

balanced nature of a person. Love originates in a good-natured person (the communal-munthu) from a balanced combination of our instincts, heart, mind, and soul: what the heart feels, the mind confirms. Reason is also important for love, so that lovers know how to lead and handle their needs and desires properly.¹¹ Western education has focused on the head only and thus limited our capacities to understand and know life in plenitude in the cosmos.

Therefore, how each culture does philosophy may be very different, but the fundamental concerns are the same--life's meaning and purpose of what it means to be "being-thru-becoming-human", and our human relatedness to the entire cosmos. The differences in the manner of doing philosophy are a variation on a common theme of the meaning and security of life and existence. This broad understanding of philosophy opens a chance for more players in the philosophizing field, especially from cultures that were written off as archaic and hence non-philosophical and non-logical as Lucien Levy-Bruhl (1857-1939)¹² once described the Africans. Malawian cultures were such marginalized entities during the colonial times. They needed to be civilized, and yet had been civilized in a different way by their cultures.

It follows from this that the Greeks had their own view and method of doing philosophy (love of wisdom or wisdom traditions), so too the Indians, the Chinese, the Europeans, the Native Americans, the Africans, and the Aboriginal peoples of the world. The Australian Aboriginal peoples call their way of philosophising "Dreamings" and it is expressed through art. From their drawings they can explain how everything in the world is related and thus provide existential meaning and purpose. Africans are not an exception to doing philosophy in their own ways and according to each cultural context. For instance, the Chewa speak of "*Kukula ndi mwambo*" or "*Kukhala wa mwambo*" meaning to grow up on the basis of wisdom traditions,¹³ or being imbued with wisdom. These are interchangeable expressions. They also speak of "*Kukhala ndi nzeru*" or "*kukhala wanzeru*" meaning living with, or rather out of wisdom¹⁴. The term *mwambo* covers the whole cultural system and meaning of appropriate responses of life in community and in the world. At the heart of *mwambo* is the reality of *uMunthu* who is the actor. The one who has *uMunthu* is *munthu wa mwambo*, that is, a person living by wisdom tradition; and such a person of wisdom tradition has also the character whose core is *uMunthu*. Therefore, the Chewa view of reality may not be the same as other peoples, for instance, the Greeks and Chinese, nonetheless it might also share some aspects with them since we are all concerned with the same existential questions. However, the Chewa have much in common with other Bantu groups when it comes to matters of wisdom traditions and their worldview.

It is, therefore, a grave mistake that was committed by Europeans upon their contact with Africans to assume that their way of doing philosophy was the only one, or that the African ways were infantile waiting to be enlightened by the European ways.¹⁵ Taking a geometrical model, they wanted to found everything on universal principles.

It is only now that European philosophy is beginning to appreciate that reality is also relational a fact that African cultures realized a long time ago and, therefore, that the Cartesian bifurcation of nature was a grave mistake. Africans have always maintained the view that reality was not only relational and spiritual, but also personally so. This applies also in the understanding and defining of their own identity. The following dictum by John Mbiti summarises succinctly the African communal ethos, "*I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am*". We are involved in others through a network of

relations. This dictum by Mbiti could be taken as a parody on Rene Descartes' (1596-1650) "*cogito ergo sum*" (I think, therefore, I am) which tended towards the promotion of radical individualism to the exclusion of all else. Therefore, the dictum also serves to correct Descartes' mistaken view of total human autonomy which was later picked up by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Benezet Bujo arguing in the same vein states:

The concern that motivates communitarianism in its critique of "unfettered self" or of "atomism" against liberalism is entirely in keeping with African ethics, which rejects the ideas that being a human person and acting responsibly is merely the result of having assented to rational principles, or arguing and thinking rationally. For Black Africa, it is not the Cartesian *Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore, I am) but an existential *cognatussum, ergo sumus* (I related, therefore, I we are) that is decisive¹⁶.

Even before Martin Buber (1878-1965)¹⁷ existed, the African was already in the know of "I and Thou" not only as a face to face encounter, but also as being involved with and in each person ontologically with a view to maintaining communities-in-communion. While Buber operates within a modified liberal rationalistic mode of rugged individualism, the African view comes out of a communitarian understanding of humanity and of the cosmos informed by relational thinking. It is not only the Africans who have maintained a relational view, and therefore, one that insists on complementarity of reality, but also the Chinese in their Taoist concepts of *ying* and *yang*, existential realities that the West is only beginning to appreciate in view of its own rugged individualism, logical bifurcation of nature, and paradoxical anomalies resulting from dualistic thinking with which they are infecting the rest of the world through the globalisation of knowledge, culture, and its speculative and exploitative free market economy.

Furthermore, it needs to be said that anthropology,¹⁸ which has been the major source of European views about Africans is a pseudo-science that was and continues to be racist, classist, and sexist. Anthropology has been defined as a study of "primitive cultures", and yet etymologically, the word is made of two Greek words "*anthropos*" meaning human, and "*logos*" meaning word, reason or study. This should give us the definition related to the study of the human phenomenon that is at the heart of every philosophy seeking human self-understanding. There is nothing primitive about this and so the current understanding of anthropology begs the question: Why primitive? When is primitive, primitive? Why be selective about humanity since the term anthropology means study of humanity in general? Why should anthropology make the West with its view of civilisation be used as the standard of humanity? Technological advancement does not amount to advancement in being human, and having *uMunthu*.

Anthropology was developed under the influence of Darwinism¹⁹ and was then applied to social and sociological theories. It became exclusivist, racist, and classist and remains suspect to this day. It was racist because it was non-Europeans who became anthropological specimens. It was classist because even when its meaning was widened to include other human beings in the West, it still restricted itself to study of the poor in the inner cities who were also mostly people of colour and not those belonging to the middle and upper classes living in the suburbs. It was exclusivist because the anthropological researchers from the middle class of European societies excluded their class from the study. Since they were the standard of cultural progress, they did not consider themselves a sub-

culture, but rather the main expression of European culture and ultimately that of humanity. All other cultures were considered sub-cultures within human progress.

It is not only upon a common philosophical understanding that the ruling classes and nations have established their identity, political and legal hegemony, but rather on a particular interpretation and understanding of it. In other words, they universalised their particularity and demonised other particularities. Without a common philosophical basis of a given human reality and conditions, and a particular understanding of that reality, for instance being Malawians, no people are able to survive as an entity with any sense of destiny. Without consciously holding to such a philosophical understanding any people run the danger of being either re-defined by the strong and mighty of this world or being absorbed by more powerful and aggressive neighbours, or risk being defined out of existence. This explains why Africa continues to be a victim of the West due to its philosophical dependence on it in all areas of knowledge, governance, technology, and even the understanding of its own reality. It is the outsider who writes books about us. The survival of the Jews has had much to do with knowing who they were and passing on that religio-theological and wisdom traditions that have defined them through their history to future generations in spite of being dispersed all over the world and even through the holocaust.²⁰It can all be traced to what Moses said,

Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one. Love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.²¹

It is not surprising that Jews, as few as they are globally and as vulnerable as they have been in history, they have tended to dominate the intellectual space since the modern times. They are the creators of new thoughts and ideologies that sway the world.

The lesson here is that having a clear self-understanding of one's identity as a people and being deeply conscious of it is able to sustain a people even when their geographical space has been lost. However, this is possible through a comprehensive self-understanding and a radical commitment to one's traditions of wisdom. While Malawi has the geographical space, the self-understanding of peoplehood is weak and fragmented because there is no philosophical basis upon which to construct it. Even after living in Africa for over a hundred years, the Indian is still Indian. Indians cling on to their given identity and culture in spite of adapting to modernity and learning other people's languages. They assimilate and adopt that which is new and different even by relating to local cultures, but do not give up on their fundamental philosophical and cultural orientations as expressed in and through their languages. There cannot be any meaningful and permanent development of any people without a clear understanding of their particular philosophical outlook to which they assimilate new realities. And yet, this is where Malawi seems to be in dire need, that is, of a national philosophical consciousness and understanding as a result of which they are able to carve a cultural niche in the world and also by which they can deal with the political and social fragmentations as currently experienced.

While there was a time when there was no need for a clear articulation of a national philosophy, it does not mean that Malawi never needed such a philosophy, but that there were alien substitutes

that suppressed the peoples' traditions of wisdom and which are now also disintegrating unless steps are taken to retrieve them. Initially there was the Western way of life introduced by Christian mission and the British colonial government called Western civilisation. David Livingstone spelt it out when he addressed undergraduates of Cambridge University saying, "I go back to try to open up a path to commerce and Christianity. Do you carry out the work that I have begun. I leave it to you."²² That became the larger colonial and missionary agenda inspired to a large extent by his own writings on Africa from his exploration journeys. Indeed change was needed, but it was established on western understanding as the African ways were being bulldozed into oblivion or simply marginalized. This is why Fabien Boulaga, a Cameroonian philosopher points out that the language that the missionaries who spearheaded this onslaught used was one of derision, refutation, demonstration, orthodoxy, and demanding conformity. He has countered this and says,

What has given one's ancestors reason for living and dying cannot simply be reputed as absurd and senseless by one who finds oneself in the human continuity with them. The living person will bring into play all the resources of hermeneutics. . . . The interpretation will have the ethical value of care and concern bestowed upon one's dead—the value of the acknowledgement of the historicity of one's own particularity.²³

The result was a resistance to this colonial and religious onslaught. While receiving the new message, it was either re-interpreted or simply adapted without giving up on their own traditions of wisdom and meaning. The complaint of many missionaries is that the Africans have come with their worldview in the church and they have called it syncretism which they see it as a danger to orthodox Christianity. However, with post-modernity the African churches embraced the inculturation of the Christian faith with a view to planting it in the African soil.²⁴

According to Benezet Bujo, a theologian from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) these two, Christianity and colonialism "often upset the delicate balance between the basic elements of the old clans and tribes" within African religious systems that were at the heart of traditional societies.²⁵ As a result, we became swallowed up into European identities and suffered from political, socio-economic, and spiritual alienation, and to a large extent we continue to do so especially through the educational systems that we have inherited and perpetuate. We became part of the mighty British Empire upon which the sun was supposed never to set, but one day it did—the empire melted away and we became an independent nation. While we partly contributed to its fall, however, we never totally emancipated ourselves from it in a way that could set us on our own path of growth and development in all areas of life especially thought, that is, our own self-consciousness. The British were in Malawi for themselves and not for the people of Malawi and that is why they resisted our demand for independence.²⁶ Basil Davidson speaking about colonial practices declares:

But all systems, in essential ways, operated with the same assumptions and for the same purpose. Each of them was racist and exploitative. They used colonial power to treat Africans as inferior to Europeans, justifying this by a whole range of myths about a supposed 'white superiority'. The purpose of using colonial power in this way was to make Africans serve the interests of European colony-owners.²⁷

The colonialists and imperialists practiced the politics of racial segregation and domination, labour exploitation and cultural marginalisation. They did not want to have anything to do with what was African, but only what suited their own white and European economic and political needs and a

consciousness moulded by their philosophical and cultural traditions which were being informed by racial superiority. This is why they had to resist when we demanded to be set free. They did not give freedom to African countries on a silver platter as Kenneth Kaunda has observed, "the powerful never willingly give up power—it has to be taken from them."²⁸ Martin Luther King, Jr. also intimated on the same point when he wrote,

History is the long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individual may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups are more immoral than individuals.²⁹

More often than not, they had to be forced to negotiate for independence. Therefore, the protectorate model of British colonialism failed totally to create for the country a national consciousness, rather, it alienated the people from each other and from themselves. This partly why our educational system is in crisis. If we are going to create a philosophy for the development of a national consciousness which is foundational to our educational system as a means for entrenching that consciousness, then there is need for a paradigm shift in our understanding of education.

What is Education of and for uMunthu?

In Malawi, and in other parts of Africa, wisdom is highly prized and folly scorned. Wisdom cannot co-exist with folly since they contradict each other. Both affect the proper management of human development profoundly, but in opposite directions. While wisdom leads to recognition, respect, and secure life, folly leads to being despised, laughed to scorn, and eventually to life destruction and early death. Each African culture has its own philosophical outlook on the meaning of human existence to which it refers often in order to legitimize new actions and thoughts. This philosophical orientation is embedded within the socialisation processes which is guided by wisdom in the service of *uMunthu*, and it is oral rather than written. Such a philosophy serves as a means of delineating the good, the just, and the appropriate moral issues, ends, and purposes that are discerned in life from what is considered foolish, unproductive, and destructive of the common life and values. Kenneth Kaunda wrote in the *Letter to My Children*,

The only virtues that flower in any society are those which that society nourishes by conscious and continued effort. A people's identity, especially when it lacks the long continuities of historical development, as we do, is shaped by the qualities and values they celebrate, recognize instantly, and respect profoundly... They must be nourished in each generation by the allegiance of believing and dedicated men and women. Every free man, in his work and in his family, in his public behaviour and in the secret places of his heart, should see himself as a builder and maintainer of the values of his society.³⁰

This love of wisdom and the values informed by it points to the fact that philosophy or wisdom tradition has to do with very fundamental life-needs and hence also with questions that each culture is confronted with in order to make the best choices for life and to avoid foolish and destructive ones. Therefore, the need for creating a national consciousness based on Malawi's own philosophical insights and understandings cannot be over-emphasized. However, it is important to clarify certain misconceptions before embarking on a discussion for the need of creating such a national consciousness.

Firstly, let us look at our place as human beings in the universe in relation to our wisdom traditions. This will also help deepen our existential understanding of what lies behind and within our world and life view. The questions to which wisdom traditions are applied are questions of human origins, relationships, identity, and security on the one hand, and questions of meaning, of dying, of human destiny and those of daily moral choices on the other hand. The question of origins is related to our deep sense of history, that is, the reality of our being rooted in the world and the cosmos; while that of human relations points to that of time and space. Furthermore, wisdom is concerned with the discernment of our inter-connectedness within the universe with everything else and our responsibility to them. It explores the feeling that we are not alone, but rather that we are related and depended to other realities in a variety of ways. All these relationships and inter-connectedness are important in our self-understanding a human being because human life and activities are affected by them and they in turn affect human existence profoundly. Furthermore, these relationships and inter-connectedness have much to do with the value of human existence for the entire cosmos. This means that they have also to do with a cosmic sense of communal relationships and our personal and communal identity in it. I have stated elsewhere,

To be human in Africa is to be in a priestly service in the cosmic temple in which every act, word or thought should be a sweet-smelling offering to God and to all humanity, living or departed. African humanity cannot dispense with this religiosity without also losing part of itself. . . African spirituality is cosmic and expresses itself in the total flow of life towards other beings and realities.³¹

It is no wonder Kenneth Kaunda insists on putting humanity at the centre of society and all its undertakings, the human being who "cherishes in his heart all the values which can make our nation great."³²

Secondly, there is a misunderstanding of being and of becoming human. While humanity is a part of these cosmic relationships, it has an identity that stands apart in terms of its being that of a "being-thru-becoming", and also "becoming-thru-being" in reality and meaning. Human beings embody in themselves the consciousness and meaning of being human by becoming human. Human beings are in process of becoming all the time. There is a permanence of being in spite of continual change. This means that its reality of being human has simultaneously both a beingness and a becomingness as permanent aspects of being human and that they are all wrapped together into one another. Human actuality and potentiality are wrapped up in one reality of being-while-in-the-process-of-becoming human. This is not a paradox, but rather a reality of being through relational thought. This is what *kukula* is all about, that is, growing with a sense of destiny into maturity. For instance, a child once born is a complete human being all of itself (actuality), however, it is also true that the child is in the process of becoming an older person (potentiality). The grown up person is the end becoming of a child, and the child is the initial becoming of an older person. More often than not, there are many childhood residues in the process that interfere with proper growth which *uMunthu* education is supposed to take care of them at appropriate points. In other words, actuality and potentiality define and condition each other. Throughout this evolution, we are conscious of being and remaining human beings even as we are in the process of becoming. This is the essence of the socialisation processes that complements the biological and mental growth and development processes. We are a complete

present reality from the moment of birth even as we are open to the future through a process of becoming. What are the implications of this for our existence?

John Mbiti has suggested that the concept of time is the key to unravelling these implications. In the concept of time, it is the dimension of the past (*zamani*) that becomes dominant in orienting African existence forcing time to move into the past instead of into the future. Having responded to John Mbiti elsewhere,³³ we reject that the concept of time is key to African existence, but rather the key is in who they understand themselves to be, that is, their sense of *uMunthu* as determined by their place in the cosmos, in other words, their life in *uMunthu*. Time is the context in which they create their historical sense.

Not knowing whence we come from and yet finding a world waiting for us, and then exiting this world without our permission and going whence we know not, makes human existence a mysterious given. Human existence is an intense point of animated and intimate encounter of spirit and matter on the one hand, and spirit and mind on the other thus creating a much higher self-consciousness related to wisdom and a sense of being-thru-becoming than any other creature. Human existence has to do with intensity of being alive, and that sense of being alive is realized in relationships where life energy flows from one to another in a meaningful manner resulting in much happiness and joy. This vital energy is the power of love. Only human beings are conscious of the power of love as involving wisdom seeking, meaning creating, and having moral responsibility in the cosmos as those conscious of being free within our creaturely limits. Biblical expression related to this sense of being is that of being "created in the image of God"³⁴. To be created in God's image is to be made for love, from love, with love, in love, and through love since God is love. All these insights are meant to be captured in a culturally relevant philosophy of education since love is what humanizes and defines the phenomenon of *uMunthu*.

Let me elaborate further on the implications of such a philosophical outlook in a given culture, especially in the context of Malawi. Such a philosophy (wisdom traditions) is an attempt by cultures to understand the nature and meaning of LIFE, this encounter between matter and the vivifying spirit, and also between spirit and mind for human existence. There is also another dimension, that of humanity's relation to both God and the world of nature. It is in the light of these three dimensions, namely, one internal and another external, and the third transcendent that humanity is supposed to make right and appropriate choices towards right and appropriate ends. This is what wisdom is. Such choices in turn impact on all dimensions in a self-reflective manner. Philosophy (wisdom traditions) further illuminates the question of human origins in order to keep the original purposes for human existence before a whole culture so that people live in the light of the acknowledged origins even in the face of profound changes over time. This is why myths are existentially significant. Socialization processes, the peak points of which are the rites of passage, are both an introduction and a continual reaffirmation of a given philosophical orientation within a given cultural group, namely, the celebration of life.

Finding itself thrown into a vast universe, humanity seeks an anchor for its life meaning and security. Such an anchor may be consisting of a variety of life-support schemes, for instance, myths, rituals, social solidarity, religious invocations and sacrifices, esoteric knowledge, mystical powers, scientific exploration, economic and technological developments, exploration of outer space, medical

discoveries, search for psychological wellness, and material prosperity. All these schemes vary in their adequacy in contributing meaning and security in terms of time, space, and effectiveness. Even though none seems to be adequate on its own in spite of the tendency to privilege some over the others from time to time, yet they are informed by wisdom traditions that are philosophical in nature in terms of the questions to which they are a response.

At the heart of all philosophical discourses is the search for ultimate meaning and security. Such a quest manifests itself in physical, spiritual, mental, social, and economic aspects both in time and space. Humanity pursues the quest either by acquiescing in the cosmic mysteries or unmasking the cosmos of its mysteriousness using a variety of epistemological tools or by actually engaging in both simultaneously. Our existential reality is such that in the end, we must all individually confront death alone and thus human mortality remains the greatest and ultimate challenge to human existence and security. Immortality remains the greatest desired goal. The reality of death has raised for some people the question about the ultimate meaning of human existence in the face of it. In spite of the negations posed by death, many African cultures following their wisdom traditions exercise a hope beyond the grave. They refuse to let death have the final word because the ultimate desire is for a life that lasts and hence their relation to their ancestors as mediators with God, the Most High.

UMunthu, Modernity, and Post-Modernity

Colonialism and the missionary enterprises as interludes in our history ushered in modernity through the introduction of western education and technology. The Enlightenment had subjected every knowledge to the judgment of reason as Immanuel Kant had defined it when he wrote,

“Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. *Sapere Aude!* [dare to know] “Have courage to use your own understanding!”—that is the motto of enlightenment.³⁵

This enthroned reason as the only way to assured universal knowledge and the scientific method the only method to establish truth and to bring about human progress with a view to having heaven on earth. All knowledge became centred on human progress and with the passage of time humanity became also subject to the scientific method, that is, to be understood scientifically. The scientific method proved to be very effective in unravelling the mysteries of the universe and bringing about rapid human progress in terms material changes, but not in terms of human morality. Knowledge was universalised after a mathematical model and all knowledge was to be cast in that mould. The confidence in human progress was shattered by the break out of the First World War and its devastation. This was followed by the Second World War with more devastating consequences, for instance, the dropping of the hydrogen bomb on Nagasaki and the Jewish holocaust, not to mention the millions that died globally.

Malawians were involved in both wars. John Chilembwe protested against their participation in the First World War, and those who participated in the Second World War wanted to free themselves from those who had political and economic hegemony over them. The process of

decolonization became an earnest cause for African countries. However, the desire for material progress continued and it led to independence so as to determine our own destiny as a sovereign people. Education was considered the key and it is still touted as the key. However, the critical question that seems to have not been posed was, what type of education was necessary for self-determination? It never occurred that colonial and neo-colonial education that was meant to serve the colonial and the neo-colonial enterprises was not the right education to spur the material progress of an independent country forward. Therefore, for over fifty years education in Malawi has stumbled from one crisis to the other, one incomplete reform to the other, one experiment to the other. The result has been an educated class that is neither western nor Malawian and which has become victim of a globalised culture through the free market and the media. We no longer know who we are any more.

However, Post-modernism has challenged the scientific hegemony of knowledge production and its claim to universality. Past knowledge is being deconstructed, but not being replaced as yet since new ways of knowledge production are being tried. While deconstruction might not mean a demolition of knowledge, it is a critical analysis of reality or text using a hermeneutic of suspicion to discover new insights in the understanding of the text not as the author might have intended. Meanings might be the text rather than being read out of the text, and therefore, truth is often contested. Rationality can no longer be the impartial judge. This scenario leaves space for people to come up with a variety of perspectives in the public arena, like in a market for willing buyers and willing sellers. Truth is manufactured and not given. Post-modernity has provided space for Malawians to be active players in the production of knowledge and to participate actively in the public square to sell our ideas too and not simply to be formed by other people's views and thus lose our own identity in the world. This can be done successfully by going back to our traditions of wisdom, retrieve them, come up with a national philosophy and out of that a philosophy of education to assist in the production of relevant knowledge for our own progress. Without this undertaking, Malawi is bound to continue being in crisis.

Principles of the Philosophy of uMunthu

In concluding this article, it is important to state the shaped such a philosophy of education might take by highlighting some critical principles. The following are some of the fundamental principles upon which the *uMunthu* philosophy of education is based.

1. uMunthu philosophy of education has to affirm the God of life and the inviolability of life based on the principle of love for God and neighbour which constitutes both its ontological and epistemological foundation. To be is to love and to love is to know and to know is to do. Love is also an epistemological principle of life that drives humanity to discover truth and wisdom. All knowledge is supposed to serve the realization of the fullness of life and at the centre of this is the reality of love which unites the head, the heart, and the hands.
2. It aims at the preservation and promotion of abundant life for all people within communal relationships of love informed by this dictum formulated by John Mbiti: "I am because we are,

and since, we are, therefore, I am." This is what is termed ontological relationality and recognition underlying being a community-in-communion and the knowledge emanating there from.

3. uMunthu philosophy of education would acknowledge that love as both *agape* and *eros* is the power that humanizes, and that humanness is the quality of our being human beyond our physical appearance as seen in the face of Jesus, the Christ, whose humanity was full of grace and truth and which also was exuding the glory of God and our creation. It is love that distinguishes us from the animal world. Without love, we are but beasts with a human face. The animal world serves to challenge us to human integrity when its instinctive behaviour is better than that of human beings.

4. Since love is the fundamental epistemological principle, our minds do not aim at being only rational, but rather should aim primarily at wisdom which has its source in the fear of God and acknowledges a rationality that trusts and faith that is reasonable, and all serving life that is made in God's image. This gives us a way of knowing that we call ontological (or Life) cognition, that is, all life as a way of knowing. Reason and experience become instrumental to actualizing wisdom.

5. The uMunthu philosophy of education aims at retrieving our traditions of wisdom and also accepting all human wisdom from other cultures and civilization to make it foundational to all knowledge. The Chewa say, "*Nzereu za yekha anabwika nsima m'madzzi*" meaning that, "know-it all soaked his/her food ration in the water". Therefore, uMunthu philosophy focuses on a thorough knowledge of our shared worldview to which all other knowledge needs to be related.

6. According to uMunthu philosophy of education, love is also the source of freedom and freedom is the source of service or sense of responsibility; and responsibility can only take place in a community-in-communion. Love can never be separated from freedom and the need for a disciplined life. Therefore, the educational institutions have to have an ethos constituting a community of active and responsible scholars.

7. uMunthu philosophy of education acknowledges love as the cosmic energy that also leads to cosmic relationality with humanity occupying the centre of the cosmos and becoming the crossroads of all cosmic forces and having the priestly responsibilities on behalf of all creation and Christ being the chief priest since he manifested the authentic humanness. This is an awesome responsibility to be taken seriously by everyone especially our universities. Therefore, uMunthu philosophy of education takes seriously all traditional worldviews as critical sources for its development.

8. According to uMunthu philosophy of education, to be human is to be religious since we are made in God's image, and therefore, humanness is the practice of good religion as life-affirming while all that dehumanizes is the practice of bad religion, and hence life-denying. Life is the touchstone of all that is religion. This religious foundation has been realized and fulfilled in Jesus as the new humanity. All religious traditions are secondary to this foundational meaning of religion. There are such intimations in the names of Makewana, Mbona as in the seer or visionary, and Chala or Kyala as the ubiquitous one.

9. For uMunthu philosophy of education, those who are committed to the realization of the authentic human integrity or genuine humanness are the ones who truly humanize the cultures, the social structures and institutions, and the world. These are the ones who truly inherit the earth and realize the reign of God. Therefore, character formation in terms of deepening the understanding of integrity, that is, being a unified human being, become critical to the curricular content.

This is the philosophical, uMunthu-Christological-hermeneutic, and educational outlook that could inform any educational institution with an Afro-centric mode of education into which other disciplines are to be integrated in order to serve human existence adequately and thus contribute to the overcoming of human corruption, lead to meaningful human existence and development.

Endnotes

1 A prominent Kenyan theologian and philosophers and author of many books including, *African Philosophy and Religions*, a premier text on African worldview. He lives in Switzerland.

2 A ChiChewa/ ChiNyanja expression formed from the verb *kepusa* meaning to be foolish and has the import of let sleeping dogs lie. It promotes craftiness, shrewdness, cleverness. The opposite word is *keuchenjera*, that is shrewdness.

3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Malawi (2016)

4 Paul Radin intimates this in the title of his book, *Primitive Man as a Philosopher*, (New York, 1957).

5 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures*, Basic Books, 1973, p. 126ff.

6 Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

7 Hiebert, *ibid*, p. 29.

8 Kevin Vanhoozer; *First Theology*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 2002, p. 347.

9 Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres, eds., *African Theology en Route*, New York: Orbis Books, 1979: p. 76-77.

10 Patrick Kalilombe; *Doing Theology at the Grassroots: Theological Essays from Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere Books, 1999, p. 216.

11 <https://www.iep.utm.edu/love-his/>, Katarina Majerhold, "History of Love", p.

12 In his book, Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. (1910) 1926. *How Natives Think*. Translated by Lilian A. Clare. London: George Allen & Unwin.

13 John Gwengwe wrote a book with this title, *KukulandiMwambo* in which he explains human formation among the Chewa people. However, enshrined in this title is a philosophy, a way of life, and not simply cultural traditions.

14 Stephenson Kumakanga wrote a book titled *Nzeru za Kale* meaning wisdom of the Past. One reason for writing the book was that the wisdom that was known was being forgotten due to Western educational influences. Even though the book was being used as ChicChewa literature, it was more than literature. It preserved a philosophy and an educational methodology.

15 The anthropologist Lucien Levi Bruhl thought that Africans were in a pre-logical stage and were incapable of profound philosophical thought. This position was influenced by social Darwinism, and racism has been discredited as mere prejudicial and not based on any truth.

16 Benezet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic*, Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa, 2003, p. 22

17 Martin Buber was a Jewish philosopher who wrote the book, and Thou in which he explained the importance of relationship especially face to face relationship in what it means to be human.

18 In order to rule the colonised people effectively, a whole new discipline called Anthropology was created to study the conquered peoples and it was defined in such a way that it excluded the so-called civilised peoples.

19 Charles Robert Darwin (12 February 1809 19 April 1882) was a British naturalist who achieved lasting fame by convincing the scientific community of the occurrence of evolution and proposing the theory that this could be explained through natural selection. This theory is now considered the central explanatory paradigm in biology

20 See Max Dimont, *Jews, God, and History*, 2nd edition, New York: New American Library, 1962.

21 Deuteronomy 6:4-9

22 Quoted in James McNair, ed, *Livingstone Travels, From His Own Diaries*, London: Dent and Sons Ltd., 1954, p173

23 Fabien Eboussi Boulaga, *Christianity Without Fetishes*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984, p. 4.

24 This was the cry of Rev. Yesaya Zerenje Mwasi in 1933 when he parted with the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland in his Paramount Reasons for Working Independently. He spoke of establishing the "Christianity of the soil."

25 Benezet Bujo; Op. cit., p. 17.

26 See Harvey Sindima, *Malawi First Republic* (Lanham, M: University Press of America, 2002).

27 Basil Davidson, *Modern Africa: A Social and Political History* (London: Longman, 1994), 5

28 Kenneth Kaunda, *The Riddle of Violence*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1980, p. 54.

29 James Washington, ed., *I Have A Dream*, New York: Harper One, 1986, p. 87.

30 Letter to My Children, op. cit. p. 41, 44.

31 Augustine Musopole, *Being human in Africa*, New York: Peter Lang, 1994, p. 189

32 Letter to My Children, op. cit. p. 44

33 See Augustine Musopole, *Being Human in Africa*, op. cit, p. 39-61.

34 Genesis 1:26-28

35 <http://braungardt.trialectics.com/philosophy/early-modern-philosophy-16th-18th-century-europe/kant/enlightenment/>