

## Editorial

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[thoughtandpractice@gmail.com](mailto:thoughtandpractice@gmail.com)

<http://ajol.info/index.php/tp/index>

*Thought and Practice* continues to serve as a forum for an interdisciplinary discourse on pertinent issues in African scholarship and African society. The present issue has articles on the methodology of African philosophy, indigenous knowledge, music, biomedical ethics, and religion.

Despite protests from some quarters, the question of the nature of African philosophy continues to occupy many thinkers. D.A. Masolo presents an enlightening review of Kai Kresse's *Philosophising in Mombasa: Knowledge, Islam and Intellectual Practice on the Swahili Coast*. Masolo offers helpful historical and philosophical background information that aids the reader to place Kresse's work in context.

On his part, Innocent I. Asouzu challenges African philosophers to refine the conceptual and methodological framework of their endeavours at formulating philosophical theories. He contends that most attempts at formulating viable theories in African philosophy are saddled with intrusions of ethnophilosophic and ethnocentric types, an approach he refers to as **“unintended ethnocentric commitment”**. **For example, Asouzu is extremely uncomfortable with the way in which many African proponents of communalism approach the individualism-communalism debate. It will be interesting to watch the responses of the many theorists of African philosophy whose approach Asouzu endeavours to question at a fundamental level.**

The multifaceted impact of the robbery with violence at the inter-continental and inter-racial level, for long euphemized as “colonialism”, continues to be felt in many of the intellectual struggles of the African academia. One area in which this impact is manifest is that of the question of the relevance of indigenous knowledge to the present age. Jacinta Mwendu Maweu revisits this important topic, arguing that although indigenous ecological knowledge and modern Western ecological knowledge are conceptually different, it would be fallacious to regard one as superior to the other merely because they are premised on different worldviews.

The role of music in driving public debate on pertinent socio-political issues is not difficult to see. However, it has seldom been examined by African scholars. Consequently, the article by Olumuyiwa Okuseinde and Oladipo O. Olubomehin, in which they examine the creations of several musicians in relation to the idea of development in Africa between 1974 and 1987, should be of interest to all of us, as we seek an ever deepening understanding of the forces that have shaped current public debate.

The centrality of ethics in human experience cannot be gainsaid. As such, scholars are likely to continue to interrogate the ethical implications of various facets of our collective existence - politics, economics, education, medicine, among others. Adebayo A. Ogunbure examines the ethical implications of the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study, in which African Americans were misled and exploited by an agency of the American federal government for four decades, resulting in the suffering and death of many.

*Thought and Practice* also continues to acknowledge that despite increasing secularization of societies all over the world, religion is part and parcel of human experience, and one that raises a host of philosophical questions. Karori Mbugua’s article

undertakes a critical examination of the arguments for and against the Christian and Islamic doctrine of hell, and concludes that on balance, arguments against the existence of hell heavily outweigh those for its existence. Mbugua contends that what is needed is a gentler and more sinner-friendly theology of hell that recognizes God's mercy and infinite patience.

We look forward to facilitating an ever-deepening engagement among scholars from the humanities and social sciences in their quest for deeper insight into the challenges and opportunities in contemporary African societies.

Reginald M.J. Oduor, Ph.D.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF