

AN ARTICLE BY MAKATIANI E. BURACHE THE BIDADKHO'S CONCEPT OF A PERSON

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Abstract: The historical development of European thought and some African scholars' concept of a person has led to a philosophical *dogmatic fallacy*. The error consists in the misrepresentation and in non-exhaustive definition of a person and the lack of environment as a necessity. This lack of a proper exhaustive definition of a person has led to social discrimination, socio-cultural stratification and classification of people, indignity of human life and negative exploitation of natural resources. This expose unearths the bidakho's process metaphysics and creativity based on a concept of a person from conception to natural death and the environment in whom a person must live. The article underscores a fact that a proper definition of a person can solve socio-cultural problems, promote and defend human life as well as minimize negative effects of environmental degradation. It is qualitative in approach that applies phenomenology, critical analytical, and rational approaches or methods. It establishes that a proper definition of a person and *bwidakho* requires the inclusivity of metaphysical, cosmological and ontological perspectives of reality to solve contemporary socio-cultural and environmental issues and promotion of human life. This will lead to respecting of human beings at various level of biological growth, promote sanctity of human life, reduction of global warming and minimize climate change. The work is a viable source of reference for students and scholars of philosophy; those in-charge of the common good in the society and enhances bidakho's contribution to philosophy.

Keywords: Healthcare-associated infections, hospital acquired pneumonia, ventilator associated pneumonia, etiology, epidemiology

Introduction

This article is an attempt to provide a detailed synthetic idakho understanding of the concept of a person. It provides an insight in bidakho's worldview by evaluating both the western thought and african scholars' evidence and observations about a person and its in-exhaustive definition of who a person is. Furthermore, it engages the reader into forming judgments in order to develop a deep understanding of the concept of a person in idakho community and points to the relevance of the same as a solution to the contemporary negative issues in the world. It aims at new knowledge obtainable through both critical thinking and creative thinking about data provided on a person. It collaborates various discourses about a person and communicates logically the findings obtained by solving the issue of who a person is and why. This is because, philosophy ... *aims primarily at knowledge. The knowledge it aims at is the kind of knowledge which gives unity and system to the body of sciences, and the kind which results from a critical examination of the grounds of our convictions, prejudices and beliefs* (Russell: 1912; 90). It is epistemologically true that knowledge possessed by a person can be affected by prejudices founded on sophistical and interpretational fallacies as well as false appearances (Baconian's idols of the mind). The application of phenomenology as a method of this article helps to overcome these fallacies and idols. This is because, the method of phenomenology *is a preparation for all philosophical investigation and research into the positive sciences* (Delfgaauw: 1969; 120).

In idakho perspective, to understand who a person is and why requires a *total reconstruction of the sciences, arts and all human knowledge* (Stumpf: 1982; 214). This is because, a phenomenon *is anything imagined or objectively existing, ideal or real, that presented itself in any way to man's consciousness.* (Delfgaauw: 1969; 118). This is achievable through the application of phenomenological processes of learning. It requires a paradigm shift from fanatical learning that involves words, text, language and styles. It has to go through contentious learning of fixed positions of earlier thinkers to delicate learning that claims more knowledge than can be provided which *distort knowledge* (Ibid:124) particularly about a person and therefore corrupts the mind.

Bidakho's process philosophy

Bwidakho asserts that a human being is a person from conception to natural death because of what he/she is. A person is, regardless of gender, level of biological and mental development, social status, and level of socialization or acquisition of material possessions. Therefore, to talk about a person based on the above and without the universe leads to the idols of the mind. These Bacon's *idola mentis* produce: false concepts about who a person is and why (*idola tribus*); egocentricity that consists of doctrines which an individual cherishes very much (*idola specus*); socio-cultural activities founded on human rhetoric orientation (*idola fori*) as well as dogmatic in any field of knowledge (*idola theatri*).

Therefore, process metaphysics through the application of inductive reasoning begins with a detailed observations of the world (experiential knowledge) of bidakho, the sensible realm, the phenomenal universe towards a more generalization and ideas of the supersensible realm, the noumenal universe (rational knowledge) that has to come back to perceptible world (experience). Thus, through interdependence metaphysics and ontology as well as participatory existence of bidakho has demonstrates that experience is of paramount importance. The exposure of their process philosophy has produced their lived examples as well as their existential living. Thus, the significance of experience, exposure, examples and existential living in idakho community is of paramount importance in defining who a person is and why.

Moreover, philosophy concerns itself with an all-inclusive and comprehensive human view of all accessible experience in the whole universe. A scholar in philosophy criticizes inconsistent views about reality; critiques consistent views that are partial as well as critiques those that are not broadly based on universal knowable human experience. Additionally, a scholar in philosophy accepts permanence where truth reveals permanence e.g. the principles of logic; and change where truth reveals change e.g. logic is adaptable to the facts of life and growth. It is deducible from the above, that experience includes life, motion, growth, change, death and rigidity too e.g. a person's system is a concrete system that is alive and growing but there is nothing static about it.

Therefore, for philosophy to afford a complete view of human experience needs science and a recourse to beauty in nature, art, music, moral experience, social action and religious worship. Thus, to exclude any of these areas is to be unphilosophical and fanatical. Furthermore, a philosophical discourse does not lead to a fixed and final system of thought. If it does, it means such a system of thought requires to know everything and that nothing more is knowable or can happen. But such fixed system will lead to a philosophical dogmatic fallacy which this research labors to solve. Hence, philosophy does not require memorizing unchanging answers to all possible issues in life but requires learning how to grow in a changing world. In brief, a philosopher is a person who learns how to think in the process of growth in the changing universe.

In the case of a person from bidakho perspective, the permanence is demonstrated through physical identity, the nomenclature identity and communal identity that inheres in a person's substratum from conception through the lived life on the earth in the community until one enters *Emakombe*. On the other hand, dynamicity permeates all parts of person from conception until one is buried. It affects those parts that require biological development, mental capabilities and cultural processes; what is in Aristotelian idealistic metaphysics referred to as accidents. All human beings go through accidental changes without naturally affecting the substratum of a person. It is, asserts Wiredu: *the function of philosophy everywhere is to examine the intellectual foundations of life, using the best available modes of knowledge and reflection for human well-being.* (Wiredu: 1980; 62).

The idakho concept of a person

The central task of philosophy is to develop a metaphysical cosmology that is self-consistent and adequate to all experienced facts. A philosophical analysis and synthesis require rational thinking that looks at the whole reality which has no readymade answers. It is a process that applies human reason alone and require an epistemological paradigm shift from the Bacon's *idola mentis*, the idols of the mind. Philosophy, like any other *human knowledge starts with sense experience* (Kiruki: 2004; 51). This knowledge has three ends namely; it may end in sense-perception as the first level of abstraction that leads to natural or experimental sciences. It may end in imagination that is conception and at this level scientific knowledge deals with supra-sensible realities like numbers, triangles e.t.c. This is the field of mathematics and is the second level of mental abstraction. Finally, human knowledge may end in the intellect

which is reasoning. Scientific knowledge here includes all that is. It includes things material and immaterial like God and angels. *Science on this level is called metaphysics* (Kiruki: 2004; 53). This is the third level of abstraction. Thus, to refer to a person as *mundu* is the first level of abstraction, to refer to the category of space, in the world where one resides in, of the worldliness is *mushibaala* which is the second level of abstraction and to refer to a person's source of spirituality in relation to other beings and the environment, a person is *munashibala*. This is the third level of abstraction.

The word *mundu* is applicable in dealing with others in various capacities and in different categories of people. e.g. basungu (Europeans), bahindi (indians), banyolo (luos), Baseve (gikuyus), Banandalwa (kalenjins) e.t.c. On the other hand, all people without considering their capacities and regardless of their tribal or cultural background and relations are called *banashibala*. Literally, means a person immersed in worldliness. The concept: *munashibala* is from lwidakho language. On metaphysical level, it is coined from three words; the *mu* is for *mundu*, a human being, a person, *greek is anthropos*; *na* is from *Nasaye, God*, the supreme divine being, *greek is Theos* and *shibala* retains its cosmological meaning, the universe, *greek is cosmos*. In the plural form only the *mu* change to *ba* while the other two retain their singularity form that is *Banashibala*. It is true that, *metaphysics gives the necessary precision to the meaning of terms arrived at through spontaneous knowledge* (Avira: 1982; 14). Therefore, a person is an *anthrotheocosmic* being; a word, coined from three Greek words: *anthropos* meaning humankind, *Theos* meaning God, *cosmos* meaning the universe and whatever it contains. This is because when bidakho see a human being, that is, a person, whose identity is not yet established will refer to that person as *munashibala*. After they have had an experiential knowledge about the *munashibala*, then will recognize that person and refer to him/her according to one's identity and relations e.g. *buyu ni mundu shina*, that is, who is this person?

Literally there is no talking about a human person without God and the environment in the perspective of bidakho. There can be no metaphysical nor ontological separation between God, a person and the universe. Therefore, to refer to a person as *munashibala*, that is, an anthrotheocosmic being is a confirmation of the process cosmology within process metaphysics assert the inseparability of a person from existential interdependence as well as participation of God and the universe. We concur with Alvira that: *metaphysics includes everything real within its field of study because it seeks the ultimate cause and fundamental principles of reality* (Ibid; 5).

The *munashibala* contains three fundamental elements of who a person is which must co-exist for any authentic human life, existence and definition of a person. The first is the *Mubili* which forms body of the person, *mundu* that is a person's a physical identity entity. This entity is the source of all the cosmological as well as ontological properties of a person.

The second is *mwoyo* which proceeds from *na* which comes from *Nasaye* literally refers to the soul. It is the divine entity of a person. It is from this entity that proceeds all the metaphysical properties of who a person is arises from. This is because the source of all realities is God, the absolute good of all creation. While a person though being part of the creation enjoys and absolutely depends on both God, the Theos and the all in the universe, the cosmos.

Lastly, *shibala* which is the environment, the universe, the cosmos, is the life giving and sustaining entity that provides all material needs of a person. It is a natural necessary condition for the existence and provision for human life and a ground for all interdependence reality of all beings. This entity is not part of human nature but it's a fundamental necessity. Thus, to remove a person from the reality of the environment is like removing a tree from the soil or fish from water. *The enviroing community is not one of the properties of human nature that one can single out like the body and so on. The enviroing community is a property that is external to human nature.* (Molefe: 2018; 4). It is a necessity to define who a person is.

Munashibala is a metaphysical and ontological existential participatory as well as an interdependence being in an existential interconnectedness and interrelatedness web of myriads of dynamic relationships. It is noteworthy to remember that metaphysics' material object is the sum total of what is, all beings and its formal object is being as being which has been exposed and illustrated in idakho process philosophy.

The Characteristics of Munashibala

Munashibala as a metaphysical being from an idakho perspective demonstrates all the characteristics of being. *Munashibala* is that which is, that is, *Ens est id quod est*; it encompasses all reality; it demonstrates that which exists as well as that which is real. *Munashibala* has both the act of being, the *esse*, and the manner of being, *the essentia*.

First, munashibala is an interdependence being. The source of a person's life is a mystery and its end too remains a mystery and existential dependence on the environment and other people can't be explained exhaustively. A person can never be without the other for to be a person means to be in a communion and symbiotic interdependence with others and the environment. As demonstrated, without the necessity of the environment, a person is a non-existent. In short, a person is absolutely nothing without the environment and God.

Secondly, munashibala is an incomplete biological being that requires both interdependence and participatory mode of existence from other realities for a complete authentic existence. All people, Bidakho included have a universal and natural process that a male and a female person undergo to become a total mature person. It is true that all biological process of development is universal thus confirm the universality of who a person is. Though a female person differs with a male person anatomically due to gender, but they are equal as persons. They depend on each to raise a family as well as environment for food and shelter.

Thirdly, munashibala is a self-preserving being. Human being has a body structure called human anatomy but differ due to gender and their physiological orientation. Empirically, there are physiological differences between men and women but this does not increase nor diminish who a person is. All men universally have the same body physiology. Consequently, it is a fact that universally all women have same body physiology. The universal differences between men and women are there for life-preservation.

Fourth, munashibala is an existential participating being. This requires an existential personal participation in the community's social welfare which does not destroy personal independence and autonomy but is based fundamentally on mutual recognition of the dignity of individual persons from conception to natural death. The processes need free persons working together in voluntary symbiotic mutual co-operation and understanding.

Fifth, munashibala is an existential experiencing being. It is a Whiteheadian assertion that, rational actual occasions (human persons) are made up of billions of electrons and sub-atomic particles. As existential experiencing being, requires that all human beings to demonstrate the type of change that they wish to see in the universe through creativity and development as well as an existential appreciation of the alternatives of the other actual entities in the universe that is demonstrated in an authentic appreciation of diversity in the universe rooted in the inter-subjectivity and life-experience of all rational actual occasions.

Sixth, munashibala is an existential transitory being. Bidakho like process metaphysicians demands an organic way of viewing life whether as an individual or in the community with others due to the perpetual dynamicity of actual entities. This organic approach to life is demonstrated as a community of subjects that are in a mode of dynamicity in the universe. All actual entities in the universe regardless whether they are innate or inmate that exist in various degrees and we have a direct or indirect effect on human life in general.

Seventh, munashibala is an existential relational being. A person is a relational being as elucidated from idakho philosophy. *Munashibala* demonstrates all manner of metaphysical relations namely: relations of dependence, mutual relations based on action and passion, relations according to fittingness, relation of reason as well as transcendental relations. All these relations are founded in marriage which is a universal natural phenomenon that involves a union between a man and a woman that is a prerogative of rational actual entities alone.

Eighth, munashibala is an existential aesthetic being. Everyone in the universe does practice process metaphysics as illustrated too in idakho aesthetic philosophy. All rational actual occasions are committed to better living standards of every person. They are required to care and respect the rights of others which are alienable and universal and to build communities that are humane and sustainable. This demands existential creativity and not rigidity of mind or myopic mental process.

Ninth, munashibala is essentially a metaphysical being. This is because metaphysics is the study of being as being and therefore a human person is a being that metaphysical principles can be applied to this existential being. A human person is not immune to both the process of creativity and all the process of dynamicity. Bidakho as metaphysical actual entities can discover their proper goals and purposes of their lived activities as well as advance towards their fulfilment of their nature through creativity, development and inventiveness. They apply rationality to achieve all these existential processes. It has been demonstrated that bidakho as metaphysical actual rational entities exhibit all the metaphysical attributes of who a person is such as identifiability, integrity, reasonableness, understanding, autonomy, proper comportment, freedom and conscience

Tenth, munashibala in an existential creative being. Creativity requires the ability to come up with new ideas, finding unique and innovative ways to solve problems and application of creative thinking skills. Bidakho as by embracing creativity are able to look at different perspectives, broaden their minds and are capable of generating a range of possibilities to solve various issues. Bidakho's process metaphysics is grounded too on the novelty of the principle of creativity in the universe.

The significance of bwidakho

A theory is a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain a phenomenon. It is based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained. It is a set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based and is an idea used to account for a situation or justify a course of action. Therefore, a philosophical theory is a view that attempts to explain or account for a particular phenomenon in philosophy.

Bidakho is the way bidakho view life and reality. It entails how they perceive all that is the case, live and experience life as well as comprehend how things should be and ought or must be done. *Bwidakho* theory of existence is founded on *munashibala* and asserts that a person (anthropos); God (Theos) and cosmos (the universe) are the three central pillars to understanding any reality. This is because a person is an ontological being in whom all metaphysical attributes (western attributes of who a person is) as well as interdependence of beings (Ubuntu philosophy) and the cosmological/ontological interrelatedness of realities (*idakho* philosophy) are experienced and find their epistemological expressions.

Bwidakho perceive God in relation to the environment, world or universe. That the adequate epistemological information a person has about the entire universe has to be referenced to God. Hence, the centrality of God in both their metaphysics, ontology and epistemology. Affirming the idea that in his primordial nature, God is ever a creator and creates everlastingly. While in His consequent nature, God loves and essentially relates to his creation at all levels of creativity, development and inventiveness. Therefore, since God loves his creation, he must be in a loving divine relationship with the entire universe.

Bwidakho underscores the fact that all creatures are intrinsically valuable. This metaphysical and ontological fact require that a person to respect as well as protect other beings particularly the environment that sustains human life. In doing this, Consumerist attitude and negative exploitation of natural resources is prohibited because *bwidakho* did not allow competition or individual acquisition of natural resources. Therefore, Bidakho demonstrate that ecology is valuable to life on earth and therefore deserve respect as well as existential protection.

Bwidakho do not subscribe to the Cartesian dichotomy of the mind and the body. For them each being is a unitary whole with its own mind and body at different levels of each being and according to its nature and purpose in the universe. The unity of the mind and body assists the beings in their communications and relationships. This is demonstrable in their existential sense, activities, habits, motives and expressions from natural conception to death.

Bwidakho accepts that beings have a certain amount of freedom which is exercised within an environment with others. That there is no external force that controls the creatures and the whole universe but have an external being who sustains all in the universe and is everywhere. Even God has an un-controlling love and therefore no room for the Christian dichotomy heaven and hell. This respect and protection is for all beings from the smallest to the largest being in the universe and beyond.

The existential adoption of the *Bwidakho* theory can help to contribute to the common good of beings in the universe. This doctrine underscores the fact that this is a relational as well as interdependence world. As a relational world and interdependence world, it requires living an existential life of love to all beings; treating others as well as ourselves with dignity and respect, motivates human beings to love God and the environment and has no room for the consequences of evil in hell because the universe is one though metaphysically divided in three and God is omni-present.

Bwidakho theory asserts that a human being is a person from conception because of what he/she is, a homo sapiens regardless of gender, level of biological development, social status, and level of socialization or acquisition of material possessions. In this perspective, no one concept in western philosophy as well as by African scholars fully describes a concept of a person as the bidakho's concept of *munashibala*. Concurring with Wiredu that: *human beings cannot live by particulars or universals alone.* (Wiredu: 1996;9). It has been demonstrated that from conception to death and at all levels of biological, physical, moral and social development, *one is a person because of what he is, not because of what he acquires.* (Gyekye: 1992; 108).

It is an experiential knowledge that, there is high pressure on the environment that has led to indignity of a person, climate change, habitat destruction and resource depletion. This research has demonstrated that a proper understanding of bidakho's concept of *munashibala* and their theory of *bwidakho* is vital for combating climate, protecting biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources and upholding human dignity from conception to death. This shall require adapting to sustainable farming practices, proper use of natural resources as well as energy production. It will require proper means of transportation that reduces carbon emissions and greenhouse gases. It demands acknowledging the intrinsic value of all beings in the universe and in particular a person at all levels of biological development and his/her natural ecosystem.

Ultimately, the dynamicity of the contemporary world though seemingly static or permanent requires a better understanding of a human being and the environment. In the concept of *munashibala* that contains humans, God and nature leads to a new worldview. A metaphysical paradigm shift to anthropo-theo-cosmic reality in whose all beings possess an intrinsic value but only differ in purposes and degrees of ontological perfection. The adoption of bidakho can lead to a *compassiotheoathrocosmic* society. This concurs with Wittgenstein that: *the world is all that is the case.*

Conclusion

All process philosophers underscore the fact that, the main purpose of philosophy is to live wisely in the world by promotion of a sustainable and a humane community. A community in which all voices are lovingly heard and treated with dignity and respect in each historical existential epoch. In summary all the westernized metaphysical attributes of why and who a person is are subsumed or in heirs in the *munashibala*. A person whether social, political, rational, I think therefore I am or the famous Boethius celebrated definition an individual substance of rational nature has to come down to the experiential world through interdependence, relationality and participatory existence. In brief, all westernized idealistic metaphysical attributes are part and parcel of the anthrotheocosmic being. On the other hand, the generalized African metaphysical attributes of a person of scholars such as Mbiti, Kahiga and Molefe just to name a few demonstrate interdependence on other human beings but lack dependence on the environment.

Bidakho's concept of a person as *Munashibala*, combines a person (man), God and nature in an inseparability of a metaphysical bond founded on both dynamicity and permanency of reality. Hence, what water is for the fish and soil for the trees is what God and environment is for a person. Thus, *munashibala* takes into account all the westernized as well as generalized African metaphysical attributes and grounds them ontologically in the Supreme Being as well as in the environment through myriads of existential interdependences as well as participatory web of existential interrelationships. Thus, asserting the process metaphysicians desire that: *the central task of philosophy is to develop a metaphysical cosmology that is self-consistent and adequate to all experienced facts.*

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