

A CRITIQUE OF WITTGENSTEIN'S PICTURE THEORY OF LANGUAGE FROM THE AFRICAN META-EPISTEMIC VISION OF RELITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper critiques the epistemic accuracy usually attributed to Wittgenstein's picture theory of language from the African meta-epistemic vision of reality as a relation or interconnectedness. Working basically from flow, philosophy of participation, integration, and communion as the foundation of the African cultural worldview, the paper raises issues with Wittgenstein's linguistic reduction of reality to only what language can express. Using the background of African metaphysics and its intimate link with epistemology, the paper builds an interesting and fundamental notion of reality as interconnectedness, relation, or community knowledge and thus offers an illumination of Wittgenstein's vision from different angle enabling us to think in another way. The paper thus contends that despite the level of Wittgenstein's epistemic accuracy in the guise of picture theory, language can only picture 'facts' not 'reality' and once language is stretched beyond the expression of facts to the denoting of reality it faces the challenge of maintaining its integrity in light of African meta-epistemic vision of reality. The inadequacies of Wittgenstein notion of truth with all their emphasis on fact-language agreement is antithetical to the African meta-epistemic vision of reality. The work upholds that Wittgenstein's picture theory of language in only a perspective and an objective account of reality. On a larger scale, this thesis contributes to an effort to regain a distinctively African epistemology, by explaining what truth is from the perspective of an African epistemology believing that Africans have been sucked into the global matrix unprepared, such that they have lost themselves—language, culture, dressing, religion, philosophy, education, traditions, family life, politics, governance, albeit wisdom—to others, especially Europe or the West From colonial eras onward, African identity has been deeply intertwined with European influence. Onyewuenyi argues that the African cognitive framework, norms, and even their understanding of reality were shaped by the imposing colonial presence. The Africans found it effortless to align themselves with these western cultural attributes, despite the absence of a genuine connection to their own essence. There is thus a loss of sense of self-realisation of African values: religion, education as affectivity

rather than education as mere cognition, our values, our culture, our food, marriage, our own world historical identity, difference, integrity, and merit