

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

EBO, SOCRATES

Head, Department of Philosophy, Federal University Otuoke, Nigeria

<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJREHC.2024.5508>

ABSTRACT

Life is a puzzle. Man is the only animal that is faced with this puzzle due to man's capacity to reflect. As an animal that has the capacity to reflect, man is not just programmed to exist per existence. Man needs a purpose to live. He is the only animal that questions existence. He alone among animals is capable of suicide. Man, questions even his own existence. He is perennially seeking to understand the cosmos. He is not content to just exist; he seeks meaning. In the animal kingdom, only man can set a purpose higher than life. In the cosmos, only man can sacrifice his life on purpose. All these capabilities result from his ability to reflect. This innate ability to reflect makes every man, ontologically a philosopher. Although not everyman is a professional philosopher, there is no man without some sort of philosophy of life. There is no man without values or principles that guide his life. There is no man without deliberate goals or expectations about his life. So, to say, everyman has his own philosophy of life which he seeks to realize. This work is about meaning; it seeks the meaning of man's existence in the cosmos. It highlights the critical role of philosophy in man's quest to give meaning to his existence. This research is predominantly introspective.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Although every human person who is of the age of reason is a potential philosopher, not all reasonable persons are professional philosophers. Yet, there is no human person who does not live according to any sort of philosophy. It could be in the form of commonsensical maxims, ideology, cultural or religious beliefs. It could also be embedded in the laws and mores of the society. There is no man, dead or alive who can do without philosophy of a sort in his life. Human beings necessarily have to make rationally purposeful interpretations of their existence. They are ontologically saddled with the responsibility to give meaning to their lives. There necessarily has to be rational ways of meandering through the maze of challenges and puzzles typically posed by existence. Philosophy seeks rational approaches to existence. In a nutshell, philosophy is man's persistent attempt to rationally confront his existence; to make the cosmos intelligible, and to make his existence in the world meaningful.

Man is not born into the world with any user-manual [1]. Nature thrusts upon man, the task of defining his identity, his destiny, the world; and indeed, the task of making the world habitable. To live meaningfully, man has to give a meaningful interpretation to the world. He has to discover and pursue his place and purpose in the cosmos. Man has to confront the "arbitrariness" of existence [2]. Man, not only has to confront existence, he is everyday confronted by existence. He just has to be present to the world; can neither be passive nor an unaffected bystander. He is in the cosmos. He has no choice regarding his manifestation in the cosmos. He must have to confront the cosmos. There is no question of opting out because he is part and parcel of the cosmos.

To respond appropriately to the cosmos, man must have to understand it. To understand the cosmos, he must have to reflect rationally over it. To gain a rational mental picture of the world, man, must ponder, wonder, probe, speculate and come up with plausible explanations regarding the cosmos. In a nutshell, he must philosophize; he must embark on a systematic application of rationality to his understanding of existence. He must apply philosophy in his life.

Philosophy focuses on understanding human existence and the cosmos that gives rise to it. Philosophy is a human activity. It is centered on life. Life as a whole is an unfolding activity. It is a dynamic epiphany. It is an event that has just one history which is the current history. As has been stated earlier on, life does not come with any user-manual apparent to man. Man must have to unravel the pieces of the puzzle called life, bit by bit. Even as he continually strives to understand life, man must continue to live for he cannot be exempted from life or stand apart from it in order to understand it. He must be involved with life regardless. Understanding these dynamics entails understanding the basic rational principles that ought to be applied to the day-to-day life in order to make it meaningful. These principles are what we generally call the 'philosophy of life'. But the role philosophy plays in the understanding of life goes way more than the simplistic maxims or aphorisms. What is philosophy, and what makes it so significant to meaning and life?

2.0 THE BIRTHPLACE OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is a human enterprise. As such, it is a historical event. The birthplace of philosophy is the human mind [3]. As such, philosophy can only be historically localized if the origin of man could be historically localized. As has been avowed, it is the capacity for reflection that sets man apart from the rest of the animals. It is what ontologically designates him as a man. By nature, every man is a potential philosopher. It is not out of place therefore to declare that philosophy is a universal heritage of the humankind; and as such is as old as man. If there is any consensus that man originated in Africa, it follows necessarily that philosophy as a human enterprise originated in Africa. The ability to reflect among other things is said to be the key characteristic that sets man apart from other animals. If the first man ever to exist was an African, the first philosopher necessarily would be an African. Besides producing the philosopher ontologically, Africa also historically produced the first professional philosophers.

Philosophy as an organized, formal enterprise originated in Egypt [4;5;6]. In the words of Aristotle, Egyptians were the most ancient of the human race [7]. Formal philosophy sprouted and flourished in the Egyptian civilization but was later decisively shaped and universalized by the Greek culture.

2.1 The Egyptian Origins of Philosophy

It is an incontrovertible fact that philosophy as an organized intellectual endeavor originated in ancient Egypt. The circumstances of the birth of the endeavor of philosophy in Egypt at the professional level were organic and cultural. Black Egypt was the oldest civilization in recorded history. It was the first sophisticatedly organized human society; although the boundaries and people differ significantly from present day Egypt. It was in ancient Egypt that the quest to give meaning to life and the cosmos took a formal shape. This ancient Egyptian organized quest gave rise to what we know today as "philosophy". The Egyptians sought to know the meaning of life, the origin of man and the nature man; his fate at death, the future of

the cosmos and man's place in it. The answers the ancient Egyptians got in their philosophic quest were expressed in their mores, religion, education and statecraft. These answers formed the ideology of their civilization - their collective philosophy of life which the citizenry simulated in their individual lives. Above all, these answers enriched their culture which has continued to fascinate the world till date. Indeed, philosophy was cultural in ancient Egypt. It was the bedrock of the ancient Egyptian civilization. At the crescendo of the ancient Egyptian civilization, the Egyptian society was organized along philosophical principles: religion, education, statecraft and social strata were all cast in philosophical formations.

Philosophy as a formal enterprise was taught at the temples and schools across ancient Egypt. There, students were trained in morals, body discipline and learning. The schools were centers of learning as well as religion. The nature of the ancient Egyptian religion warranted its close affinity to philosophy. The goal of the ancient Egyptian religion was the deification of man in immortality through knowledge and virtue. Philosophy necessarily became a handy tool for the ancient Egyptian religion. Philosophers' ultimate quest was always to give meaning to human existence. Philosophers' attunement to meaning is often expressed in their ethical dispositions. The marriage of religion and philosophy in ancient Egypt was a symbiotic mélange.

The oldest school of higher learning in philosophy in recorded history was built at Waset around 1391 BC by the philosopher-king, Amenhotep III [8]. It was a temple as well as a school. It is pertinent to note that formal philosophy in Ancient Egypt, unlike classical Greece, was a public enterprise rather than a private endeavor. The schools were built and funded by the state. The activities of the schools were integral parts of statecraft in Ancient Egypt. The schools were centers for the training of the ruling class in Egypt – the guardians who were the brightest and the most cultured of the ancient Egyptian populace. They were educated in the ways of men and the ways of the gods. They were taught to understand nature, master it and use its forces for the service of the society [9]. They were taught statecraft. Above all, the schools in addition to the mastery of mind and body, taught attunement to the gods [10]. As earlier stated, the ultimate aim of the ancient Egyptian philosophy was the immortality and the deification of man.

Though not exclusively, teachers in ancient Egyptian schools were often philosopher-priests. They were masters of philosophy and religion. The philosophy they taught was a mélange of knowing and doing. It appears that ancient Egyptian philosophy and ancient Egyptian religion both shared the common purpose of making man godlike through a path of mental, ethical and physical fitness. Hence, the ideal of the "philosopher-priest". Many philosophers in ancient Egypt did indeed become gods: Hermes Thoth, Imhotep, Amenhotep, etc. were often deified [12]. Philosophy from inception was tied to the realization of the purpose of the life of man. Indeed, the philosophic endeavor was fundamentally a quest to give meaning to human existence.

2.2 The Greek Era of Philosophy

The Greek era of philosophy introduced radical changes that modified the nature and meaning of philosophy. Contact with the Greek culture marked the acculturation of philosophy to a cultural matrix that was significantly different from the Egyptian milieu. The emigration of Thales to Egypt in 6 BC to study philosophy opened the floodgate of Greek scholarship in Egypt. Greek scholars on completion of their studies in Egypt always returned home to

establish their own schools and train their own students. Incidentally, history shows that philosophy as taught by the Greeks was radically different in approach and outcome as was taught in Egypt.

What the Greeks taught was philosophy without the religious, body-discipline and statecraft components. This genre of philosophy was not embraced by the Greeks by choice but was imposed by their cultural milieu. Unlike in Egypt where philosophy was the mainstream culture; the organon that drove statecraft and popular morals, philosophy among the Greeks was the counterculture. Hence, it failed to get the nod of the authorities. While the state formally instituted philosophy in Egypt, the state had nothing to do with the introduction and teaching of philosophy in the Greek cities. On the contrary, the state was wary of it. Philosophy had no organic relationship with the prevailing orthodoxy. It was an entirely foreign ideology. It taught about gods unknown to the Greek pantheon. The first Greek philosophers were neither rulers nor had they meaningful political influence. They were basically outsiders to mainstream culture and power. Philosophy in Greece was taught by people who had minimal business with statecraft.

The strife between the state and early Greek philosophers led to the strafing off of the cultural components from philosophy. It led to greater abstractions in philosophy. It effectively made philosophy a counterculture and a perennial critique of the state. From the Greek days to date, philosophy has always been at loggerheads with the mainstream culture. What the ancient Greek philosophers introduced to Greek culture was criticality. The principle of critically eventually became the defining element of philosophy to this day. The scientific part of philosophy as thought in Egypt was not fully integrated into the Greek version of philosophy because the state was fundamentally opposed to philosophy. Philosophy among the Greeks unlike in Egypt got no public funding. State approved religions to this day remain at loggerheads with philosophy because unlike as happened in Egypt, there was no integration between mainstream religion and Greek philosophy.

Before the introduction of philosophy, the Greeks already had their gods, their religion, their statecraft and their culture. Attempts at integrating these with philosophy were met with stiff resistance. It would cost Socrates his life; sent Aristotle on exile. Many philosophers followed suit either to exile, death or imprisonment. Incidentally the globalized genre of philosophy we have today is the highly abstracted genre developed in ancient Greece whose mainstay is criticality. In this light, philosophy could be defined as the application of criticality to the understanding of reality. Criticality, not rationality distinguished Greek philosophy from Egyptian philosophy for rationality underlined both the Egyptian and the Greek genres of philosophy.

3.0 THE GREAT BIAS

Contemporary Western literature largely claim that philosophy originated in Miletus, a Greek city in the province of Ionia. These revisionist scholars project Thales as the first philosopher in recorded history. According to them, Thales was the first human to put forth a philosophical formulation of the universe. But these are Western biases of relatively recent invention. Until 1879, that was unheard of [13]. The bias was borne out of the unfavorable milieu created by colonialism. Thales himself admitted that he travelled to Egypt to be tutored in philosophy [14;15]. If Thales went to Egypt to learn philosophy, it means there must have been at least a

school of philosophy in Egypt. There must have been philosophers; and there must have been philosophy students there. Therefore, Thales could not have been the first philosopher in recorded history. It should rather be stated that Thales was the first recorded Western philosopher in history. Yes, Thales was the first European to philosophize but he learnt philosophy in Egypt where Hermes Thoth had philosophized about two thousand five hundred years before him. There were already schools of philosophy in existence for hundreds of years before him. He was not the first recorded philosopher in history. Hermes Thoth of Egypt was [16]. Egyptians had already philosophized for over two thousand years before Thales thought of travelling to Egypt to study philosophy.

Rather than Miletus falsely promoted by Western bias as the birthplace of philosophy, Egypt actually is. Until the plunder and destruction of Egyptian cultural heritage by the Alexander in the company of Aristotle, his friend and former tutor, Egypt flourished in culture and learning [17]. Most of the works attributed to Aristotle by Western historians were actually products of thousands of years of intellectual endeavors of Egyptian philosophers and scientists which Aristotle looted from the royal libraries of Egypt as Egypt fell to the Greeks under the command of Alexander [18]. What is the rationale behind addressing Alexander as "Great" by Western historians when he could be properly described as an anti-intellectual vandal?

The Greek invasion notwithstanding, Alexandria which later became the capital city of Egypt continued to flourish in learning and culture until it was completely destroyed in 7AD by the Islamic invasion. It is noteworthy that science just like philosophy had indeed flourished in Egypt long before Thales philosophized in Miletus. The eclipse of the sun which Thales predicted was a piece of knowledge he obtained while in Egypt. The Egyptians measured the length of pyramids by measuring the shadow it cast at the same time the shadow cast by the human body was equal to the person's height. The mathematical formula which is named after Pythagoras as the Pythagoras theorem, was actually a theorem Egyptians had used for thousands of years in constructing pyramids which Pythagoras learnt during his twenty-seven years sojourn in Egyptian schools as a student of philosophy and science. Pythagoras actually gave a silver goblet each to three Egyptian philosopher-priests of Heliopolis, Memphis and Thebes as fees in order to learn philosophy, mathematics and science in Egypt [19]. That was in addition to a letter given him by Polycrates the then ruler of Samos, introducing him to King Amasis of Egypt [20].

Unlike Europe where the philosophic exercise was individualistic, in Egypt it was rather communal. Rather than the counterculture philosophy was among the classical Greeks, it was the mainstream culture in Egypt. Philosophy in the Greek culture witnessed frequent cases of individuals modifying communal knowledge in a bid to personalize the credit. For instance, the assertion that all things came from water was a common assumption at the time of Thales, yet he personalized it. In African Philosophy however, knowledge is viewed as a property of the community. There were no such attempts at personalizing the credit for knowledge because knowledge was viewed as a communal heritage [21]. Even when such knowledge was modified or improved upon, it was done for the community. It was not to be presented as a new idea by an individual. Egyptian schools forbade students from writing down their ideas as such and from divulging the knowledge to non-initiates. Writing down of thoughts was the preserve of masters. It was a collective effort. The knowledge put down was not any individual's opinion but the legacy of the school; and indeed, the community.

But the reverse was the case in the Western of tradition of philosophy; basically, because from the ancient Europe through medieval Europe down to the early modern Europe, philosophy was a foreign idea. Unlike in ancient Egypt, philosophy was not organic in Western civilization until the triumph of the Renaissance. The communal nature of African philosophy deprived it of the kind of individualism that characterized philosophy in the Western tradition. It was this kind of individualism that gave Thales the false credit of originality by his successors and kinsmen who wrote down as Thales' own ideas what he admittedly learnt from Egypt. Diodorus Siculus, Diogenes and Clement of Alexandria stated unequivocally that the Milesians as well as the rest of the ancient Greek philosophers learnt all they knew from Egypt, and were proud of their Egyptian learning [22;23;24].

The experience of the transatlantic slavery and colonialism which further weakened African culture, gave the West the impetus to write off Africa as a "dark continent", and claim for itself, the credit for the origin of philosophy which rightly belonged to Africa. Slavery and colonialism presented Africa in very bad light. These experiences suppressed African culture and presented to generations of the African people, a false history of culture and learning. In some instances, Africans were portrayed as a people that had no culture until their contact with Europe [25]. The propaganda to portray Africans as low-level humans without culture was aimed at justifying the inhumanities of slavery and colonialism.

4.0 WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

To the question, "what is philosophy", the traditional answer is that philosophy is an endeavor towards rationally understanding man, the world, the source of the world, the place of man in the world, his purpose, the meaning of his existence and the ultimate fate of his being. It is an endeavor because it is not a mere abstraction. It is a historical activity. It involves knowing and doing. It is safe to state that the enterprise described above was what the earliest Egyptian thinkers embarked upon when they took on a formal study of nature and meaning. Among these early philosophers were: Hermes Thoth (3000 BC) Amenhotep (2700 BC), Imihotep (2700 BC), Antief II (2500 BC) and Ptahhotep (2350 BC); a celebrated moral philosopher. His philosophy survives to this day in his book known as the Maxims of Ptahhotep [26]. These thinkers among many others handed over the baton of the philosophic enterprise from generation to generation, over two millennia before philosophy came in contact with the Greek culture. This systematized exercise was known as the wisdom of Egypt. It was not the conventional wisdom. It was a systematic enquiry. It would later be called "philosophy".

The neologism "philosophy" is attributed to the philosopher-mathematician known as Pythagoras. The term came from two Greek words: philos which means love, and sophia which means wisdom. So, philosophy literally means love of wisdom. It is pertinent to note that formal philosophy had existed for thousands of years before the term "philosophy" was coined. In other words, he was not the first philosopher. The name of a phenomenon which had been in existence for thousands of years was merely modified. Philosophers who existed before Pythagoras must have known philosophy by a certain name, certain names or some description or descriptions. Of course, they did have a name for it.

Philosophy was "wisdom"; philosophers were called the "wise". "Philosophy" has its roots in the ancient Egyptian word seba which means wisdom; the wise. The term was inscribed on the tomb of the philosopher-king, Antief II around 2500 BC. Seba became sebos when it was

transcribed into Coptic. The meaning remained unchanged. From sebos, the term was transcribed as sophia in Greek.

Philosophy was a new and hostilely received non-mainstream idea among the Greeks of Pythagoras' era. It was the wisdom of Egypt, a foreign idea. The Greek translation of the Egyptian sabe was sophia. On return to Samos, Pythagoras attracted some followers and students whom he taught sophia, the wisdom of Egypt. These students and followers were referred to by others as the lovers of sophia. The Greek word for lovers is philos. So, lovers of sophia would translate to philos-sophia. That was how the Greeks changed the name of philosophers from "the wise" to "lovers of wisdom". The term sophia by which philosophers were traditionally known was modified with the prefix philos to form the neologism philos-sophia which is anglicized to philosophy. This experience is akin to early Christians being called "Christians" by non-Christians at Antioch in Pisidia. Non-philosophers called Pythagoras' students of sophia "philosophers" (philos-sophia) rather than sophia that philosophers were generally known as at that time. That was how the enterprise came to be known as "philosophy".

Philosophy is basically an open-ended inquiry into the nature of reality. It is a methodic and rational inquiry into the ultimate causes of things. Philosophy goes beyond the face value of things, and investigates their root causes. Philosophy analyses the relationship between things and the language of the investigation itself. The subject matter of philosophy is reality in all ramifications. Philosophy asks the question of "why" and "how". It is the ambition of philosophy to give interpretation to reality as a whole.

Biology for instance, may explain the functions of the parts of the human body in detail but it can never explain the function of the human person as an entity neither can it explain why the human person exist at all in the first place. Biology cannot explain why humans have willpower and consciously make choices. It cannot explain what life is neither can it pinpoint the actual location of life in the body. Biology cannot address the question whether man has a soul or not. It cannot answer the question whether life has a purpose or whether it is a meaningless exercise of chance. Philosophy attempts to address these questions in order to give humanity a deeper understanding of not just their existence but existence in entirety.

5.0 THE QUEST TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD

The first philosophic quest of man was the quest to unravel the world. What is the world made of? What is the origin of life and the things we see in the world? From what do things come? These were the focus of philosophy from Hermes Thoth of Egypt to Thales of Miletus. It is still a legitimate concern of philosophy to this day. From the ancient times to the contemporary era, philosophers put forth different hypotheses to explain the origin and nature of reality. While Thales would say that life and the multitude of things in the world have their origin in water, Leucippus and Democritus propounded that everything in the world came out as a result of the collision of atoms that were moving freely in space [27]. Anaximander traced the source of the world to an amorphous indeterminate substance that he called "the boundless" while Anaximenes after him traced the source of life to air. Heraclitus of Ephesus seeing how often things change, used the imagery of fire to describe the nature of the world. Parmenides on the other hand looked at the world as a whole and declared it to be one, unchangeable and permanent. For Parmenides, it is the nature of the world to be in existence. It simply cannot not

be in existence. The idea of "nothing", he declared, is absurd and illusory. But Pythagoras, the mathematician-philosopher enamored of the beauty of geometry declared that everything is made of numbers. That is, the whole world can be mathematically calculated.

All the ancients mentioned above sought to understand the world. They sought to discover the origin of life. Science as we know it today had not yet been invented. The scientific method had not yet been formulated. They all sought to rationally interpret the world using commonsensical insights. They moved away from the mythical and religious explanations of the world and sought to rationally define the world.

The quest to explain the world persists even to this day. Socrates radically shifted the focus of philosophy among the Greeks from the cosmos to the human person. He brought focus on an aspect of philosophy neglected in the ancient Greek tradition. In the Egyptian times the focus of philosophy was always the fulfilment of man and the understanding of the world. Modern and contemporary philosophy deepened the focus on man and his relation to the world.

6.0 PHILOSOPHY, THE STATE AND ITS RELIGION

Philosophy as a formal enterprise is rooted in the establishment of the human society. It is an enterprise at the service of the society that seeks the truth about the good life and the cosmos using the sole power of reason. It is at the service of the society; it does not happen in vacuum. Without the state, there would have been no philosophy as an organized enterprise. Philosophy is not an abstract exercise but a community endeavor. The state provided the enabling environment for philosophy to thrive. The state is not a mere assemblage of people upon a certain territory. It is an assemblage of people upon a certain territory with a purpose which is to live the good life. Philosophy seeks the truth about the good life [27]. The organization of the state reflects its understanding of the good life. Philosophy seeks to prescribe for individuals as well as the state, the conducts that would guarantee the good life.

The good life according to a people is always determined and defined by their ideology implicitly and explicitly. The laws, the morals and the cultural practices of a people are a function of their ideology. The ideology of a people is their philosophy; their collective philosophy of life. The ancient Egyptian state exemplified this. Philosophy mirrored the goals of the state, directed the goals and sharpened them. The goal of the Egyptian state was to produce a citizenry with the mastery of nature and the ways of the gods – a people in attunement with the gods and nature. On the individual level, the state sought immortality for man [28].

Philosophy and religion are at the service of ideology. Although the ideology itself is a philosophy; it is often expressed ritually by religion. Philosophy and religion are in a way the same enterprise with different methodologies. Both aim at the formulation and the preservation of the ideology and purpose of the state [29]. Sometimes, the attainment of the purpose of the state requires a fundamental change or modification in ideology. Philosophy does this easier than religion for philosophy by methodology is amenable to change while religion is by methodology resistant to change. Philosophy is based on reasoned inquiry but religion is based on unquestioned faith. Philosophy makes no pretense of having the final answer to any problem but religion often dogmatically claims that its answers are final and eternal.

Now, all these activities whether religious or philosophical take place in the state. The state itself was created out of man's natural instincts for survival. The fundamental function of the state is to guarantee the survival of its citizens. In the state of nature, man was at war with other species either because of his desire to consume these species or because of the desire of these species to consume him. Beyond man's ecological war with other species, man faced the greatest threat to his existence from fellow men for man is wolf unto man [30]. To contain this threat, men had to band together to achieve peace among themselves, to achieve better economic cooperation, to protect themselves from the strong among themselves and from other men outside their society. In essence, men banded together to form the state for survival. After man has achieved survival, what next?

Do men exist merely to survive? Is survival the purpose of life? That's when man starts to wonder. Wonder - the impetus that gave rise to philosophy. Man's wonder on the environment gave rise to his thoughts on the world around him and on life itself. These thoughts systematized as well as the process of systematizing them constitute philosophy. When these thoughts are built into a comprehensive body of ideas for the guidance of the society, they become an ideology.

When an ideology is ritualized, it becomes a religion. Conversely, both religion and ideology are kinds of philosophies but are not philosophy itself. Both religion and ideology are closed systems of ideas. Because they are closed, they don't accept questioning. But philosophy thrives on questioning reality. In philosophy, nothing is beyond questioning.

While philosophy seeks the realization of the good life for the state, relying solely on reason, religion seeks the good life for the state relying solely on faith in a given revelation. The reliance of religion on revelation which is a temporal event of a certain era makes it resistance to change for revelation is not a continuous event. It is not dynamic. Revelation once documented cannot be altered. Hence any event unforeseen by the revelation becomes an automatic source of tension to the religion that results from such a revelation. Philosophy on the other hand is open-ended and dynamic. It does not lay claim to any revelation or any doctrine as the final truth

The state often has to contend with tensions between philosophy and religion. The crux of the tension is the interpretation of truth. For religion, truth is static; it is often anchored on a revelation. Philosophy on the other hand, sees truth as dynamic. The cosmos is characterized by change. The truth about the cosmos must necessarily be characterized by change. The state and her values are not immune to change.

7.0 PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

Socrates made the good life, the focus of his philosophy. To be able to live the good life, man must know his place in the cosmos. It is in the cosmos that he has his being. His fate is tied to the fate of the cosmos. If the cosmos is a divine project intended for a divine purpose, man has to discover this divine purpose, interpret it and attune his life to it. It is the position of religion that the cosmos is a divine project. History however shows that the priestly class often claims the monopoly of the knowledge and interpretation of this divine purpose. The priestly class often claims an exclusive revelation of this purpose to one of their own whom they variously refer to as founder, demigod, a god or a prophet. In some religions, this revelation is written

down and taken as the final authority on morals, life and meaning. Hence, any ideology inimical to their interpretation of the cosmos or to the revelation is often ruthlessly suppressed by the authorities.

Philosophy on the other hand rejects revelation entirely. Even when philosophers hold the view that the cosmos is a divine project, they do not bequeath the interpretation of the nature and purpose of the project to any revelation or to the priestly class. At all times they hold the project discoverable and accountable to reason. Philosophers have not always attributed the cosmos to a god. Sometimes, they have attributed the cosmos to nature. Nature, philosophers have sometimes referred to as God [32].

Man however, is the only animal that seeks purpose for his existence. He is the only animal that requires a purpose to live for [33]. He is the only animal that is capable of suicide. He is the only animal that seeks meaning in life. He alone seeks to understand the cosmos and his place in it [34]. He cannot be happy if he thinks that his existence is meaningless. Man's curiosity to understand the world and give meaning to his life is ontological. It is an inherent part of human nature. The capacity for reflection distinguishes man from other animals and from all realities. It sets man aside as a meaning-seeking animal. Man interprets his own life. He sets the value of his own life. He is the measure of his own life. His conscious relationship with his own life is undulated by his own philosophy of life

8.0 CONCLUSION

One's philosophy of life influences his life choices and the meaning of his own life. The cosmos is an enigma that can be described by science in bits but can only be explained by philosophy as a whole [35]. Philosophy plays the critical role of guiding man and the state in this search for the meaning of life, the purpose and nature of the cosmos. Life though a biological experience is transcendental in value. Man bequeaths value to life. Man, does not just live, he wants to live the good life. "The unexamined life is not worth living" [36]. Philosophy is the scale upon which man weighs his life. It also serves as the beacon and the rudder which shows the way and guides man in the course of his life.

REFERENCES

- Ebo, S. (2022). Globalization and the clash of cultures. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* Volume 10 ~ Issue 9. pp: 208-213 ISSN (Online):2321-946. <https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol10-issue9/1009208213.pdf>
- Giordano, B. (2021). Jean-Paul Sartre: The consciousness and the self. *Philosophy International Journal*. <https://medwinpublishers.com/PhIJ/>
- Ebo, S. (2018). Restoring the African origins of philosophy. *SKHID* 5(6). <https://skhid.kubg.edu.ua/article/view/148338>
- Diogenes Laertius, translated by Yonge, C.D (1895). *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. https://www.google.com.ng/books/edition/The_Lives_and_Opinions_of_Eminent_Philos/O9rWatB8iQMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PR3&printsec=frontcover

- James, G.M. (1954). The Stolen Legacy. https://archive.org/stream/STOLENLEGACY/STOLEN%20LEGACY_djvu.txt
- Ebo, S. (2019). Egyptian sources of ancient philosophy. https://kubg.edu.ua/images/stories/podii/2019/05_16_zbirnyk_kfs.pdf#page=55
- Adi, H. (2013). Greece studied from ancient Egypt. <https://www.africanholocaust.net/greece-studied-kemet/#:~:text=VII%20Aristotle%20ranked%20the%20country,28%2D45>.
- Drower, S.M. (2024). Luxor. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Luxor>
- Clement of Alexandria. (150-215 AD). The Stromata. <https://ethicsof suicide.lib.utah.edu/selections/clement-alexandria>
- Obenga, T. (1995). A Lost Tradition: African Philosophy in World History, The Source Editions. Philadelphia,
- Orlando, R. (2008). BES: The ancient Egyptian way of initiation. Lane College.
- Ogunmodede, F. (2004). On the historical evolution of schools in African philosophy. <https://academicjournals.org/journal/JPC>
- Onyewuenyi, C.I. (1995). The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: an Exercise in Afrocentricism.
- Ebo, S. (2018). The “matser” made world: a new conceptualization of matter and spirit. SKHID No 1 (159). <https://skhid.kubg.edu.ua/article/view/157444/158061>
- Diodorus Siculus (60 BC). Library of Histories,
- Johnsen, L. (2024). Thoth: Egypt’s greatest spiritual teacher. <https://yogainternational.com/article/view/thoth-egypts-greatest-spiritual-teacher/>
- Ebo, S. (2022). A critical take on the debate on African philosophy. Social Science and Humanities Journal vol.6 No. 3. <http://www.sshjournal.com/index.php/sshj/article/view/788>
- Raju, C.K. (2024). Aristotle the laughable intellectual superman from Stagira or pseudo-Aristotle of Toledo? https://medium.com/@c_k_raju/aristotle-the-laughable-intellectual-superman-from-stagira-or-pseudo-aristotle-of-toledo-a85892bcefde
- Janes, G.M. (1954). The Stolen Legacy. https://archive.org/stream/STOLENLEGACY/STOLEN%20LEGACY_djvu.txt
- Obenga, T. (1995). A Lost Tradition: African Philosophy in World History, The Source Editions. Philadelphia,
- Yimini. G.S & Ebo, S. (2022). Realizing social unity in Africa: Insight from three (3) relational models in quantum physics. Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences vol.

2 iss. 4 <https://gsarpublishers.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/GJAHSS472022-Gelary-script.pdf>

Diodorus Siculus (60 BC). Library of Histories,

Clement of Alexandria. (150-215 AD). The Stromata.

Diogenes, L. (c. 366 BC). Lives of Eminent Philosophers.

Igboin, B.O. (2011). Colonialism and African cultural values. African Journal of History and Culture Vol. 3(6), pp. 96-103.

Ptahhotep. (2350 BC). Maxims of Ptahhotep. Discovered in Thebes by Prisse D'Avennes in 1847.

Brainard, J. (2018). Democritus' idea of atom. <https://flexbooks.ck12.org/cbook/ck-12-middle-school-physical-science-flexbook-2.0/section/3.11/primary/lesson/democrituss-idea-of-the-atom-ms-ps/>

Ebo, S. (2021). Random thoughts on happiness and meaning. Middle European Science Bulletin vol 11. <https://cejsr.academicjournal.io/index.php/journal/article/view/498>

Zabkar, L.V. (1963). Herodotus and the Egyptian idea of immortality. Journal of Near Eastern Studies. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Herodotus-and-the-Egyptian-Idea-of-Immortality-%C5%BDabkar/b8eeb154c4d989a02cafaae54d885f2118f1d69f>

Ebo, S. (2022). A critique of the power-values dynamics. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS), vol. 6(6), pages 154-158. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/bcp/journal/v6y2022i6p154-158.html>

Hobbes, T. (1651). Leviathan.

Nadler, S. (2001). Baruch Spinoza. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza/>

Ebo, S. (2018). Ethical issues on the environment. F.U.O Quarterly Journal of Research 10.13140/RG.2.2.21997.90081

Ebo, S. (2022). Random thoughts on the concept of mind in a material universe. Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol.10, No.5, pp.15-24, ISSN: 2052-6350. <https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Random-Thoughts-on-the-Concept-of-Mind-in-a-Material-Cosmos.pdf>

Ebo, S. (2022). A cosmological construction of an infinite cosmos. IOSR Journal of Applied Physics Vol 14 Iss.1. Pp. 59-64.

Stuhr, J.J. (2016). The unexamined life and surface pleasures. The Journal of Speculative Philosophy Vol. 30, No. 2