

## PREFACE

It has been close to four decades now since African philosophy came into its own as a disciplinary force in the ideological battle for the survival of the African continent. In those years, it survived the Hegelian deliberate sidelining of Africa from the universal context of history and the rejection of its mandate as a cultural enterprise. It generated debates and controversies on the conditions of its own possibility as well as numerous and often contradictory methodologies to guide its sustenance and its interventions on behalf of Africa. African philosophers have evolved over the long period since the traumatic unfolding of their discipline within the cauldron of the decolonization process on the continent. There have been books written, anthologies collected, conferences organized, and essays published on substantive and methodological issues around the ideas of the self-identity and development of Africa.

When Kwasi Wiredu published *A Companion to African Philosophy* in 2004, he brought together a significant ensemble of African philosophers on what has been achieved within the field so far. In his introduction to that anthology, Wiredu brought us up to date about the state of African philosophy “in our time.” However, a lot has happened since then to Africa, to African scholarship, and to the world to challenge philosophizing on the continent. Between that time and now, there have been several incidences and issues—new additions to the problems of existence on the continent—unleashed especially by the globalization process that requires new philosophical reflections. Africans top the list of refugees fleeing the continent for political and economic reasons. Democratic governance remains essentially bedevilled by corruption and bad leadership, climate change is now more than critical, religious fundamentalism now has the face of terror, economic paradigms are getting challenged, sexuality and identity are under serious siege, citizenship is weathering the ethnic storm, gender is taking a serious and renewed stand against patriarchal politics, African writings of all hues have evolved to confront both the African predicament and the human

condition, nationalism seems tenacious in the face of cosmopolitanism, Nollywood has fully come of age, the Afropolitans have arrived, and African philosophy must take stock of these issues and reassess its disciplinary capacities and relevance. Old arguments must be reexamined, and new ones must be created. It is time for the African philosophical enterprise to crank up its intellectual engines and make a move forward.

The *Handbook of African Philosophy* takes on the challenge of rethinking the intellectual, professional and curricular boundaries of African philosophy by provoking reflections on a whole range of issues which African philosophers have hitherto engaged, those that are confronting them, and those they have been silent about until now. The *Handbook of African Philosophy* is therefore distinctive for three reasons:

- a. It offers a comprehensive survey of the field of African philosophy, especially with regards to new events and issues that are significant for philosophical practice in Africa. It therefore seeks to generate fresh insights into new discourses and intellectual development in African philosophy occasioned by new directions in feminism and gender issues, new arguments in development studies, terrorism, the nature of philosophy itself, globalization, and some other critical issues raised by the diaspora. For instance, the chapter on “Philosophy in Portuguese-Speaking Africa” will provide a much-needed enlightenment on a much-neglected Lusophone African philosophy that does not feature in the African philosophical literature, while the chapter on “African Philosophy at the African Cinema” launches African philosophy into an area that has received little or no attention from African philosophers. The chapter titled “African Philosophy, Afropolitanism, and ‘Africa’”, as well as other chapters, attempts to further draw the discipline into a deep interrogation of, and intellectual relationship with, African literature and other disciplines involved in the collective efforts at interrogating the African postcolonial condition. “An African Philosophy for Children,” “African Philosophy and Education,” “African Philosophy as a Multidisciplinary Discourse,” and “Teaching African Philosophy and a *Postmodern Disposition*” all present nouveau intellectual pathways which rarely feature in the discourse on African philosophy. “Africa and the Philosophy of Sexuality” recognizes the growing import of sexuality arguments on the continent in the wake of human rights debate and the draconian legislations and outcries against homosexuality. And “Yorùbá Conception of Peace” attempts to launch a critical interrogation of conflicts on the continent through a conception of peace that is not only indigenous to Africa but has the potentials for global applications. In “Ritual Archives,” we have a unique inclusion in the *Handbook* that represents an African historian’s philosophical interrogation of the epistemologies of Africa and the limitations of the Western understanding of archives.

- b. The *Handbook of African Philosophy* provides an opportunity for new and established scholars of African Philosophy to reengage their own and other philosophers' ideas, arguments, and thoughts about Africa and her predicament in a global world where issues of knowledge, technologies, pedagogy, sexuality, hybridity, gender, neoliberalism, and terrorism have become major intellectual challenges.
- c. Finally, the *Handbook of African Philosophy* will also serve a pedagogic purpose that will provide researchers, students, and teachers of African philosophy with a handy volume about the past, current states, and future possibilities of the discipline.

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