

THERAPEUTIC PHILOSOPHY AND KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY

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ABSTRACT

This lecture distils the areas in my scholarship, identifying problematics noticeable in our lived experience. These problematics are captured in the expression, ‘poverty of the mind’, which refers to the lack or ignoring of forms of consciousness required for meaningful engagement with reality and the enhancement of full humanity. To these, Philosophy as a therapeutic activity gives attention. This discourse observes that when critical reasoning, intellectual enlightenment, ethical reflection, and historical consciousness are unattended to, underdeveloped, or impeded, individuals will exhibit fragmented dispositions, subsisting unguarded imitations for reflective self-understanding. Such condition would limit the discovery and acquisition of knowledge. In this discourse, an attempt is made to highlight some possible orientations for engaging the condition and bringing about therapy.

My research efforts employ the ethos of therapeutic Philosophy through knowledge discovery, which include critical thinking, self-examination, ethical principles, a definite conception of reality, and goal-orientedness. What has emerged all through my scholarship is that knowledge is discovered not produced. My research engaged aspects of Philosophy and meta-philosophy in the areas of Epistemology and Philosophy of science, Metaphysics, and African tradition of Philosophy. These are reflected as (a) *Therapeutic philosophy and metaphysics of the human person*: It is argued that humanity is not just a species but a quality.

(b) *Therapeutic Philosophy and Epistemology*: My research efforts show that knowledge is intercourse. This is the way to enrich the knowledge of ‘the Other’ in oneself while bringing oneself to the knowledge of ‘the Other’. (c) *Therapeutic Philosophy and culture*: My argument is that Philosophy’s interrogation of culture springs from an understanding of the relationship between the human person and culture – a relationship characterised by formation rather than production.

(d) *Therapeutic Philosophy and education*: Philosophy as an activity, combines with education to liberate the human being from poverty and limitations.

(e) *Therapeutic Philosophy and Science*: Philosophy in relation to science, among other activities, interrogates beliefs, ideas, methods, hypotheses, theories and laws that constitute scientific knowledge.

(f) *Therapeutic Philosophy and African experience*: Part of Philosophy's therapeutic task is to participate in the healing of African experience from the phenomenon of injustice occasioned by epistemic and moral dislocation, mental and cultural inertia.

(g) *Therapeutic Philosophy and healthcare delivery*: The connection between therapeutic Philosophy and healthcare delivery is presented in the conceptual overlap between Philosophy and therapy.

Philosophy, rightly understood, is therapy. Therefore, the central claim of this inaugural lecture is not an attempt to forge a new nexus between Philosophy and therapy. It is rather an analytic statement to say that Philosophy is therapeutic, as the meaning of the predicate term is contained in the meaning of the subject term. This understanding invites philosophers to assume more active therapeutic roles within society, including taking the lead in developing Philosophy clinics or forms of philosophical counselling. Such an initiative would position Philosophy as remedial rather than merely diagnostic, offering conceptual clarifications, ethical reflections, and critical self-understanding to individuals and communities facing moral distress, social conflicts or existential disorientation.

