

THE PROBLEM OF UNDERMINING HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AMONG THE BANTU PEOPLE

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Abstract: We are living in a world where human competition is at play and human knowledge is the central object that suffers a lot in this competition. People tend to undermine and condemn human intelligence of some individuals because they cannot think and act according to what they expect. This has led to many problems that are related to all facets of life be it social, economic, political and spiritual. Manipulation and exploitation of human dignity is on the rise by fellow men. The bantu people suffers most, we have used the category of Bantu people as a representation of many black people that have been victimized with the problem of undermining human intelligence. This problem is not only among the philosophers and the westerners but even among the Bantu people themselves. They undermine human intelligence of their fellow black people in tribes and regional contexts. David Hume an empiricist in his work *An Inquiry on Human Understanding* argues that, knowledge is acquired by experience through sense perception. Although our capacity to form ideas may seem completely unbounded, in fact ‘all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience.

Keywords: Knowledge, Human intelligence, Empiricism.

Introduction

The article is based on second objective which maps out our chapter three in our Masters Thesis in Philosophy which entitled *David Hume’s Concept of Knowledge and the Problem of Undermining Human Intelligence among the Bantu people*. It focuses on the concept of association of ideas in relation to the problem of undermining human intelligence. Therefore, the theory of empiricism is helping to realize, acknowledge, and understand the nature of human intelligence. However, this article intends to analyze the problem of undermining human intelligence among the Bantu people and the negative attitudes towards the Bantu Intelligence by some philosophers.

Definition and General Understanding of Human Intelligence

Intelligence has been defined in different ways; in simple language, it has been defined as the ability to acquire knowledge and skills.¹ While philosophically it has been defined as; the capacity for abstraction, logic, understanding, self-awareness, learning, emotional knowledge, reasoning, planning, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving.² Therefore, Human Intelligence is the intellectual power of humans, which is marked by complex cognitive feats and high levels of motivation and self-awareness.³

According to the eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant, he believed that there are different kinds of Intelligence or perhaps different facets of intelligence, and that people clearly differed in the degree to which they possessed them.⁴ According to Li-fang Zhang, a psychologist, also says there are many types or kinds of human intelligence, here are some of them;

Logical – Mathematical intelligence, Linguistic intelligence, Spatial intelligence, Musical intelligence, Bodily- kinesthetic intelligence,

¹ Oxford Dictionary, *Intelligence*, Tenth Edition (Oxford,2012)

² Cf. Anna T. Cianciolo and Robert J. Sternberg, *Intelligence A Brief History* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 2.

³ Cf. Colom Roberto (December 2010). "*Human intelligence and brain networks*". Online article, *Dialogues Clin. Neurosci.* 12 (4), 489-501. [doi:10.31887/DCNS.2010.12.4/rcolom](https://doi.org/10.31887/DCNS.2010.12.4/rcolom). [PMC 3181994](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2131994/). [PMID 2131949](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2131949/) Accessed on 15/02/2022

⁴ Cf. Anna T. Cianciolo and Robert J. Sternberg, *Intelligence A Brief History*, 13.

intrapersonal intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, Naturalistic intelligence, Emotional intelligence and Artificial intelligence.⁵

These kinds of intelligences correspond to certain spaces of knowledge which are distinct and relatively independent of each other.

Nature and Brief History of Human Intelligence

The nature of human intelligence is to enable humans to remember descriptions of things and use those descriptions in future behaviors, it also gives cognitive abilities to learn, form concepts, understand, and reason, including the capacities to recognize patterns, innovate, plan, solve problems and employ language to communicate. Finally, Intelligence enables humans to experience and think.⁶

Historically it has been identified that:

The first people to ponder the nature of intelligence were not psychologists or educators, but philosophers. The ancient-Greek philosopher Plato likened people's intelligence to blocks of wax, differing in size, hardness, moistness, and purity. A person whose block of wax was overly hard or soft and muddy or impure would suffer intellectual deficits. Thomas Aquinas, writing in the thirteenth century CE, believed the comprehension skills of intelligent people to be more nearly complete and universal than those of unintelligent people. According to Aquinas, however, even the most intelligent person could not approach the omniscience of God.⁷

In reality human intelligence has been there from the existence of man.

Even though ideas about the nature of Intelligence have existed for thousands of years, much of what we know about intelligence has been discovered since the late nineteenth century like Artificial intelligence and Emotional intelligence.⁸ The same point was raised by Robert J. Sternberg in 2012 about intellectual styles when he acknowledged and praised emotional intelligence that it is important to acknowledge human intelligence with different contexts.⁹ However, these intellectual styles or kinds refer to people's preferred ways of processing information and dealing with tasks. Different scholars have their own preferred style terms, both in their writings and in the talks they deliver, including "cognitive style," "learning style," "thinking style," "mind style," "mode of thinking," or "teaching style."¹⁰ Probably this is where the problem comes in because everyone wants everyone to think in a style he/she wants, and if fail to respond in such a manner you are perceived less or not intelligent at all.

Understanding the Bantu People in relation to Human Intelligence

According to Tempels, the Bantu people are the speakers of Bantu languages comprising several hundred indigenous ethnic groups in Africa. In order to understand the Bantu people; you need to understand their culture, language and the system of principles.¹¹ Therefore, in understanding the Bantu we want to look at three dimensions; Origin of the Bantu, their way of life in general and most important the understanding of Knowledge and Intelligence by the Bantu people.

Origin of the Bantu People

⁵ Li-fang Zhang, An online article on "Types of Human Intelligence," <https://www.iberostar.com/en/inspiration-guide/wellness/eight-types-of-intelligen>, Posted on 20/01/ 2013, Accessed on 16/02/2022. Pp. 7-14

⁶ Cf. Colom, Roberto (December 2010). "Human intelligence and brain networks," Online article, *Dialogues Clin. Neurosci.* 12 (4), 489-501. doi:10.31887/DCNS.2010.12.4/rcolom. PMC 3181994. PMID 2131949 Accessed on 15/02/2022.

⁷ Anna T. Cianciolo and Robert J. Sternberg, *Intelligence A Brief History*, 12.

⁸ Cf. Anna T. Cianciolo and Robert J. Sternberg, *Intelligence A Brief History*, 14.

⁹ Cf. Robert J. Sternberg, et Al., *Handbook of Intellectual Styles: Preferences in Cognition, Learning, and Thinking* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2012), 16

¹⁰ Robert J. Sternberg, et Al., *Handbook of Intellectual Styles*., 19.

¹¹Cf. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 18.

According to some historians, they say:

There are two basic theories of Bantu origins. The first was advanced by Joseph Greenberg in 1963. He had analyzed and compared several hundred African languages and found that a group of languages spoken in Southeastern Nigeria were the most closely related to languages from the Bantu group. He theorized that Proto-Bantu (the hypothetical ancestor of the Bantu languages) was originally one of these languages that spread south and east over hundreds of years. This was quickly challenged by Malcolm Guthrie who analyzed each Bantu language and found that the most stereotypical were those spoken in Zambia and in the southern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This provided the alternate theory that Bantu speakers had spread from this location in all directions.¹²

However, the extent and the rate of advance of the Bantu migrants are difficult to date with any precision. They may have reached East Africa coast near cape Delgado by the fourth century A.D. in the person of Claudius Ptolemy's Ethiopians.¹³

The life of the Bantu people (Culture)

According to Tempels, life and death determine human behaviour; among the Bantu people life and death are great apostles of fidelity to a magical view of life and of recourse to traditional magical practice. He further argues that, it is very possible with the individual and with the tribal or culture group that the mysteries of life and death, survival and distraction, together with fear arising from all these. Therefore, life and death became the psychological agents that gave birth to certain behaviour patterns and to certain redemptive practices.¹⁴ This is why we see that the influence of the environment and of psychological factors (emotional fantasy, or childish imagination) would however, scarcely be scientific to retain as the soul ground of human behavior.

To discuss the life of Bantu people is to discuss their culture which is the centre of African life. It is wide and diverse and that's what define their being or identity. We know that culture is the way of life. However, the thinking pattern and decision making are at times influenced by culture. Therefore, if one wants to study the Bantu people, he/she must give up his/her culture and incorporate into the culture of the Bantu. The Bantu people respect so much the beliefs and they prefer to be pragmatic, that's why there are so many rituals in their life.¹⁵ Just as philosophy and religion are interwoven in traditional African communities to the extent that if one wants to understand their philosophy one must study their religion, so too is the connection between their ontology and religion. African ontology is religious and for one to understand their religion one must penetrate their ontology.¹⁶

Wisdom and Intelligence According to the Bantu people

According to David Wechsler in his article on *Intellectual Quotient Test*, he says; in order to predict an individual's ability to "understand the world about him and his resourcefulness to cope with its challenges" one needs to have a much broader understanding of the individual beyond a single IQ score.¹⁷ However, according to the Bantu people wisdom is consisted in the discernment of the nature of beings of forces. True wisdom lies in ontological knowledge and the sage '*par excellence*' is God who knows every being. God is the one who comprehends the nature and the quality of the energy of each being. According to Tempels, God is force, possessing energy in himself, the mover of all other forces. He knows all forces, their ordering, their dependence, potential and their mutual interactions.¹⁸ Wisdom cannot be separated from God it is perceived to be granted by God. The ability to do good and to practice the good morals is the highest knowledge among the Bantu people.

¹² Cf. Robert W. July, *A History of the African People* (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1970), 194-5.

¹³ Cf. Robert W. July, *A History of the African People*, 195.

¹⁴ Cf. Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 19.

¹⁵ Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Post-colonial African philosophy* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers 1997), 23.

¹⁶ Cf. F. Ochieng'Odhiambo, *Trends and Issues in African Philosophy* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc 2010), 42.

¹⁷ Cf. Phillip L. Ackerman, *The Nature Of Human Intelligence*, Edited by Robert J. Sternberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 18.

¹⁸ Cf. Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 45.

Intelligence among the Bantu people can be traced from philosophic sagacity. According to *Odhiambo*, the findings in Kenya show that there are two main divisions of sage philosophy. One is that of the sage who's thought, though well informed and educative, fails to go beyond the celebrated folk-wisdom. Such a sage may not have the ability or inclination to apply his own independent critical objection to folk beliefs. He is, therefore, a folk sage in contrast to the second type of sage, the philosophic sage. The former is a master of popular wisdom while the latter is an expert in didactic wisdom.¹⁹ These findings are not far from the understanding of wisdom among the Bantus.

According to Odiambo:

Any genuine and concrete national culture should be identical with the unifying or common patterns of the general way of life of a people living as a community or believing to have the same destiny. A national culture has both practical and theoretical aspects. Things such as music, dance and fashion constitute the practical aspect. The theoretical aspect is formed by the philosophy which justifies such activities. A culture without a clear philosophy is actually incomplete and vulnerable to every foreign values and isms, no matter how obnoxious they might be.²⁰

It is in this line that we see activities among the Bantu people fall in the category of philosophical sagacity. Philosophical sagacity is part of a culture of every African community. This is because in every African community, there are certain people who are considered to be wise in the community and they offer services of helping the community to run and keep the legacy. Taking philosophy as tenets that underlie thought and action, the truth is that Africa must, as any other place, have philosophical principles that justify and govern its cultural practices. It is a pity that in Africa these principles are mostly covert and left at the implicit level. These principles must be unearthed and made explicit.²¹

The critical question is on how to know that a person is intelligent or wise? Among the Bemba people from Zambia, sometime back, men used to have academy (*pa nsaka*) where young boys used to learn from the sage. As young men they used to learn how to make huts and other artistic activities like making handles for holes, axes and other tools. It is from this same academy where the sage taught sayings and proverbs that helped them to realize and uphold human values.²²

If the sage wants to test the wisdom of young ones, they would try them separately with different approaches. For example the most famous test was; getting delicious food and wraps them nicely with fiber (wooden rope). Thereafter, a young boy or man maybe called and told to (at the time everyone is called for a meal) to go and put a bunch of fiber on a bank of the stream to make it soften in readiness for the work.²³ This is because fiber was used in different works, to build huts, making baskets, fish and animal traps. A wise child would get fiber and start running towards the river or the stream and along the way he unwraps the bunch of fiber and finds food inside, then eat the food and put fiber in water. But a stubborn and ignorant child would refuse to take the responsibility because it is time for a meal and he cannot leave food.²⁴ These and many other tactics the sage used to practice clearly shows the wisdom and intelligence among them and it has made many people become responsible and respectful.

Among the Bantu people like any other African tribes, there are rain makers and diviners who are able to detect and read the signs of time. They would just get some sand in the hands and throw them in air and tell whether it will rain or not.²⁵ Others like fisher men would just touch water in the river or lake and be able to tell whether the weather is favorable (there will be wind that can capsize canoes or not) for fishing or not. Others would say this is science learnt from Western education, but it is purely African empirical knowledge. All this knowledge helps the community and its own people without depending on Western education.

Negative Attitudes Towards the Intelligence of the Bantu

¹⁹ Cf. Ochieng²Odhiambo, *Trends and Issues in African Philosophy*, 115.

²⁰ Odhiambo, 117.

²¹ Cf. Odhiambo, 117.

²² Richard Mukuka, *Aba Bemba no BuBemba: understanding the Bemba cultural world*, (Kasama: Kalebalika Press, 2020), 45.

²³ Cf Mukuka, *Aba Bemba no BuBemba*, 46.

²⁴ Cf. Mukuka, *Aba Bemba no BuBemba*, 46.

²⁵ Mukuka, *Aba Bemba no BuBemba*, 47.

It is an ideal that every man is rational regardless of the race, tribe or color, just by the nature of humanity affirmed by Socrates.²⁶ However, the reality is that, the complexity of human knowledge and intelligence is always compromised and misunderstood by some people. It has been noticed that people including some philosophers like Hegel, Kant, and others could not acknowledge human intelligence in Bantu people. Apart from these renowned philosophers, it is also observed among the Bantu themselves undermining other tribes not to be intelligent and praise other tribes to be more intelligent. Some people have been denied opportunities in leadership and in other life sectors because they are not born from the perceived intelligent tribes hence the discrimination that leads to our problem.

Hegel's Negative Attitudes Towards the Intelligence of the Bantu

Our concern is on the adequacy of Hegel's cultural framework upon which he constructed a Philosophy of History which excludes Africa from the scheme of things. Hegelian dialectic is a project aimed at the exclusion of Africa from the universal history, leading to certain problematic theses like the Hegelian thesis on slavery, which is connected to the problem of class formation and his concept of the state.²⁷ Hegel with no prudence at all removed Africa from being civilized and cultured. However, in his perspective Africa is unhistorical, undeveloped spirit and it is still involved in the condition of mere nature; devoid of morality, religion and political constitution. Hence he holds that it is justified for Europeans to enslave and colonize Africa.²⁸

According to Hegel, Africa is divided into three parts, he says, there's Africa proper which he refers to the territory that lies south of the Sahara. The second part he calls it European Africa which is referred to the territory that lies on the north of Sahara. The third part he mentioned is Egypt which lies on the territory that is connected to Asia.²⁹ Hegel's assertion on Africa sounds to be far from the truth that defines Africa, presuming that Hegel was basing on the skin color of the people of Africa. People from north of Sahara have some Arabs who are light skinned. However, civilization and intellect cannot be discovered through external appearance, therefore, Hegel's allegation is untrue and harsh on the life of Africans. Furthermore, as Hegel undermined Africa proper which he termed as "the land of childhood, which lie in the dark mantle of night."³⁰ This is a condemned allegation that point to undermining of human intelligence which is part of human nature.

Hegel's phenomenology brings an aspect of dominance where he puts supremacy on some spirits than the other. However, Hegel interprets the consciousness of the spirit in relation to power and obedience. According to Hegel, the more imperious his nature the greater his demand for submission and the passionate will to rule. Not only that, but also to be beyond conceals from him his real dependence upon the persons over whom he normally wields his scepter.³¹ This is what Hegel thinks about the weak where he placed proper Africa that they need to submit to Europeans as their masters. We can also affirm that he who craves dominion over other men is not free from them he needs them to satisfy his ruling passion.

According to Hegel's doctrine of the will, regarding the life of consciousness, of the soul, as a self-development or self-determination is acquired through environment. For Hegel the real is intelligible and the intelligible is what is real. Therefore, intelligible beings matter most and are the only real beings.³² The critical question is; how did Hegel conceive Africans, are they real or not? Probably the temptation we have in this kind of interpretation is that, Hegel could not recognize Africans to be among intelligible beings if he is capable of excluding them in the universal History.

Hegel's notion of Anthropology offers better understanding of the conception of Africa, as he said Anthropology is the study of the soul. According to him the soul is that level at which Spirits sleeps, active only within itself, at one with the environment. Despite conceiving this; he further undermined African spirit by saying that; in Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective

²⁶ Cf. Stump, *A history of philosophy*, 37.

²⁷ Cf. George W. F. Hegel, *The History of Philosophy*, Translated by J. Sibree (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 121.

²⁸Cf. Hegel, *The History of Philosophy*, 123.

²⁹ Cf. Hegel, *The History of Philosophy*, 124.

³⁰ Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 91.

³¹Cf. J. Loewenberg, *Hegel's Phenomenology: Dialogue on The Life of Mind* (Illinois: The open court publishing co. 1965), 88.

³² Cf. John Angus Mc Vannel, *Hegel's Doctrine of the Will* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 45.

existence.³³ Therefore, African has not reached the level of realizing his own being, not yet realized his person. According to him African is natural man in his completely wild and untamed state.³⁴

Kant's Negative Attitudes towards the Intelligence of the Bantu

Kant is one of the greatest German philosophers who reconciled the problem of knowledge arising from two schools of thought, *empiricism* and *rationalism*. Kant after reading Hume's *Inquiry on Human Understanding*, he claimed to be awakened from dogmatic slumber by Hume. In the preface of *Critic of Pure Reason*, Kant starts off by presenting to us the dilemma of human reason; it is burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss, since they are given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself, but which it also cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason.³⁵ For instance, a principle, as that of causality, in carrying us to more and more remote conditions, forces us to realize that by such regress our questions can never be answered. We are therefore compelled to take refuge in postulates of a different kind, such as, that there must be a first unconditioned cause from which the empirical series of causes and effects starts.³⁶

Kant notes that, in such a case, reason sees itself necessitated to take refuge in principles that overstep all possible use in experience, and yet seem so unsuspecting that even ordinary common sense agrees with them.³⁷ However, after publishing *Critic of Pure Reason*, Kant also published an essay in which he claimed that people from Africa and India lack a drive and hence they lack the mental capacities to be self-motivated and successful in northern climates. He further argues that Africans and some Indians were never becoming anything more than drifters.³⁸ According to Kant, black slaves will never be good laborers unless they are coerced into activity. They cannot work on their own, unless they are pushed. Kant further argues that black people are a semi race and stunted as a result they are weak, inert, and incapable of any culture because of the migration of their ancestors. Kant ranked black people to occupy the lowest level of the racial hierarchy.³⁹

Kant's undermining of Human race gives an assumption of the superiority of the white race. Although Kant's own definition of race as such is formulated merely in terms of heritable differences in physical appearance, he never connects his understanding of race with their capacities for agency and their powers of intellect. However, Kant's theory of race and its implications for global migration cast is cosmopolitan.⁴⁰ Despite writing good things on morals about categorical imperatives and a very good synthesizer on knowledge through *Critic of Pure Reason* Kant ended up despising and undermining black people's dignity and intellect.

Karl Marx's Negative Attitudes Towards the Intelligence of the Bantu

Karl Max is a German capitalist philosopher born in 1818 and died in 1883, is famous because of his philosophy of capitalism. He published his famous work *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848; he also authored another important book in the history of the socialist movement which was titled *Das Capital*. These writings and others by Karl Marx and his counterpart Fredrick Engels form the basis of the body of thought and belief known as Marxism.⁴¹ The undermining of human intelligence in Karl Marx can be traced from his classification of individuals, class, and community. According to Marx, "in the Middle Ages, the citizens in each town were compelled to unite against the landed nobility to save their skins. The extension of trade, the establishment of communications, led the separate towns to get to know other towns, which had asserted the same interests in the struggle with the same antagonist."⁴²

³³ Cf. John Angus Mc Vannel, *Hegel's Doctrine of the Will*, 46.

³⁴ Cf. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 93.

³⁵ Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*; In: Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Eds.), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1. (Henceforth it shall be referred to Cf. as Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*....).

³⁶ Norman Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 6.

³⁷ Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A viii, 99.

³⁸ Cf. Pauline Kleingeld, *Kant's Second Thoughts on Race*, *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1950-), Oct., 2007, Vol. 57, No. 229 (Oct., 2007), pp. 573-592, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4543266>, accessed on 4/3/2022

³⁹ Cf. Pauline Kleingeld, *Kant's Second Thoughts on Race*, 574.

⁴⁰ Cf. Pauline Kleingeld, *Kant's Second Thoughts on Race*, 575.

⁴¹ Cf. *The Collected Works of Karl Marx*, by Delphi Classics (East Sussex; Delphi Publishing Ltd 2016), 28.

⁴² *Karl Marx And Frederick Engels The German Ideology*, Edited by C.J. ARTHUR (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), 89.

Marx categorized the community into town with different conditions of lifestyle where he identified some town to be better than others. According to him he suggests that:

Out of the many local corporations of burghers there arose only gradually the burgher class. The conditions of life of the individual burghers became, on account of their contradiction to the existing relationships and of the mode of labour determined by these, conditions which were common to them all and independent of each individual. The burghers had created the conditions insofar as they had torn themselves free from feudal ties, and were created by them insofar as they were determined by their antagonism to the feudal system which they found in existence. When the individual towns began to enter into associations, these common conditions developed into class conditions. The same conditions, the same contradiction, the same interests necessarily called forth on the whole similar customs everywhere.⁴³

Marx suggests these classifications for the purpose of archiving the goal of socialism and capitalism which give power to the bourgeoisie and allows them to perpetrate the poor. However, he continues saying that:

The *bourgeoisie* itself, with its conditions, develops only gradually, splits according to the division of labour into various fractions and finally absorbs all propertied classes it finds in existence (while it develops the majority of the earlier property less and a part of the hitherto propertied classes into a new class, the proletariat) in the measure to which all property found in existence is transformed into industrial or commercial capital. The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors.⁴⁴

The divisions proposed by Marx give room and freedom to the perpetrators to make the conditions of the poor become more difficult and harsh to survive. If those considered being poor cannot be given platform and freedom to participate in community activities that are performed by *bourgeoisie*, how are they going to raise their statuses? Human intelligence is in each and every individual, therefore, individuals should not be judged on the level of their status quo in a society.

According to Marx, "if from a philosophical point of view one considers this evolution of individuals in the common conditions of existence of estates and classes, which followed on one another, and in the accompanying general conceptions forced upon them. However, it is certainly very easy to imagine that in these individuals the species, or "Man", has evolved or that they evolved "Man"-and in this way one can give history some hard clouts on the ear."⁴⁵ It is called evolution in the sense that, various estates and classes subordinate varieties of species or evolutionary phases of man. However, Marx insists that this subsuming of individuals under definite classes cannot be abolished until a class has taken shape, which has no longer any particular class interest to assert against the ruling class.⁴⁶

Though Marx did not directly mention the Bantu people as the victim of lower class, however, his classification of communities and individuals points to undermining the African community as he praises the European community. Perhaps his concept of evolution points to elevating the weak and poor through the movement to civilized and developed communities like Europe and America. According to him, man has a chance to develop both intellectually and materially only in the community and not outside the developed community. He says, the transformation, through the division of labour, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labour.⁴⁷

⁴³ Karl Marx And Frederick Engels *The German Ideology*, 89-90.

⁴⁴ Karl Marx And Frederick Engels *The German Ideology*, 90.

⁴⁵ Karl Marx And Frederick Engels *The German Ideology*, 90.

⁴⁶ Cf. Karl Marx And Frederick Engels *The German Ideology*, 90.

⁴⁷ Cf. Karl Marx And Frederick Engels *The German Ideology*, 90.

Tempels Negative Attitudes Towards the Intelligence of the Bantu

Tempels in his work, *Philosophy of Bantu* has written many things concerning the life of the Bantu people in Africa and one of the most critical issues he argued is on knowledge and intelligence. According to Tempels, the Bantu people are primitive, and they lack philosophy, hence they are behind and uncivilized. He also claimed that the Bantu people are animists and the claim of origin of primitive religion is to be found in ancestor worship and magic practice.⁴⁸ However, Tempels claimed that African people evolve their customs, habits and behaviour develop because of interactions with Westerners and their religion contributes to development.⁴⁹

Tempels question also the metaphysics of the Bantu People and asserts that the Bantu ontology is different from the Western. He argues that, metaphysics does not treat of the abstract or the unreal: which are but its notions, its definitions, and its laws, which are abstract and general, as the notions, definitions and laws of very science always are.⁵⁰ Tempels argument is based on Bantu ontology where vital force is the fundamental concept in metaphysics. However, according to Tempels westerners can conceive the transcendental notion of 'being' by separating it from its attributes, 'Force' but the Bantu people cannot.⁵¹ This clearly shows how Tempels undermined the capacity of the Bantu people in conceiving metaphysical realities.

However, 'Force' in his (Tempels) thought is a necessary element in being and the concept 'Force' is inseparable from the definition of *being*, however, the Bantu hold a *static* conception of being while the Western world hold a *dynamic* conception of being.⁵² The critical question is that, how is it possible that the Bantu people in the modern world have different conception of being from the ancestral one if their conception is static? Emmanuel Chukwudi in *Postcolonial African Philosophy, on Modern Science and Ethnoscience*, argues that, *Ethnoscience* discourse called for treating all cognitive systems on a *par* as belief systems, thereby refusing to recognize the usual epistemological distinctions between real knowledge and mere local belief. However, these studies did not deny that some belief systems were able to achieve more powerful effects than the others, of course.⁵³ All systems work for better understanding of concepts and this proof Tempels allegation to be futile as he claimed the other system to be more effective and superior to Bantu conception.

Tempels consistency of use of the word primitive is enough to see the negative attitudes towards the Bantu people. In strict sense, we can interpret anything primitive to be behind time and uncivilized and unacceptable as the standard. How can Tempels claim the Bantu people to be primitive yet he stayed with them and studied their culture and clearly participated in them? Then we can conclude that he was also primitive at that particular time he spent life with them. According to Bantu understanding of '*Muntu*' is referred to a 'Person' and not what westerners connote by 'The Man' which signifies vital force, endowed with Intelligence and Will.⁵⁴ Therefore, if '*Muntu*' is endowed with Intelligence and Will, then we don't see logic in undermining human intelligence in Bantu people.

Undermining of Human Intelligence among African Tribes

Taylor in his book called, *Culture and Customs of Zambia* argues that, according to the Bantu people, the difference between empirical knowledge and innate ideas is that; empirical knowledge is acquaintance and efficiency through experience, while innate ideas does not involve experience but reasoning which is the ability to remember and connect ideas logically.⁵⁵ The problem of undermining human intelligence among the tribes of Africa can be traced from this understanding. Some tribes categorize other tribes not to be rational or empirical especially the minority in

⁴⁸ Cf. Tempels, Placide, *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959), 34.

⁴⁹ Cf. Tempels, Placide, *Bantu Philosophy*, 34.

⁵⁰ Cf. Tempels, Placide, *Bantu Philosophy*, 50.

⁵¹ Cf. Tempels, Placide, *Bantu Philosophy*, 50.

⁵² It sounds judgmental and not pleasing when you realize that your understanding of certain concept is different from other peoples understanding to put their minds in a box by calling them being static. Today many Bantu people have different concepts of God from the ancient one. However, this is just proving that Tempels allegations on the primitive concepts of Being as he calls the Bantu is not factual.

⁵³Cf. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Postcolonial African Philosophy* (Cambridge: Blackwell publishers Ltd., 1997), 47.

⁵⁴ Cf. Tempels, Placide, *Bantu Philosophy*, 54.

⁵⁵ Cf. Scott D. Taylor, *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, 78

the society. What we mean by not rational is that, one is unable to critically analyze issues logically and make sound decisions. While not being empirical we mean by not providing experiential/empirical evidence of knowledge and understanding to critically rely on rationale and imaginations.⁵⁶

As earlier mentioned in the background, we have seen many people being rejected and denied some opportunities and privileges politically or socially because they are judged not to be intelligent basing on experience. It is evident that we are getting lost into the Western world that has taken intelligence to be an identity of civilization and attributing it to academics. This tends to undermine some Bantu people especially those who do not have access to formal education and refer to them as dunderheads with no intelligence. This has extended even to some fellow Bantus who tend to undermine some tribes not to be intelligent people and praise other tribes among the same group of Bantus as more intelligent. It is common in most African communities and countries where there are so many tribes in one community to undermine the minority. The perception of superiority and dominance to undermine the minority is evidently shown in many African political, economic and religious activities.

Political Situation in Relation to Human Intelligence

Most African countries hold elections to put leaders in governance from the lowest rank to the head of state. During campaigns for elections; propaganda becomes one of the tools to defeat the opponent. The common manifesto during these campaigns is to use hateful speech basing on tribe (tribalism), such as “don’t vote for that candidate he/she is not your tribe mate”. Some people associate leadership with intelligence claiming that one cannot be put in higher office because he/she does not belong to the tribe perceived intelligent. For instance, Zambia held general elections on 12th August 2021, and during campaigns before elections, some political parties used tribalism to de-campaign the opponents as some media platforms reported.⁵⁷ According to some media platforms, the problem of tribalism does exist in most African countries. However, the main source of tribalism is undermining the other, and mostly on intellectual capacity. Therefore, its repercussions and consequences are genocide like Rwanda experience in 1994, apartheid and xenophobia in South Africa, underdevelopment of communities and loss of Human trust and dignity.⁵⁸

Academic situation in Zambia

The general perception on human intelligence among Zambians (note that all tribes in Zambia are Bantu speaking people) is that the *Lozi* people from the Western part of the country are more educated than any tribe in Zambia, while *Lamba* people from Copperbelt are perceived to be less educated, hence the conclusion that *Lozi* people are more intelligent than *Lamba* people.⁵⁹ Taylor based his argument on the educational privileges received probably from the British colonial masters and missionaries who came earlier before independence.

However, about the *Lamba* people in Zambia, Fr. Michael O’Shea an Irish Catholic Priest also argues in his book, *Missionaries and Minors* that, *Lamba* people failed education and preferred hunting and fishing and those who managed to attend school could not grasp concepts easily. He was comparing them with *Bemba* people who migrated from the Northern part of the country in search of employment in mines around Copperbelt Province. His assessment was done among the school children from Copperbelt where the Missionaries built schools for children of minors; the indignant *Lamba* people would prefer doggy school for fishing or hunting.⁶⁰

Economic Situation and Intelligence among the Bantu People

In most African countries there are tribes that are perceived not to be intelligent and tribes that are perceived to be more intelligent basing on the number of academic qualifications acquired. For example in Kenya according to

⁵⁶ Cf. Michael, A. Bishop J.D. Trout, *Epistemology and the Psychology of Human Judgment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005), 58.

⁵⁷ Times of Zambia News Paper, one of the oldest and reliable media House in Zambia reported on 03rd March, 2021 that, one political leader of Patriotic Front party despised the *Tonga* people where the opponent leader belongs to that they are not intelligent they only know how to rare cattle they cannot lead people.

⁵⁸Cf. Norman Barry, *An introduction to African Modern Political Theory*, Fifth Edition (New York: Palgrave, 2019), 27.

⁵⁹ Cf. Scott D. Taylor, *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, 89.

⁶⁰ Cf. Michael O’Shea, *Missionaries and Minors in Zambia* (Ndola: Mission Press, 1996), 79

some Anthropologists claim that there is a number of academia among *Luo* people than the *Ndera*, *Turkana*, or *Massai* people of Kenya. This makes a claim that the *Luo* tribe is more intelligent than any other Kenyan tribe.⁶¹

However, others also associate human intelligence to the running of the economic and social affairs of certain tribes. For example the San/bushman people of Namibia and Democratic Republic of Congo who are considered to be the minority whose way of life testifies that they are nomads. San/Bushman do not have permanent place to stay.⁶² Other tribes especially the majority undermine human intelligence of the San/Bushman because they are not formally educated as other tribes; instead they prefer hunting to education. The dominance by the majority becomes a leeway to undermine human intelligence of the minority which should not be the case. People with low standard of living are also perceived to be less intelligent than those with high standard of living in most African communities.⁶³ Even in some working places in many African communities the lowest paid workers like general workers without professionalism are perceived to be less intelligent than those in higher offices and highly paid. However, in some instances some general workers are more effective than those with white collar jobs, reason being, some are privileged to hold offices through some favors from the executive members on relational basis.⁶⁴

Religious Influence

John Mbiti in his book *African Religions and Philosophy*, argues that Africans are notorious by religiously, which means that the bond is quite strong between African people and their spirits and Supreme Being. Perhaps Tempels condemnation of African ontology emanates from the strong connections Africans have with their beliefs.⁶⁵ When an African person especially among the Bantus, believe in a concept, it takes time to remove that concept from him/her.⁶⁶ However, we can argue that religion has contributed to the Intellectual development among the Bantus. The mission schools built by missionaries and the literatures given to many African communities have helped many Bantu people to realize their intellectual capabilities. Today we have so many successful people who have been educated by missionaries like the late professor John Mbiti and others.

However, the negative influence can only be traced in the support of male dominance where one gender suffers consequences at the expense of some beliefs. Even though in some Bantu societies are a matrilineal society culturally, men take dominance in a number of roles. In decision-making, it's men who are supposed to take a leading role. Scott confirms this by saying; "Women generally have lower status in a traditional rural environment as well as in contemporary urban contexts".⁶⁷ In marriage, the power of deciding on many circumstances is left to the man. A woman can express her opinion on a certain matter but that is taken just as such, an opinion, the power to make the final decision is much left to the man. This to a certain extent limits the effectiveness of dialogue in the sense that the contribution of the other is taken relatively and a decision cannot be relied on.⁶⁸ This clearly shows the problem of undermining of human intelligence among females.

Conclusion

We have come to realize that, the complexity of human knowledge and intelligence is always compromised and misunderstood by some people. We have also come to learn that the consequences of undermining human intelligence in certain tribes among the Bantus cause some problems like; genocide, underdevelopment in the community and loss of human integrity and dignity. We have also learnt that human intelligence like any other knowledge can be contextual; hence this human intelligence cannot be undermined because it is unlimited. The greatest challenge we have discovered in our study is the failure to acknowledge human intelligence that exists in each and every human person. It is from this failure to acknowledge human intelligence that causes other human problems that we witness in our day to day life. We also come to learn that human intelligence has been

⁶¹ Cf. William R. Ochieng, *Themes in Kenyan History* (Nairobi: East African Education Publishers Ltd., 1990), 147.

⁶² Cf. Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Namibia*, 2007, available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4954ce36c.html>, United Nations Report [accessed 8 March 2022]

⁶³ Cf. Njuguna Ndung'u, *Kenya Portrait of Country, Heritage and Diversity* (Nairobi: Central Bank of Kenya, 2008), 47.

⁶⁴ Cf. R. A. Obudho, *Urbanization and development Planing in Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1981), 194.

⁶⁵ Cf. John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Anchor Book, 1970), 27.

⁶⁶ Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 116.

⁶⁷ Scott D. Taylor, *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, 93.

⁶⁸ Scott D. Taylor, *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, 95.

compromised by many people which make others think that they lack intelligence because they have not responded to their expectations.

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