

## **Symbolic Universes<sup>1</sup> of Hellenism And Afrikology: Metonyms And Search for Global Epistemological Field Building**

<sup>\*1</sup>Archange Byaruhanga Rukooko, <sup>2</sup>Daniel Komakech

<sup>1</sup>Department, Makerere University

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, Gulu University

Corresponding Author: \*Archange Byaruhanga Rukooko

---

**Abstract:** The paper argued for establishing the problem space of Hellenistic rationality and mentality. It constituted new sets of demand by juxtaposing two universes – Hellenism and Afrikology. Accordingly, it reshuffled the canonical feelings towards Hellenistic rationality and offered an angling upon which rationality becomes a field of debate and faulted, in favour of the African epistemology - Afrikology, established in its core tenet, the heart. The paper therefore tried to argue in general that, Hellenism is not inferior as such but that it is only one aspect of angling reality. Through an epistemological fault lines, the paper objected to the imposition of Hellenism as “the science” whose subjectivity ought to be dominant to the point of universalising itself as “dominant subjectivity”. This objection is not however, to trivialise Hellenism, this the paper has mentioned severally but, to offer a new epistemological space in which reality is allowed to reveal itself in the multiple spaces as Afrikology elucidates, without an overriding colonial epistemology of naming and understanding reality. It is only then that we can truly appreciate our common humanity in building a global knowledge.

**Keywords:** Hellenism, Afrikology, Heart, Word, Tongue

---

Date of Submission: 31 -10-2016

Date of acceptance: 10-08-2017

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The paper establishes the metaphysical and epistemological problem of Western Hellenistic tradition and the obtaining reversals from Afrikology and its universe, the heart. Case studying Western Hellenism and Afrikology, we question and adumbrate the fault lines of Western Hellenism in view of privileging Afrikology. We shifted the debate from the common tendency of Hellenistic rationality to a new space in which rationality is readjusted to the superiority of the heart. This we implored by reaching into the tenets of the heart, visualized and verbalized in the word and tongue. We refocused on Hellenistic rationality particularly because it is this regime that embodied and matured the contemporary misconstrued emphasis on the mind. However, we have avoided entering into a temporal debate of historiographical category of temporal and spatial epoch in which the debate started. This particular aspect is another process we are undertaking in a separate book. Consequently, this work is framed to elaborate on the limitations of Hellenistic rationality, and privilege Afrikology and its universe, the heart.

From this debate, we begin to put our subject matter in perspective, namely, the all too often emphasis on the interpretation and understanding of rationality should be defined as such, a derivative from the respective central domain, which we argue as being Hellenistic. Second, it is this dialectics of negation that takes us to elaborate on the universe of Afrikology. Accordingly, part one is on the metonyms of Hellenism, show casing its rhetoric and ideological character. The second part, problematizes Western Hellenistic rationality climaxed in the Cartesian cogito ergo sum. It is also in this part that we juxtapose Hellenism and Cartesianism against method, content and motivations. It is here that we question the subsequent enthroning of rationality and how this reshaped metaphysics, epistemology and human ontology in Western thought. Part three establishes the consequent of this ratio-mentality and its liminal and embedded consequent bordering totalitarian tendencies of a pecuniary type. To show that rationality is not the only locigal way to explain epistemology and metaphysics, the paper uses Afrikology and its universe, the heart, to establish a positive reconstruction of the centrality of the heart and its attendant cosmic vision and horizontal ontological relation.

## II. METONYMS OF HELLENISM

Markus Cromhout citing Bergen and Luckmann normalizes Hellenism as a symbolic universe integrated in an all-embracing frame of reference<sup>3</sup>. Gonda Van Steen in an interview suggests similarly, the symbolic search for Greece in its classical image and root<sup>4</sup>. In reference to this tradition of search of Greek 'inside' and "identity" of Europe, there has been a trend of historiographical and temporal location of Hellenism. Accordingly, A. A Long calls this attempt as a search for "doctrinal inheritance"<sup>5</sup> while Malcolm Schofield hardly deviate from this and as it were, traces Hellenistic root to the death of Alexander the Great and ending with the battle of Actium, 300 years after the death of Alexander the Great<sup>6</sup>. Historically and for purpose of reminding ourselves, Hellenization becomes a historical process of uniting and conforming diverse cultures of the Mediterranean within Alexander's empire, to the basic part of what is Greek<sup>7</sup>. However, on a closer look, the historiography of Hellenism is actually more complicated which gives an impression that, not the chronology is the problem but rather, what it does mean and, set out to perform. To indicate its arbitrary character pointing to unspoken intention, some argue that Hellenism starts at the last days of Aristotle and ends around 100 BC while others including Jaap Mansfeld argue that Platonic and Aristotelian corpora form the foundation of Hellenism. But even then, Posidonius, Philodemus, Epicureans, Aenesidemus and Pyrrhonism are not part of the chronology<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, Hellenism cannot favorably be understood historically but more, in its ideological breath, content and motivation. This is what we shall try to elaborate on, in the subsequent paragraphs.

Hellenism comes from the Greek verb *hellenizein* which means, to speak and act like a Greek<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, Adolf Deissman angling of Hellenism is that of Orientals and therefore Hellenism turns out to be the caricature of Greek as an "inside" of Europe and the bigger Europe<sup>10</sup>. If this is the case, then Hellenism is Hellenes; to think and behave like a Greek or European as opposed to the "other" – the barbarian. Hellenism therefore at this point, indicates a tendency towards what Anna Carastathis calls, "an intra-European and colonial geography of Western Europe and subaltern others"<sup>11</sup>, and that the fantasy with which Hellenism is referenced, constitutes it as European, Western and orientalist<sup>12</sup> in structure, with a mythology of origin, civilization and therefore, appropriate<sup>13</sup>. Rightly so, Hellenism turns out to be European continental metonyms with its borders distinct; its own epistemology, sciences, politics, culture, and so forth.

Accordingly, we argue that Hellenism is not science but an ideological discourse and symbolic universe of the binary logic of the differentials between the Greek from the 'other' that is often named, "barbarian"<sup>14</sup>. Accordingly, Gonda Van Steen in Eferpi Mitsi and Amy Muse heuristically eulogizes it as, "engenders competing figurations of Greekness"<sup>15</sup> or what Martin Heidegger qualifies as; "The Greeks are we" and Karl Jaspers names as the "axial time for humanity"<sup>16</sup>, both in view of classifying the superior class that Greekness elicited. Using Mahmood Mamdani's phrase "conflation conditioned within the logic"<sup>17</sup> of Greekness, we argue that Hellenism is therefore a carrier of European tendency and coloniality. Consequently, we want to follow the footsteps of David Scot's argument that, it is misleading to simply read off a proposition without prior effort in reconstructing the issue it aims to respond to<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, we appreciate Quentin Skinner as he cites J.L. Austin, "to be in position to understand a proposition, you have to understand it not merely in its internal logic but as a move in an argument"<sup>19</sup>. This is the orientation with which we shall look closely on Hellenism in the next section.

Concluding this part, we emerge with a reading and cuing of Hellenism as a competing Western narrativization process to prop its ideological epistemological 'supremacy' with, a colonial mentality of the "other", as non-Hellenes. It is at this point that we seek to establish a reversal to this tendency, through faulting Hellenism and consequently, using Afrikology and its universe of the heart to create an open ended space for a global epistemological field building. However, we will intentionally leave out the problem embedded and typified in the rationality regime. That, we are following in a separate revisiting of Hannah Arendt's Totalitarianism, Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer and Sovereign Power and, Carl Schmit's Political Theology. Consequently, we limit ourselves as the next section will show, on an analytical appreciation and understanding of Hellenistic rationality regime and the subsequent fault lines of its symbolic universe and its practical limitations.

To this far therefore, we have tried to clarify Hellenism and locate its space. Accordingly, and cognizant of the extensive character of Hellenism, we chose and also limited the area of focus to and on rationality and mind tradition of Hellenism. From this choice, two issues emerge namely; how do we contextualize the meaning of "rationality and mind" and secondly, why rationality and mind problem any way? To be able to answer these two, we seek to take a little more time clarifying these issues and engage in a discursive debate. It is at this point of debate that the substantive issue of the work and thesis will emerge.

### **Western Hellenistic Rationality and Cartesian Regime**

Whereas the Egyptians simultaneously used the mind to mean heart (Memphite Theology)<sup>20</sup> or heart as the locus of reason, recommended that the mind be led back to the heart<sup>21</sup>. The Greek used "nous", translated to mean, the "mind". The question is, how do we explain these two different lines of arguments? An answer can be granted here, namely; some argue that, from historical account of Greek philosophers studying in Egypt and having gained some knowledge, were impious and instead, sought to own the knowledge as attributable to them (Greeks) and so, the option was to either alter or make some additions to make the ideas different and original. Similarly, through the Hellenistic hermetic world view that centered on reason or rationality as the source for proto-typing reality, aided this situation. The second likely answer can be traced back to the Egyptian elderly priest's quarrel on the Greek students as captured by Plato in his *Timaeus*, one can suggest misunderstanding as the function of the difference;

Solon! Solon! You Greeks are always children. An old Greek does not exist! **Plato, *Timaeus***. From this, it is possible to discern the likely difference to be largely a misunderstanding. This is especially clear when one begins to contrast the terms; the Greek "nous" believed to have originated from the Egyptian term, "nu" (or "nw") that meant; to see, look, perceive, observe<sup>22</sup>, with the heart. However, if we take the old Egyptian priest's observation seriously, we begin to see the problem right from Plato who in the same *Timaeus*, having quoted to us the rebuke from the old Egyptian priest, nevertheless, established a three approach in understanding the human person; the body and mind (reason), with reason seated in the head, passion in the chest, appetite in the stomach and heart as passion that should be governed by reason.

Similarly, Plato's astronomical belief in spherical universe on one hand and on the other, seeing the head as spherical as well, led him to conclude that reason was in the head. Hippocrates who also studied in Egypt (famous for the Hippocratic Oath) also shared Plato's idea that reason is in the head. Aristotle on the other hand, corrected Plato and argued that the heart was the 'primary sense organ' and the seat of the soul itself<sup>23</sup>. This was a similar position of the Stoics and Epicureans. St. Augustine in the *Confession* for example, argued that the heart is "what I am inwardly", "where I am whatever I am"<sup>24</sup>. Gregory Palama is decisive on the matter and so, puts an impressive show to resolve the issue once and for all; that the mind is incorporeal and so, it is present in the heart not as confined as in a container because it is a simple, but as an instrument which does not dissipate its activities abroad but focuses its activities within the heart<sup>25</sup>. However, the Platonic tradition surged and crept back; Herophilus of Chalcedon (so called father of anatomy) argued that reason or rationality was in the head on the account of neuro-anatomy, while Galen used Aristotle's division of beings or life into vegetative, animal and rational to defend his Platonic ideas that the vegetative character is in the liver, animal soul in the heart and rational soul in the brain<sup>26</sup>.

In the same vein, Descartes follows Hellenistic ‘science’ methodically, to allow him use the Hellenistic scientific tradition of verification and falsification for the purpose of ‘proving’ and ‘validating’ what was so established both in the scientific / rational and religious Hellenism. This act of “prove” and “validation” to Rene Descartes was first and foremost independently important, truly human, and holistic and cosmologically sound, as an attempt of going beyond business as usual<sup>27</sup>. Accordingly, this subsequent section dedicates ample space in theorizing Rene Descartes’ system. We therefore start with a question; did Descartes actually locate the mind in the brain? To this question, we figuratively say yes but critically, no. This can be measured from his contradiction of an incorporeal “mind” and yet indwelt in a corporeal “brain”, which obviously served to function as Hellenistic tradition. This is the contradiction in terms that we want to follow and explain.

As such, if there is any inconsistency, then it is not Descartes but Hellenism. One sees this tone of Hellenism in Descartes submission to the Hellenistic teaching on science, reason and the human being. This he did by accepting that human beings are “machines” and since the brain was considered scientifically as the human central nervous system, Descartes simply obeyed this tradition and accordingly placed the mind in the brain and not the “heart” since Hellenism had discarded the heart as ‘emotional’. That Descartes did not treat the subject of the heart extensively, was only suggestive that the matter had already been put to rest within the Hellenistic tradition and needed no further elaboration. In conclusion, there is therefore no thing as Cartesian ‘cogito ergo sum’<sup>28</sup>. What we call “Cartesian” is simply Hellenism which Descartes had been understandably influenced into. Cartesianism is therefore European Hellenism and should be corrected to read as such.

However, before we seek to solve the Cartesianism, we need to problematise Cartesianism; in the Second Meditation, Descartes offers us a starting point of the puzzle, namely, he poses a question; “what is this I that I know?”<sup>29</sup>. He answers; “I am in the strict sense only a thinking thing that thinks, that is, I am a mind or intelligence or intellect or reason”<sup>30</sup>. In Part II, Chapter II, uses phrases such as; “...what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt”<sup>31</sup>, “...assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence”<sup>32</sup> But as John Cottingham rightfully attests, Descartes’ words, “strict sense” logically means Descartes is aware of the corporeality as well except, de-emphasized it so that the ‘thinking thing’ was to be given opportunity to be disembodied<sup>33</sup>. John Cottingham captures Descartes statement on this;

I showed that by the words ‘in the strict sense only’ I did not mean  
an entire exclusion or negation, but only an abstraction from material things;  
for I said that in spite of this we are not sure (*italics are my emphases*) that  
there is nothing corporeal in the soul, even though we do not recognize  
anything corporeal in it<sup>34</sup>.

This particular observation by Descartes is significantly a portrayal of a difficult situation in which he was in, in ‘clearly’ and ‘distinctly’ explaining his thought. It is on this basis that Antonio Damasio as cited by Ian Hacking observed that by his observation of this magnitude of significance, Descartes was actually returning us to the holistic human person<sup>35</sup>. On the basis of Descartes confession, Antonio Damasio tries to reconstruct Cartesian mind-body duality into a triune of; “mind”, “body” and ‘brain’. However, although Ian Hacking does not want to see Antonio’s addition as an extension of Descartes’ universe but a positive contribution, he (Ian) actually tacitly agrees with the idea of a holistic universe or reality, now seen in the ontological extension of Antonio’s “mind”, “brain” and “body” from the Cartesian two “mind” and “body” relation. With this, if given time, Antonio or any other person including Ian Hacking himself, would have extended the universe to probably four, five, six and so on, to countless horizon of the complex numbers of reality in defining human composition.

Indeed, as part of this extension of the universe, William James added emotions as well and significantly rejected Cartesian’s “othering” of emotion as an insignificant sub-altern but, argued that emotion

(like other realities) is an expression of some associated and distinct states conceived as the proper locus of the emotion itself<sup>36</sup>. Paul Redding captures William James' concern in his own thoughts;

...if we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its characteristic bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind, no mind stuff" out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and a neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains....What kind of an emotion of fear would be left, if the feelings neither of quickened heart –beats nor of shallow breathing, neither of trembling lips nor of weakened limbs,...were present, it is quiet impossible to think<sup>37</sup>.

What William James is trying to reconstruct here, is the foundation of humanity and reality as far beyond the restrictive calculi of Cartesian method and taking us into a deeper cosmogony and spiritual interaction in a holistic universe. This, William James confirms in his argument of paradox;

...our body itself is a palmary instance of the ambiguous. Sometimes I treat my body purely as a part of outer nature. Sometimes, again I think of it as "mine", I sort it with "me" and certain local changes and determinations in it pass for spiritual happenings. Its breathing is my "thinking", its sensorial adjustments are my attention, its kinesthetic alterations are my "efforts", its visceral perturbations are my "emotions"<sup>38</sup>.

At this point, we become more puzzled to read Cartesianism in the same conventional light as was commonly revered as the golden age of break through and Descartes himself honoured as the father of modernity. First, is Cartesianism therefore wrong and misinformed about the complexity of the issue he is dealing with and his being a novitiate on the issue? Second, was Cartesianism actually misunderstood as it was assumed within the dominant Hellenistic "rational" or "mind" tradition? The second question is a question of critical re-consideration of Cartesianism while the first is a judgmental consideration which in our view is a "judgmental mentality" which biases fair discussion and as such, we will concern ourselves with the second question of methodological nature.

Consequently, from Descartes' emphatic call for; "the mind must be most carefully diverted from such things if it is to perceive its own nature as distinctly as possible", he was indicative rather, that a conception about oneself can be understood as a technique, by emptying oneself conceptually from the phenomena and remaining disembodied doubter. Second, Descartes in his phraseology, "I can doubt I have a body" and "the body is not essential to me"<sup>39</sup>, was actually aware as we observed earlier that it is logically inconsistent but given the method for the purpose of careful arrival at the same truth, Descartes methodically uses the "body" to go beyond and try to prove existence beyond and not outside the "body". Therefore, the "body" is actually included in the method. This he did allude to in Part II, Chapter III; "...my design was singly to find ground of assurance, and cast aside the loose earth and sand that I might reach the rock or the clay"<sup>40</sup>In this sense, Cartesian method is as John Cottingham remarks, "not correspondence to actual truth of the matter but a means to arrive at the truth, itself it is not truth"<sup>41</sup>. Similarly, William James as cited by Antonio Damasio, remarks that Descartes' notion of; "clear and distinct", is methodological classification that depend on our temporary purpose with no permanent steadfast purpose that obliges us to be consistent<sup>42</sup>.

From the ongoing presentation, we conclude that Cartesian emphasis on the mind / reason as seated in the brain, and secondly, the usage of the mind / reason to doubt was actually Hellenistic. Even then, Descartes was not in any way substantially breaking from the Hellenistic tradition since the Roman Catholic Church had accepted Hellenism. But more importantly, Descartes was fully aware of the fate of the power and brutality of the church against what it termed, "heresies and heretics" and so, he was only inviting his audience not to take reality around us for granted but be critical through questioning using his new invented technique of "cogito ergo sum".

Picking from this reconstructed logic, we then proceed to offer an alternate reality as argued by Afrikology. The object of this presentation as already referred to, is not a competing discourse against Hellenism as such but rather, a global open ended field building, providing the so called 'subaltern' 'other' a voice and a viewing of reality (which in this sense, is the idea of mind and heart). It is hoped that this 'other' voice will motivate a more open and democratic philosophical space for more inclusion and openness to multiple positions of reality. Second, reinforce and school us on the need for "seeing" and "visualizing" our angling or position of reality not fixated in our dominant subjectivity but dispersed in its multiple forms.

### **Afrikology and its Universe**

The word, "Afrikology" is not ethnic or racial but a validation of a human knowledge of living, an epistemology that reconstructs the centrality of the heart as opposed to the rationality and reason regime. It is "Afri" because it is inspired by what Dani Nabudere calls, "ideas originally produced from the cradle of human kind located in Africa"<sup>43</sup> and so, it is not Afrikology because it is African (although to some extent). It is also "ko (logy)" because it is based on logos, the word from which the world was originated<sup>44</sup>, but at the same time, an episteme, a knowledge and consciousness. Consequently, Afrikology does not strive for superiority but a reclamation and validation of its rightful position. Afrikology seeks to avoid claim to an overarching epistemic superiority, but stand points, namely; plurality of epistemic direction, a methodological theoretical pluralism, an open – ended epistemology. Meaning therefore, knowledge is an interpretation that is always situated within a living tradition and our inescapable historicity or what Tsenay Serequebehan calls, ontic living, situatedness in particular "horizon"<sup>45</sup> of understanding based on the cosmogony and re-negotiation of life and living.

Consequently, the universe of Afrikology is organic, cosmic, religious and human and abhors any form of degradation, simplification and compartmentalizing. This universe has many essential regime types, but for our discussion here, we shall look at the centrality of the Heart, and its constituent parts, Cosmology and Ontology. Accordingly, the section that follows is a discussion on the Heart.

Afrikology and the Heart

O my heart which I had from my mother,  
O my heart which I had upon earth,  
Do not rise up against me as a witness...  
do not speak against me concerning  
what I have done....**The Book of the Coming Forth by Light**

For a long time now, the word "heart" as used here, has been taken leisurely as an emotional concept. Second, "heart" was only an important organ for medical purpose and so was believed to have been the concern of the pioneer medical experts. But far from this, there was already a strong contestation and as Charles Finch III in his book; *Book of the Heart and Vessels* argued, actually, the concept was already in existence some 6000 years (BC)<sup>46</sup> in Egypt. This was not as an organ to be manipulated by the Egyptian doctors, but that the heart (ib, in Egyptian) carried an extremely important role as quoted above and that it is actually the core and seat of life and being. In that case, to the Egyptian, "heart" was not only emotional but ontological and epistemic. For example, it was believed that, "the actions of the arms, the movement of the legs, the motion of every other member was done according to the orders of the heart (my italics) that has conceived them"<sup>47</sup>.

More importantly, ib (heart) was synonymous with "Maat (Egyptian word for morality, truth and justice)", and as a result, a heart not weighed down by sin and corruption was believed to balance and the person would be judged righteous. From these characteristics, the heart was therefore set apart as a standard of cleanliness (purity) and being light (unblemished). Subsequently, in Egyptian tradition, upon death, the heart was to be judged by balancing it with the "Maat" (that was represented by the figure of a feather) for its lightness to see if one's heart was equally light and not burdened by sins and transgressions. If it balanced, namely, the heart being as light as the feather, it meant the person was righteous, while the reverse was also the case. Explicating the centrality of the heart, the Egyptians expounded on the concept of ib and maat in *The Book of the Coming Forth by Light*, commonly known as, *The Book of Death*. It is here that upon one's death; the Grand Ancestor Ausar<sup>48</sup> presided in the Hall of justice<sup>49</sup>, with about 42 jury of judges, each wearing a feather of

truth on his head, with the spirit of the dead allowed to defend itself by reciting the 42 Negative Confessions found in Chapter CXXV of The Book of the Coming Forth by Light (The Book of the Dead)<sup>50</sup>.

The ib or heart believed to form in us from a single drop from the child's mother's heart, was therefore according to the Egyptians, not only the seat of thought, will, emotion, intention<sup>51</sup>, but also, was the seat of justice, morality and truth. Following this, Wim van den Dungen argued accordingly that the Egyptians represented heart inform of a hieroglyph with a mammal symbol to mean; "intelligence, interiority, thought, intentions, disposition, will and mind". At the same time, the heart to Egyptians was likened to a rudder that shows direction and directs the body. The heart is also the seat of "will" and so, one's heart was responsible for what one does<sup>52</sup>. Accordingly, the heart was elaborated using the following epithets, or what Wim Van den Dungen termed as, proverbs or maxims, to indicate the centrality of the heart; heart is weary (to be tired in body and mind), the exactness of heart (the correct, precise information give), heart get big (sense of personhood), control of heart (self-control), little heart (a man of weak cognitive ability), evil on his heart (evil intention), swallowing the heart (to lose sight of reality),(ibid.)<sup>53</sup>.

In the Shabaka Text<sup>54</sup>(Memphite Theology), the heart was of central importance epistemologically. The Egyptians discovered that the heart had a functional system of knowing and communicating, using "words" that named the speech and "tongue" to communicate. As it were, the Shabaka Text (Memphite Theology of Creation) established this in the following passage;

Ptah created the universe with his heart and tongue  
By uttering words and names by the tongue things  
were brought into being.

On the senses, the myth suggests that;

What the eyes see, what the ears hear, are taken to the heart to be pondered  
and then brought forth as being or reality through being uttered by the mouth<sup>55</sup>.

In line 53 of the Shabaka stone (text), we are told that;

There came into being as the heart and there came into being as the tongue...  
through this heart, by which Horus became Ptah and through this tongue  
by which Thoth became Ptah.

The line continues to acclaim this;

...the heart and tongue gained control over members of the body,  
by teaching that Ptah is in everybody...all gods, all men, cattle,  
creeping things and ...that lives.

These are a manifestation of a distinctly Egypto- epistemological frame and interwoven relation between the key realities, namely, the heart as central, the word and the tongue, from which existence and all there are, came into being.

One need to notice that "mind" is conspicuously absent in the discourse and epithet, for the simple reason that it was not important and that it was taken care of in the process. This particular point, namely, the quiet of "mind" and centrality of the heart in Egypto-religious epistemology as opposed to the Hellenistic emphasis on "mind", will be substantially discussed in the next section.

In line 55, we find a similar epistemological emphasis given to the heart and its centrality;

The sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears and the smelling the air  
by the nose, they report to the heart. It is this which causes every completed...  
to come forth, and it is the tongue which announces what the heart thinks.

...all the divine order really came into being through what the heart thought and the tongue commanded<sup>56</sup>.

The idea of “thinking heart” and tongue (horu) is quite fascinating because, we see two significant issues, namely; that the process of thinking is actually located in the heart with the specific attribute to the tongue translated as “utterance” (hw in Egyptian). However, according to the Egyptians, the “word” was not compartmentalized but holistic, structured around “speech” and “tongue” who together, communicated the thought of the heart or what the heart communicates. This process in turn, needed not just “hearing the word” but, “listening to the word”. It is the “listening to the word”, understanding and communicating it, that constitute “logos” in the technical sense.

It is the tongue that communicates what the heart perceives because, knowledge about the universe and humanity is connected with the spoken word, which word is perceived by the eye and passed onto the heart that names the things the eye has perceived and so, passed on as it were to the tongue<sup>57</sup>. In our daily human interaction, we for example laugh with our heart, forgive with and from the heart, we hate with the heart, we sympathize and empathize with the heart. The heart therefore ceases to be a mere concept but an engine that drives human beings. This drive is not only thinking but more importantly, judging; judging thinking, judging conduct, judging knowledge and belief, judging culture and judging a judgment as well. The composite of judgments in effect, points to a more significant direction; the heart directs and critically questions human beings with the purpose not only to become and consolidate knowledge but more importantly, consolidate humanity.

The world besides man is not the world that is not non-human because humans are a composite of it and dependent on, but a world together-with-human beings, a cosmogony that is comprehensively whole. Subsequently, this cosmogony places the heart not only as a preserve of humans but as a shared reality that is present in all that is and at the centre of unity of all that is. So, when a human heart judges, it judges not only human but the world. When it loves, enjoys, forgives, to mention, it is not only human but “worldly” (world sensitive) as well. In that case, ‘human’ heart is only human when it is worldly and inversely, a heart that is not worldly is not human, not animal but simply evil and wrong. In that circumstance, it is not the human who is evil and at the same time, one is not an animal to be animalized or turned into a homo sacer but that, it is a corrective and restorative judgment with the purpose of being restored to human life. Here, the “loss of heart” is a loss of one’s ontology as human and can be restored or corrected only with the corrected and restored heart. That therefore means, the heart is ontologically and cosmologically at the centre subsisting as the very identity. We can represent this when we say; “you are not a human being” to mean, you do not have a heart. This can be repeated of a people, namely, “you are not a people” to mean, the people do not have a heart. The same can be repeated of a political regime and so forth. The section that follows, takes us into an analytical discussion on the subject matter of the heart and its universe. We hope to use the section to explicate certain embedded meanings and cues that were not well represented in the preceding sections.

### **A Meta- narrative of the Heart: Word and the Tongue**

As we have noticed earlier, the heart connects the human person with, the universe and the cosmic order. However, this does not mean, the heart is superior and so vertically placed but, as it were, connects the human person to the entire cosmic universe horizontally, bearing the responsibility and duty to balance human relations and the cosmic universe. It is this responsibility that upon death, one’s heart was to be weighed according to ancient Egyptian cosmogony, through the morality of maat, to discern whether it performed its rightful duty par excellence or not. This process is indicative therefore that the heart is not only a moral seat but also a defining moment of one’s being or non-being as well. Similarly, the morality of maat exposes the heart as the first principle of life and cosmic universe, with the associated relations in the social, economic and the political. In this setting, one needed not good laws, good police, and good army and so on, but a good heart that integrates the human person into the cosmic universe, in keeping with maat principles. Similarly, the heart has two most significant constitutive elements, namely; the “word” and the “tongue”. The word is the content and consciousness of the heart, a vital force that the heart uses to perpetuate presence and being, of reality. The word is therefore the content of the universe and the holistic cosmogony with its moral order and justice as willed by God (who is the originator of reality in its totality) and yet planted in the hearts of every being with the object of conscious attention and perpetuation of the presence of reality. This manifestation is not yet verbal expression but presence in its totality and identity of all, as are and as ordered and justly in a relation. Inversely, if there is no-being then, we have absence. Absence as it were, means the word is not manifest in the realm of being. Consequently, since word is perpetually present, therefore non-being is not there and so, a contradiction in



terms, since word as perpetually and necessarily present, is a manifestation of being, being as corporeal and incorporeal. As a manifestation of presence, word therefore is a disclosure of reality, not in a restricted or scripted sense but dispersed disclosure from each one's heart as freely and as openly and honestly as possible. The role of the heart in the dynamics of disclosure is positive, namely, not coerced uniformity, through the values of maat, namely, truth, justice and equality to allow different perspectives to interact, within the principle of maat. As a result, word is not simply an aberration of being-as-such, that-which-is but, a cosmic living order within the design of maat and a cosmic obligation of perpetual being. A perpetual harmony of "is" and "was"<sup>58</sup> into simultaneous "is-was".

At the same time, the disclosure is an act of the heart exteriorizing reality so that it may be known and so, disclosed in an expressive presence through the tongue and, as such, this expressive disclosure is a heart expression, causing reality to be known through uttering or speech of the word through the function of the tongue (mouth). The tongue is therefore expressive, dialoguing, inter-subjective, to cause understanding. However, the tongue is guided by the heart so that it conforms to the maat, namely, speak the truth, and speak justly and boldly without fear or favour. On this basis, the tongue must not be "two", namely, deceptive and uttering falsehood, but express what the heart commands it to say as truly and honestly as possible in a dialogue, inter-subjective and understanding way. The function of "dialogue", "inter-subjectivity" and "understanding" are attributes of the heart as well and to the ancient Egyptians, it was dynamically built around the Egyptian personality – "Thoth"<sup>59</sup>, who was believed to be god or messenger of the God who would interpret the messages to human persons in a manner that they were to "listen", "hear" and "understand" the word(s) with their hearts and speak it / them correctly and truthfully with their mouth or tongue. However, this meaning was lost and instead, Hellenised and so, Thoth was reconstructed in the Greek tradition of Hermes (Greek god). Thoth was revered in ancient Egypt with a salute; "great", "great", "great" which in admiration by the Greeks, was coined in salutation as "Trismegistus" which in Greek, comes from two words; "Tris" for "thrice" while "megistus" means, "great", and so, "trismegistus" is translated as "thrice great"<sup>60</sup>.

This in itself is not the problem but, the real problem has been, the imposition of the Greek god "Hermes" and so, what was Thoth's role of a messenger and interpreter, turned into 'Hermetism' or "Hermetic", namely, simply the teaching of sacred mysticism or mysteries so that interpretation and understanding became mystic or mysterious. This was also the same meaning conferred when Thoth was reconstructed along the Roman god "mercury" and so, Thoth became the "messenger of the gods"<sup>61</sup>. Accordingly, we seek to follow up this component of Thothism with a view of clarifying on its explication of the heart and its universe – word and tongue.

### **Thothism**

The ancient Egyptian source book, The Kybalion, cites its premier wisdom, namely; "the lips of wisdom are sealed, except to the ears of the understanding"<sup>62</sup>. From here, one sees the whole system of cosmic or "word" through interpretation whose seat is the "heart" and, communicated through the "tongue". Unfortunately, Thothism was utterly altered when it was Hellenised to mean, "hermeneutics" and as such, it became merely Hellenistic academic affair of rationality and science and so, disconnected from the cosmic universe of the "heart", "word" and the "tongue". Let us look through this corruption in more details, within the post-Hellenistic usage of the art of interpretation and understanding now coined as "Hermeneutics" and gained ascendance around the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as a philosophical movement and science as popularised by Friedrich Schleiermacher<sup>63</sup>. As it were, hermeneutics as a subject required rigour, namely, language and thinker, an understanding that was believed to be impossible if one did not think and had no words with which to think<sup>64</sup>. But, Friedrich Schleiermacher however realises the futility of his project and conceded that understanding words is itself toil because one has to learn the grammar of the language, the meaning, use and objectives<sup>65</sup>.

As cited in Julius J. Scott, E.D. Hirsch notes that the crisis is not just the complexity of words or language but that, it is the problem of pretence of thinking that we can arrive at validity and consensus of meaning<sup>66</sup>. While Julius .J. Scott adds that the problem is the attempt to separate the world from that of the

writers<sup>67</sup>, Hans-Georg Gadamer in his work, *Truth and Method*, uses the title sarcastically to bemoan method and science of interpretation and understanding as ineffective<sup>68</sup>. Martin Heidegger consequently argues in the same line using his famous term; “vorstruktur” which means, afore structure of consciousness which one brings with oneself as one approaches a text, while at the same time appreciating the author’s horizon as well<sup>69</sup>. Similarly, Jacques Derrida in, *Violence and Metaphysics* ends up with nihilism, namely, deconstruction that leaves nothing fixed and so, no guide lines to be followed while interpreting or trying to understand<sup>70</sup>.

Accordingly, Shaun Gallagher argues that the Hellenistic hermeneutics as different from Afrikology hermeneutics, exemplified in Thothism has unfortunately been Hellenised. This search for ‘strict’, ‘precise’ and ‘predictable’ understanding as though it is computational epistemology, was misconstrued because human cognition is not designed to work with strict and definitive categories or rule - following or method, but flexible proto-types<sup>71</sup>. Consequently, both the modern and contemporary usage of the reality of ‘interpretation’ and ‘understanding’ as “hermeneutics” is not only flawed but inconsistent with its original ancient Egyptian notion. As a result, our role here is to reconstruct and return the notion of interpretation and understanding to its original state, namely; beyond the Greek god “hermes” to the Egyptian “Thoth”, whom although the Greeks called Trismegistus as a title for being great, great, great, in light of the problem in hermeneutics, it will bring confusion and as such, we want to refrain from the Greek wordings here and simply call him, Thoth as in the Book of Thoth and, the responsibility he held as a messenger and interpreter, as Thothism. Thothism therefore is not science or rationality so akin to Hellenism but, life, living, cosmo-vision, human and the universe expressed by the heart, word and tongue.

Thothism therefore is an interpretation of the messages from God to human kind and the universe but, within the cosmic relation of the heart because the heart is the source of truth and in turn, the heart interprets the word(s) to the tongue to utter to human kind and the universe. This wisdom is manifest from the creation story in which God (Ptah) created the universe with his heart and tongue. By uttering words by the tongue, things were brought into being, while the heart gave the tongue what to say about the beings<sup>72</sup>. This cosmic interpretation and understanding took the form of; “what the eyes see, what the ears hear, are taken to the heart to be pondered and then brought forth as being or reality through being uttered by the mouth (tongue)”. It is however important to note here as pointed in the Maxims of Ptahhotep (2200 BC) that, the heart was not scripting, linear and rigid but, expressed inter-subjectivity (expressions), internality externalized and, consciousness<sup>73</sup>. In its full title; the Ptahhotep’s Maxims of Good Discourse, the concept, “discourse” is here expressive of verbal thought, while, “maxim” from the Egyptian word “tjes” also means “speech” or “utterance”<sup>74</sup>. The concept “good” in Egyptian word is “nefer” which means, “fine quality”, “happiness” or “happy of condition”<sup>75</sup>. Consequently, the Maxim of Good Discourse may therefore mean; a discourse that produces happiness. This means that, a “speech” should produce good life or happiness. The idea of “good life” is therefore a moral concept and as such, good speech is good morality and inversely, bad speech is bad morality. In brief, the maxim therefore typifies maat and consequently, the expression is itself morality. The keen hearing and listening is therefore itself not just philosophy but “Saboyet” (the Egyptian word for wisdom), with the theoretical wisdom being knowledge and truth while, practical wisdom is; justice, rectitude and perfection<sup>76</sup>.

### III. CONCLUSION

By and large, as set in the thesis, we argued for establishing the metaphysical and epistemological problem space of Hellenistic rationality. Consequently, we constituted new sets of demand for appreciating these, by juxtaposing two universes – Hellenism and Afrikology. But as we set about doing just that, we reshuffled the canonical feelings towards rationality and offered an angling upon which rationality becomes a field of debate and faulted, in favour of the African metaphysics and epistemology of Afrikology, established in its core value of the heart. From a stand point of Afrikology, we argued that the mentality of the “mind” and “rationality” are ontologically limited to the substance. It has no worldly essentially in its characteristics but, ergo sum, the “I am”, with the ergo sum, the “I am” no longer extensive and non-horizontal but vertical, exalting itself as a thinking thing, not necessarily as a corporeal or human being but for as long as it so function as a

---

thinking thing. Thinking becomes therefore a thing and no longer human and as such, a machine that is as well mechanisable. The alternate offer of Afrikology and specifically, the heart and its universe, was to adumbrate a positive human engagement and relations within themselves and also with the cosmogony.

We argued in general that, Hellenism is not inferior as such but that it is only one aspect of angling reality. Through the metaphysical and epistemological fault lines, we objected to the imposition of Hellenism as “the science” whose subjectivity ought to be dominant to the point of universalising itself as “dominant subjectivity”. This objection is not however, to trivialise Hellenism, this we have mentioned severally but, to offer a new space in which reality is allowed to reveal itself in the multiple spaces as they are without an overriding colonial epistemology of naming and understanding the reality. It is at this point that we argue that, by appreciating these multiple spaces and positions of reality, is the beginning of a true global field building of reality.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This part of the title is adopted from Markus Cromhout , A Clash of Symbolic Universes: Judeanism vs Hellenism (HTS, Vol. 63, No.3, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Markus Cromhout , A Clash of Symbolic Universes: Judeanism vs Hellenism (HTS, Vol. 63, No.3, 2007), 109.

<sup>4</sup> Efterpi Mitsi and Amy Muse, Some Thought on the Trails and Travails of Hellenism and Orientalism: An Interview with Gonda Van Steen. Accessed June 27, 2015.

<http://www.synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/>

[fileadmin/synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/uploads/Issue5/9.Van\\_interview.pdf](fileadmin/synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/uploads/Issue5/9.Van_interview.pdf), 2013, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Long A.A. Long, From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy. (Oxford: Oxford University Press,2006), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Malcolm Schofield, et al.,The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy, Cambridge Histories Online. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xii.

<sup>7</sup> Cromhout, A Clash of Symbolic Universes,Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Adolf Deissman, The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays, Vol. 39, No. 59 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Carastathis, Is Hellenism an Orientalism ? Reflections on the Boundaries of ‘ Europe’ in an Age of Austerity. Critical Race and Whiteness Studies, Vol. 10, No.1(2014), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Deissman, The Language of the New Testament, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>14</sup> Efterpi and Muse, Some Thought on the Trails and Travails of Hellenism and Orientalism: An Interview with Gonda Van Steen, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, The Contemporary Ugandan Discourse on Customary Tenure: Some Theoretical Considerations. Makerere Institute of Social Research. Working Paper No.13. (Kampala: Makerere University, 2013), 87.

<sup>18</sup> David Scott, Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Memphite Theology ( Shabaka Text).

<sup>21</sup> David Bradshaw, The Mind and the Heart in the Christian East and West, Faith and Philosophy. Science and Human Nature Volume 26, Issue 5 (2009).

<sup>22</sup> Win Van den Dungen, Ancient Egyptian Roots of the Principia Hermetica, accessed June27, 2015.

[http://www.maat.sofiatopia.org/ten\\_keys.htm](http://www.maat.sofiatopia.org/ten_keys.htm)

<sup>23</sup> Bradshaw, The Mind and the Heart in the Christian East and West, Faith and Philosophy. Science and Human Nature, 23.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Dungen Wim Van den, Intelligent Wisdom: Reflections on the Cognitive Continuum from Myth to Non-dual Thought(Antwerp, 2012), 7.

- <sup>27</sup> Rene Descartes, Discourse on the Method. Part III, Chapter III. (usa: Start Publishing, 2012), 19.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> John Cottingham, Cartesian Dualism: Theology, Metaphysics and Science. Cambridge Companions Online (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 243.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> Rene Descartes, Discourse on the Method. (USA: Start Publishing, 2012), 12.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 13.
- <sup>33</sup> Ian Hacking, The Cartesian Vision fulfilled: Analogue Bodies and Digital Minds. Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, Interdisciplinary Science Reviews Volume 30, Number 2 ( Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, Paris: Maney, 2005), 165.
- <sup>34</sup> Paul Redding, Feeling, Thought and Orientation: William James and the Idealist Anti-Cartesian Tradition (PARRHESIA, 2011), 41.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Cottingham, Cartesian Dualism: Theology, Metaphysics and Science, 248.
- <sup>39</sup> Dani Wadada Nabudere “Towards an Afrokology of Knowledge Production and African Regeneration”, International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Trans- Disciplinarity Vol. 1, Issue 1. (2006): 17, accessed June 21,2015, doi: 10.1080/18186870608529704.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., 19.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Patrick Tabaro, Blacks Gave Science to Europe (African Heritage Series: Two, 2011).
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Ausar was believed to be god Osiris.
- <sup>45</sup> This Hall is in contemporary times called the Temple of Justice, Ministry of Justice or Courts.
- <sup>46</sup> The detailed discussion is forthcoming in a separate article.
- <sup>47</sup> The Egyptian tradition of burying the dead is such that, the dead’s brain was considered non- essential and so, a long spoon would be used to scoop the brain out, but the heart as the seat of life and intentions, was carefully protected.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> Pharaoh Shabaka (Re) was believed to be the son of or the father was Ptah-Tatenem and ruled around 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty around 716 – 702 BC.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> Nabudere, Towards an Afrokology of Knowledge Production and African Regeneration, 19.
- <sup>54</sup> Win Van den Dungen, “Ancient Egyptian Roots of the Principia Hermetica”, last modified 02 December, 2010 [http://maat.sofiatopia.org/ten\\_keys.htm](http://maat.sofiatopia.org/ten_keys.htm).
- <sup>55</sup> Julius J. Scott, Jr., “Some Problems in Hermeneutics for Contemporary Evangelical”, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol. 22, No.1. (1979): 48.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>57</sup> Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy, The Hermetica: The Lost Wisdom of the Pharaohs (London: Tarcher Publishing, 2008), 21.
- <sup>58</sup> Micheal N. Forster, Hermeneutics: The Oxford Hand Book of Continental Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 17.
- <sup>59</sup> Dani Wadada Nabudere, Afrikology and Transdisciplinarity: A Restorative Epistemology. ( Africa Institute of South Africa, 2012), 15.
- <sup>60</sup> Romualdo E. Abulad, “What is Hermeneutics?” Kritike, Vol. 1, No.2 (2007), 16.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup> Scott, Jr., “Some Problems in Hermeneutics for Contemporary Evangelical”, ibid.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> Georg Hans Gadamer, Truth and Method (London: Seabury Press, 1975), 305.
- <sup>65</sup> Abulad, “What is Hermeneutics?”, 18.
- <sup>66</sup> Jacques Derrida, Violence and Metaphysics. In, Claire Elise and Lara Trout ( New York: Routledge, 2005), 48.

<sup>67</sup> Shaun Gallagher, "Hermeneutics and the Cognitive Sciences", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, II, No. 10 – 11(2011): 6 – 7.

<sup>68</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Translated by Weinsheimer Joel and Marshall Donald. (New York: Continuum, 2006), xx-xxi.

<sup>69</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1094a).

<sup>70</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Understanding of Other Persons and Their Life Expressions".

Translated by J.J. Kuehl. In, *Theories of History: Readings in Classical and Contemporary Sources*, Patrick Gardine. (New York: Free Press, 1959, 1927), 213-225.

<sup>71</sup> Mirjam Lichtheim, "Ancient Egyptian Literature", Volume 1, 4-6. Accessed June 30, 2015.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/92106494/Lichtheim-Miriam-Ancient-Egyptian-Literature-Volume-1-The-Old-and-Middle-Kingdoms>.

<sup>72</sup> Wim Van den Dungen, *Intelligent Wisdom: Reflections on the Cognitive Continuum from Myth to Non-dual Thought*, Antwerp, 2012, 7. Accessed June 28, 2015.

[http://sofiatopia.org/equiaeon/intelligent\\_wisdom.htm](http://sofiatopia.org/equiaeon/intelligent_wisdom.htm).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Francis Ogunmodede, "On the Historical Evolution of Schools in African Philosophy", *Journal of African Philosophy and Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006), 88. Accessed 12 June, 2015.

<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jpc/article/viewFile/36453/25453>.

<sup>76</sup> Lampert Jay, "Teaching Ancient Egyptian Philosophy), 95.1 (1995). Accessed 25 June, 2015.

<http://www.phillwebb.net/regions/Africa/ZTeachingAncientEgyptianPhilosophy.htm>

<sup>77</sup> For more discussion on the subject of substance, read Severinus Anicius Manlius Boethius. Moorhead, "Boethius' life and the world of late antique philosophy". In, *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, edited by John Marenbon (Cambridge: University Press, 2009), 29.

Archange Byaruhanga Rukooko. "Symbolic Universes of Hellenism And Afrikology: Metonyms And Search for Global Epistemological Field Building." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 22.8 (2017): 61-73.