



# Reappraising the Reincarnation Debate in an African Culture: A Conceptual Clarification



Akinpelu A. Oyekunle<sup>1</sup>  & Ezekiel S.N. Mkhwanazi<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Philosophy, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.

## ABSTRACT

This paper re-examines the reincarnation debate within the African cultural context, with a focus on the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria and the Nguni people of Southern Africa. The reincarnation debate has generated the query that the term/concept 'reincarnation' does not describe or capture African socio-cultural thinking and belief about the interrelationship between the living and the dead. Alternative terms that align with African intellectual heritage and cultural practices have emerged because of this query, while critiques have been advanced against the alternative terms' arguments. Thus, the reappraisal of the reincarnation debate becomes necessary to provide analytical justification for the proposed alternative terms for the phenomenon of reincarnation within the African socio-cultural ecosystem. Adopting an expository and analytic method of philosophising, this paper calls for a conceptual clarification of what reincarnation could mean in the African context. This paper argued that the phenomenon of reincarnation explains one of the ways Africans promote family solidarity and unbroken inter-generational unity in the cycle of existence. As such, the African conception of reincarnation encapsulates a philosophical explanation of the perpetuation of the family of the past on a cyclic continuum involving present and future generations. The study concludes by emphasising the importance of reconceptualising reincarnation within the African conceptual framework to ensure the logical and intelligible representation of African intellectual heritage and identity, particularly considering the global epistemicide of local knowledge systems.

### Correspondence

Akinpelu A. Oyekunle  
Email:  
aaoyekunle21@gmail.com

### Publication History

Received:  
21<sup>st</sup> September, 2024  
Accepted:  
4<sup>th</sup> December, 2024  
Published online:  
24<sup>th</sup> December, 2024

*Keywords: Reincarnation, Yoruba, Nguni, Cultural Heritage, Conceptual Frameworks*

## INTRODUCTION

The belief that the human soul, or life-giving principle, is immaterial, immortal, and can occupy another body after death to continue living is held in many civilisations. This idea requires the understanding of a human being as a mix of material (body) and immaterial (soul) elements, and of death as the annihilation of the former. Many expressions have been used to describe the soul returning to a new material body in a "future post-humus life".<sup>1</sup> Metempsychosis describes a soul's continuing existence in sequential transitions from one body to another. Transmigration, on the other hand, describes the movement or passing of a soul from one body to another and from one life form to another. The third term, Metempsychosis, refers to the soul's release from the dead body into a new body of the same or different

<sup>1</sup> Hasskei Majeed and Mogobe Ramose, "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation," *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 8, no. 2 (September 27, 2019): 139–58, <https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v8i2.10>.

species through a cycle called 'incarnation.' Scholars and enthusiasts of various cultures have used these terms to imagine the continuous return of life in a certain form and pattern. A term that has, however, been commonly employed across many cultures for these bodily metamorphoses by the soul is 'Reincarnation'.

This paper is aimed at eliciting a conceptual appraisal of the term reincarnation from the African context by interrogating the reincarnation debate' within the African thought processes. This is done against the various backgrounds of the term from other cultural perspectives, particularly the Western and Asian perspectives. The paper seeks to show that ideas exemplifying incidents and the reality of a phenomenon describable as reincarnation exist in African ontological discourses. It queries blind and uncritical appropriation of the ideation of the term from the Western or Eastern prism by Africans, as such an appropriation will distort and misrepresent the meaning of the idea in the African context. The study noted that this query did culminate into the advancement of alternative terms that are argued to be fitting with African intellectual heritage and cultural practices regarding the idea of 'reincarnation'.<sup>2</sup> However, arguments for the alternative terms have also come under various critiques.<sup>3</sup> These criticisms, as argued by Ada Agada encapsulate the "losing struggles" of justifying the alternative terms or concepts.<sup>4</sup> Hence, this critical reappraisal of the reincarnation debate from an African parlance.

The paper begins with a summary of African reincarnation works, then discusses reincarnation and soul immortality, using Yoruba and Nguni cosmology to clarify the terms. The next section examines the African cultural system's conceptual frameworks (CF) for intellectual criteria. The aim of enunciating the conceptual framework within which thoughts on reincarnation hinge, is to reveal the logical and ontological intelligibility of such thoughts. The article then reexamines the reincarnation question by critically examining how African civilisations rationalise the idea of reincarnation. Oriki, – 'oral praise-poetry', and rara-sisun, – 'funeral chants' of the bereaved indicate a relational connection between the living and the deceased loved ones. The article further explores the Nguni notion of ukubuyisa (bringing home the dead) and its similarities and differences with Western and Eastern 'reincarnation'. In the conclusion, the paper justifies the conceptual definition of an African view of reincarnation.

### Attempts at the Philosophical Construal of the Term 'Reincarnation'

Various attempts at engaging in a philosophical exposition of the idea of reincarnation include that of Idowu, Onyewuenyi, Ekwunife, Oluwole, Almeder, Hales, Chukwuelobe, Majeed, Majeed and Ramose, Edet, Ojimba and Agada, to mention but a few.<sup>5</sup> Almeder and Hales discuss the empirical presentation

<sup>2</sup> M.A. Izibili, "Reincarnation 'Iroso' in Esan: A Myth or Reality," *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 6, no. 2 (December 3, 2008): 105–9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2008.11886583>; O. T. Òkèwándé and A. K. Adébáyò, "Investigating African Belief in the Concept of Reincarnation: The Case of Ifá and Ayò Olópón. Symbolism among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria," *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta Vostokovedenie i Afrikanistika* 13, no. 2 (2021): 267–81, <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu13.2021.209>; Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, *African Belief in Reincarnation: A Philosophical Reappraisal* (Enugu: Snaap Press, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Ada Agada, "Exploring the Question of Reincarnation in African Philosophy within Intracultural and Intercultural Contexts," *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 7, no. 1 (2018): 141–48; Mesembe. Edet, "Innocent Onyewuenyi's 'Philosophical Re-Appraisal of the African Belief in Reincarnation': A Conversational Study," *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 5, no. 1 (2016): 75–99, <https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v5i1.6>; Hasskei Majeed, *Reincarnation: A Question in the African Philosophy of Mind* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Agada, "Exploring the Question of Reincarnation in African Philosophy within Intracultural and Intercultural Contexts."

<sup>5</sup> Bolaji E. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longmans, 1962); Onyewuenyi, *African Belief in Reincarnation: A Philosophical Reappraisal*; Sophie. B. Oluwole, *Philosophy and Oral Tradition* (Lagos: Ark Publishers, 1AD); Robert. Almeder, "On Reincarnation: A Reply to Hales," *Philosophical Quarterly of Israel* 28, no. 1–4 (2001): 247–358; Stephen. D. Hales, "Reincarnation Redux," *Philosophia, Philosophical Quarterly of Israel* 28, no. 1–4 (2001): 359–67; Matthew. Chukwuelobe, "Eternal Return and IloUwa – Nietzsche and Igbo African Thought: Implications for Cross Cultural Philosophizing," *Philosophy Today*, 2012, 39–48; Hasskei Mohammed Majeed, "An Examination of the Concept of Reincarnation in African" (University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2012); Majeed, *Reincarnation: A Question in the African Philosophy of Mind*; Hasskei M Majeed, "An Analysis of Kwame Gyekye's Conception of 'Sunsum' in Akan Philosophy," *Ghana Journal of Religion and Theology* 7 (2017): 137–49; Mogobe Ramose and Hasskei Majeed, "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation," *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 8, no. 2 (2019): 139–58; Edet, "Innocent Onyewuenyi's 'Philosophical Re-Appraisal of the African Belief in Reincarnation': A Conversational Study"; Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba and Ada Agada, "Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence and the Notions of Reincarnation in Onyewuenyi and Majeed," *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 9, no. 2 (October 27, 2020): 35–56, <https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v9i2.3>; Kolawole A. Olu-Owolabi, "Constitutionalism and Political Order: Visions and Tensions in Anyiam-Osigwe's Quest for a Philosophy of Socio-Political Order in Nigeria," in *The Development Philosophy of Emmanuel Onyechere Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe: Enhancement of Socio-Political Existence and Order*, ed. Adebola B. Oladipo Olusegun and Ekanola, 2nd ed. (Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2009), 166–82; Sophie. B. Oluwole, "Reincarnation: An Issue in African Philosophy," in *Witchcrafts, Reincarnation and the God-Head* (Lagos: Excel Publishers, 1992), 39–56.

of reincarnation, while Ekwunife, Oluwole, Chukwuelobe, Edet, Majeed, and Majeed and Ramose discuss its hermeneutical and religious aspects.<sup>6</sup> However, Agada and Ojimba and Agada performed Western-African cross-cultural research on the soul returning to a new body after death.<sup>7</sup> Ojimba and Agada compared Friedrich Nietzsche's perpetual recurrence, to Onyewuenyi and Majeed's conceptions of reincarnation to provide a basis for cross-cultural reincarnation philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

Reincarnation and rebirth have been studied from the African perspective, but we believe there are more subtleties that have been overlooked. This paper will reexamine the reincarnation argument by analysing it in an African cultural framework. Western and Southern African conceptual frameworks will be examined to understand African intellectual and rational reasoning. Some socio-cultural practices of the Yorubas of western Africa and the Ngunis of Southern Africa on death and burial customs will be emphasised to indicate how the African ideation of reincarnation may not be the same as the perspectives from the Western and Asian cultures.

### **A Conceptual Overview of Reincarnation: Immortality vis-à-vis reincarnation**

Reincarnation comes from the Latin words *re* for 'back', 'back from', and 'back to the original place' and *incarnatus* for 'made flesh' or 'to make flesh'. Thus, *re-incarnatus* means 'to be made flesh again' or 'back to the flesh'. Reincarnation is based on the premise that the soul of a person survives death and decomposition. Many cultures, including Eastern, Western, and African, hold this concept. The soul can occupy another's body after death for these people, indicating the return to physical existence. According to the Macmillan Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, "reincarnation is the postulated rebirth of the human soul in another form after bodily death."<sup>9</sup>

Although many cultures believe in reincarnation, they, however, hold diverse views about the manner in which reincarnation takes place. To cover all these perspectives is beyond the scope of this article. Reincarnation is a belief or idea that would be discussed in detail without trying to represent all potential viewpoints. According to Sophie Oluwole, "Philosophical and religious beliefs regarding the existence or non-existence of an unchanging self, have a direct bearing on how reincarnation is viewed within a given sociocultural setting."<sup>10</sup> Thus, holding that the immaterial soul's immortality complements rebirth is not self-contradictory. In other words, reincarnation testifies to the immortality of the human soul.

According to Majeed and Ramose, reincarnation advocates belief in the 'reality' of an immortal, immaterial soul.<sup>11</sup> This is because the immaterial soul survives death and is essential to identifying humans and reincarnates. Reincarnation is a belief in the rebirth of a dead person. While the veracity or logical viability of such representations as explored by Almeder, Hales, Majeed, and Majeed and Ramose is not the focus of this paper, it is worth noting that reincarnation as a re-presentation (making present again) of the dead person in a newly reborn body would improve understanding of reincarnation, especially from Yoruba and Nguni perspectives.<sup>12</sup> In Yoruba cosmology, the immaterial soul emanates from Olodumare (God) – the supreme being, and is essentially spirit and hence immutable. Thus, the

<sup>6</sup> Almeder, "On Reincarnation: A Reply to Hales"; Hales, "Reincarnation Redux"; Olu-Owolabi, "Constitutionalism and Political Order: Visions and Tensions in Anyiam-Osigwe's Quest for a Philosophy of Socio-Political Order in Nigeria"; Oluwole, "Reincarnation: An Issue in African Philosophy"; Chukwuelobe, "Eternal Return and IloUwa – Nietzsche and Igbo African Thought: Implications for Cross Cultural Philosophizing"; Edet, "Innocent Onyewuenyi's 'Philosophical Re-Appraisal of the African Belief in Reincarnation': A Conversational Study"; Majeed, "An Examination of the Concept of Reincarnation in African"; Ramose and Majeed, "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation."

<sup>7</sup> Ada Agada, "Existence and Consolation: Reinventing Ontology, Gnosis, and Values in African Philosophy," 2015; Ojimba and Agada, "Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence and the Notions of Reincarnation in Onyewuenyi and Majeed."

<sup>8</sup> Ojimba and Agada, "Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence and the Notions of Reincarnation in Onyewuenyi and Majeed"; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1990); Onyewuenyi, *African Belief in Reincarnation: A Philosophical Reappraisal*; Majeed, "An Analysis of Kwame Gyekye's Conception of 'Sunsum' in Akan Philosophy"; Hasskei M. Majeed, "An Examination of the Concept of Reincarnation in African Philosophy" (University of South Africa, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Donald M. P M Borchert, "Encyclopedia of Philosophy," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Macmillan Reference, Gale, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Oluwole, "Reincarnation: An Issue in African Philosophy"; Oluwole, *Philosophy and Oral Tradition*.

<sup>11</sup> Ramose and Majeed, "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation."

<sup>12</sup> Almeder, "On Reincarnation: A Reply to Hales"; Hales, "Reincarnation Redux"; Ramose and Majeed, "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation."

immaterial soul is seen as the archetype or form of the dead, who in the Yoruba ontological hierarchy becomes the living dead or an ancestral spirit.<sup>13</sup>

Immortality denotes eternal life. It points to human survival after the body dies. Thus, human essence—the 'life-giving energy' or 'life-giving force'—survives death. Izibili states that "immortality is sometimes interpreted to mean that the identity, consciousness, and memory of the individual persists even after death".<sup>14</sup> Thus, immortality and rebirth go together. Both immortality and reincarnation, which represent the persistence of human life beyond death, make the concept of survival after death understandable.<sup>15</sup> Their pragmatic agreement is that the soul remains immaterial to ensure immortality. The soul and forms are flawless, indestructible, and unchanging for Plato. This causes the soul to rest with other souls after death. Reincarnation differs from immortality in that the deceased returns to physical life, either as an animate or inanimate body with respect to different cultural contexts. Reincarnation could thus be considered as a physical representation of immortality. This explains why Western reincarnation doesn't fit the African worldview. All races believe the soul is immortal, although their representationalism in the physical world differs.

There are two schools of thought on reincarnation based on the typology of the body the reincarnated soul inhabits upon its return. One theory claims that humans cannot follow metempsychosis, where the soul reincarnates as animals, plants, or other inanimate objects. At its "come back," the soul can only occupy another human body, according to this theory. Another theory suggests that humans reincarnate as animals or inanimate objects if they are punished for past misdeeds and immoral conduct.<sup>16</sup> Both theories center on soul transmigration, where the spirit changes bodies after death. These two schools agree that the soul survives death.

### Life After Death in African Culture

This study will demonstrate the strong belief in life after death among the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria, West Africa, and the Nguni people of South Africa. To the Africans, death is seen merely as the physical end of humans on earth.

#### *The Yoruba people*

Among the Yoruba people there is communal saying that *awaiyemaku kan kosi, iku lopin eda* (death marks the end of humans on earth no mortal human can escape death). To the Yoruba people, life after death means the existence of an individual in an incorporeal, yet real form in a life beyond. Thus, the sayings *aiye loja, orun nile*; (the earth/world is a figurative marketplace and heaven is home). This is seen in the idea of 'Ehin-Iwa' It is strongly held as a belief that there is an undeterminable continuity of existence after death. As such, death is only a transition from the physical world to the 'world beyond' in the scheme of existence. For the Yoruba-speaking people, the dead live on and continue to serve as a guide to the living. To this end, the aged deceased are often said to become the living-dead, and are believed to become guiding ancestors. In other words, at death, the dead automatically become the guiding spirit of the family in their life affairs, traditional ethics, and other activities. It should be noted here that the Yoruba people's belief in life after death is a genus of the general African belief on the same issue and that it all hinges on the belief in the unitary nature of life.

These reinforce the idea that a people's culture reflects its ideas and mores in religion, arts and crafts, attire, music, occupation, customs, tradition, etc. When a person dies in Yoruba culture, the soul, which is believed to vivify the body, leaves the body and goes to exist independently, and because of its indestructible and immortal nature, it seeks another body to live in. According to Yoruba cosmology, the dead leave the physical world to live in the spirit world. Hence the idea that *Baba rele*, or *Iya rele* – Baba

<sup>13</sup> Majeed, *Reincarnation: A Question in the African Philosophy of Mind*.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Aziegbemhin. Izibili, "Reincarnation 'Iroso' in Esan: A Myth or Reality," *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 6, no. 2 (2008): 105–9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2008.11886583>.

<sup>15</sup> Òkèwándé and Adébáyò, "Investigating African Belief in the Concept of Reincarnation: The Case of Ifá and Ayò Qlópón. Symbolism among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria."

<sup>16</sup> C Kindree, "Claims of Physical Evidence of Reincarnation," 10AD, <https://listverse.com/2014/12/30/10-claims-of-physical-evidence-for-reincarnation.>; Òkèwándé and Adébáyò, "Investigating African Belief in the Concept of Reincarnation: The Case of Ifá and Ayò Qlópón. Symbolism among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria"; Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn, *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

has gone home, or Mama has gone home, as the case may be. This explains the strong adherence of the Yorubas to the belief in a metaphysical existence. That is, all the dead go to the spirit world to live as clan or race ancestors. In this sense, Yoruba people view the dead as living dead or ancestors who exist in an incorporeal, actual life beyond the physical world. This theory supports the idea that are always influential in the daily lives of the living.

Reincarnation must be distinguished from Yoruba beliefs as expressed in the ideas of *abiku* and *akudaya*. The former describes the "spiristic-child" ontology. That includes youngsters who died physically before birth, infancy, toddlerhood, childhood, or before their prime. According to Yoruba belief, such children can live in both worlds, namely the spiritual and physical worlds and are referred to as *abiku* 'those who die to be born again, and again, and again'. The *abiku* reappears again and again because it essentially metamorphoses into a snake which will appear to the mother of the deceased child who will then be frightened and call for help to kill the snake, not knowing that it is the 'spirit-child'. After being killed the *abiku* will re-appear to show that it defies death. *Akudaya*, on the other hand, is the notion that people who die by human machinations or accidents sometimes live again in another area of the globe until they can complete the natural term of their existence. This delineation highlights African and Yoruba disdain for untimely death and the classification of ancestors after death.<sup>17</sup> The delineation also supported Yoruba belief in the existence and participation of gods or the spirit world in human life as shown by the appearance and reappearance of the spirit-child (*abiku*) and the rebirth of those whose life was cut untimely (*akudaya*). This clearly shows that the Yoruba view of reincarnation differs greatly from Western and Eastern views as in the Yoruba's ontology there is the co-existence of the terrestrial and the celestial worlds.

### ***The Nguni people of South Africa***

The idea of reincarnation can be extrapolated from one of the rituals that are undertaken to mark the end of mourning a deceased family member among the Zulu-speaking people of South Africa. Zulu speakers are Nguni subgroups of Southern African Bantu speakers. The Zulu word *Ukubuyisa* means 'carrying a departed person home,' although it should not be interpreted as taking the corpse from the gravesite back home. The ritual has a metaphysical significance. A deceased person being brought home is believed to be 'alive' and in proximity to play a guardianship role to his or her terrestrial family. This rite indicates a Zulu-speaking people's belief in human immortality.<sup>18</sup> The ritual normally occurs a year or two following a family member's burial.<sup>19</sup>

The ritual serves two purposes. First, the practice helps the deceased sleep peacefully. It is believed the departed must go through the dry ground to reach the land of the living dead (ancestors), making the journey difficult.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the family must brew beer for the departed. The dead cannot return home before entering the afterlife. Before reaching the ancestral world, he cannot sleep well, hence the importance of the ritual. The Karanga people of Zimbabwe also perform this ceremony. They believe this practice cools the deceased's spirit, so he doesn't harm the living.<sup>21</sup> The Tswana and Sotho-speaking South Africans also practice this ritual for their dead. The practice is called *matshediso*, meaning aiding the dead pass over into the land of the ancestors.<sup>22</sup> The deceased is said to be returning to their ancestral country. Thus, the surviving family members must benefit from helping the deceased cross over into the ancestral world.

Secondly, the rite returns the deceased to his home. A ritual named *Ukubuyisa* fits this description. This ritual brings the departed back to his or her physical family. The dead are represented in

<sup>17</sup> Kehinde Oṣanyinbí, Oḷádótun B., Falana, "An Evaluation of the Akurẹ̀ Yorùbá Traditional Belief in Reincarnation," *Open Journal of Philosophy* 6 (2016): 59–67, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2016.61007>.

<sup>18</sup> Hans Haselbarth, *Christian Ethics in the African Context* (Ibadan: Daystar Press., 1976).

<sup>19</sup> Eileen Jensen Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* ( Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1950).

<sup>20</sup> Edison Mhaka, "Rituals and Taboos Related to Death as Repositories of Traditional African Philosophical Ideas: Evidence from the Karanga of Zimbabwe," *Academic Research International* 5, no. 4 (2014): 371–85.

<sup>21</sup> Mhaka, "Rituals and Taboos Related to Death as Repositories of Traditional African Philosophical Ideas: Evidence from the Karanga of Zimbabwe."

<sup>22</sup> Fortunate M. Phaka et al., "Barcoding and Traditional Health Practitioner Perspectives Are Informative to Monitor and Conserve Frogs and Reptiles Traded for Traditional Medicine in Urban South Africa," *Molecular Ecology Resources*, October 16, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1755-0998.13873>.

phenomenological parlance. The deceased returns home (to the terrestrial world) after reversing his disappearance (death).<sup>23</sup> The ritual was practiced more often for prominent leaders. Example: kraal head or king. Krige defines such persons as those "who will look after the whole village in death as in life".<sup>24</sup> This ceremony finally integrates the departed into the ancestors, and the deceased's name is eventually mentioned by the ancestors after his or her death, and the name of the deceased is finally included in the praises of the ancestors for the first time after his or her death.

How is this rite performed? Three main physical activities are done. The ritual starts with an animal slaughter. It may be a cow, sheep, or goat, depending on the deceased's socioeconomic rank.<sup>25</sup> Second, an elderly male family member drags a tree limb from the deceased's burial to his homestead. While dragging the branch, the family elder praises and invites the departed to return to his homestead to care for his family.<sup>26</sup> Thirdly, the gall of the sacrificed animal is poured over the deceased's sons to summon his spirit. Gall is said to attract those living in the spiritual world, therefore anyone doused with gall attracts them.<sup>27</sup>

The *Ukubuyisa* ceremony is accomplished when the bereaved dreams of the departed as a snake basking on his or her grave.<sup>28</sup> However, if the departed appears as a wandering shade (*isiThunzi*) that causes the grieving more sorrow and trouble, this indicates that the deceased has not yet 'crossed over' and is not yet home in his homestead.<sup>29</sup> In this case, the *Ukubuyisa* ceremony may need to be repeated. The *Ukubuyisa* ceremony is important for the deceased's family because it reintegrates them into the community of the living. The ceremony allows a reintegration of the deceased who becomes present to his family and community of the living in an invisible spiritual, and yet real way. Thus, a deceased who returns in this way may be said to have reincarnated. Reincarnated people have more power and life force than existing humans. Their family members are thought to have a greater way of being which makes them more useful to the family and community. According to Krige, "The *Ukubuyisa* ceremony secures the blessings and help of the deceased for the whole lineage."<sup>30</sup>

The four concepts examined above, namely, 'abiku' and 'akudaya' from the Yoruba conceptual scheme, and the 'ukubuyisa' and 'matshediso' from the Zulu and Sotho cultural practices, respectively, point to the existence of the idea of re-appearance and re-presentation (making present again) of the deceased person back to the terrestrial world. However, the form in which this re-appearance takes place may differ from culture to culture. In western and Asian perspectives re-appearance of the deceased is understood to be a 'reincarnation' of sort.

### **Basic African Principles/Assumption and Conceptual Frameworks for Intellectual Criterion**

Conceptual frameworks (CFs) drive the intellectual trajectories of respective cultures, which promote different philosophical traditions. CFs make the culture's mental process reasonable, systematic, and understandable. According to Jonathan Chimakonam and Uchenna Ogbonnaya, "theories in different philosophical traditions are distinguished by their background logic and methodological dispositions."<sup>31</sup> In other words, conceptual frameworks drive the creation of ideas.<sup>32</sup> Thus, understanding a culture's knowledge generation and transmission requires evaluating its intellectual thought processes' CFs. Such an evaluation could justify the concept appropriation context for clearer term use in that culture.

However, a culture's conceptual frameworks are based on underlying assumptions that shape its people's thinking. Every culture has a basic assumption for designing conceptual frameworks for intellectual thought. Thus, the underlying premise determines a culture's rational, systematic process. The received or provided belief system that underpins cultural concept development is the essential

<sup>23</sup> Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

<sup>24</sup> Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

<sup>25</sup> Hans Haselbarth, "A Christian Approach to the Bringing Home of the Dead," *Umpumulo*, 1968.

<sup>26</sup> Haselbarth, "A Christian Approach to the Bringing Home of the Dead."

<sup>27</sup> O. Raum, "Funeral Rites in the African Pagan Society," *Umpumulo*, 1968.

<sup>28</sup> Raum, "Funeral Rites in the African Pagan Society."

<sup>29</sup> Raum, "Funeral Rites in the African Pagan Society."

<sup>30</sup> Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

<sup>31</sup> Jonathan O. and Chimakonam and L Uchenna. Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology, and a New Logic: A Decolonial Approach to Philosophy* (Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

<sup>32</sup> A. Akinpelu Oyekunle, "An Exploration of an Indigenous African Epistemic Order: In Search of a Contemporary African Environmental Philosophy" (University of South Africa, 2021).

assumption for cultural, and intellectual position.<sup>33</sup> There are many ways to navigate the culture's concept creation system, but they all follow the principle of idea construction in consistency with the basic assumption. Thus, a culture may have several conceptual frameworks for intellectual inquiry. Basic assumptions in the culture's intellectual stance cause CFS.

Understanding how knowledge and logic are defined and accommodated in a particular cultural setting requires identifying the basic assumption of an African conceptual framework, which holds African ideas, beliefs, principles, and views together in a rational and intellectually sound continuum.<sup>34</sup> This is because different philosophical traditions create diverse conceptual frameworks. However, CFs that demonstrate a culture's worldview rationally are based on a core premise that holds together any culture's belief system, intellectual principles, and socio-cultural worldviews in a rational continuum. According to Asouzou, Oluwole and Oyekunle, intellectual thought processes are based on spoken and unexpressed truth. Africa views reality as a holistic and unified ontological process.<sup>35</sup> Life is cyclical, not polarised. Since life has no origin or conclusion, those who die go to a higher life.

African ontology views being as a vital force with a dynamic nature dynamic force. According to Mbiti, "Force is the nature of being, force is being; being is force."<sup>36</sup> Additionally, there are diverse categories of forces: divine force, celestial forces, terrestrial forces, human forces, and vegetable and mineral sources. According to Onyewuenyi, these forces are hierarchical. So God (*Olodumare*) comes first, then the Divinities/spirits, then the founding fathers and the live dead in primogeniture, then the living in seniority.<sup>37</sup> The Yoruba believe that *Olodumare*—God/Supreme Being—is at the top of this hierarchical system, followed by deities or gods like *Ogun*, *Oya*, *Obatala*, etc., and the Clan ancestors, then the living. Spirituality is the highest in this hierarchy. This is largely because one can see beyond the corporeal, achieve perfection, and overcome death at this level. Thus, everyone anticipates this spiritual existence. This implies that the deceased become ancestors after death. Their body dies, but their life force grows ontologically. Thus, the deceased is thought to have a vital superiority of intelligibility and will rule over the living since they have ascended into the hierarchy. With superior intelligibility and the deceased's interest in immortality, the ancestors want to expand their and their descendants' vital force. Thus, 'going home' is a typical term for the dead. This suggests that the deceased met with other ancestors "above" to prepare dwellings for the next ones and influence life's continuance and viability. Yorubas often have cases where the deceased, old grandparents – *Iya-agba* or *Baba-agba*, appear to the *Olóri-ebi*, the family's head, to give advice on life's growth, development, and sustainability, as well as the family's welfare.

Africans, especially the Yoruba and Zulus, believe that only the ancestors or ancestral spirits can incarnate because they exist in the spirit realm. The dead who lived to a prime age led the household, community, or clan, lived a good and exemplary life, and left children and grandchildren to carry on the clan or family existence are considered to have died a 'good death'. Celebrations and full funerals are always held for such deaths. Those who die under such circumstances are considered ancestors in the hierarchy of beings. One reason for restricting reincarnation to the ancestors is that Africans prefer the death of the old and hate the 'untimely' death of the young. Prayers and sacrifices are made to prevent the death of a young person. Such deaths are called *oku-oyo*—tragic/unfortunate death. *Oku-oyo* victims are thought to have not reached the conclusion of earthly existence and entered their ancestors' happiness. As seen below, reincarnation in African cultures means replenishing life and supporting the kin. Thus, it seems sensible to believe that only individuals who died under favourable circumstances can play such a role. According to Idowu, ancestor-transformed deceased incarnate in their grandchildren and live beyond death.<sup>38</sup> Idowu seems to be saying, which goes along with our earlier discussion on the framework of African ontology regarding the status of the dead, that the dead have the ontological ability to exist in

<sup>33</sup> Oyekunle, "An Exploration of an Indigenous African Epistemic Order: In Search of a Contemporary African Environmental Philosophy."

<sup>34</sup> Sophie. B. Oluwole, *Socrates and Orunmila as Two Patrons of Classical Philosophy* (Lagos: Ark Publishers, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Asouzou, "Ibuanidanda" and the Philosophy of Essence: *Philosophy the Science of Missing Links of Reality*; Oluwole, *Socrates and Orunmila as Two Patrons of Classical Philosophy*; Oyekunle, "An Exploration of an Indigenous African Epistemic Order: In Search of a Contemporary African Environmental Philosophy."

<sup>36</sup> Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 54.

<sup>37</sup> Onyewuenyi, *African Belief in Reincarnation: A Philosophical Reappraisal*.

<sup>38</sup> Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*.

the life beyond according to their order of primogeniture and have a kind of communal influence due to their 'vital superiority' of intelligibility and will over the living.

The Yorubas and Zulus believe that ancestors participate in the affairs of the living while remaining in the spirit realm, expressing communal links between the living and the dead. The African people's unitary ontology is shown by this metaphysical argument. Given the importance of the "vital force," it is important to emphasise that the forebears can be present in one or more descendants of surviving clan members without reducing the power. The intriguing fact is that "one grandchild may not have the monopoly of the ancestral return."<sup>39</sup> After *Baba/Iya agba* dies, the family cycle can produce numerous children, which contributes to their reappearance. For boys and girls, such children are called *Babatunde* or *Yetunde*. This signifies "Father has come again" or "Mother has come again". These babies are born after the old person dies. The first kid of the same gender as the deceased is often considered a reincarnation.

CFs for African intellectual criterion regarding reincarnation provide a rational explanation for the African view's divergence from Eastern or Western conceptions, where a person's soul returns to another body, animate or inanimate, for eternal life. This illustrates that translating rebirth into reincarnation in Yoruba culture is a conceptual conflict. Trying to apply an alien cultural conceptual framework to another culture will generate a contradiction. This will not only iron-collar the worldview of such a culture, but it will also diminish its existential realities.<sup>40</sup>

The essential point for guarding African philosophical postulations within the platform of Africa's conceptual framework is that it helps to avoid the uncritical assimilations that are embedded in foreign cultures. Failure to be circumspect of this would inhibit a clear understanding of the intellectual foundations of African cultures.<sup>41</sup> African philosophical postulations should not be blindly accepted or allowed to become cultural nationalism, which would lead to ethnocentrism's methodological crises.<sup>42</sup> Critical and reasonable human experiences must underpin the evaluation of African traditional thinking through African conceptual frameworks and logic.

### **The Conceptual Clarification of Reincarnation**

Africans believe that humans are at the confluence of the terrestrial and celestial, which explains why Yorubas and Zulus believe in the continuous affinity between the living and the dead. Yorubas and Zulus believe in communal communication and communion between the living and the dead. This idea supports the ancestors' ability to manage, influence, help, or punish humans.<sup>43</sup> The communalistic nature of African society, where a person is seen not just as a biological entity with psycho-physical endowments but as a being who can fulfil his or her obligations as a community member in the physical and spiritual realms, supports this idea.

According to the discourse on the rationalisation of reincarnation from the African conceptual framework, to import the idea of reincarnation, even in the technical sense of the Western or Eastern conceptual scheme, into the African, Yoruba, or Zulu scheme of usage is to say that the ancestor's rebirth in the little one ended the spirit world's existence. It is believed that rationality or simple common sense would buttress the point that it is not amenable to a positive thought process to hold that one can reincarnate in the technical usage of the Western term, in one's grandchildren, and continue to live in the afterlife. Reincarnation is unnecessary in the African socio-cultural paradigm to indicate life continuation. Reincarnation is not the only indication of life continuance. Being alive in the ancestors means the deceased does not need a human body to express himself. Non-Africans may view reincarnation as a downward spiral. In contrast, reincarnation in the African ontological framework implies a continuous upward journey. The upward journey is death to reach ancestor status.

<sup>39</sup> Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*.

<sup>40</sup> Maurier, "Do We Have African Philosophy?," 31.

<sup>41</sup> Olusegun Oladipo, "Introduction," in *Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy: Four Essays by Kwasi Wiredu*, ed. Olusegun Oladipo (Ibadan: Hope Publication, 1995), 1–10.

<sup>42</sup> Oladipo, "Introduction"; Oluwole, *Socrates and Orunmila as Two Patrons of Classical Philosophy*; Oyekunle, "An Exploration of an Indigenous African Epistemic Order: In Search of a Contemporary African Environmental Philosophy."

<sup>43</sup> Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*.



Thus, the dynamic nature of the deceased as living-dead, the ontological hierarchy of force, and the interactions of various categories of forces in African ontological systems explain how the Yoruba believe the deceased ancestor can maintain his status in the spirit world while making his presence felt in the land of the living. The drive for clan or societal growth, development, and sustainability is vital to Africans, especially Yoruba and Zulus. They think this endeavour is bigger than the individuals involved. Even in the slightest matters, people are drawn to spiritual guidance. Thus, offspring or clan members often implore the deceased not to forget them in prayers and eulogies:

<i>Baba mi, 'omo eso dunloye',</i>	My father, (oral praise)
<i>Ma sun gbagbe awa omo re oo</i>	Do not sleep off and forget your children
<i>Oku Olomo kii sun</i>	The dead, leaving behind offspring, sleeps not

In addition, when the deceased's offspring are having a hardship, they consult oracles to reach out to the deceased, whom they believe lives on. Thus, Africans believe that the departed must maintain their rank in the hereafter for the clan's survival, while the living must continue to pour libation to the dead. This is believed to be necessary to maintain the living-dead community. In fact, Izibilli states that the concept that ancestors return to their families in their grandchildren strengthens the claim that the dead are always powerful among the living.<sup>44</sup> Thus, this could address the family continuity, survival, and sustainability question.

Resemblance in the newly born and the departed, on which many based their theory of reincarnation in the African context, is necessary but not sufficient to prove reincarnation in Western and Eastern perspectives. In the Western perspective of reincarnation, there is no need for a likeness between the dead and the reincarnated person or body. Since Western thought allows for metempsychosis, we don't think it's rational to look for similarities between the deceased and reincarnating inanimate or non-human beings. The Yoruba and Zulus' conception of the unity of life, which can be viewed in the ontological conception of reality, the ontological interaction of the dead and the living, and the solidarity for life continuity, explains reincarnation in the Yoruba context. The body decays after death, but the soul survives death to continue existence in the spirit world – *Orun Alakeji*, the "World of invisible beings" as an ancestor. Africans believe in the living dead and the continuity of thought that postulates the rebirth of the same souls in another body, while they are anticipated to live in the spirit realm as ancestors.<sup>45</sup> According to Ramose, Africans believe the dead live on in the spirit world.<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article is an attempt to demonstrate African people's belief in the immortality of the human person. The 'ukubuyisa' ritual from the Zulu-speaking people of South Africa and the idea of 'abiku' and 'akudaya' in the Yoruba's ontology, which can be correlated to the concept of reincarnation, are a classic illustration of African people's belief in the continuous harmonious coexistence between the terrestrial (this world) and celestial (the world beyond) existence. The perpetual perpetuation of life and the function of the living-dead or ancestors in the physical world cannot be overstated. African people also subscribe to the belief in the eternal recurrence of life, which manifests itself in the rebirthing of a departed soul in a new human body to ensure the merging of the family of the past, of the present, and of the future. The 'reincarnation debate' often misinterprets this belief or process of the reappearance of the deceased as reincarnation in the western and Asian understanding. Reappraising these discussions and reconceptualising this perennial socio-cultural phenomenon from an African perspective has become necessary.

Reconceptualization of the phenomenon of reincarnation in African perspectives has led to the development of alternative terms such as "life share," "eternal occurrence," "living perpetuation," "cyclic regeneration," "vital force" and "vital influence." These alternative terms have been captured succinctly by the Yoruba idea of 'abiku' and 'akudaya', and the Zulu concept of 'ukubuyisa.' The envisioned

<sup>44</sup> Izibilli, "Reincarnation 'Iroso' in Esan: A Myth or Reality," 2008.

<sup>45</sup> Ramose and Majeed, "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation."

<sup>46</sup> Ramose and Majeed, "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation."

justification is plausible since these terms represent the society, clan, or family's perpetual occurrence and pro-longevity cycle. One may argue that the living-dead in African cultures retain their presence in the spiritual realm and help their race and clan survive the ordeal of life. Thus, it seems more rational to state that a newborn child is the life-perpetuation, vital influence, or regeneration of an ancestor rather than a reincarnation. Accordingly, this study's conceptual explanation supports the use of phrases like life share, eternal occurrence, living perpetuation, cyclic regeneration, etc., over "reincarnation". The researchers believe the conceptual clarification technique will open the door to intellectual debate on rationalising reincarnation from African parlance. It would also advance the decolonial effort to make African intellectual heritage and identity logical and intelligible despite global competitiveness and the epistemicide of local knowledge systems.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agada, Ada. "Existence and Consolation: Reinventing Ontology, Gnosis, and Values in African Philosophy," 2015.
- . "Exploring the Question of Reincarnation in African Philosophy within Intracultural and Intercultural Contexts." *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 7, no. 1 (2018): 141–48.
- Almeder, Robert. "On Reincarnation: A Reply to Hales." *Philosophical Quarterly of Israel* 28, no. 1–4 (2001): 247–358.
- Asouzou, Innocent I. "Ibuanidanda" and the Philosophy of Essence: Philosophy the Science of Missing Links of Reality. Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 2011.
- Borchert, Donald M. P M. "Encyclopedia of Philosophy." In *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Macmillan Reference, Gale, 2006.
- Chimakonam, Jonathan O. and, and L Uchenna. Ogbonnaya. *African Metaphysics, Epistemology, and a New Logic: A Decolonial Approach to Philosophy*. Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
- Chukwuelobe, Matthew. "Eternal Return and IloUwa – Nietzsche and Igbo African Thought: Implications for Cross Cultural Philosophizing." *Philosophy Today*, 2012, 39–48.
- Edet, Mesembe. "Innocent Onyewuenyi's 'Philosophical Re-Appraisal of the African Belief in Reincarnation': A Conversational Study." *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 5, no. 1 (2016): 75–99. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v5i1.6>.
- Hales, Stephen. D. "Reincarnation Redux." *Philosophia, Philosophical Quarterly of Israel* 28, no. 1–4 (2001): 359–67.
- Haselbarth, Hans. "A Christian Approach to the Bringing Home of the Dead." *Umpumulo*, 1968.
- . *Christian Ethics in the African Context*. Ibadan: Daystar Press., 1976.
- Idowu, Bolaji E. *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. London: Longmans, 1962.
- Izibili, M.A. "Reincarnation 'Iroso' in Esan: A Myth or Reality." *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 6, no. 2 (December 3, 2008): 105–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2008.11886583>.
- Izibili, Matthew Aziyebemhin. "Reincarnation 'Iroso' in Esan: A Myth or Reality." *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* 6, no. 2 (2008): 105–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0972639X.2008.11886583>.
- Kindree, C. "Claims of Physical Evidence of Reincarnation," 10AD. <https://listverse.com/2014/12/30/10-claims-of-physical-evidence-for-reincarnation>.
- Krige, Eileen Jensen. *The Social System of the Zulus*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1950.
- Majeed, Hasskei. *Reincarnation: A Question in the African Philosophy of Mind*. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2017.
- Majeed, Hasskei M. "An Examination of the Concept of Reincarnation in African Philosophy." University of South Africa, 2012.
- Majeed, Hasskei M. "An Analysis of Kwame Gyekye's Conception of 'Sunsum' in Akan Philosophy." *Ghana Journal of Religion and Theology* 7 (2017): 137–49.
- Majeed, Hasskei Mohammed. "An Examination of the Concept of Reincarnation in African." University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2012.
- Majeed, Hasskei, and Mogobe Ramose. "Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation." *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 8,

no. 2 (September 27, 2019): 139–58. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v8i2.10>.

Maurier, Henri. “Do We Have African Philosophy?” In *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, edited by Richard Wright. Lanham: University Press of America, 1984.

Mbiti, J.S. *African Religion and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1969.

Mhaka, Edison. “Rituals and Taboos Related to Death as Repositories of Traditional African Philosophical Ideas: Evidence from the Karanga of Zimbabwe.” *Academic Research International* 5, no. 4 (2014): 371–85.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

Ojimba, Anthony Chimankpam, and Ada Agada. “Nietzsche’s Idea of Eternal Recurrence and the Notions of Reincarnation in Onyewuanyi and Majeed.” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 9, no. 2 (October 27, 2020): 35–56. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v9i2.3>.

Òkèwándé, O. T., and A. K. Adébáyò. “Investigating African Belief in the Concept of Reincarnation: The Case of Ifá and Ayò Ọlópón. Symbolism among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria.” *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta Vostokovedenie i Afrikanistika* 13, no. 2 (2021): 267–81. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu13.2021.209>.

Oladipo, Olusegun. “Introduction.” In *Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy: Four Essays by Kwasi Wiredu*, edited by Olusegun Oladipo, 1–10. Ibadan: Hope Publication, 1995.

Olu-Owolabi, Kolawole A. “Constitutionalism and Political Order: Visions and Tensions in Anyiam-Osigwe’s Quest for a Philosophy of Socio-Political Order in Nigeria.” In *The Development Philosophy of Emmanuel Onyechere Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe: Enhancement of Socio-Political Existence and Order*, edited by Adebola B. Oladipo Olusegun and Ekanola, 2nd ed., 166–82. Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2009.

Oluwole, Sophie. B. *Philosophy and Oral Tradition*. Lagos: Ark Publishers, 1AD.

———. “Reincarnation: An Issue in African Philosophy.” In *Witchcrafts, Reincarnation and the God-Head*, 39–56. Lagos: Excel Publishers, 1992.

———. *Socrates and Orunmila as Two Patrons of Classical Philosophy*. Lagos: Ark Publishers, 2015.

Onyewuanyi, Innocent C. *African Belief in Reincarnation: A Philosophical Reappraisal*. Enugu: Snaap Press, 1996.

Osanyinbí, Ọládotun B., Falana, Kehinde. “An Evaluation of the Akure Yorùbá Traditional Belief in Reincarnation.” *Open Journal of Philosophy* 6 (2016): 59–67. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2016.61007>.

Oyekunle, A. Akinpelu. “An Exploration of an Indigenous African Epistemic Order: In Search of a Contemporary African Environmental Philosophy.” University of South Africa, 2021.

Phaka, Fortunate M., Edward C. Netherlands, Maarten Van Steenberge, Erik Verheyen, Gontran Sonet, Jean Hugé, Louis H. du Preez, and Maarten P. M. Vanhove. “Barcoding and Traditional Health Practitioner Perspectives Are Informative to Monitor and Conserve Frogs and Reptiles Traded for Traditional Medicine in Urban South Africa.” *Molecular Ecology Resources*, October 16, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1755-0998.13873>.

Ramose, Mogobe, and Hasskei Majeed. “Reincarnation, Resurrection and the Question of Representation.” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 8, no. 2 (2019): 139–58.

Raum, O. “Funeral Rites in the African Pagan Society.” *Umpumulo*, 1968.

Taliaferro, Charles, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn. *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

## ABOUT AUTHORS

AKINPELU A. OYEKUNLE (Ph.D.) is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology, University of South Africa, Pretoria. His research focuses on advancing African epistemology as a theoretical and pragmatic framework for addressing the global challenge of environmental crisis. Research interest includes Environmental Philosophy, Applied Epistemology, Decoloniality and Development Studies, among others. He plays the piano and enjoys travelling outside philosophical engagements.

EZEKIEL S.N. MKHWANAZI is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology, in the College of Human Sciences, at the University of South Africa, in Pretoria. He obtained his master's degree in philosophy at Louvain in Belgium and his doctoral degree in 2016 at the University of South Africa under the directorship of Prof Mogobe B. Ramose. The title of his doctoral dissertation is *Nkrumah and Levinas in Dialogue over the Primacy of the Other: An African Philosophical Perspective*. His research interests include African philosophy, Ubuntu philosophy, Philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah and Emmanuel Levinas, History of Western Philosophy, Social philosophy, Informal logic, Phenomenology and Existentialism. E-mail: Mkhwaesn@unisa.ac.za