

Introduction

Leonard Harris

Purdue University, USA

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Africana philosophy, as an area of study, includes debates and arguments about community among African peoples around the world. This edition of *Diogenes* is a contribution to these debates. This edition helps dispense with the stereotype of African philosophers as either absent from the community of philosophers or, when present, reduced to unidimensional voices expressing a racial essence. Africana philosophy is an on-going arena of dissent and dialogue.

There are competing conceptions of community in this edition. Some conceptions, for example, are based on communitarian sensibilities in which local cultures are, and should remain, the basis of communes. Genuine collective entitlements, on this view, are pragmatically assured. Sage and Ubuntu accounts support communitarian sensibilities. Other conceptions of community are based on existentialist sensibilities in which individual consciousness and responsibility are inescapable features of freedom, lest we risk bad faith and fail to recognize that local culture can be a source of myopic oppression, informing other accounts of community.

The central ideas informing schools of philosophy authored by Léopold Sédar Senghor, Marcien Towa, and Asres Yenesew are discussed in articles by Mabana, Bâ and Kebede, particularly the concepts of civilization, universality, and community. Ramose, Murove, Presbey and Foé offer their own conceptions of cosmopolitanism and character of community. Arguments regarding the conflict between partisanship and cosmopolitanism, Ubuntu as a warranted idea, inter-ethnic conflict and community, and the limitations of postmodernist conceptions of being are the focus. Boni, Dotson, Headley, da Silva address epistemological issues of solidarity and race in community. The character of race, existence, history and aesthetics as features of Africana philosophy is addressed by Gordon, Oguejiofor, Osha and Lalèyê.

UNESCO, Philosophy Division, and the Alain Locke Society sponsored the conference ‘Philosophical Dialogue Between Africa and the Americas’, April 18–21, at Purdue University. The conference was one source for articles in this edition.

The conference was organized to address contemporary challenges and celebrate the International Year for People of African Descent (2011) proclaimed by the UN General Assembly at its 64th: ‘People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice and Development’. This conference was intended as a contribution to a fluid dialogue. As claimed by the famous African American philosopher Alain Locke, author of critical pragmatism, authentic dialogue requires “fluid and functional unity rather than a fixed and irrevocable one”, having as “its vital norms...equivalence and reciprocity rather than identity or complete agreement”. The debates were simulcast live in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Fifteen half-hour video interviews of the philosophers and all conference debates are archived and available at www.alainlocke.com, and a White Paper is available at <https://www.purdue.edu/research/gpri/publications/documents/AfricaanditsDisporiaWhitePaper.pdf>.

Corresponding author:

Leonard Harris, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA.

Email: lharris@purdue.edu