



The inflexionnel philosophical mode

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In spite of its many philosophical productions, remarkably solid books and articles, of which it can be proud and which give it a certain legitimate consideration in the contemporary scientific world, the philosophical practice of Africa remains deficient and unsatisfactory. Copying, rehearsing and ruminating in a largely faithful or even servile way—in attempts at interpretations and understandings without a conscious emancipatory social purpose—Western reflections produced on their own specific experiences. The philosophical work we have carried out so far in our African universities, in a very academic way, for the purposes of academic promotion or a hoped-for scientific visibility (with works generally published in our small local magazines and editions) without too much concern about the real problems to be solved or the most effective way to do so.

And in spite of the directions given to us early by wise elders¹, a glance at the productions of our philosophers shows a surprising indigence resulting from an almost total indifference as to the mode of philosophizing which can be worthwhile and disagreement as to the problems that are ours, in their own specificity beyond their formal universality. The dissertations of Licenses, Diplomas of in-depth studies, and even Doctorates, are almost exclusively focused on authors, mainly Western European or American, having almost never taken into account in their reflections the specificities of what is happening and abandons human beings in our concrete societies.

The philosophical style inherited from most of our teachers of thought has taught us, insistently, that philosophy has to be situated in universality and that any question, that of justice or injustice for example, must absolutely be treated in order to be in the philosophical, in its highest generality, abstractly, universalist, totally ignoring places and circumstances, land of birth and incarnation, nuances and concrete modalities in which this question arises. Thus, we must learn to unlearn what we have learned and practiced. We have failed to recognize that a reflection on specificity is not only possible but, moreover, is absolutely indispensable.

When philosophers of our societies work in accordance with the acceptable philosophical style of the thinkers whom I call "pre-

¹ See, among others, Taïta Towet (1959). "Le rôle d'un philosophe africain", *Présence Africaine*, n° 27-28; Kwame Nkrumah (1965). *Consciencism. Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization*, New York - London, Modern Reader Paperbacks (2nd ed., 1970). Nkrumah particularly emphasized the need to focus our thinking on our history, our situation and our existential conditions in the face of cross-cultural confrontations between cultures on the African cultural terrain.

scribers"², prescribing political and/or moral guidelines, they forget the need to philosophize in such a way as to make their work effectively acceptable. Making their work audible, "tuneful", is ideal to the aspirations of concrete societies and individuals.

Faced with such intellectual misery, I decided to challenge completely the African way of philosophical act³. I resolved to point out, as a matter of fact, to every genuine philosopher the duty to contribute in a maximum way to the effective alleviation of suffering, misery, injustice, poverty and any other constraint that hinders the legitimate aim of living and living well for human beings and societies. To do this, it is necessary to endow philosophical practice with a power large and wide enough to influence the great decision-makers and "inflectors" of the fortunate or unhappy destiny of human beings in particular communities. In other words, it is a question of philosophizing effectively, with the maximum power to influence policy-makers at the top of the republic, who are charged with working with a stronger responsibility for development, improving living conditions, to the elimination of the difficulties which desolate and stigmatize the legitimate passions of living and

2 As philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, Kant, and Rawls, insofar as they indicate the principles and rules of the organization of society and / or the individual conduct of persons in specific circumstances, times and specific places (and even, previously, the theoretician strategist Machiavelli) are in my opinion prescribers par excellence. In particular, Kant is so by his "maxims" and Rawls with the "principles" they have forged. In his *Zum ewigen Frieden* (Towards Perpetual Peace) Emmanuel Kant even formulated for policy, in the obvious admirable aim of an efficiently inflexional philosophy, principles in the legal form of "articles" to be applied in the constitution of a "society of nations" leading to "perpetual peace". But, as the adverb "efficiently" suggests, it is evident that any prescriptive philosophy is not necessarily inflexional, that is, it contains within it, from its mode of realization, the potentiality and the capacity to influence the minds and ways of thinking in concrete societies by directing them with maximum force towards the organization and governance that are the best and most beneficial for each citizen within the city.

3 See, among others, our article: Tshiamalenga Ntumba and Ngoma-Binda, "Philosophons autrement. Propositions pour une nouvelle race de philosophes en Afrique", *Revue Philosophique de Kinshasa*, Vol. IV, n° 6, 1990, pp. 77-85.

living well among compatriots in society. It is a question of bringing discipline specialists to care, with increased responsibility and awareness, to produce an *inflectional philosophy*. But the advent of inflectional philosophy is possible only through three phases of intellectual activity, which constitute the *inflectional theory*. These are: the construction phase, the publicity phase, and the phase of political commitment.

1. Constructing Inflectionality

The first phase of a philosophical act called for success is the constitution of inflectional philosophy, in strict accordance with inflectional theory, as a set of precise principles and rules of philosophical practice. For reasons of convenience and of fidelity to the initial formulation, I must repeat here, the principles elaborated in the founding work of the theory that I have called inflectional⁴.

Inflectional theory—which may also be called "inflectionist"—consists of the following twelve principles, conceived as being able to confer on philosophical practice a great force of inflection or inflective power over the consciences and decisions of political leaders who hold a great power over the destinies, individual and collective, of human beings of specific communities.

1.1. *The principle of philosophical authenticity*

The first principle of inflectional theory is that which I call the principle of philosophical authenticity. It stipulates that the inflectionality of philosophy depends on the philosophical authenticity of the pretension to philosophize or, more exactly, on the mode of ap-

⁴ Ngoma-Binda, P. (2004). Philosophie et pouvoir politique en Afrique. La théorie inflexionnelle, Paris, L'Harmattan. This theory has been explained in my other work: Ngoma-Binda, P. (2011). Théorie de la pratique philosophique, Paris, L'Harmattan ; chapter 6, pp. 176-188.

proach of the objects of society and on the assignment of meaning and intention to the philosophical practice.

This principle imposes on the thinker the requirement to know correctly the nature, the object and the aim of philosophy in order to penetrate it and to discover the most adequate, valid, stronger and more effective opportunities of self-fulfillment.

Epistemological vigilance is indispensable to the success of a well-constructed philosophy. In other words, a philosophy is authentic only if it satisfies adequately the requirements formulated by the epistemological interrogation of philosophy on its own nature, its own modality of advent, and its own finality in the concrete context of a particular society of a specific time expressing specific aspirations recognized as valid and relevant.

1.2. The principle of practical reason

The second fundamental principle of inflectional theory is the requirement for philosophy to articulate itself as a practical reason. It intends to prescribe to philosophy the duty of producing itself, with finesse, both as theory and as practice, as a theoretical practical dialectic. But even more so, the concept of practical reason is to be taken both in the sense of what is given by the physical senses, and thus what commands a concrete preoccupation, and as in the Kantian sense of practical orientation of freedom and life, mainly the moral life. The inflectional theory fully gives philosophy its original sense of *logos*, understood as a logical desire, that is to say, a rational and reasonable speaking desire. As a rational desire, philosophy necessarily bears a metaphysical attribute which manifests it as theory. And as a reasonable desire, philosophy contains a practical aspect that gives it to be wisdom.

It is in this way that philosophy presents itself very clearly in Plato: as theory and practice, as metaphysics and as wisdom of concrete life, as the contemplation of ideas and the practice of the latter.

And it is in Aristotle that the major articulations of practice are revealed, in plain terms, the fundamental fields of application of the values of wisdom. For this philosopher, philosophy is, in its practical content, the desire for wisdom, for rationality and ethics, with regard to economic and political affairs within the city. It is also this practical philosophy that contemporary German thought, turning its back on much of its famous idealism since the 1970s, is trying to rehabilitate and upgrade⁵.

The principle of practical reason posits that any philosophy which is intended to be inflectional necessarily carries a practical identity, preferentially arising out of the life lived, of the human needs and emotions that the economy, politics and ethics focus and arouse in a society. And, through an intellectual effort aimed at removing commas and conjunctions, one might say that a philosophy with strong and perceptible impact on society, an inflectional philosophy, is the one that leads to the emergence of a new global thought, namely, a theory of "ethical political economy". In this sense, the inflectional principle of practical reason can also be understood as a principle of exigency and urgency of a powerful philosophical reflection, articulated on the conditions of possibility of an ethical political economy as an appropriate response to specific demands of a concrete existence in a specific world. The inflectionality or the inflectional force of a philosophy is essentially a function of the orientation or the practical interest of the latter. An exclusively theoretical philosophy (e.g. ontology) is less likely to be inflectional than a practical philosophy, because that one is a science of generalities and metaphysical definitions, whereas the other is consciously and decidedly a directive science of the practical life of individuals and society.

⁵ See for example: Riedel, Manfred (1972). *Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie*, Freiburg, Verlag Rombach; Lenk, Hans (1975). *Pragmatische Philosophie. Plädoyers für eine praxisnahe Philosophie und Wissenschaftstheorie*, Hamburg, Hoffman und Campe Verlag.

1.3. *The principle of emancipatory utility*

The third principle of inflectional theory stems from the practical option of philosophy. It stipulates that, in order to claim to be taken into account by society, every philosophy has an obligation to conceive itself and to act as a tool in the service of society. One does not philosophize to philosophize. And philosophy has to pass from the status as the *servant philosophy of theology* (of the Absolute and the gods), to that of a *servant philosophy of society*, and this in the most resolute and efficient manner possible. Where poverty prevails, the people can only need, as a matter of priority, a "servant philosophy of the poor". Every other form of thought has no effect and no social utility

Thus, inflectional philosophy is conceived as an emancipatory instance of society. It is essentially in the mode of thinking of the "critical theory of society" and, more specifically, in the Habermasian view of the philosophical act⁶. In other words, true philosophy is an intellectual contribution to the effort to be, and joy of existence of man and society. It is well understood here that the inflectional potentiality of philosophy depends on the tools and strategies it puts into action in the collective effort to maximize the joy of existence for everyone. Any philosophy with a legitimate inflectional pretension must occur in a way that makes it recognized and admitted by any sensible person as an effective strategy of struggle in the struggle for life, in an effort to maximize the desire to be and the chances of joy of the individual, and the power of the fatherland.

1.4. *The principle of sociality*

Inflectional philosophy develops an initial self-consciousness as a social-purpose production, because it considers man not as an

⁶ Habermas, Jürgen (1974). *Profils philosophiques et politiques*, Paris, Gallimard; Id. (1976). *Connaissance et intérêt*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976 ; Id. (1993). *La pensée postmétaphysique. Essais philosophiques*, Paris, Armand Colin.

individual, an isolated consciousness, but rather as a sociality. And this is where the relevance of bisoïty theory—as a philosophy of the *biso*, or *we*, developed by Tshiamalenga Ntumba⁷, becomes clear.

Thus, the fourth principle of inflectional theory is that of *sociality*. It intends to dismiss the paradigms of being and consciousness (i.e metaphysics) and even of language as pure object of linguistic or logical analysis, and joins the Habermassian, post-metaphysical paradigm of communication. This means that inflectional philosophy intends to address not the individual consciousness, but the social individual, society, especially the individual understood as a political actor: a social individual posing gestures and acts with great influence effectiveness.

A philosophy has more inflectionality (capacity of inflection) than another if it concerns the polis and is addressed essentially to the social individual, and preferentially to the leading political actor, which possesses the greatest and the most the historical responsibility for the social destiny of the whole community. A solipsistic philosophy, ruminating for itself only the metaphysical thoughts on the purest abstractions, and which the others do not understand, is not at all socially useful. Once again, to get out of his miserable situation, the poor need a philosophy of poverty; and suffering society need a social and political philosophy of suffering.

1.5. *The selection principle*

The fifth principle is what I call the *relevant selection principle*. It stipulates and underlines the necessity of a judicious, lucid and reasoned selection of the objects of philosophical discourse.

A philosophy with inflective pretension is articulated only on objects that are, so to speak, "predisposed", that is to say, by the very

⁷ Tshiamalenga Ntumba (1987), "Langage et socialité. Primat de la "Bisoïté" sur l'intersubjectivité", in: Philosophie africaine et ordre social, Kinshasa, F.T.C., p. 57-82.

fact of their nature, objects likely to help find efficient and genuine responses to the issues to be resolved. This requires a strong capacity for intuition and correct reading of the realities of society, both local, national and international. In this sense, the inflectional theory states that everything is not worthy of philosophy, and that the notion of "totality of the real" usually given as the object of philosophy by our textbooks constitutes a non-operative fiction. On the other hand, it considers that the inflectionality of a philosophy is a function of the choice made among the multiple possible objects of discourse.

It goes without saying that there is always already an initial choice that is operated by the thinker. But the fundamental question that is posed is that of the correctness and the pertinence of the choice. For, as many studies have shown, it is not always easy to know how to focus attention on relevant subjects, based on an insightful reading of society and an adequate problematizing. Lucidity is effectively supported by intuition or an appropriate intellectual sensitivity to multiple appeals by diverse and multiple discourse objects.

The inflectional theory orders objects and takes hold of those which, in the order of fertility and priority, are found to be most effective with regard to the emancipatory intention of philosophy, and with regard to the aspirations for freedom and happiness of society. I realize that philosophy, a place par excellence of the unfolding and exaltation of reason and freedom, would be ruined if it forbade intellectuals to reflect philosophically on all things of the universe, of life and death, and even on the essence of the tree, the stone, the grasshopper, or the dust. But I am afraid the final result can only be a "dusty philosophy", no doubt elegantly written, but inevitably dusty, just good for the locusts of the trees, which I imagine will have a good deal of trouble, to consume it, to penetrate the stone bark of which it would be made.

Very seriously speaking, it should be noted that the history of thought offers us no example of a philosophy articulated on such strange objects. On the contrary, it appears that philosophy has its privileged objects, perhaps no more than a dozen, on which it usually works. Thus, the beautiful slogan of the "totality of the real" is terribly fallacious.

Even in metaphysics, where the pretension is to grasp the totality of the being of the real (and notice here that the meaning becomes quite different), it is generally only a question of intellectual grasping of cosmology, of "the whole of the beings", leaving aside individual beings (trees, stones, locusts, etc.) as undeserving of philosophical attention. I also perceive a certain sophism in this assertion (which means that one can philosophize on everything), modeled on the model of the "all-way leads to Rome". It should be noted that the shortest route, and in principle the better one because it is likely to take less time, is preferable to any other; similarly, any object of philosophical thought capable of leading much more effectively to the realization of the emancipatory intention of practical philosophy is preferable to any other.

This is the selection principle of inflectional theory. It is good to reflect philosophically on the "baobab", on the "dust", on the "table", on the "web of spider", on "sexuality in the heaven" or again and especially on the "ntu" in as long as "ntu" within the *Bantu Philosophy*, provided that, beforehand, the relevance of these objects is established in view of the battle for life to which every incarnate and responsible philosopher is obliged to contribute in an effective way.

1.6. The principle of intimate proximity

The principle of selection, justified by the imperatives of efficiency and adequacy with the well-understood ultimate philosophical intention (that of liberation or the giving of meaning to life and the joy of existing to every human being) necessarily implies other

ways of being of a philosophy that intends to be inflectional. In particular, there is the need to take into account the social demands of his time and society in order to guide them and provide them with appropriate outcomes. This is what I call the principle of close proximity of the philosopher.

An inflectional philosophy is thought which realizes as much as possible, in its elaboration, that which gives the most meaning to human existence, to the life of everyone and all in society. The principle affirms this: an inflectional philosophy is any philosophy which is closest to the vital concerns of the society. I state that the problem of poverty and injustice or, positively, the need for joy of existing, prosperity and distributive and pacifying justice, is for Africa the most fundamental concern of society. The more it moves away from this focus of ultra-existential problems, the more gradually and essentially a philosophy loses its possibilities and chances of practical effectiveness.

1.7. *The principle of topicality*

The seventh principle is the one I call *topicality*. It stipulates that inflectionality is a function of the topical and urgent nature of society's problems, and on which philosophy strives to provide its comprehensive and therapeutic contribution⁸. It posits that any philosophy increases its capacity of impact (i.e. becomes inflectional), insofar as it focuses on the present and the future of the society, refusing the sterility of the school and academic practice centered on the study of ancestors, African and Western, dead-living persons of our university libraries. It would be stupid to say that studying the past is idiotic and sterile. We simply affirm that the historicist look of the

⁸ The idea assumes the emancipatory aim assigned to philosophy by Habermas. It is also in this sense that the practical reflection of Mbolokala Imbuli (1996). *La thérapeutique philosophique: mythe ou réalité*, Kinshasa, FCK.

past is an intellectual misery, and that the taking into account of the past is valid only if it is conditional and strategic.

This perspective implies that the recourse to the dead, to our ancestors or to dormant books of the libraries must take place *a posteriori*, as a possible means (through intelligent scientific research, combined with a remarkable intuitional view) of potential contribution to search and elaborate the best solutions to the problem currently experienced by his society. Socrates, Kant or any other ancestor of the West, Asia or Africa will be judiciously used only if his thoughts are predicted or attested to be able to effectively contribute to the effective solution of the present problems of society and individual persons for whom it is proposed to philosophize.

It is clear that the actuality is not to be limited to an exclusive area of life. It concerns economic and social life as well as political, cultural, ethical, ecological and technological life. And its importance is determined on the basis, *inter alia*, of the principle of social and intimate proximity. Thus, it will be noted that the concept of actuality forged here goes beyond the media sense of the term. For me, it means a reality that threatens the chances of *presence* and joy of existing at the *present existence* of the individual and society. The actuality is presence and effectiveness, possibly threatened.

1.8. *The principle of publicity*

The eighth principle of inflectional theory states that the inflectionality of philosophy depends on its degree of accessibility to the public as wide as possible. This principle poses the requirement of

the sub-principles of clarity, maximum diffusion, "journalization"⁹ or mediatization, judicious choice of linguistic tool, and democratization of philosophy.

But, as is well known, this principle is governed by the economic force placed at the disposal of science (philosophical in this case) by the national community. The cultural or ideological power of philosophy depends on the significance of economic power at the disposal of the philosopher, his working environment, and society. It is therefore understandable that the reality of the economic underdevelopment of our countries and workplaces entails high risks of disability to the productivity and expansion of products of philosophical work.

It is precisely here that the philosopher is the most challenged, and is constrained to show a high degree of practical creativity to imagine new structures for expansion of his ideas in society. One of these structures is the possibility of mediatizing the philosophical meetings, conferences and any other activities. But there is also the other effective structure of university education, which, however, requires a judicious rethinking and modeling from an inflectional perspective.

1.9. The principle of educational adequacy

The ninth principle of inflectional theory is based on the assumption that the inflectionality of discourse depends on the adequacy of the programs and the teachings of philosophy to the general basis of the most distressing needs and problems of its city.

⁹ Several chapters that compose Jürgen Habermas' *Philosophical and Political Profiles* were previously published in various German newspapers or weeklies. And many of the philosophers of this country use the newspapers to express their point of view on a question of society that is topical and of great importance. By doing so, they bring philosophical ideas to the public. In Africa, this practice hardly exists among philosophers, except perhaps a few rare cases. I do it, for my part, quite often. On the other hand, the current position of newspapers in Africa in the dissemination of information and ideas no longer permits efficiency to be seen elsewhere.

Thus, I maintain that the curriculum of an inflectional philosophical teaching will be founded on the only essential subjects, the most capable of assisting in the genesis of the most inflecting effects of society.

In a rigorously thought-out program, freed from numerous, too general, and with little contribution certainty in view of the ultimate aim of education in philosophical practice, a philosophy with genuine inflectional pretension will be articulated on the teachings of sociology, political economy, political science, legal science (as a codification of ethical precepts and decisions) and a natural science selected according to current and relevant scientific concerns for the promotion of society.

I also argue that in an inflectional philosophy *applied ethics* enjoys the absolute priority of teaching and reflective practice. Beyond general ethics, it includes and takes into account political ethics, economic ethics, biomedical ethics, ecological ethics, in short, ethics applied to the different spheres of concrete life of individuals and of human societies. It is essentially in this intellectual province that the inflectionality of philosophical activity is susceptible of great presence and fertility.

1.10. The ideological core principle

The tenth principle stipulates that any philosophy with inflectional pretension must obey the requirement to contain an *appropriate ideological core*. The latter signifies the set of values targeted by philosophy, around which it is organized, and which intends to give a meaning and a happy destiny to society. Ideology is the ideal that animates, gives life to philosophy. It is the "living kernel" in the absence of which a philosophy becomes a simple spoil, like a heap of dead mud.

Ideology is the technology of philosophy through which the latter is capable of operating, of transforming reality, of concluding

to the transformative action of consciousness and of society. Philosophy can never serve society and humanity effectively if it lacks the relevant living nucleus that mobilizes the attentions and efforts of a people. The ideal of Pan-African unity, the ideal of Negro dignity and authenticity, the ideal of political democratization of the nation and justice for all, are examples of relevant ideological nuclei. With this principle, philosophy is a real strategy of struggle for the life of the human, social, symbolic, spiritual and material values that a people forge as to guarantee its existence at all costs. Thus, the ideological nucleus principle, as the place and expression of the highest moral and social values, is also that of the *ethics of philosophy*. True philosophy is that which, in its core, enunciates and endeavors to admit universally acceptable moral values, beyond individuals and micro-societies, into the rational and reasonable sphere of existence of humanity. An inflectional philosophy therefore conforms to the principle of the need for ethics. As we noted in another study: "No well-born philosophy exists without ethics manifesting, beyond metaphysical construction, as its substance. Any philosophical pretension devoid of ethics is a non-philosophy. Even when it is formulated under the label of *critical thought*, philosophy is deficient if it does not include the prescription of moral values for man and for society."¹⁰

1.11. *The principle of political engagement (?)*

The principle of political exigency poses the necessity of the political consciousness of the philosophical act. If it is true, philosophy necessarily involves a political vocation and leads to politics, even in the discrete form of ethical and educational action. From this point of view, any philosophy that takes political power as its main object

¹⁰ Ngoma-Binda, P. (2010). *Théorie de la pratique philosophique*, Kinshasa, Ifep, p. 66. An "international" version of the same book was published in Paris, at L'Harmattan, in 2011.

of reflection is potentially inflectional. This requirement seems to me to imply that of marriage or, in any case, dialogue, mutual trust and mutual acceptance of philosophy and politics, of the scientist and politics. The maximum moment of mutual acceptance is probably at the point where the philosopher (or scholar-ideologist) agrees with politician on the ideas and values that must form the fundamental pillars of the national political Constitution as well as all the others legal texts contributing to the creation of the basic structures of society.

In short, inflexional philosophy is synonymous with committed philosophy, the bearer of politics, assumed by a thinker who knows himself to be a political actor and who directs his thought to social transformation, that is, to the correct orientation of political decisions. An inflexional philosophy is not only indicative and descriptive but, even more so, normative, prospective of the best form of social life. It is a philosophy of the ways and conditions of the possibility of good political governance.

Since it is theoretically close to politics, philosophy is more likely to be listened to by political authorities. By the same token, it maximizes its power over the social destiny of individuals and the wider community. However, it is indispensable to know that politics has legitimacy only if it bases all its decisions and actions on the institution of an appropriate and valid right previously established in society in a rational and democratic way. Very seriously, Kant insists on the requirement of conformity of political action with the law. He said: "Right must be held sacred to man, some great sacrifices that it may cost the power which governs (...); all policy must bend the knee before the right, and thus it may hope to arrive, albeit slowly, to a degree where it will shine with lasting brilliancy"¹¹. In accordance with the principle of ethical necessity, every right and

¹¹ Kant, Emmanuel (1974). *Vers la paix perpétuelle*. Essai philosophique, Paris, PUF, p. 155.

every policy is valid and admissible only if it is based on morality. It is the ultimate judge of all human action. With the maximum reason, morality is constitutive of wisdom, or of any desire to philosophize in an authentic and effective way, for the elevation and the felicity of all the inhabitants of the city. It is again Kant who informs us that: "True politics can not, therefore, take a step before having paid homage to morality; and although politics is in itself a difficult art, its union with morality is in no way an art, for this one breaks off the knots which the that one can not untie as soon as they are no longer agreement"¹².

1.12. The principle of fundamentality

The twelfth principle is what I call the principle of fundamentality. It affirms that an inflexional philosophy is one which, by its strength and intrinsic charm, inspires or is likely to inspire the fundamental institutions of society. In addition, it states that a philosophy of inflectional pretension is preferable to another if it is more efficient, and if its positive effects are more desirable and, therefore, supposed to be more rational and more reasonable. This means that the possibility of imperfection always and already leaves open a possibility of going deeper and at the fundamental, which is fundamental in terms of the excellence of life, of society and of the relations between beings and humans.

In this perspective, it is necessary to add, in order to join and complete the definition of the principle of practical reason mentioned above, that inflexional philosophy is a practical philosophy which is fundamental insofar as it claims to be philosophical authenticity. One must therefore invalidate, as erroneous, the idea of thinking that practical philosophy necessarily and exclusively lies outside or is inferior to fundamental research. In so far as it is genu-

12 Ibid., p. 155.

ine and well-lit, practical philosophy is always a research that is both applied and theoretical, that is to say, fundamental. It is this double inextricable nature which, precisely, constitutes one of its major qualities, and which gives it its remarkable charm.

In any case, as the examples of Habermas and Rawls show today, reflection articulated on practical or relatively practical objects, such as communication, democracy or justice¹³, may well be a matter of fundamental research. It is precisely the pretension of inflectional philosophy to provide the political actor, more than other actors, with fundamental reasons for believing in the need to listen to the philosophical voice that preaches rationality and morality in the human, economic, social, political and cultural action.

2. Make Action: Publicize Philosophical Ideas

The second phase of inflexional philosophical work is the act of associative publicization of philosophical knowledge produced in accordance with the inflexional theory. It involves, by encompassing, associating the public with the philosophical act. The ideas produced in the work of the philosopher are brought to him, and presented to him, by means of the most seductive manner possible.

The relevance of the encompassing-democratization phase is evident when one knows that any idea, whether philosophical, economic, political or otherwise, remains without real existence and without effect or inflectional power if, even valid and relevant, it lacks of adequate maximum publicity. This phase of philosophizing, centered on the opening to the non-specialist public, involves three major stages.

13 Rawls, John (1971). *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press. For Habermas, the subjects dealt with in his post-metaphysical theory are manifestly practical (see, among others, the works cited above).

2.1. Adequate teaching of inflectional content

The first stage is the teaching of philosophy according to a dynamic, committed pedagogy, making attractive the philosophical knowledge to the students who are taught. It must be emphasized here that the requirement consists in highlighting the behavior of desire for wisdom, as the maximum will of intelligence and morality in the individual and public conduct. However, the audience is so small that philosophical education has scarcely any chance of reaching an important population, in spite of the appropriate pedagogy implemented and, above all, of the content of the academic curriculum that has been put into practice, as specified in the ninth principle of inflexional theory. Teaching within academic frameworks is necessary, but it is not sufficient to give philosophical activity the power required for it to be able to influence the decisions and orientations of political leaders in society.

2.2. Mediatizing ideas that are relevant to community life

The second stage is the mediatization of the philosophical knowledge previously constructed so as to endow it with the necessary inflectional power. The effect of philosophy on a large public can only be expected if significant efforts are made. The philosopher presents to the public the fruit of his reflections differently than by the usual means of publication or publicity. He does not disdain, on the contrary, the use of the media by means of appropriate television and radio broadcasts, the use of new communication technologies, in addition to conferences with larger or smaller audiences in closed rooms. The mediatization of punctual symposiums and conferences is very insufficient.

This is surely a broad and even enormous philosophical task that goes beyond the usual channels limited to the publication of books and articles in specialized scientific journals. Inflexion power is neither maximum nor possible with books and articles limited to

a very limited audience of specialists such as researchers, teachers and students. When one knows that the faculties of philosophy are among the ones which are more able to take away the preferences of students seeking university training, it is to be expected that very long years will be expected to see philosophical teaching producing memberships, effects and from important fidelities to philosophical thought with effective power over political leaders and societies.

2.3. Legitimizing? the inflective philosophy

The third stage is the effort of jurisdictionalization of the philosophy previously constructed on the model of the inflectional theory. It is a matter of providing all the necessary advocacy efforts leading to the acceptance of relevant philosophical ideas by legislators and governors. The philosophical act leads to success if the ideas of the philosopher are taken into account in international, national or even local legislation. Ideas cast into binding laws and rules of conduct are likely to flourish in society and help make adequate decisions in society.

The juridisation of philosophy is realized from an effort to fix ideas in the appropriate legal language. We find examples of the juridicalization of philosophical thought in the work of Aristotle, who began to elaborate political constitutions for the societies of his time. Likewise, it seems to me that Emmanuel Kant has traced an admirable way. Not only did he put a few ideas into readily assimilatory and usable "maxims", but even more he formulated the "Perpetual Peace Project" in the form of articles of laws that could be appropriated and used by political decision-makers and legal "arrangers".

Obviously, the "provisional" and "final" articles¹⁴ he proposed were of a nature to facilitate the task of drafting ideas in the form of laws. The "juridized" philosophy has a high capacity of inflectional potential. The philosopher gives himself power and gains a victory, from his ideas, whenever they are taken into account and cast into the national or international legal arsenal.

In this perspective, and on many occasions, I have had to produce what I believe to be an inflectional reflection accomplished, inspired by the theoretical principles of inflectionality.¹⁵

In particular, following an appropriate and reasoned reflection inspired by the work of Emmanuel Kant, I elaborated a "Draft Political Constitution of the United States of Africa", as a supranational body with the right and the right to impose common rules and principles of political governance on African nations¹⁶.

The postcolonial African experience leads the intellect to conclude that outside of such an instance we can not see the real de-

14 Kant, E., op. cit. 1974. Kant states six "preliminary articles", three "final articles", and a "secret article". These are, in total, ten principles of perpetual peace, which Kant proposes to be taken into account by legislators and rulers.

15 See, in particular, my works: Ngoma-Binda, P., *Une Démocratie Libérale Communautaire pour la DR Congo et l'AFrique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001 (A Community Liberal Democracy for the DR Congo and Africa, partly translated and published in English under the heading: *The Mesomal State. A Community Liberal Democracy*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2017); Ngoma-Binda, P., *La participation politique. Ethique civique et politique pour une culture de paix, de démocratie et bonne gouvernance*, Kinshasa, Ifep, 2005 (Political Participation. Civic and political ethics for a culture of peace, democracy and good governance); Ngoma-Binda, P., *Démocratie, Femme et Société Civile en Afrique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012 (Democracy, Woman and Civil Society in Africa); Ngoma-Binda, P., *Pouvoir et Moralité dans les Affaires Publiques*, Matadi, 2014 (Power and Morality in Public Affairs). It should be noted that these works are probably not formulated in abstract philosophical language, but they do, and at least, of political theory.

16 See Ngoma-Binda, P., "Draft Political Constitution of the United States of Africa", in: Oswald Ndeshyo Rurihose (ed.), *Le nouvel élan du Panafricanisme, l'émergence de l'Afrique et la nécessité de l'intégration continentale*, Kinshasa, Cededurk, 2015, pp. 529-539 (The New Impetus of Pan-Africanism, the Emergence of Africa and the Necessity of Continental Integration). This Draft Constitution, containing some forty articles, should be able to be proposed for in-depth consideration and possible adoption by the African Union.

mocracy and good governance leading to the development, political stability and social peace. It presents itself as the ultimate path to the effective and rapid advent of Africa's power, peace, progress and dignity. It is the form of governance most likely to help African nations better organize themselves, catch up with other nations in the world and, ideally, advance at the same pace. The proposed legal provisions are of a nature to be accepted, insofar as the Project, in line with the ideas of Pan-African ideology, is a proposal for a realistic political unity limited to the major principles of democratic governance.

3. Acting Beyond The Laboratory: Political Commitment

Philosophy, even speculative, is false if it confines the intellectual to the laziness of contemplation, interpretation, or eternal rumination of the metaphysical and epistemological concepts of science and reality. True philosophy is an incentive to act. For the philosopher, there are two major forms of action.

3.1. Engage in politics to participate in decision-making

The inflexional theory directs the philosopher to go beyond his own dispensary of intellectual production, to leave his own path and to go, like and with other wise intellectuals, to join hands in the common construction of a happy country, habitable in full safety for all. Thus, to philosophize is to engage in an intellectual approach aiming at the triumph of wisdom, that is, reason and morality in the institutions, decisions, and public life of men and women who wish to live together a life of harmony and peace in the same city. To achieve efficiency, commitment must be both intellectual and practical; and it must be placed, as a priority, in the register of political governance.

In this perspective, the philosopher, if he takes himself seriously, is obliged to conform to the Plato's prescription of the necessity of assuming the responsibility of political direction of the city. Contrary to the Kantian prescription¹⁷, the inflectional philosopher gives himself the duty to engage in politics with the clear and conscious desire of contributing with the maximum of reason and morality to the smooth running of the city towards a good state of existence and better governance. The political participation of the philosopher, or the commitment of the wise intellectual in politics, has ideally to be direct¹⁸. This means that the latter is raised to the high political spheres where the decisions of global governance of the city are taken. Without access to the top levels, the philosopher however can act within the framework of a semi-direct participation. I mean that he may effectively be advising political leaders at the top of the state. For this, and to be inflectional, the philosopher must neither disregard politics nor remain inactive as to the paths that make access to the structures of political governance.

3.2. Generating vocations of true politicians

Another way of doing politics is, as a philosopher, to stimulate vocations among young intellectuals of all disciplines, within the framework of a civil society action. It is a question of continuing the formative work of Plato and Aristotle outside the narrow, closed

¹⁷ Opposing Plato, who strongly recommends that the philosopher should become king, or that the king should listen to philosophical reason and conform to it in his decisions, Kant considers that it is not reasonable that the philosopher should occupy himself with political affairs in the city. Kant's position is hardly grounded because, even if this philosopher intends to preserve the philosopher's reason from corruption in the political arena. See Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 131. Moreover, and as contradictory, he nevertheless suggests to kings, and in a "secret article", to make philosophers of the king's private advisers (but not kings themselves); he prays kings to let the philosophers speak "freely and publicly" and listen to them to take advantage of their wisdom. It is clear that the adviser is eminently political, as it can inspire high-level political decisions.

¹⁸ See Ngoma-Binda, P. (2005). *La participation politique*, *op. cit.*, Ifep.

walls of the classical school. It is from this vision of things that I created, in 1990, the Institute of Training and Political Studies (Ifep) in Kinshasa. We have had to train many political actors and members of "civil society" around various themes related to the organization and governance of society. Similarly, training has emphasized the importance of ethics in a political governance that is supposed to be correct.¹⁹

Conclusion

The specific context of an Africa that suffers atrociously, which has been wracking for decades, and even dramatically retreating in terms of expected performance in favor of the good and long life of citizens, calls for a consistent and adequate mode of philosophical action. Turning away from the old philosophical mode, to which we are attached in a servile and incredibly visceral way in spite of its sterility, I invite philosophy to give itself, in Africa, a way of philosophizing otherwise more efficient, that has strong effects on the consciousness of the policy-makers and political leaders of our nations. The time had long since stopped philosophizing to philosophize. It is necessary to philosophize to make act, to make advance political governance towards better achievements in the social life.

We have to work to produce inflexional philosophies, reflections that are endowed with a power of maximum inflection of our individual and collective destiny towards the best opportunities for a long and happy life for all in the community concerned and, ultimately, of man on earth. The task therefore presupposes an appro-

¹⁹ For lack of adequate means, Ifep was not able to continue its political, civic and moral training seminars for adults wishing to enter politics. It is an idea that deserves to be relaunched with the noble intention of helping our nations better govern themselves. For the time being, it is limited to writing and publishing, not without difficulties, books on politics and civic culture.

priate theory consisting of a set of specific principles of self-realization of philosophy.

In addition, inflectional theory implies that the philosophizing ceases to be limited to the traditional modes of self-production and self-presentation before the public. The philosophical act with the power of maximum inflection is given a more clearly defined intention of political and ethical commitment. It is regulated by the theoretical and practical prescriptions that are likely to bring it closer to the people and to be accepted by them, the legislator, as a tool for political governance of high performance and able to generate a better life.

In the construction of the nation and the governance of our destinies, the philosopher has the duty to demand to be listened to by the political leader. For there is indeed its place, and it is eminent. But to be listened to, he has to conform to the mode of philosophizing which can be listened to by the recipient of the philosopher's ideas. This means that a philosophy that wants to be inflectional cannot produce itself outside the prescriptions of the inflectional theory.