EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS and the ‘MODERN’ THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

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1. EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS

Men are distinctively born with a cognitive consciousness. Basic to the characteristic, all men by nature desire to know (Aristotle, Metaphysics; p. 1). They have a metaphysical need, which, according to Ayn Rand, is “an authentic need of man’s consciousness” (Rand, 1984; p. 8). Thus, in addition to the physical and psychological needs, men have a philosophical need to satisfy originated from its basic nature as a rational being. Yet, the available scientific models of human needs are not abstract enough to integrate it. Models such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, fail short to include the metaphysical need of man.

I think, throughout its existence man meets this metaphysical need primarily in two ways: either through rational inquiry or creating narratives to belief. Both mechanisms of satisfying the metaphysical need commonly attributed for circumventing the anxiety from incomplete knowledge or the ambiguity from multiple interpretations. In general, the need is the same so the solution as the anxieties and ambiguities are the uncertainties that are caused by an incomplete ‘conception of reality’ – incomplete knowledge. Therefore, the ‘need to know’ need is satisfied as far as there is one and only one truth that confirms with reality and unambiguous. However, failing to satisfy this metaphysical need plunged one into an epistemological crisis.

What is an epistemological crisis? It’s a paralyzing situation where one rediscovers for himself versions of the other-minds problem and the problem of the justification of induction. For who thrown themselves in such crisis, Macintyre (2006) describe, they discover, that is, that there is a problem about the rational justification of inferences from premises about the behavior of other people to conclusions about their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and of inferences from premises about how individuals have acted in the past to conclusions expressed as generalizations about their behavior, generalizations which would enable us to make reasonably reliable predications about their future behavior. Hence, an individual who is plunged into an epistemological crisis is reckoned with array of possible interpretations to a representation that he was convinced without ambiguity.

As human, we all are living with an epistemological crisis and very few become conscious of the situation they are in. For the vast majority of us, although we endlessly try to satisfy, it is not possible, at least for now, to completely meet our metaphysical need, ultimately, which is to find an empirical law that is consistent in different contexts. Thus, Macintyre (2006) assert,
ambiguity, the possibility of alternative interpretations, becomes a central feature of human character and activity. And, he adds, madness or death may always be the outcomes which prevent the resolution of an epistemological crisis, for it is always a crisis in human relationships. Therefore, those who realized the crisis they are in will squander their entire life to resolve it.

While the vast majority of us stubbornly tried till we get mad or died, very few were able to resolve epistemological crisis. One’s accomplishment in resolving an epistemological crisis is appraised in terms constructing a new narrative which enables him to understand both how he could intelligibly have held his original beliefs and how he could have been so drastically misled by them. To mention few, Socrates, Aristotle, Christ, Galileo, Kant, Descartes, Luther, Machiavelli, Rand, Polanyi and the like are some of the most prominent philosophers who resolved their epistemological crises, thus, transformed the way we conceive reality. They are acknowledged for resolving epistemological crisis they encountered by reformulating both the criteria of truth and its understanding.

2. MODERN THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

The epistemological debate on ‘modern theory of knowledge’ is as old as human’s existence and primarily stems from the metaphysical need. The need to ascertain a theory or, may be, an empirical law that makes man’s conception reality as consistent as the law of nature. However, as cited by Andrews and Okpanachi (2012), ‘theory is always for someone and for some purpose,’ thus, it always bears the marks of its passage through time (Macintyre, 2006). No exception to the ‘modern theory of knowledge’ – mainly referring to the ‘modernist conception of reality’ purported by the Western world.

Based on their answer to the question: ‘upon whose consciousness is existence dependant?’ and their epistemological implications, the Western world’s conception of reality are broadly categorized into three versions. In his attempt to distinguish Ayn Rand’s philosophy of Objectivism, Leonard Peikoff illustrated the difference. According to Peikoff (1991, p. 20 – 23) the first version is ‘the supernaturalistic version’ – implicit in Plato’s theory of Forms and became explicit with the Christian development from Plato, which viewed existence as a product of a cosmic consciousness. The second version is the Social Version – implicitly professed by
Immanuel Kant and became explicit with the Hegelian Development from Kant, which viewed society introspection as a means of truth. The third version is ‘the Personal view’ – each man’s own consciousness controls existence.

The epistemological debate on the conception of reality has been tough between supernaturalistic and social versions, particularly between the prominent philosopher of each version, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant, respectively. The contest was further intensified during the 20th century involving other two prominent thinkers of the time: Ayn Rand and Michael Polanyi. The argument between the later two philosophers is significantly different from the one held in the 18th and 19th centuries. But, in general, the current controversies on the modern conception of reality, more specifically, theory of knowledge can be seen from two broader perspectives: as part of the continuous epistemological progress and politics of knowledge.

Particularly, since World War II, the Enlightenment has come under critical scrutiny from philosophers, theologians, political theorists, and indeed virtually all humanistic disciplines, as thinkers in these fields have argued that the modern conception of reality definitely established by the enlightenment philosophers led directly to the two world wars of the 20th century and to the crises that have followed in their wake, including most notably the growing threat of global environmental disaster (Jardine, 2011). As result, Weiler (2006) argue, especially since the second half of the 20th century, the concept of “knowledge” has undergone profound changes.

Ayn Rand, the prime advocator of the objectivist epistemology illustrated that the supernaturalistic conception of reality, although it has been abandoned by most philosophers, is still entrenched in the public mind of the Western society. She argues that the root of this mentality is not rational argument but the influence of Christianity. In many respects, the West has not recovered from the middle ages (Peikoff, 1991; P: 21). However, though the Supernaturalistic (religious view) has been the dominating philosophy from Plato to Hume, it is definitely established by the enlightenment philosophers. Particularly, as scholars such as Jardine, (2011); Weiler (2006); Abdi (2006); wiredu (1998); and immanuel Kant himself affirm, the most prominent figureentrenching the modern conception of reality in the Western society is attributed to one Philosopher: Rene Descartes; ‘indubitable principle’ – “I think, therefore I Am”.
Man’s mind functions on the basis of certain context, which, in Ayn Rand’s words, “is the entire field of a mind’s awareness or knowledge at any level of its cognitive development”. As Aristotle indicated, “...for what we know, we often do not know in a different context”. Hence man can make conceptual differentiation and integration only on the basis of prior knowledge, the specific prior knowledge available to him at that stage. However, Descartes’ indubitable principle can be a consistent context of experience only by making space, a nonentity, as a property of things. In his Essay, Critique of Pure Reason, Immanuel Kant labeled the theory of Idealism in general, and Descartes’ indubitable principle in particular, as dogmatic and problematical theory;... which makes no such assertion, but only alleges our incapacity to prove the existence of anything besides ourselves by means of immediate experience. But more importantly, in the same essay, Kant discloses that Descartes’ indubitable principle ‘is a theory rational and evidencing a thorough and philosophical mode of thinking, for it observes the rule not to form a decisive judgment before sufficient proof be shown, …which itself possible only under the assumption of external experience’ (Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Page: 150).

It may seem that we are dealing with the centuries old philosophical argument between the two most prominent philosophers: Kant and Descartes. However, Kant’s last argument is essential to unveil Descartes context-less principle as it is the continuation of a philosophical tradition of the Western society that extends from Greece to USA. And, it is this tradition, augmented with a Christianity religion; dominates the modern conception of reality and theory of knowledge. Hence, to understand the epistemological misconception of the Modernist Science and the knowledge systems of the world, both in the Western and Eastern or Global North or South, we need to dig what Immanuel Kant called the “the Philosophical Mode of thinking”.

Because, it is the predominance this ‘mode of thinking’ which is failed to conjure up the existing reality, by victimizing the education and knowledge systems, and hinders the developmental progress of most nations of the developing world. By and large, it is where the very prejudice of Neo-liberalism arises from. As Williams (2013) assert, the predominance of modernist science, premised on a mechanistic, Cartesian, and materialist worldview means that many of us now inhabit a life-world that is very much a contracted experience of reality—that which we can physically apprehend defines the limits of our experience. Macintyre (2006) also argue that the
incoherence that is unconsciously reproduced by Descartes is a metaphorical incoherence at the heart of every theory of knowledge in the Platonic and Augustinian tradition.

In her attempt to distinguish the Objectivist epistemology from Idealism Ayn Rand alleged the later as Mystics because they hold that knowledge (of true reality) derives not from sense perception or from reasoning based on it, but from an otherworldly source, such as revelations or the equivalent. For instance, Rand chip away Plato’s “abstractions”, Augustine’s God, Hegel’s Ideas, but she doesn’t contest Descartes’ Indubitable principle. However, next to Immanuel Kant, Michael Polanyi, Macintyre (2006); Weiler (2006); and Williams (2013) verify that Descartes’ epistemological ideals are inherited from the Platonic and Augustinian tradition.

Descartes’ advocacy of consciousness without existence unveils when he wrote “…I thence concluded that “I” was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing;..” (Rene Descartes, P: 18-19); and his assertion on knowledge that goes: “…it had been placed in me by a nature which was in reality more perfect than mine,…and which even possessed within itself all the perfections of which I could form any idea; that is to say, in a single word, which was God” (ibid.), in Rand’s words, is a “mystics of spirit”. But still, for Peikoff and Rand, Rene Descartes is not one of the “mystics” but Immanuel Kant’s ‘pure reason’ is social creeds.

Rand’s softer stance on the Platonic and Augustinian tradition, particularly on Rene Descartes,’ and her derogatory approach to Immanuel Kant, is telling. Specially, it is telling that the difference between Rand’s Objectivism and Kant’s ‘Pure reason’ is radical that lies on the conception of reality whereas the former diverges from the supernaturalistic merely on its religious view. Because, Objectivism advocates reason as man’s the only means of knowledge, and therefore, it does not accept God or any supernatural. Ayn Rand emphasizes saying; ‘we [Objectivists] are a-theist, as well as a-devilist, a-gremlinist (Peikoff, 1991; p: 33-34). Thus, for a Supernaturalistic to be Objectivist he only needs to replace the cosmic consciousness by abstraction. However, Kantians assert that we possibly have different sort of conceptual apparatus, thus, our idea of truth and reality would be different. The difference lies in their way of conceiving reality.
3. MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE OBJECTIVIST EPISTEMOLOGY

3.1 THE CONTEXT-LESS CONTEXT

As we discussed it in the previous section, the modern theory of knowledge is proliferated from Descartes’ context-less first principle and purported by the objectivist epistemology, which is thriving on the descend of the Kantians. To elucidate it further, the Objectivist epistemology continued Descartes’ context-less and indubitable principle by its primacy of consciousness: existence exists and identity. It takes reason for non-contradictory identification of existence (reality) using the art of logic, thus, incorporates the Aristotelian objectivism into the platonic and Augustinian mode of thinking. The concept of ‘Objectivity’ attributed as a requirement for the proper development of human consciousness. As Ayn Rand claims, the elements of objectivity in Aristotle’s philosophy, even though incomplete and inconsistently formulated, enabled the West to achieve science and an industrial civilization (Peikoff, 1991; p: 117).

More than the triumph to development of science and civilization, the hallucination of the objectivism epistemology went as far as unifying science into a homogenous and uniform concept. As Weiler (2006) explain, the notion “unified science” as a homogeneous and uniform concept of knowledge that can be applied equally to every conceivable object, originated in the epistemology of the classical natural sciences and its extension to the social and behavioral sciences – in line with a classic statement: ‘There is not ‘natural’ or ‘cultural’ science; there is only science or non-science and all empirical knowledge is scientific in so far as it is valid.’

However, this notion of extending the natural science epistemology to the social or behavioral science, is based on the assumption that are able to construe each other’s behavior which provides us a reliable reasoning and reasonable action possible. But, according to Macintyre (2006), the assumption that we construct about future behavior or present inner attitudes are inferred from past behaviors, which in turn are schemata that are not empirical generalizations, but merely prescriptions for interpretations. Thus, if this ‘unified science’ is to be rational, objective means of knowledge, it must contain elements of a priori cognition. Because, according to Kant, this cognition stands in a twofold relation to its object: either theoretically determine the conception of the object or practically establish its reality – rational cognition. Therefore, unless the pure or a priori element is treated first, and must be carefully distinguished
from that which is supplied extraneously, any other method can only lead to irremediable confusion.

It is here that the influence of Descartes’ presuppositionless principle for the epistemological misconception of modern science comes to view. As Macintyre (2006) illustrate, epistemological progress consists in the construction and reconstruction of more adequate narratives and forms of narrative and that epistemological crises are occasions for such reconstruction. The following is extracted from ‘Discourse on the Meaning of Rightly Conducting the Reason’ by Rene Descartes unveils how he plunged in an epistemological crisis and the form of narrative he used to describe it.

“…as soon as my age permitted me to pass from under the control of my instructors, I entirely abandoned the study of letters, and resolved no longer to seek any other science than the knowledge of myself, or of the great book of the world. ..., I had always a most earnest desire to know how to distinguish the true from the false …But after …studying the book of the world,…I at length resolved to make myself an object of study, and to employ all the powers of my mind in choosing the paths I ought to follow, an undertaking which was accompanied with greater success than it would have been had I never quitted my country or my books.” (Rene Descartes, Discourse on the Meaning of Rightly Conducting the Reason; p: 6 – 7)

Thus, he was reckoned by alternative interpretations of reality, as result his conception of reality became ambiguous. However, Macintyre (2006) argue that Descartes’ description of his own epistemological crisis has, of course, been uniquely influential; yet, ‘he [Descartes] radically mis-describes it’, and thus has proved a highly misleading guide to the nature of epistemological crises in general. The “I think, therefore I am” – is intended to lack any background based an assumption that one knows nothing whatsoever until he can discover a presuppositionless first principle on which all else can be founded.

Jardine (2011) argue science does not work by applying a set “method” to collected data; rather, scientific intuition leads the scientist to attend from the particulars of his or her subsidiary awareness to a new insight that integrates the data into a theory. Therefore, Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” – presuppositionless first principle was not developed all the way through a context-less doubt since the philosophical inquiry itself presupposes the Cartesian doubts and its philosophical teaching tradition. Macintyre (2006) argue, but of course someone who really believed that he knew nothing would not even know how to begin on a course of radical doubt; for he would have no conception of what his task might be, of what it would be to settle his
doubts and to acquire well-founded beliefs. Rather, *Descartes* tried to describe his epistemological crisis by the means of epistemological ideals that he inherited from the *Platonic* and *Augustinian* tradition. *Descartes* also couldn’t recognize that he is responding not only to the timeless demands of skepticism, but to a highly specific crisis in one particular social and intellectual tradition (*Ibid.*).

The incoherence in the *Platonic and Augustinian tradition* is challenged by the postwar era most important philosopher of science; *Michael Polanyi’s philosophy of science, Michael Polanyi (1891-1976)* (*Jardine, 2011*). According to *Polanyi’s theory of knowledge* and the assertion by many other scholars (*Wiredu, 1998; Macintyre, 2006; Weiler, 2006; Jardine, 2011*); the highly abstract understanding of knowledge found in the *objectivist epistemology* is at the bottom of the Enlightenment’s intellectual confusion. Though the *modern concept of knowledge* is assumed to be context-free, but its proponents were failed to notice that the *theory* itself is developed within the context of the *Platonic and Augustinian tradition*. As result, *Weiler (2006)* argue, the crucial failings of the objectivist epistemology inflicted a significant change on the conception of knowledge that is at once more differentiated: in sense that it differs by the objects of knowledge and the circumstances of generating it, to be more contingent: in the sense of statements that are valid only under certain conditions.

**3.2 KNOWLEDGE IN STATIC AND DYNAMIC CONTEXTS**

In addition, the Cartesian theory of knowledge has another epistemological misconception. It does not take the existing *oral-literacy* differences in the perceptual process. However, *Polanyi’s theory of knowledge* shows, by contrast, that knowledge can only be comprehended and justified as a type of process. Objectivist descriptions of knowledge tend to consider only the accomplished feat of knowing, not the actual process of knowing, something most obviously manifested in the way positivism typically considered only completed systems of physical theory, rather than considering developing systems or the actual history of older systems; this failure is what leads to the idea that scientific practice can be exhaustively explicated in terms of an abstract, impersonal, eternally valid (and in this sense static) method (*Jardine, 2011*).

*Macintyre (2006)* indicated the problem arguing that the *Platonic and Augustinian tradition* is a conception of knowledge as analogous to vision: *the mind’s eye beholds its objects by the light of*
reason, which sharply contrasts knowledge and sense-experience, including visual experience. This is another blunder of the objectivist epistemology at the essence of abstracting knowledge from a context of its discovery whereas non-literate people cannot abstract themselves from the lifeworld’s dynamism.

Apparently this is paradoxical given that the non-literate well-acquainted with the specific details of visual phenomena but having difficulty in verbal description. To exemplify the effects of oral-literate differences, let’s pose the same question to myself and my mother. My mother is illiterate but she gave the birth and knows when I was born exactly. I went to school and learn arithmetic, so, I can tell when I was born exactly. If you asked me “When I was born?” I categorically answer “1974.” On the other hand, my mother, as a substitute of such a categorical character – the number ‘1974’, you will have an elongated recounting of prior events before my birth. Although she is the one who gave the birth, she will have a very difficult time giving accurate verbal descriptions of the phenomenon.

As Jardine (2011) illustrates, the difference between me and my mother is literacy which links a particular kind of visual experience to verbalization and communication, a situation quite different from what prevails in oral cultures. Hence, the perception, communication and thought process about the phenomenon is significantly affected by the written or printed visual symbols of the numbers, such as ‘1974’, in the aforementioned example, it serves me (the literate) as an object in three-dimensional space and became a paradigmatic visual experience. But to my mother, the numerical symbol, ‘1974’ won’t have a meaning nor represent a specific visual experience.

So that, Jardine argues, through vision, the dynamism of the lifeworld can be stopped and subjected to detailed description and analysis. And, only literate people can conceive the lifeworld as a kind of “snapshot” and abstract elements of this world from their context and analyze them (ibid.). This is the case that Ong (1981) demonstrated as the fundamental difference between the oral and literate noetic situations where there is the centrality of a particular mode of visual experience for literate perception, communication, and thought processes. Even though the objectivist epistemology defined ‘language’ as a code of [visual-auditory] symbols, the auditory symbols do not serves as the written symbols to conceive reality.
as a kind of snapshot and abstracting the percepts from their context to analyze them by
differentiation or make synthesis through conceptual integration.

More specifically, Jardine (2011) illustrated the case citing a classic study by A. R. Luria on
peasants in Soviet Union, in which subjects were presented with drawings of four objects, such
as a hammer, saw, log, and hatchet, of which one fitted into a different category than the other
three, and asked to group them. Although the subjects with some reading ability were able to
group the objects “correctly,” that is, according to abstract conceptual categories, the illiterate
peasants attempted to group the objects according to how one would use them in actual lifeworld
situations. The illiterate subjects were puzzled to separate the ‘log’ from the tools, since then
there would be nothing on which to use the tools.

Another finding of Luria’s study was the illiterate subjects’ resistance to give abstract definitions
of such objects as trees, instead expressing surprise that anyone should ask such bizarre
questions as “What is a tree?” This also confirms the first finding that definition is the final step
in concept-formation – abstraction which is highly conceptualized and decontextualized.
Therefore, Jardine conclude, using the relatively fixed written or printed word as a paradigm
only literate people can conceive the world as a kind of “snapshot” whereas illiterates have only
minimal capacities for abstraction and decontextualization (ibid.).

Unlike the literates, the illiterate subjects were not familiar with ‘written words’ – which,
according to the objectivist epistemology, are symbol that denote concepts. Of course, it is by
means of abstracting concepts that man can analyze and synthesis, thus, understands reality. But,
concepts are aspect of reality that cannot exist separately, because they are mental entities. On
describing existing reality, I wonder how the ‘abstraction shortcuts’ – the decontextualized
conceptual concretes, can be more reliable than the oral culture’s narrations – the portrait of the
reality itself?

Therefore, the epistemological misconception of the modernist science is inflicted by its
methodology to abstract a complete body of knowledge from the context of its discovery. The
human knowledge, though based on sensory perception, is conceptual in nature, and on the
conceptual level of consciousness displays a new feature: it is not automatic or infallible;
whether through ignorance or evasion, it can make mistake, distort, or departs from reality
(Peikoff, 1991). As any conceptual level of consciousness, the modernists’ concept of knowledge is not different; it was not infallible, and has failed. Thus, the epistemological progress keeps on the conception of knowledge to formulate it to be more contingent than differentiated. From this perspective, I believe that the current controversies on the modern concept of knowledge are inflicted by an epistemological crisis within each of us which constitutes the continuous reconstruction of the scientific tradition.

Weiler (2006) exhibit, due to the developments in the second half of the 20th century, some elements of classical theories of knowledge have suffered, including the concept of objectivity; the idea of the certainty of statements across temporal and other circumstances; the possibility of prediction; and the belief in the possibility of quantification, i.e. of representing reality exhaustively in numerical and quantitative terms. More exclusively, Polanyi’s theory of knowledge, discloses crucial failings of the objectivist epistemology such as: objectivism understands knowledge as impersonal, failing to take into account the irreducible personal element; it depicts knowledge in an abstract fashion, omitting the context that allows knowledge to be attained at all; it is dualistic, in that it thinks only in terms of “subject” and “object” and implicitly regards the knowing subject as a disembodied mind; it is static, concentrating only on completed knowledge rather than actual acts of knowing; and it fails to understand the communal context of the knowing process (Jardine, 2011).

4. THE OBJECTIVISTS EPISTEMOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL COLONIZATION

In this section, we briefly lash on the imposition and importation (in our case, Ethiopia) of the objectivist epistemology and the hegemony of science. But before that, I want to ascertain that the supernaturalistic conception of reality, of course, is still entrenched in the Western public mind, but against what Ayn Rand claims; it has not been fully abandoned by the Western philosophers. Except for its cosmic consciousness, the Platonic and Augustinian intellectual tradition is entrenched in the objectivist epistemology and famously sustained by herself, Ayn Rand and her compatriots such as Leonard Peikoff. After the go-ahead verdict at Berlin Conference, it was exported to the then colonized Africa, in post-colonization it subsist after being institutionalized in the Washington Consensus, and well implemented by UNSECO, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and so on.
Andrews and Okpanachi (2012) demonstrate that the history of colonialism, coupled with the current socio-economic realities in many African countries as well as the perpetuation of imperial or neo-colonial tendencies has placed the continent in an unfortunate dilemma of whether to stick with the colonial form of education and books or use its limited resources to generate innovative ways of producing contextually relevant knowledge. Thus, they argue that the present state of intellectual capability on the continent is characterized by knowledge dependence and thus not well suited towards the development of Africa. Therefore, we Africans, as Welier (2006) suggest, not only need to change the epistemological foundations of our understanding of knowledge, but also with the way in which we assess different processes and institutional forms of knowledge production.

In their effort to draw attention to the epistemic oppression and academic dependency in African countries, Andrews and Okpanachi (2012) argued that African people should think creatively from within and produce knowledge that is more in tune with an African context rather than depending on books, theories, and approaches from elsewhere. Hendricks and Quinn (2000) also stress that the heavy reliance on textbooks and rote-learning which present knowledge as clear-cut characterized school education in [Africa] that left students unable to use academic texts to gain insight into the context-bound processes by which formal academic knowledge can be integrated with personal knowledge brought from their indigenous home cultures.

However, Hendricks and Quinn (2000) underscore that academic expertise has two dimensions: domain content and rhetorical process, and they argue that expertise occurs when students understand the rhetorical processes at work in academic texts (the claims, positions and arguments being supported or questioned) and this ability overlaps with domain content (a critical mass of knowledge in a certain field). Hence, they argue, referencing is a fundamental part of the academic discourse essential to get understanding of knowledge as constructed, debated and contested.

This can be seen by examining the two prominent objectivists’ stance, Ayn Rand and Leonard Peikoff, who morally concluded as: “capitalism emerges triumphant: it is the system of and for the good....from Adam Smith to the present, the value standard upheld by capitalism’s champions has been the “public good” (Peikoff, 1991, p: 391 - 93). As an MBA student, I took
the course ‘International Business Management’ in which Adam Smith is acknowledged as the ‘father of liberalism and economical science’. In his book “The Wealth of Nations”, published in 1776, he brought two classical trade theories: the ‘Vent for Surplus’ and dynamic ‘Productivity theory’. Both my teacher and text books I referred did not go beyond the clear cut summary of such as, the ‘vent for surplus’ theory, more significance for developing country as it enters into international trade not to reallocate given resources but rather to provide the effective demand for output of surplus that would have remained unutilized without trade (Meier, 1988).

Suppose this ‘developing country’ is from the Africa, and you want to elaborate the academic discourse of international trade, so you refer to the rhetoric processes of the ‘famous’ book: An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, is constructed. The following lines are extracted from the aforementioned book by Adam Smith:

“…it may be true, perhaps, that the accommodation of an industrious and frugal peasant exceeds that of many an African king, the absolute master of the lives and liberties of ten thousand naked savages (P: 9)...All the inland parts of Africa... seem in all ages of the world to have been in the same barbarous and uncivilized state in which we find them at present (P: 15). The most barbarous nations either of Africa or of the East Indies were shepherds... populous ....therefore, it was more difficult to displace the natives, and to extend the European plantations over the greater part of the lands of the original inhabitants (P: 489) ...Some particular branches of commerce, which are carried on with barbarous and uncivilized nations, require extraordinary protection. An ordinary store or counting-house could give little security to the goods of the merchants who trade to the western coast of Africa. To defend them from the barbarous natives, it is necessary that the place where they are deposited should be, in some measure, fortified (P: 564)...”

I wonder what Mr. Smith purported for his Majesties’ nation subsist in the barbarous and uncivilized African nations? Isn’t this how today’s ‘Capitalism’ treats Africans? ‘It is not about ‘liberalism and economical science,’ in general or in particular, but as a social system, does it have anything to do with our social values? As Ayn Rand asserted, hierarchically, the science of economics is a derivative, which succeeds philosophy; since economics presupposes politics, it also presuppose morality and, beneath that, metaphysics and epistemology (Peikoff, 1991; p: 379). The current neo-liberal tendencies by the western politicians and institutions such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the like are perpetuation of Adam Smith’s contracted view. Bluntly, policy directions from World Bank and IMF chiefs to Africa feel like being kissed by this man’s corpse.