



## **REIMAGINING HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES, AND THE CHALLENGE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE DIGITAL AGE: AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

*Our world is highly getting digitalized and artificialized because digital thinking and its resultant technological application are gradually permeating every aspect of life. As such, technological reimagining and automation involving digital devices are now spanning across the educational sector; where teaching and learning processes are being envisaged in mechanized and smart-driven mode. Amidst these technological envisagement is Africa standing more like an Onlooker; replete with digital thoughts, but deficit of its adequate expression and practical application in driving humanities and sciences in the continent due to the challenge of academic freedom. This abeyant position resonate critical questions that revolve on whether the African is intellectually and technologically free to re-imagine humanities and sciences. Is the African with his ingenuity and attitude therefore free to re-imagine humanities and sciences in the digital age? Can the global community accept indigenous African digitally re-imagined humanities and sciences in Africa? What really can the African do to successfully re-imagine humanities and sciences in the continent? Using philosophical method of analysis, this study interrogates these critical questions in determination of the challenges posed by academic freedom towards indigenous reimagining of humanities and sciences in the digital age. The study finds that African spaces have limited academic freedom; hence the African is subtly forced to implement the western already digitalized educational processes. This challenge is deeply being fostered by the existent coloniality, geopolitics and encumbering pseudo democracy buffeting the continent. The study notes that until the African mind and space are decolonized, and the African intellectuals exercise due academic freedom, reimagining humanities and sciences in Africa's digital age would remain an ideal devoid of practical application.*

**Key words: Academic freedom, Digital age, Humanities, Philosophical, Reimage, Sciences**

### **Introduction**

The world is getting digitalized and artificialized because digital thinking and technological application are permeating every sector of human society. Congruently, technological reimagining, automation and digital devices are spanning across the education sector; where teaching and learning processes are technologically smart-driven. Amidst these tech-educational innovations is the Africans standing more like



Onlookers; replete with authentic digital capacities but deficit of academic freedom to express and apply them in reimagining humanities and sciences in the continent. The African is rather bent to apply the already western certified and approved tech-devices in the education sector, in a possible manner and contexts. This controlled abeyant position of Africa resonate critical questions that bother on the challenge of academic freedom in reimagining humanities and sciences in Africa's digital age. Is the African therefore academically and technologically free to re-imagine humanities and sciences in the continent? Do academics in African spaces have enough academic freedom to genuinely re-imagine humanities and sciences in present Africa's digital age?

A critical investigation reveals that Africa is not free to re-imagine humanities and sciences, but to implement western already digitalized processes where possible. This is as academic freedom that could necessarily lead to authentic technological and digital educational innovation in Africa is confronted by formidable challenges posed by geopolitics, pseudo democracy and existent coloniality in the continent. These factors even conspire with the internal socio-political, cultural, religious and economic dynamics to undermine the required internal commitment to the public good in the continent. To this end, African national governments are subtly compelled by geopolitical pressures via educational funding, trade agreements, structural adjustment programs and the demands of multinational corporations to bow to the control of the global north that formed the western bloc. These forces limit African states' abilities to prioritize domestic welfare; such as academic freedom and genuine educational re-imaginings. They then compel African governments even to adopt policies that would largely favour foreign investors, sponsors, international creditors and the western bloc; all at the expense of indigenous people, communities and societal sectors. Consequently, the Africans could be digitally and intellectually best described as beings that are born free, but are "everywhere in chains" (Rousseau, 1968:49). They are in the chain of controlled academic freedom, educational and societal emancipation sustained by the buffeting western coloniality, geopolitics and internal pseudo democracy in the continent.

In other parts of the world however, the idea of academic freedom is one of the celebrated practices. This is because of its indispensability in adequately reimagining humanities and sciences, and thus bringing about sustainable societal development. Thus, the present tech-digital nature of humanities and sciences in the West and most Asian countries results from the high level of academic freedom exercised by academics. This story is different in Africa as academic freedom is shackled, subjecting academics to mere implementation and application of that already certified and approved by research and technological institutions in the West.

The hindrance of academic freedom in Africa has however a colonial history. This is as academic freedom prevailed in African spaces prior to colonialism. Shannon (2018) for instance attests that prior to colonialism, North African academic



institutions in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries functioned with remarkable diversity in scholarly approaches. Conversely, the

independence of African state was mere transformation of colonialism to neocolonialism. The attainment of political independence therefore only changed the composition of managers of most African states, not the character of the colonial era. Hence, the attainment of Independence by African states did not destroy but preserved the colonial structures and systems (Isife, 2020:126).

Isife and Agbanusi (2022) observe that through colonial education, Africans were instilled with the mentality of repudiating themselves as non resourceful; and thus incapable of indigenous tech-educational innovation in the continent. The coloniality of these long years of colonialism in the continent is still prevalent. The post colonial geopolitical clutch on African academic freedom is indeed more visible in the shackling of the education sector with western curriculum/learning experiences that largely conflicts with African worldview and thoughts. Thus, African curriculum and educational administration has remained a replication of Western structures towards actualization of less African educational objectives. Along with these structures are the foisted African leaderships that have remained western stooges, bridling academic freedom necessary for indigenous digital re-imagining of humanities and sciences in accordance with African autochthonous cultural values and thoughts. Consequently, indigenous efforts towards reimagining humanities and sciences have remained a futile struggle against Western forces, coloniality and their African stooges. This is more so as the quest for reimagining humanities and sciences is a quest for academic freedom that is a pitch against western universalism and existent academic conformity. Yet, academic freedom remains the fulcrum of authentic digital and technological innovations in humanities and sciences. It is in awareness of this knowledge that this treatise explores the deprivation of academic freedom in Africa and the obstacle posed by this limitation to genuine reimagining of humanities and sciences in Africa's digital age.

### **Conceptualizing academic freedom and the notion of reimagining humanities and sciences**

The concept 'academic freedom' makes sense from the logic of human epistemological limitations. Fish (2000:3) demonstrates this logic when he asserts the philosophical reality of fallibility and thus promotes cosmic relativism by arguing that,

one man's meat is another man's poison...the obligation to refrain from judging one another; from the obligation to refrain from judging one another follows an ethic of mutual respect; this is anchored on the basis that no one is in full possession of the truth.

The comprehensible logic in the preceding assertion signals that the human person is not *omniscient*--all knowing; hence the great need for inclusiveness or what we call



academic freedom. The further implication of the contextual logic exposes the maximal need for each person's freedom to pursue the truth by his own rights or authentic trajectory, but with the obligation to accord another the same freedom. Central in understanding the concept of academic freedom therefore is the notion that my claiming the privilege of choosing or speaking my mind without restriction bounds me to accord the same privilege to other people. In this direction, Bilgrami' (2015:12-13) observes that,

many of our past opinions, which we had held with great conviction, have turned out to be false...So, some of our current opinions that we hold with great conviction may also turn out to be false...Therefore, let us tolerate dissenting opinions just in case our current opinions are wrong and these dissenting opinions are right.

Academic freedom is therefore the freedom of scientific and technological thought and expression; freedom to develop, innovate and apply scientific and technological knowledge and devices in the domain of humanities and sciences without restriction. This meaning encapsulates the idea of no privilege in academic endeavours; and gears for equal right of all voices to be heard in the academic domain.

Thus, academic freedom poises for academics to express their authentic knowledge, thoughts, skills and convictions via the scrutiny of reason and truth that stand as objective norms. It is on this ground that Wilson (1996:131) posits that, "academic freedom is granted in order to ensure that truth actually be sought in teaching and research; in return for being able to pursue truth fearlessly, professors must accept the obligation to pursue the truth". Congruently, Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) policy statement in Smith (2000:24) reveals that, "academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base research and teaching on an honest search for knowledge. Consequently, the practice of academic freedom goes with circumscription, obligation and responsibility. Yet, the vital import of academic freedom is glaring in its ensuring of zero hindrance of academics from academic expressions of their views, innovations and pursuit of authentic objective truth.

From these vintage points, academic freedom could also be viewed as the freedom of teaching and discussion, expressing opinions and carrying out research and innovations without hindrance and censorship (Ndasauka, 2025). Indeed, the concept of academic freedom is an essential essence of tertiary education. This is because it broadens scholars' ideas and knowledge, and enables universities to reconstruct and contribute to the paradigm shift and growth of human knowledge. Ideal tertiary institutions are thus competitive arenas and market places of ideas; where neither greater freedom is given to certain academics nor undue advantage given to ideas over others. Rather, ideas prevail or diminish based on their worth and truth value. Based on these backdrops, limiting academic freedom is inconsistent with the role and being of tertiary institutions.



Meanwhile, practical academic freedom is central in reimagining humanities and sciences. The 'idea of reimagining' connotes a rethink, towards renewing humanities and sciences in line with the digital age. This is academic innovation, which has to do with rebranding humanities and sciences to a more standard and genuine state using the modern technological devices. The concept of re-imagining humanities and sciences therefore signals innovative reproduction for maximal production. It signals re-fashioning, adding something new on the *status quo* and achieving a new but genuine reality the drives realization of educational objectives and human increased productivity.

### **The 'how' of poor academic freedom in Africa**

It was evident that academic institutions in Africa were marked by academic freedom as far back as 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries (Shannon (2018). The present absence of academic freedom therefore began with the later intellectual formation in western academic tradition and western-oriented institutions which imbued many Africans with western mindsets. This mindset is deepened by the learning experiences that are not only predominantly western in content and approach, but repudiates the African as incapable of autochthonous or any educational innovation. The western inclined educational curriculum have however continued to groom academics that are bent on replicating what (educational innovations) has been articulated and approved in the western world. This promotion of western educational universalism is a negation of relativity and distinctiveness of human contexts, truths and principles that characterize humanities and sciences and undergird academic freedom. This development recalls the inalienable fact that "truth may not always be dependent on the collection of facts that a proposition asserts, but rather on the context in which that proposition is asserted," hence the indispensability of relativity in human existence (Chimakonam, 2017:22). As such, science and technology have universal appeal; but their contents are culture bound, hence indigenous science and technology are crucial in reimagining contextual humanities and sciences. Yet, the fact that African academics are constrained to apply western format of humanities and sciences with their associated technological devices in African spaces do not portray academic freedom and authenticity. Consequently, the African academic do not actually do better.

The shackling of academic freedom in Africa is indeed among the lingering achievement of the hegemonic global north. This is as it undermines African intellectual and societal development, removes from African academics the freedom to explore and search for truth objectively, and impacts on the re-construction and practice of authentic humanities and sciences in African spaces. It is against this situation that the call to re-imagine and contextualize humanities and sciences in African institutions of learning along African authentic tradition, digital and technological endowments is arising. Yet, the increasing poor academic freedom and western epistemic dominance of humanities and sciences have continued to cast critical questions on the reimagining project and its effectiveness in the continent.



### **Challenge of academic freedom in reimagining humanities and sciences in Africa's digital age**

It cannot be over emphasized that academic freedom in Africa is being deliberately undermined and limited through carefully manipulated systems. This unfolding challenge aims at maintaining western *status quo* in humanities and sciences, and keeping the African under western dominance. Thus, limited academic freedom as experienced in Africa undermines indigenous thoughts and ideas necessary in renewing education and human practices, and in advancing development. Unfolding this phenomenon, the French biologist Jacques de Certaines, in Hountondji (1990:5-6) reveals.

In the African universities where I was trained, there was a scientific teaching quite valid in the subject matters I had to learn, but it taught dependence rather than real science. I mean that, for three years I was told how biology had developed through experiments that necessitated the use of facilities unavailable on the spot. Therefore in order to do biology, students had to go abroad. Such and such scientific results were published in such and such journals, but these journals were European or American, and one had to read them abroad. In short, during three years...I learned that, in the end, all I could do as a biologist in the future would have to be done under the control of American centres, American periodicals, with European facilities, and that all I could ever do at the University of Dakar was to duplicate European experiments, or to conduct minor experiments that would have to be submitted for publication to European journals. All this apparently good teaching only lead to a feeling of dependency towards those places where science was really being done. How could such a dependent teaching lead to real development?

Even now that "serious debates are going on in the West on the great need for academic freedom, the system of education bequeathed to Africans by western colonialists and intellectuals is one devoid of such freedom" (Ezeogu & Chinweuba, 2025:64). Since the minds of the emerging African intellectuals are controlled by Western forces, how then would re-imagining humanities and sciences in Africa be possible? The challenge of academic freedom in re-imagining humanities and sciences is again evident in

the compelled emphasis of most African higher institutions of learning on the importance and centrality of scholars' publications in western indexed journals in their promotions. Such journals often place interest on citation of western scholars. Such journals even determine the scope of a research work and what to be published; which must often anchor on their purported western intellectual superiority (Ezeogu & Chinweuba, 2025:64).





Another challenge to Africa's academic freedom reveals through western sponsored research institutions and agencies that over the years usurp the power of recognizing African intellectual output and research process based on whether the tune is called from or funded from the global north (Nyamnjoh, 2015). So far, the African academics' research emerged from any of the known research institutions or agencies in the west where scientific outputs and clinical trials are monolithically taken to be certain and true, it is accepted as impactful. Contrarily, such research is rejected. As such, the present rating and ranking of African academics that is based on international (western) recognition have become a big challenge to the reimagining of humanities and sciences in Africa. This is more so as African scholars are technically and subtly being forced to focus in addressing issues that are directly and wholly of interest to the west or global world in order to gain acceptability. In this direction, Africa's interests, needs and worldviews are largely neglected. Again, to attract funding which largely comes from the Global North, the donor agencies dictate what should be the focus of the research. To get the outcome of one's research published at the international level, African academics are also expected to strictly follow the publisher's guideline. These publishers are of course research agencies and funding institutions in the Global North. It all boils down to the old saying; he who pays the piper, calls the tune (Ezeogu & Chinweuba, 2025:64).

From all indices therefore, the West-inclined education and global academic *status quo* dislodge the academic freedom of the Africans and imbue many African intellectuals with the attitude that repudiates re-imagining humanities and sciences in Africa's digital age

### **Reimagining humanities and sciences in Africa's digital age**

The glaring poor academic freedom in Africa raises critical questions for African academics, scientists and technologists concerning reimagining humanities and science in the digital age. This is especially as most of these academics are products of western shaped institutions and education curriculum that actually need to be reimaged. How then can humanities and sciences be reimaged in Africa's digital age by the western shaped African academics, in western shaped education institutions, teaching and learning modes? How then can African academics and stakeholders acquire the capacity to reimage humanities and sciences in Africa amidst western geopolitics and its force of globalization in the continent? As African academics grapple these questions, we must keep in mind that academic freedom has to be accepted as a practice that must be universal in its application. As such, academic freedom as practiced in the west should similarly be practiced in Africa without any modification, and in the knowledge that a contrary to this is a contradiction.

### **Coloniality, geopolitics, pseudo democracy and academic freedom in Africa**

The contextual argument is that academic freedom that could enable reimagining humanities and sciences in African tertiary institutions is undermined by the west via



the forces of coloniality, geopolitics and pseudo democracy. These forces have become carefully and deliberately manipulated by the west in order to limit academic freedom and maintain western epistemic hegemony in Africa. The implication is enormously seen in the western epistemic dominance, control of African mind and underdevelopment in many parts of the continent.

### **1. African coloniality**

According to Maldonado-Torres (2007:243),

coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation of a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus coloniality survives colonialism.

Coloniality therefore refers to the frameworks, patterns and structures of power, relations and interactions that emerged from colonialism, and have continued to shape all dimensions of African life and societies despite the formal ending of colonialism. This means that coloniality is the colonial logic and legacies bequeathed to previous African colonies. These logics and legacies remain naturalizing powers buffeting and neutralizing African genuine emancipation. This is as even the “knowledge production in Africa is still ensnared in the colonial matrix of power” (Oyěwùmí 2016: 4).

Coloniality is however “inseparable from Western modernity, which is the paradigm in which Europe was mythically conceived (through a one-sided and Eurocentric construction of history) to be the most advanced moment on the linear, unidirectional, continuous path of the species” (Coetzee, 2017:73). Because coloniality is inseparable from western modernity, coloniality and modernity together shape African “postcolonial world” and keep it hostage to the western worldview in less tolerance for alternative African indigenous modernities and imaginations of the world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:39-40). As such, colonialism might be a thing of the past as Africa is now in a new era, where the continent has claimed official political independence from the former colonial powers. Yet, presently hindering academic freedom and academic innovation in Africa is the issue of coloniality – an offshoot of colonialism. This coloniality obfuscates the continuities from post colonial Africa and current day independent Africa. Consequently, the once colonized nations of Africa have continued to live under the same “colonial power matrix” (Grosfoguel, 2007:219). This is more so as post colonial African leaders not only rule as stooges of the erstwhile colonists, but have in many ways continued the same colonial pattern in even a more detrimental way that obstructs academic freedom, breach human rights and poses a threat to the survival of African societies.





All these point to coloniality as the extent Africa is still shaped by Euro-centred tenets in her socio-political, economic and intellectual endeavours. In other words, coloniality describes the continued influence of internal affairs of once colonized countries by colonial legacies and the erstwhile colonists.

## **2. The problem of geopolitics**

Geopolitics composes of global interactions and deliberations from which critical global decisions and policies that affect the world are made. Geopolitics is a political struggle of nations, as well as influential relations in which the interest of the western bloc led by the US largely takes precedence. Geopolitics is a multifaceted international politics that set the pace of internal affairs in different continents of the world, especially Africa. As such, geopolitics is a western tool of control over Africa. This is as Africa is rarely included in the essential interactions and critical deliberations that constitute geopolitics that impact the world. More so, these geopolitical interactions are often bothering on exploitation of Africa. The non comparative advantage of the west, which avails her the monopoly of geopolitics is because of here large stable economies, socio-political organizations, responsive, effective and efficient military capacities. With these non comparative capacities, the hegemonic west not only arms herself with geopolitics; she controls geopolitics and shoulders the burden of funding academic programmes, activities and researches in many parts of the world, especially Africa. Since 'he who pays the piper calls the tune', these countries of the global north seizes the opportunity availed by their capacities to fund academic researches and programmes in dominating and controlling research, grant, recognition, aids, academic freedom and even politics in Africa. This control is more strengthened by these western countries' inalienable permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where they exercise veto power over decisions within their interests. Based on their capacities and sponsorships, the west controls even the United Nations Organization (UNO) and other organs of the UNO. With these organs under their firm control, the rest of the world and every sector of human societies in Africa, such as politics, education, trade, etc are controlled (Chinweuba 2019).

## **3. The challenge of pseudo democracy in the continent**

Another inimical factor to African academic freedom is the increasing pseudo democracy in the continent. This is a "political system that parades itself as democratic but offers no true elements of democracy for the citizens" (Akinfenwa, 2022:1). "Pseudo democracy is not people or service driven, but rather suppressive, oppressive, coercive and incapable of delivering the expected public good" (Chinweuba, 2023:17-18). It is more of authoritarian rule via which human rights and academic freedom are limited and hindered by those in government. As such, no form of extrinsic innovation happens in many African tertiary institutions without the approval of those in Government. And because the people in government rigged themselves into offices with the support and help of their foreign partners, they rule as stooges of their foreign sponsors whom they implement their approved policies or



secure their approval to make policies and changes that will impact their interest in every sector, including education.

### **Can re-imagined humanities and sciences in African spaces be acceptable at the global stage?**

The aim of the global north through geopolitics is to compel the rest of the world, especially Africa, to its dominance, control and exploitation. Apart from the UN organs, these aims has been achieved through other controlled international firms and organizations that influence, shape and control African education. These organizations have remained the power behind the grants, funds and sponsorship of education programmes, academic activities and many other projects in Africa. They too determine the quality of every educational output and academic paradigm shift in Africa. Thomas Kuhn alludes to these western organizations in his work “The structure of Scientific Revolutions”, calling them “The scientific community”, and revealing that they globally define educational paradigms; accept or reject it (Ejeh, 2015, 9-10). Because the scientific communities as Kuhn calls them are funded by the large economies of the west, such as US, UK, Canada, Germany, etc., their functions and decisions are deliberately shaped by the western bloc. The implication here is that the west has stable research institutions, educational organizations and research and academic quality recognition institutions under their control. As such, African academic freedom is not only being hindered by these institutions in line with western interest, reimagining humanities and sciences in Africa’s digital age would not likely be accepted nor recognized at the global stage.

The western countries also have available and accessible research funds and grants highly needed and sought by researchers and educational institutions in Africa. This is coupled with the fact that the rating of intellectual outputs and academics’ rankings in Africa is not only based on their international recognition but on whether more percentage of such outputs was published in Europe and America. Through these avenues, the west shapes the content of education and undermines intellectual liberalism that can result to reimagining humanities and sciences in the continent. It thus means that “since these global research institutions and agencies fund academic programmes and research in Africa, they dictate the subject matter, scope and dimension of teaching curricula and research to the advantage of the powerful countries of the global north that offer them sponsorship” (Ezeogu & Chinweuba, 2025:67).

All these boil down to the fact that the envisaged reimagining of humanities and sciences in African tertiary institutions might be an effort in futility. It might neither gain foreign sponsorship nor gain global approval, acceptance or recognition if concluded. The quality and effectiveness of the product of this re-imagination would rather be viewed and dismissed with bias. This bias would, of course stem from the conviction that such African intellectual research output was not funded, controlled, shaped or have the tune called from any of the western research institutions,



paradigm shift institutions, agencies or countries (Nyamnjoh, 2015). A typical reflection of this reaction is already glaring in the Madagascan herbal remedy for the treatment of COVID-19. This remedy was sentimentally discouraged and dismissed by World Health Organization (WHO) as lacking scientific evidence. Yet, it became glaring in the Al Jazeera news channel analysis of May 5, 2020 that the reason for the dismissal was because the cure did not emerge from any of the western research institutions or agencies where it is believed that scientific outputs and clinical trials must monolithically emerge. Thus, African scholars and tertiary institutions lack similar playing ground with their counterparts in the west. Rather, the national and global systems are shaped to coerce Africa into following western prototype of humanities and sciences in order to gain global recognition and acceptance.

### **Africa and reimagining humanities and sciences in the digital age**

The fundamental question of this discourse has also revolved on what Africans can truly do, to effectively re-imagine humanities and sciences in the continent? This effort must start with rejection of pseudo democracy and authoritarian regimes. Africans must therefore build societies where true democracy and human rights prevail. This is because it is people oriented administrations that can be accountable and eager to reduce the dependence of Africa on foreign grants and sponsorship of educational programmes that make the continent vulnerable to western academic hegemony. Only such government can create the capacity that would make African scholars and academic institutions to largely rely on their diverse countries for sponsorship of academic programmes and scholarships. Africa has the required resources; hence all that Africa needs is to wake, stand and walk from their natural self, collaborating with other countries, but detaching from all forms of inimical dependence.

The need for academic freedom in Africa has indeed become germane in order to re-imagine humanities and sciences *in tandem* with African authentic human resource and development. This need for revolution in tertiary education is now more germane because the lot of a people can only improve when there is a positive change in their educational contents that fundamentally constitute their modes of thought and being. As it is, the western grip on the continent deprives the African of genuine, peculiar, quality education and authentic technological advancement, and deepens underdevelopment in the continent. Allowing this trend however, stands to eventually deprive the future African generation of unique indigenous human resources that can initiate, develop and sustain autochthonous science and technology in the continent. Until Africa becomes self-sufficient, the western countries will continue to use their research funds and education grants to entrap academic freedom and suppress authentic innovations in humanities and sciences in the continent's institutions of higher learning. Congruently, the rating, recognition and ranking of African academics and intellectual outputs should be based on African standard. African Union (AU) can help in this regard by setting up a quality intellectual community that would be domiciled in African countries to ensure quality African standard of education and research.



Since academic freedom is the basis for true and genuine education, its control in Africa has direly impacted African autochthonous intellectualism and authentic development. This means that the true freedom of Africa lays with academic freedom; hence the need for African public private partnership (PPP) to indigenously fund education and research programmes. This is in order to save academic freedom of scholars from obstruction cast by foreign sponsors and to facilitate the reimagining of humanities and sciences in consonance with African autochthonous existence and needs.

### **Philosophic foundation of the argument**

It is self evident that no idea has ever been assumed and posited without some kinds of suppositions; hence Hans Georg Gadamar (1967) asserts that nobody speaks and acts from nowhere, but from a particular or some backgrounds. As such behind every supposition is a presupposition that serves as its inevitable foundation or ground of being. The philosophic foundation of academic freedom that underscores reimagining humanities and sciences is thus reflected by Fish (2000) in his 'theory of personhood'. Fish (2000) contends that the human person is naturally a bearer of reciprocal rights consisting of the right to choose, believe and speak. The logic of these rights indicates that since what makes one a person is the capacity for speech, belief and choice, and not the belief, speech and choice themselves, one's beliefs, utterances and choices ought to be respected. This is as one is obligated to reciprocally respect the beliefs, utterances and choices of others because they are rights incidental to human essences. On this lane, academics are obligated to project their technological innovations freely for the development of their education sector and societies. Sequel to this, the conception of academic freedom should be in Africa as it is in the global north. Any contrary to this amounts to contradiction of human nature.

The grounds of these suppositions are more evident in the philosophic presuppositions of the ancient philosopher Protagoras. Protagoras holds that "man is the measure of all things, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not" (Stumpf, 1994:32). This existential position encapsulates the reality of the human limitations in knowledge acquisition based on varied human capacities and exposure. Protagoras holds that we perceive things differently, and knowledge is limited to our diverse perceptions and by our varied environments and exposures. For this reason, knowledge is relative; especially as it is impossible for a particular person or group to discover the total truth and holistic nature of a reality. It is this relativity of knowledge and its undergirding varied but natural human perceptions in Protagoras that remain one of the bases of academic freedom and reimagining humanities and sciences in the digital age.

### **Conclusion**

This study focused on the possibility of reimagining humanities and sciences in Africa owing to the prevalent limitation of academic freedom in the continent. The study finds that academic freedom is limited in Africa via the forces of coloniality,



geopolitics and pseudo democracy orchestrated by western nations. The grip of the western nations on African education sector is even tightened by their economic capacity to fund academic programmes in Africa. This gives the west an advantage of influencing and controlling academic activities in the continent along their interests. Yet, because of their bias on Africa, it will truly be difficult for the global community to accept African re-imagined humanities and sciences unless such project is called from the west, funded and controlled by the western academic or research institutions. It then means that it is time for Africa to organize herself, take full responsibility of funding her educational programmes and research, and thus reduce the grip of the west on the continent. Only in this position can Africa effectively engage in the reimagining of humanities and sciences in the continent.

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