

# The genre of reality: African Philosophy in the Covid-19 crisis

8<sup>th</sup> *Asixoxe – Let's Talk!* African Philosophy Conference

15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Centre of Global Studies, Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech

Republic, and the Centre of African Philosophy, University of Bayreuth, Germany

(the event is taking place online; links will be distributed among registered participants ahead of the event)

The global shock generated by the virulence of Covid-19 pandemic and various measures taken to curtail the spread of this pandemic put in question the way people negotiate their daily reality, and their relationship to the world. We no longer access the real through simulacra; the real itself is in transformation and is confronting us. Our very bodily reality has changed, impacting the way we meet, the way we interact, our relationships. Human interactions have been limited by face masks, social distancing, but also transposed into digital communication.

We invite you to join the 8th *Asixoxe-Let's Talk! African Philosophy conference* and to explore with us following questions and more:

- How is Covid-19 pandemic talked about in Africa? What are the texts and the textual genres that conceptualize Covid-19? How are these expressions culturally specific? What are the narratives of Covid-19, both in the sense of accounts of the experience of suffering from Covid-19 and in the sense of broader societal conceptualizations of the pandemic? How is Covid-19 talked about in African languages?
- What about medical ethics regarding the anti-covid 19 vaccine research, clinical trials, and its application to humans? Is there any philosophical argument in support of the growing up anti-vaccine activism in Africa? How far does the global medical system integrate indigenous knowledges in the struggle against Covid-19? What kind of metaphysics shapes the African countries health public policies? How do our perceptions of solidarity change in the global scramble for the anti-Covid 19 vaccine?

- How to reconcile the right to freedom of African people with the restrictive measures imposed by the state on the grounds of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic? How do anti-Covid measures affect social and cultural practices, and beliefs of African people, as for instance the metaphysics of sickness and death, or burial and mourning practices? How does the mask change our interaction with the face? How does it change the gaze? How do we approach the other and alterity in a situation of "covered faces"?
- How are digital technologies accessed and used by Africans in the effort to help mitigate the effects of Covid-19 and of the anti-Covid measures? Is there any philosophical reading of the increasing digital divide between developed and developing countries?

This year's *Asixoxe – Let's Talk! African Philosophy Conference* will be held online. The conference will also host a virtual reception to launch the **ERC Consolidator Grant "Philosophy and Genre: Creating a Textual Basis for African Philosophy"**. The conference is hosted jointly by the Centre of Global Studies, Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic (<http://cgs.flu.cas.cz/cz/>), and the Centre of African Philosophy, University of Bayreuth, Germany (<https://www.afrophil.uni-bayreuth.de/en/centre-of-african-philosophy/index.html>).

Confirmed keynote speakers include:

Rogaia Abusharaf (George Town University in Qatar)

Paulin Hountondji (National University of Benin)

John Lamola (University of Johannesburg)

Dismas A. Masolo (University of Louisville)

Irina Turner (University of Bayreuth)

Next to **panels with invited keynote lectures**, the conference will include a "Roundtable Discussion" and an "Early Career and Graduate Student Forum". To understand the experiential impact of the pandemic and to explore alternative, especially narrative or artistic, ways of accessing the real, the conference will conclude with a "Phenomenological and Narrative Forum". We invite contributions to these three platforms, following the guidelines below (please indicate in your abstract to which of the three you wish to contribute):

**Roundtable Discussion:** we invite established researchers to contribute to this discussion; the abstracts will go through a rigorous peer-review process to select the ones most pertinent to the topic of the conference.

**Early Career and Graduate Student Forum:** we invite contributions from early-career researchers and students, especially at graduate level, to highlight ground-breaking research related to the topic of the conference.

**Phenomenological and Narrative Forum:** we invite contributions from Covid-19 survivors, their relatives and friends, as well as people who were critically affected by the anti-Covid measures imposed by governments, and who wish to share their experiences. We expect the participants to present a "phenomenology of Covid-19" and its related phenomena, to narrativize these experiences and to develop philosophical reflections on the basis of these experiences, in other words, to philosophize the Covid-19 experience. We also invite reflections on pandemic fiction related to Africa.

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**Registration and participation** in the conference is free of charge. Scholars wishing to participate without giving a presentation are asked to email the organizers to receive the link to the event.

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Please submit your abstracts no later than 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to **Dr Albert Kasanda** [albertkasanda@yahoo.fr](mailto:albertkasanda@yahoo.fr) or **Professor Dr Alena Rettová** [alena.rettova@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:alena.rettova@uni-bayreuth.de).