
From ‘Man is the Measure of all Things’ to Money is the Measure of All Things: A Dialogue between Protagoras and African Philosophy

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Abstract

Protagoras’ declaration that “man is the measure of all things” is conventionally discussed in the context of epistemology. There was, however, a communal or social dimension to this even in ancient Greece. In the unfolding process of time, this latter dimension assumed greater intensity and expanded systematically into all aspects of human relations. The centrality of money in these relations speaks to the transition from “man is the measure of all things” to money is the measure of all things. It is precisely this thesis that the present essay proposes to defend.

1. Introduction: Money is the measure of all things

Cattle were central in various social transactions of ancient Greece. This practice is now obsolete in contemporary Greece. Yet, the same practice – was common especially from Central to Southern Africa from time immemorial. The crucial importance of cattle in the same region of Africa, especially with regard to marriage custom, prevails even in our time. The manner in which the quality and quantity of cattle is computed in marriage negotiations more than suggests that they fulfill the function of measurement of value. In this sense they are similar to money.

Through its gradual but systematic and sustained penetration into virtually all spheres of human interaction at family, communal, social, national and international levels, money has become universal in the conduct of human relations. Its claim to universality has been facilitated by its impersonality and conceptual homogeneity. As such it has become the standard as well as the measure by which even human value is determined.

On this point, Seaford, submits, in his discussion of money in ancient Greece, that “the result was a single thing of unique status, money, that could be exchanged for, and measure the value of numerous other things”¹. Accordingly, it assumed a central role in human relations. The centrality of money in human relations is often confused with its putative indispensability. It is this putative indispensability of money for human survival that sustains the idea, from ancient times to the present, that “Money has become a distinct basic value that is implicitly or explicitly compared to other basic values such as birth or virtue or justice. ... For the mass of humankind the only virtue is money, compared to which self-control, knowledge, rhetoric, speed of foot are of no account, for money ‘has the greatest power’.”² While the great power of money is manifest even in our time, its centrality, as opposed to its indispensability in the conduct of human relations, is ethically and economically questionable. It is the concern of this paper to illustrate and question the putative indispensability of money in the conduct of human relations. Humanity still has the chance, to revert under qualitatively new existential conditions, to “man is the measure of all things” and thus explode the myth that money is the measure of all things.

2. Protagoras contextualized

Bertrand Russell, in his *History of Western Philosophy*³, describes Protagoras as ‘chief of the sophists’. In the context of other attestations to his professional renown⁴, this counts as a fair judgment. Although Protagoras is usually counted as a pre-Socratic philosopher⁵, his time of flourishing overlaps with that of Socrates⁶. In fact, Plato’s *Protagoras* purports to be a dialogue between Socrates and Protagoras.

The Sophists were skeptics, who made their living by teaching “rhetoric”⁷, or the art of persuasion and argument. This teaching aimed at enabling “a public speaker to address an assembly in an effective form”⁸. Therefore, the Sophists did not necessarily consider moral considerations as implied by their calling⁹. They were therefore regarded as socially and morally subversive¹⁰ at the time Protagoras flourished. Indeed, the Sophists “professed to teach the art of Rhetoric, ... There was, of course, nothing wrong in this in itself, but the obvious consequence - that the art of rhetoric might be used to ‘get across’ a notion or policy which was not disinterested or to promote the politician’s career - helped to bring the Sophists into bad repute. ... If a man wanted to make money in the Greek democracy, and it had to be done mainly by lawsuits, and the Sophists professed to teach the right way of winning these lawsuits. ... To this should be added the fact that they took payment for the instruction which they imparted”¹¹.

On the basis of this citation and, in view of our endnote 4, it is clear

that the Sophists functioned in an already monetized society. Considering this and the fact that in the time of Protagoras the principal focus of Greek philosophy was shifting from cosmological and scientific questions to social, political and ethical ones¹² - a shift which the Sophists affirmed¹³ - the question of the status, role and significance of money in ancient Greek society arises as a matter of course. This question, it would appear, has not played a significant role in the interpretation of Protagoras' "man is the measure of all things". It is our intention to interpret Protagoras from this point of view as well. In the time of Protagoras the principal focus of Greek philosophy was shifting from cosmological and scientific questions to social, political and ethical ones¹⁴.

This shift of focus, and the insistence of Sophists like Thrasymachus¹⁵ and Callicles¹⁶ that 'might is right' and that there is no impersonal standard to which to appeal in contests for power¹⁷, both propagated and reinforced a social stain on the Sophists. The stain must have been strong enough to make Protagoras admit the risks involved in proclaiming his profession¹⁸. The risks did not deter Protagoras from stating his thesis that "man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not". This thesis gave rise to considerable controversy in philosophical interpretation. The controversy revolved in part around the question whether or not this was an exclusively epistemological statement. It also revolved around the meaning of the term "man". The third part of the controversy was whether or not the thesis was an axiological or ethical value statement. Referring to Protagoras' thesis, Copleston observed that *"There has been a considerable controversy as to the interpretation which should be put on this famous saying, some writers maintaining the view that by 'man' Protagoras does not mean the individual man, but man in the specific sense. If this were so, then the meaning of the dictum would not be that 'what appears to you to be true is true for you, and what appears to me to be true is true for me', but rather that the community or group or the whole human species is the criterion and standard of truth. Controversy has also turned round the question whether things-...- should be understood exclusively of the objects of sense-perception or should be extended to cover the field of values as well"*¹⁹.

3. Protagoras' doctrine

A classic statement of the supposed inconsistency of the thesis ascribes to Protagoras the view that "the various and conflicting characteristics perceived by men all exist objectively as material parts of the perceived universe"²⁰. This is Aristotle's contention, in his claim that "he [Protagoras] said that man is the measure of all things, *meaning nothing but* that what

anyone believes stably exists; *this being so it follows that* the same thing both is and is not, is both good and evil...., *because* often this thing appears noble to some, its opposite to others"²¹. An individual's perception, then, becomes knowledge in the sense of it being an infallible apprehension of what *is objectively real*. This interpretation is primarily epistemological. It may be stated as the claim that knowledge is limited to the perception of the perceiver. Consequently, there cannot be a general, universally valid and applicable standard of knowledge. One of the problems with this interpretation is that it would endorse solipsism that precludes the claim to knowledge by others. But the mere experience of the others through individual perception is already the basis of collective or "objective" knowledge. Also, the interpretation is fertile ground for both epistemological and ethical relativism.

In Vlastos' estimation, Aristotle's 'report' is rather a constructive inference²². He points out the corruption of Aristotle's testimony: Aristotle draws a wrong inference because he omits "for him" after "stably exists", and arrives at a view which is out of line with the well-authenticated views of Protagoras, who advances the view that "*that which is believed by anyone is (true) for him who believes it*"²³.

4. Epistemological implications of Protagoras' doctrine

The Causal Theory of knowledge, now a well-established trend in Western epistemology, vindicates the Protagorean view. The idea underlying all the various formulations of the Causal Theory is that one's belief is justified and thus constitutes knowledge if the belief is caused in an appropriate way²⁴. The ability to distinguish the actual state of affairs in which the belief is true from relevant possible states of affairs in which the belief is false, is a widely accepted interpretation of "the appropriate way". Now, this distinction is best achieved by a method that is reliable in the circumstances²⁵. The salutary point here is that a reliable method for distinguishing true beliefs varies with the circumstances. This means simply that what constitutes good evidence for a true belief is relative to the state of affairs prevalent in the belief situation. Accordingly, if my measure for p is based on a reliable method, then my claim to knowing p is rationally validated by the Causal Theory.

According to Taylor, the charge of ethical relativism begins with Plato's crediting Protagoras with the view that reality-in-itself is individual in the sense that I live in a private world known only to me and you in another private world known only to you. Thus, my perceptions refer to "realities" that belong to my private world to which I alone have access²⁶. This denies inter-subjective discourse and thus leads to epistemological and ethical relativism. But the charge of relativism cannot stand because as already

stated above, the thesis of Protagoras means that “the community or group or the whole human species is the criterion and standard of truth”.

5. Protagoras and ethical relativism

The interpretation of Protagoras’ thesis as the epistemological position that there cannot be a universally valid standard of knowledge applicable to all situations, does have ethical implications. In the ethical context it means that morality is pre-eminently a matter that pertains to the individual. The argument against epistemological relativism is applicable to the sphere of ethics. Protagoras acknowledges justice as the ordering principle of political life. But justice cannot be known only and exclusively by one individual if it must be the principle and criterion for judging whether or not the well-being of everyone in the polis is protected and promoted. Therefore, justice as the principle and criterion of individual well-being within the polis must be accessible and comprehensible to all the individuals. Here the principle of universality is apparent though inchoately. For Protagoras justice is the manifestation of culture which is the human being’s best weapon against the “war against the brutes”²⁷.

Three factors justify Protagoras’ uneasiness about the charges of inconsistency and disregard for inter-subjective values. First, among these is his insistence that justice, piety and *sophosyne*²⁸ constitute human virtues²⁹, and that these are necessary for political existence³⁰. Second is Protagoras’ humanistic ethics, implied in his claim that the life worth pursuing is the life ordered by justice and fellow-feeling. Third, he claims that wisdom consists in the power to change men (and the judgments or decisions of communities) by imparting what appears to them to be sounder or better³¹ judgments³². What is better to them must be what is useful or pleasant to them, such that the result appears good to them³³. What is right, good or useful then depends on subjective and contingent conditions prevalent within a culture and conceived by members of that culture to be such. What this suggests is a keen awareness of the social foundations of values. Nothing in this implies that dialectical dialogue between cultures and men is impossible. Rather, it provides the possibility for a shared inter-subjective basis for value systems by suggesting that moral conflicts between individuals be resolved by the activity of wisdom into a coherent set of values accepted by the conflicting parties³⁴.

6. “Man” versus money “is the measure of all things”

We have already suggested that the historical context within which Protagoras lived was monetized. Protagoras’ thesis that “man is the measure

of all things” was posited in this context. The question is whether or not the thesis was a refutation of money as “the measure of all things” to the extent that money was the standard and determinant measuring individual status and worth in society. The distinction and separation between rich and poor was not foreign to ancient Greece. The struggle between these two groupings manifested itself, for example, in the rich expropriating the property of the poor and even selling some of the poor into slavery. Slavery was thus also a living reality in the life of ancient Greece. Against this background, it is fair to infer that “rich” and “poor” were indices pointing to social standing and worth in the polis. They also were indices of the relative political and social power between the two groupings. Money was the basis for the separation between the two groupings and the problems that arose between them.

Seaford points out: *“From the surviving laws of Solon we can gather that the polis is already somewhat monetized. Indeed, the Greek polis of the sixth century BC became the first thoroughly monetized society in history. This unprecedented monetization of Athens was probably a cause of the crisis faced by Solon. The central problem for him was that, as he put it ‘of wealth there appears no limit. Those of us who have the most wealth are eager to double it. This strange quality of monetary wealth, as unlimited, was emphasized by the Greeks. Of course greed and the accumulation of wealth are present in societies that do not have money. But the institution of money encourages an activity, the making of money, that is inherently unlimited by any practical consideration. Whereas for all save a lunatic there is a limit to the number of e.g. tripods that can be desired and accumulated, there is no limit to the amount of money that can be desired and accumulated’³⁵.*

The problem faced by Solon in ancient Greece is somewhat a prefiguration – an irony of history – repeating itself and documented in the Bible story about those who were given talents. The individual who was given only one talent is reported to have buried it and later returned it to his master. His complaint that his was only one talent compared to those who received more than one, was not entertained at all. Instead, the returned talent was then given to those who had the diligence to increase and multiply the many talents that they had received. Probably saddened by this, the individual who received only one talent was censured for having failed to act on the understanding that “there is no limit to the amount of money that can be desired and accumulated”. Money then becomes the measure of all things in the sense that the activity of moneymaking is paramount in determining the meaning and worth of the human being as well as the natural environment within which the human being is situated. Thus a human being could be sold for money and become a slave in ancient Greece. In this way human freedom was subordinated to the primacy of the

moneymaking activity. Was this the precursor of the genocidal slave trade in Africa? Was Jesus not worth thirty pieces of silver for Judas Iscariot? The struggle for ancient Greece then was to put into practice and to strike a balance in the metaphysical tension between 'limit and the unlimited'. This struggle has not died yet and it is alive in our time.

The (implicit or explicit) claim of mainstream, neo-classical economics to be a science independent of ethics and politics has of course been variously criticised. I end with one of these criticisms. It will perhaps be the final irony of history that at the very moment at which the view of the world represented by neo-classical economics is congratulating itself on its global triumph, it is becoming apparent that this triumph is unsustainable, that it can do very little (apart from negating its own basic premises) about impending global environmental catastrophe. The material prosperity attributed to the gospel of universal self-interest has been so great that our politicians, though generally aware of the dangers of global warming, are quite incapable of taking decisive action to prevent it. The freedom and unlimit inherent in global capitalism refuses to be limited, and the end of history will not be how Francis Fukuyama imagined it. The economically unlimited, condemned by Aristotle as contrary to nature, is now making nature uninhabitable. Despite all their faults, perhaps the ancient Greeks have something to teach us after all³⁶. Aristotle's condemnation was ethical. He censured the pursuit of the 'economically unlimited' since in practice it established the "*sovereignty of money*"³⁷ and undermined the ethical foundations of human relations. And we draw from Protagoras' thesis and Aristotle's censure the lesson that it is ethically imperative to decenter money, to remove it from its throne of deadly inviolability, ubiquity and omnipotence and to restore "*man as the measure of all things*". Against this background we turn to a consideration of affinities and differences between Protagoras and African philosophy.

7. Protagoras and African philosophy

Each of the three identified strands of Protagoras' thought find an echo in authentic (indigenous) African thought. One prominent point of their convergence is on humanism³⁸. The humanistic leitmotif in Protagoras' thought is succinctly captured in his thesis that the human being is the measure of all things. A number of African thinkers, and we think correctly, have identified humanism as a foundational principle in indigenous African social and political thought and practice. It is evinced in Akan thought, for instance, by the guidance that the following maxim provides in formal political and legal deliberations: "*onipa na ohia: mefre sika a sika ngye so; mefre ntoma a ntoma ngye so; onipa na ohid*"³⁹.

Wiredu provides two complementary interpretations to this proverb, both of which establish its humanistic leitmotif. According to him⁴⁰, it means that

- a) all values derive from human interest
- b) human fellowship is the most important of human needs.

A couple of principles flow from this humanistic ethos. One of these is the principle of the political sovereignty of the people,⁴¹ which states that political power rests ultimately in the hands of the people. As ultimate stakeholders in the polity, they have a fundamental right to be represented in the composition of government and in the determination of strategies meant for their welfare. Faithful adherence to the principle of representation is vital since it boils down to the recognition that the philosophical “social contract” is meaningful and has a chance of success if and, only if it acknowledges that the people’s right to life – in the terminology of John Locke, the “right to subsistence” – is inalienable and, therefore paramount. *Rerum Novarum* underlines this point in these terms: “since the domestic household is anterior both in idea and in fact to the gathering of men into a commonwealth, the former must necessarily have rights and duties which are prior to those of the latter, and which rest more immediately on nature. If the citizens of a State – that is to say, families – on entering into association and fellowship, experienced at the hands of the State hindrance instead of help, and found their rights attacked instead of being protected, such associations were rather to be repudiated than sought after”⁴².

Another principle is that indigenous African humanism upholds dialogue and consensus as the foundation of communal and political organization. According to Protagoras, a particular view or value remains true or good for a particular society until it is overturned by “better” views of a wise man. This implies both openness to dialogue as the route and process of exchange of views leading to consensus. The end result of consensus is the adoption of the “better” view. Our understanding of dialogue is predicated on Bujo’s criticism of the communication theories propounded by J. Habermas and K.O. Apel. Briefly, Bujo questions the “inhumanity and the imperialism of reason” that permeate the communication theories of Habermas and Apel⁴³. As a counter to these theories Bujo offers the “palaver” as the indigenous African model of communication ensuring recognition and respect for humanness and assuring reason a place in the exchange of ideas. According to Bujo, “the model of the palaver, which ... has proven to be more efficient in the African context, ought to be remembered. This model takes the interests of the individual into consideration in such a way that it can successfully

function at the micro-ethical level too. The participants of the palaver are indeed in solidarity with all those affected in the community, since they themselves live with and among the people and since they in principle do not exclude anybody from the discourse of palaver. Dialogue with the ethics of discourse could be fruitful for both models. On one hand, the procedure of palaver could work towards a more reflected reasoning, without abandoning its sage-oriented basis and its priority of humanness. On the other hand, the ethics of discourse will reduce its overemphasis on rationality in favour of humanness, in order to give the person as a person a privileged position. Only in such a manner can the ethics of discourse completely achieve that equality of chances of which it tirelessly speaks”⁴⁴.

The third is the principle of exchange. This is illustrated by reference to Wiredu and Ogotemmel. Wiredu points out that government in the traditional Akan setting is better described as a coalition of citizens⁴⁵. Accordingly, political power is set up for participation – not for appropriation – and the underlying philosophy is one of cooperation – not confrontation⁴⁶. Participation and cooperation rest upon the foundation of Akan morality expressed by the maxim: *Obra ye nnoboa*: Life if mutual aid⁴⁷. Among the Bantu-speaking peoples the same principle is manifested in the practice of *letsema* translated with apparent lack of understanding as “work party”. Surely, a “work party” in the mining industry, for example, is constituted with the intention and, in the spirit fundamentally different from the philosophy of *ubuntu* in which the practice of *letsema* is anchored. *Letsema* is the manifestation of the principle of exchange. It is the sharing of labour, the exchange of the means and the instruments of labour, it is the sharing of mutual concern and care over widows and widowers, over orphans as well as the poor. It is the will to promote and protect the well being of others as a means of doing the same for oneself. It is indeed life in an extended communal family explicated by Nyerere in his classic *Ujamaa*. The African sage, Ogotemmel, expresses this principle of exchange crisply in these terms. “*The altar gives something to a man, and a part of what he has received he passes on to the others, ... A small part of the sacrifice is for oneself, but the rest is for others. The forces released enter into the man, pass through him and out again, and so it is for all ... As each man gives to all the rest, so he also receives from all. A perpetual exchange goes on between men, an unceasing movement of invisible currents. And this must be so if the universal order is to endure. The Word is for everyone in this world, it must come and go and be interchanged, for it is good to give and to receive the forces of life*”⁴⁸.

In this citation Ogotemmel lays bare the principle of exchange from the point of view of African vitalogy⁴⁹. Against this philosophical background, the claim to private property, especially with regard to land, is rather odd for an African loyal to indigenous philosophy and culture. The

principle of exchange thus understood has survived the “independence” of African states. Its role in the development syndrome for Africa is yet to be acknowledged.

8. The Global Economic Context and NEPAD

Globalization is principally about the convergence of culture, political power and productive economic resources⁵⁰ in the service of wealth creation. In the current global context, the vehicle for wealth creation is the global ‘market’ of capitalism. To the extent that it drives ‘the market’ upon which the structure of capitalism rests, competition is a core feature of capitalism. Wealth creation based on competition is the cornerstone of neo-liberal economics which holds sway in the global economic order that has co-opted the NEPAD, as indicated by its aims⁵¹. It is our view that globalization, with its competitive capitalist markets, has de-centered man for money as the measure of all things.

This is because the notion of competition upheld here represents the pursuance of self-interest in an adversarial and exclusivist fashion. What this means is that competition as it is understood in the context of globalization refers to a contest between rivals in which a rational actor seeks his/her interest against that of another rational actor⁵². Under this conception, two scenarios are liable to rise. First, such rivalry makes human beings mere tools in the quest for self interest. Secondly, competition excludes one from the field of meaningful ability for self-interest seeking if one lacks material or intellectual wealth. Thus competition is the willful permission conduct oneself in human relations. It justifies the taking away of life and of human dignity⁵³. Consequently, not “man”, but wealth becomes the measure of all things in the capitalist context.

According to Presby, the philosophy underlying the thoughts and actions of prominent Western politicians who advocated the universalization of neo-liberal economics is provided by philosophers of capitalism like Ayn Rand and Garreth Hardin, who suggest that “*the poor must rather starve and die than become perennial charity cases for those who are rich*”⁵⁴. The philosophy of capitalism then espouses an extreme methodological individualism that exalts the virtues of selfishness. In this sense, globalization furthers the trajectory of the Western thought that initiated and sustained slavery, colonial domination, the missionary invasion of Africa, and continues to sustain neo-colonialism⁵⁵.

We saw above that the attribution of ethical relativism to Protagoras is problematical. Neither can the philosophy of selfishness be attributed to indigenous African thought. Accordingly, the defense of selfishness and the substitution of money for man as the measure of all things, which are central

tenets of the global capitalist system, as they contravene both Protagoras and African thought.

9. NEPAD and Globalization

It is rather perplexing that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which claims the status of an "African-owned and African-led development programme" committed to the self-reliance and sustained upliftment of Africa⁵⁶, should affirm the philosophy, aims, and processes of globalization. This is precisely because the aims and philosophy of globalization vary from the African perspectives on the human being and society. We now take a closer look at the NEPAD document to establish this.

The NEPAD document was endorsed in October 2001 by African Heads of State and Government meeting in Abuja, as the main development agenda for Africa⁵⁷. NEPAD purports to constitute a 'partnership' at two levels. Firstly, it is a partnership of African countries with the governments and owners of capital in the Western world. Success at this trans-continental partnership is desirable for two reasons. It is envisaged that it would change the historical relationship between Africa and the West in order to dispense with the "dependency through aid" that underpins it⁵⁸. Next, this type of partnership is desirable to the extent that it holds the prospect of generating "capital flows to Africa, as an essential component of a sustainable long-term approach to filling the resource gap"⁵⁹. Furthermore, NEPAD aspires to build a partnership among African countries principally for the purpose of implementing 'the Programme of Action'. This programme essentially seeks to derive maximum gain from the anticipated capital flows⁶⁰.

The document recognizes that Africa's malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world stems from centuries of unequal relations between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries⁶¹. This relationship underlies the logic of African underdevelopment⁶². Section V of the document then outlines a 'Programme of Action' for restoring the integrity of Africa in its relations with the world. The main objective of the programme is to enable the continent catch up with developed parts of the world⁶³; and its goals are:

- To ensure that the continent achieves the agreed International Development Goals (IDGs)⁶⁴.
- To achieve and sustain an average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of above 7 per cent per annum for the next 15 years;

The foremost political mechanism needed to sustain that growth is liberal

democracy⁶⁵. Further, the document also supports the employment of the poverty reduction strategies as the most appropriate mechanism for the distribution of income and wealth⁶⁶.

10. Appraisal of some sections of the NEPAD document

The NEPAD document is open to many criticisms, and we wish to dwell on four of these.

First, for a document which claims to be African-owned and African-led, it is rather casual on the role African culture can play towards development. It acknowledges "*Africa's rich cultural legacy*" and assigns to it the role of serving "*both as a means of consolidating the pride of Africans in their own humanity and of confirming the common humanity of the peoples of the world*"⁶⁷. The problem with this rather "*by the way*" approach to African culture is that it undermines the pivotal importance of culture for political and economic development in Africa.

Secondly, NEPAD is deeply rooted in neo-liberalist economics, which makes money rather than "*man*" the measure of all things. This is exhibited in three main ways in the document. First, by upholding of "*economic growth*" as one of its principal aims without qualifying this with the necessity to protect the well-being of every individual. Here the issue is both epistemological and ethical. Is there only one understanding and knowledge of economics, the kind of knowledge that is always and inevitable destined to seek "*economic growth*"? The question is somewhat rhetorical though urgent in view of the deleterious effects of development based upon economic growth as the decisive epistemological paradigm. Ethically, the imperative of economic growth is based upon the untenable presupposition that the life-giving and sustaining resources on planet Earth are infinitely unlimited. Accordingly, the acquisition of such resources in the name of economic growth precedes the ethical imperative to use as much as we need leaving the planet as good as we have found it and, ensuring that future generations shall also use and enjoy its life-giving and life-sustaining resources. This reasoning – manifestly against the "*Lockean*" proviso – is also fundamentally at odds with the African ethical principle that *feta kgomo o tshware motho*: if and when one must make a choice between protecting disposable wealth and saving human life then one must choose for the latter. This reasoning is consistent with the ethical interpretation of Protagoras' thesis. Second, NEPAD de-centers the African in its endorsement of opening up African economies to external investors and securing the property rights of foreign capital. Third, Neo-liberal economic strategies pervade some of the key responsibilities which the signatories promised to undertake. These are:

- (a) Restoring and maintaining macroeconomic stability, especially by developing appropriate standards and targets for fiscal and monetary policies, and introducing appropriate institutional frameworks to achieve these standards;
- (b) Instituting transparent legal and regulatory frameworks for financial markets and auditing of private companies and the public sector;
- (c) Promoting the development of infrastructure, agriculture and its diversification into agro-industries and manufacturing to serve both domestic and export markets.
- (d) Strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution at the regional and continental levels, and to ensure that these mechanisms are used to restore and maintain peace.

Clearly, (a) to (c) furthers neo-liberalist policies. It is suggested that the achievement of (d) may not even be for its own sake but to provide "*an enabling environment*"⁶⁸ for business. Given this, the capability of the programme to address the needs of the Africans or deal with the core problems hindering Africa's development is doubtful. NEPAD's emphasis on integrating Africa's economy into the globalization process, expanding the freedom of markets and of capital movement, was rejected by Nigeria and other countries at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference at Doha, Qatar in 2001. It is most likely, therefore, that the success of the document will be heavily contingent upon the support of imperial interests. This greatly undermines its ability to address local needs and therefore secure local ownership and support⁶⁹.

Furthermore, the supposition that a 'partnership' with the wealthy West will rectify the existing unequal relations borders on fantasy. The Akan maxim, that 'the hand that receives is always beneath that which offers' succinctly explains why such a supposition is illusory, for if one takes the philosophy of capitalism seriously, one would hardly come to the conclusion that capitalists will offer someone resources in aid to enable the person ascend to the position where you can compete with them.

11. Conclusion

We have argued that from ancient Greece to the present, money has supplanted Protagoras' dictum in interpersonal and international relations declaring with its increasingly powerful voice that "*money is the standard and measure of all things*".

Through NEPAD, Africa has adopted the strategies of neo-liberal economics and the processes and institutions of globalization as indispensable tools for the realization of its vision of self-development. Thus

Africa has embraced the exalted notion of the role of money in human relations because in our view, globalization, with its competitive capitalist markets, has de-centered man for money as the measure of all things.

We have maintained that assigning such centrality to the role of money in the conduct of human affairs is both economically and philosophically untenable for the African future, as it is incongruent with the fundamental ethical principles that sustain African social organization.

In our view, a framework for Africa's development must envision existential conditions based in the ethic of "man is the measure of all things". This however, requires recapturing the basic ethical tenets of the philosophic ethic of Protagoras' dictum and that emanating from the knowledge and ontological systems of indigenous Africa. Such an orientation is more sustainable philosophically, as it yields a comprehensive vision of development that disputes the one founded on the ethic of competition. Further, it will position Africa as the subject of the struggle for its liberation from the imperialist and exploitative practices it has suffered, and continues to suffer, from its encounter with the West.

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1. Seaford, R., 2004. *Money and the Early Greek Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p. 147.
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 4. In *The Meno*, (91d – 91e) Plato reports that Protagoras practiced his profession for forty years and earned more money from it than did "Pheidias and ten other sculptors"; and speaks of his "good reputation" till his death and afterwards. Also, in Plato. 1956. *Protagoras*. Vlastos, G. (ed). Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Co., p. iii; Vlastos reports that Protagoras is reputed to have been the confidant of Pericles, who commissioned him to write the constitution for the Athenian colony of Thurii.

5. As in Honderich, T. 1995. (ed) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 725. Also in Russell, B. 1979. op. cit. chapter X.
6. Protagoras lived between 490 – 420 BC, and Socrates between 370 – 399 BC. Besides, Plato's dialogue *Protagoras* purports to recount an encounter between Protagoras and Socrates.
7. This is how Georgias describes his calling. See Plato, 1960: *Georgias*, Hamilton, W. (tr.), London, Penguin Books, 449a.
8. Plato. 1957. *Theaetetus*. Op. cit. p. 72.
9. Russell, B. 1979. op. cit. p. 95.
10. Honderich, T. 1995. Op. cit. p. 840.
11. Copleston, F., 1946, 1962. *A History of Philosophy*, Volume 1, Part 1, Image Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York p. 104.
12. Ibid. p. 375, p 839. This is the view of many historians of philosophy, who consider Socrates as the beginning of sustained discourse on ethics in Ancient Greek philosophy.
13. Copleston, F., 1946, 1962. p. 101-102.
14. Ibid. p. 375, p 839. This is the view of many historians of philosophy, who consider Socrates as the beginning of sustained discourse on ethics in Ancient Greek philosophy.
15. In Plato's *The Republic*. 338c ff.
16. In Plato's *Georgias* 483a ff.
17. This refers to the position that "justice" implies the unlimited right of the strong or mighty in society taking advantage of the weak.
18. Plato. 1956. *Protagoras*. Vlastos, G. (ed). op. cit. 317bc.
19. Copleston, F., 1962. op. cit. p. 108.
20. Plato. 1956. *Protagoras*. Vlastos, G. (ed). op. cit., p. xiii.
21. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1062b 13 – 18, cf. Plato. 1956. *Protagoras*. Vlastos, G. (ed)., op. cit. xiv.
22. Ibid.
23. Plato. *Theaetetus*, op. cit. 170a.
24. Appiah, K. 1989., *Necessary Questions*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p. 52.
25. Goldman, A. 1978. "*Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge*". In Pappas, G. S. and Swain, M (eds), *Essays on Knowledge and Justification*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 124.
26. Taylor, A. E. 1926. *Plato: The Man and his Work*: London: The Dial Press, p 326.
27. Plato. *Protagoras*. op. cit. 322b-c.
28. Ibid., Vlastos G. 1956. op. cit. informs us on page viii that this word can have any or all of the following meanings: discretion, prudence, reasonableness, decency, good sense, moderation, temperance, and self-control.

29. We wish to adopt Vlastos', definition of 'virtue' (in 1956. op. cit., p. x) as the sum of right dealings in human relations. Protagoras makes special mention of political virtues as part of human virtues.
30. Vlastos G. 1956. op. cit. 323a – 325a.
31. Though not truer since all opinions are true for those who hold them.
32. Plato. *Theaetetus*. op. cit. 166e – 167d.
33. Ibid., p. 73.
34. Vlastos, G. 1956. op. cit., pp xx – xxiv.
35. Seaford, R., 2006. "Limit and the unlimited in ancient and modern ethics and politics" unpublished paper presented to "The First International Conference on Ethics and Politics" held in Heraklion, Crete, May 24-28 2006. p. 1 (emphasis in the original text).
36. Seaford, R., 2006. op. cit. p. 6.
37. Vandavelde, T., 1996. "Appropriation and the sovereignty of money" in *Law, Life and the Images of Man*, (ed.) Fleerackers, F., van Leeuwen, E and van Roermund, B., Duncker & Humblot: Berlin p. 481-483.
38. By this we mean, simply, the tendency to emphasize the human being. We prefer the term humanness to humanism. The former is consistent with traditional African philosophy and culture of ubuntu among the Bantu-speaking peoples. For an extended discussion of this point see, Ramose, M.B., 2002. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, Mond Books Publishers: Harare, Zimbabwe p. 41-43.
39. Literally: It is the human being that counts: when I call on money [when I am in need] money does not respond; when I call on my clothes, my clothes do not respond; [so] it is the human being that counts.
40. Wiredu, K. 1992. "Moral Foundations of an African Culture". In Wiredu, K and Gyekye, K (eds) *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I*. Washington, D. C: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. p. 194.
41. Ramose, M.B, "The King as memory and symbol of African Customary Law", in Hinz, M.O. (ed.) 2006. *The Shade of New Leaves*, Berlin: LIT Verlag. p. 362-363.
42. Rerum Novarum, par. 10, in *Catholic Social Thought*, 1995. O'Brien, D.J. and Shannon, T.A., (ed.), Maryknoll: New York p. 18.
43. Bujo, B., 1997. *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, (trans.) Nganda, Cecilia Namulondo. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa. p. 38-40.
44. Bujo, B., 1997, op. cit. p. 41.
45. Wiredu, K. 1997. "Democracy and Consensus in African traditional Politics: A Plea for Non-Party Politics". In Eze, E. C. (ed) *Post-Colonial African Philosophy*. Blackwell., p 310.
46. Ibid. p. 308.
47. Wiredu, K., 2003. "The moral foundations of an African culture", in Coetzee, P.H. and Roux, A.P.J., (ed.) *The African Philosophy Reader*, Routledge, London p. 293.

48. Griaule, M., 1965. *Conversations with Ogotemmelí*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 137.
49. Nkemnkia, M.N., 1999. *African Vitalogy*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa. p. 165-170.
50. Predominantly capital, labour and technology.
51. Paragraph 27 of the NEPAD document states these as self-reliance and sustained upliftment of Africa.
52. The Group of Lisbon, 1995. *Limits to Competition*. Cambridge, Massachussets: MIT Press. p xii.
53. Arnsperger, C. 1996. *Competition, Consumerism and the "Other": A philosophical Investigation into the Ethics of Economic Competition*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut de Reserches Economiques pp.12-13.
54. Presby, G. M. 2002. "African Philosophers on Global Wealth Redistribution" pp 283-300 in Presby, G., Smith, D., Abuya, P. & Nyarwath, O (eds) *Thought and Practice in African Philosophy*. Nairobi: Konrad Adenauer Foundation., p. 286.
55. Eze, E. C. "Introduction", in Hountondji, P. 1983. *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press. Also Mudimbe, V. Y. 1988. *The Invention of Africa, Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Chapter 3.
56. 2001. The New Partnership for Africa's Development. Paragraph 27.
57. The Africa Union has adopted NEPAD as its development plan. See The AU's The Strategic Plan at www.au.org.
58. *ibid.* Paragraph 5.
59. *Ibid.* paragraph 153.
60. *Ibid.* paragraphs 27, 47, 60.
61. *Ibid.* paragraph 8.
62. *Ibid.* paragraph 3.
63. *Ibid.* paragraph 65.
64. *Ibid.* paragraph 68. The IDS are: (1) to reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015; (2) to enroll all children of school going age in primary school by 2015; (3) to make progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in the enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2015; (4) to reduce infant and child mortality ratios by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015; (5) to reduce maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015; (6) to provide access for all who need reproductive health services by 2015; (7) to implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015.
65. Paragraph 79 of the document provides that "Africa undertakes to respect the global standards of democracy, which core components include political pluralism, allowing for the existence of several political parties and workers' unions, fair, open, free and democratic elections periodically organized to enable the populace choose their leaders freely".

66. Paragraphs 118 and 151.

67. Ibid. paragraph 182.

68. This is a term frequently used in World bank and IMF documents to refer to the state of security in a country, and the level of development of its liberal democratic practice and regulative instruments for investments.

69. Lehulere, O. 2003. "NEPAD, The Program of South African Capital". In *Khanya: A South African Journal for Activists*, 4, November.