

THE EDUCATION OF MAN : NYERERE'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS AN
EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA. //

A critical reflection on Nyerere's educational ideas in the light
of Iu-jipen's existential phenomenology and of Freire's existential
philosophy of education, and with specific reference to Nyerere's
thinking about the meaning of education in the African context.

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ABSTRACT

This is a philosophical study about Nyerere's educational thinking, its main purpose being to establish the significance and meaning of that thinking in philosophical terms. Although President Nyerere of Tanzania has been widely acclaimed as a statesman and a political philosopher, he has rarely been regarded as an educational philosopher in his own right. What is more, his educational ideas have often been misunderstood and misinterpreted. As a result, the philosophical character of Nyerere's educational thinking has tended to be ignored or has been dismissed as highly utopian or as "hopelessly revisionist". From all this follows our primary concern which is to establish the possible significance of Nyerere's educational ideas in philosophical terms. Our second concern relates to the meaning of these ideas; more particularly, it seeks to establish the manner in which Nyerere has arrived at his optique which views education as a human phenomenon.

Given these two concerns, two hypotheses are proposed. The first hypothesis posits that Nyerere's educational ideas will come to light in a truly philosophical manner through the words and works of established philosophers, in casu William Lijpen and Paulo Freire. The second hypothesis posits that Nyerere reflects in a similar manner on the education of man, as Lijpen does on human existence and Freire on the pedagogy of man.

To demonstrate the validity of the first hypothesis, Nyerere's educational thinking is critically analyzed in the light of Lijpen's

existential phenomenology and of Freire's existential philosophy of education. The method used here is that of textual analysis. Following this analysis, it is found that, although Nyerere's educational ideas have come to light as truly philosophical in character, more is required for one to come to terms with Nyerere's logic of education. Nyerere's educational thinking has - it appears from the foregoing analysis - an internal logic of its own which is examined by means of the second hypothesis.

To demonstrate the validity of the second hypothesis, which posits that Nyerere reflects phenomenologically on the education of man, involving a dialogical approach, use is made of the dialectical method. The study tries to capture Nyerere's dialogue with the educational reality of East Africa, moving from the thesis of educational theory via the antithesis of educational facticity to the synthesis of educational praxis. Following the application of this method it is found that Nyerere's synthesis amounts to an optique which views education in existential terms, that is, as a human phenomenon. Underlying this optique is a concept of man as an acting person who seeks to liberate himself within the well-defined context of society. "Man-in-society" is Nyerere's central reference-point, both for his political and educational thinking.

Having demonstrated the validity of the two hypotheses, one cannot but recognize the philosophical meaning and significance of Nyerere's educational thinking as well as the contribution thereof towards an existential philosophy of education in Africa. It is here in fact that lies the merit of this philosophical study.