uBuntu, Cosmo-uBuntu, and Artificial Intelligence: A Global Africa Contribution

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My interest is in processes as integral parts of problem-solving and eventual solutions; thus, I am interested in making salient the importance of philosophical and theoretical foundations in solution-seeking and technological advances. In engaging generative technologies such as the so-called Artificial Intelligence (AI), we must first understand that machines have no intelligence, but humans do; such human intelligence facilitates the process and efficiency of machine learning which empowers machines with AI. Since the human in Modernity realizes itself through the mind as in the Cartesian motto "cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am)—as opposed to the human in the African-derived epistemology known as uBuntu, which is rooted in the motto, 'a person is a person through/unto/because of persons'—it is no wonder that machines are personified as intelligent inventions and substitutes for humans, especially the human perceived as non-intelligent. I herein argue for evoking uBuntu and African cosmology in the sphere of generative technologies because they ground us in the reality that humans are not only connected to humans, but also to their ancestors and land. Ancestral presence in African Cosmology is also denotative of the world they inhabit and all that is in it—thus, the environment, technology, and other forms of life in the universe are critical ecological aspects of every dimension that affects human life. Moreover, in uBuntu-world, in a Sankofa fashion, history moves forward while drawing wisdom from the past and carrying hope for and into the future—i.e., the past, the present, and the future are interconnected, juxtaposed, and not mutually exclusive. Cosmo-uBuntu theory is the voluntary embracing of uBuntu as a foundational value system in our participation in planetary conviviality, without forcing universality. Cosmo-uBuntu and uBuntu-informed praxis offer an alternative to the world: to engage in an AI that does not preclude the human since African cosmology embraces the humanity of all humans and takes the non-human, seriously, as part of the ecosystem in the cosmos. Therefore, for AI to serve humanity and avoid the perils of the so-called modernization such as the cycles of 'invention-damage-remediation-complacency,' Global Africa must play a significant role in the process of conceptualizing, inventing, innovating, and operating technology. This will ultimately play a critical role in shaping the education of the future, which in Sankofa terms is the education of the past and of the present—those who were, are still here; the unborn are already here.