

One-Page Pre-Session Note RVP Washington Seminar Participants (Aug 17 – Sept 18, 2026)

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Topic: Fragile Universals: Rationality, Affect, and the Structure of Solidarity in Post-African Traditional Societies

The Thesis in Tension/Abstract

My research posits that post-African philosophical tradition, expressed through Akan, Yoruba, and Zulu metaphysical systems, rejects both the Cartesian division of reason and affect and the Western onto-theological presumption of stable, self-identical substance. African thought conceives personhood as acquired rather than given—a fragile achievement of relational attunement rather than a metaphysical endowment. Within Akan and Yoruba ontologies, rationality is inseparable from affect, producing solidarity not as a fixed structure but as a dynamic event. Post-African traditional societies (PATS) inherit communitarian frameworks yet operate under radical precarity, diagnosed through the concept of “fragile universals.” These universals—claims to reason, affect, and collective identity—are destabilized by Western techno-scientific modernity and transhumanist extensions, where machine logic and obsolescence erode the ethical fabric of communal existence. Employing critical hermeneutics and decolonial metaphysical reconstruction, this paper asks how solidarity can be rebuilt not through abstract universalist rationality but through a rationality affectively embedded, ancestrally continuous, and ethically obligated to the Other?. African rationality—rooted in vital force, relational causality, and the primacy of being-with—contrasts with Western rationality, which privileges atomistic cognition and instrumental mastery. Grounded in *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (“a person is a person through persons”), an epistemological and moral framework emerges where truth is performative, solidarity enacted through dialogue, and continuity requires the living to respond to the dead. Three implications follow: (1) fragility becomes a positive ontological category; (2) affect gains epistemic legitimacy in practical reasoning; (3) algorithmic universalism fails because it cannot metabolize its own precariousness. The paper concludes by proposing an affective-communitarian metaphysics paradigm for engaging technology and global justice.

Keywords: Fragile universals; affective rationality; solidarity; post-African traditional societies; algorithmic universalism