

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF AFRICA: CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS IN THE RESTORATION OF AFRICAN IDENTITY IN THE GLOBE

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ABSTRACT

The African continent over the years has been misconstrued by the Western world. The basis of the discourse on African philosophy has been that of rationality (reason) and irrationality (emotion). Africans have been accused of being irrational, savage, non-human or subhuman. That Africa has no history, no culture and has never contributed towards the world civilization and development. Since then, the tentacles of the debate on rationality and misinterpretation of Africa have seriously widened. The authenticity of African identity has been, as well, questioned. Globalization, which is seen as a medium of unification, has come with its implicit or explicit evidences of neocolonialism and racism. With this, human relation has existed on the platform of superiority and inferiority, civilized and uncivilized, developed and underdeveloped world. All these were predicated on the philosophical racism that was self-evident in the philosophical works of some Western philosophers. Using hermeneutical method, this work intends to investigate into the basis of the struggle for control of African identity. The work concludes that there is much to be done in Africa by African intellectuals. African philosophers or intellectuals should live beyond speculations and embark on pragmatic approach regarding culture, politics, economic and globalization so as to restore African identity in the globe.

Introduction

The struggle to dominate and control African continent has been an endemic thing since the period of colonialism through neocolonialism and imperialism. So many works have been written, so many theories have been propounded and so many actions have been taken regarding this endemic issue. The struggle has taken different dimensions in African continent. First, it is the struggle between the Western claim of superiority over Africa, in which Africa was tagged an inferior race. Secondly, it is the struggle between the civilized cultures against the uncivilized cultures. Ultimately, it is the struggle over Western claim of rationality against the denial of rationality for Africans. With regard to this, Western civilization or culture was taken as the standard upon which African culture or identity is measured. On the other hand, African

scholars, knowing the implications of the denial of African history, rationality, dignity or African personhood, responded to the relegation of Africa and her identity.

As a result, different schools of thoughts, namely; Afrocentric Movement, Negritude Movement etc., emerged in response to the western discourse on Africa. African Thinkers like Kwameh Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Nnamadi Azikiwe of Nigeria in their both individual and collective capacities, as well, reacted vehemently as they fought to redefine African image in the world. Frantz Fanon, an Algerian, considered violence as a better option in restoring African identity, while African-Americans like WEB. DuBois, Martin Luther King Jr. and others applied integrative approach as a way to restore blacks' image in America. The essence of the struggle, as we can see, was to reposition the Africa amongst counterparts in the world. D. A. Masolo's *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, posited *Logocentrism and Emotivism*¹ as the main two systems in the struggle for control of African identity. These two systems, as observed, could be linked to the struggle of Western Christianity over the African tradition, the Western civilization over the African civilization or the Western culture over the African culture. Still, all these are aspects of the struggle of control of African identity.

Obviously, the struggle started with the desire to dominate, exploit and disseminate European culture in Africa by all means. Masolo anchored the foundation of the struggle for control on racism. Just like Masolo, M. B. Ramose's *African Philosophy through Ubuntu* has chapter one as "The Struggle for Reason in Africa", while the second chapter of the book dealt on "African Philosophy and Liberation of Africa".² As observed, both Masolo and Ramose conceptualized reason as the basis of the struggle for control of African identity. The struggle began, according to Ramose, due to the misinterpretation of Aristotle's definition of man as "a rational being."³ To this end, Ramose asked a pathetic question: Why is it that one segment of humanity is unwilling to recognize the common sense demand that even the colonialized-decolonialized have the natural right to self-defence? The question is: What is the justification for the claim that only a particular segment of *homo sapiens* is entitled to self-defence at the expense of other fellow human beings?⁴

However, this misinterpretation of Aristotle's definition of man by Western intellectuals completely polarized the world or humanity into rational and irrational world. Africans were not regarded as human beings because they were seen as people without rationality, without culture, without history and without civilization. The right of knowledge in relation to the African is measured and determined by passivity as well as uncritical assimilation. This has serious implications in African environment. With this view, Africa became founded upon and continues to thrive on the false claim that only one segment of humanity has the prior, superior and exclusive right to reason.⁵ Hence, one of the consequences of the derecognition of rationality of the African *anthropon* (man) was precisely the upholding of the so called right of conquest⁶, that is, the will to dominate. This will to dominate, said Ramose, currently manifests itself in the name of "democratization", "globalization" and "human rights" slogans.⁷ He further stated that:

The material and practical restoration of the African's right to life (substance) continues to be hindered by the subtle and deadly refusal to review the status and validity of the right acquired by posterity on the basis of the questionable right of conquest. For this

reason even decolonialization has failed to restore full sovereignty to the African. What we have is a rather defective and limping sovereignty, that is to say, political sovereignty (if at all Africa has political sovereignty...*the bracket is mine*) bereft of economic sovereignty. In this way, the structural and systematic impoverishment of Africa is sustained.⁸

Having said the foregoing, it is apt for us to place certain concepts that aid in the understanding of this work in their correct perspective.

Conceptual Clarifications

The terms to clarify in this section include: *logocentrism* and emotivism. This will help us to escape the hammer of confusion or ambiguity. With this, we turn to *logocentrism*.

Logocentrism(Reason)

The Greek word, “logos” means ‘word’ or ‘reason’, while the term “centre” from which the term “centrism” is derived, means concentrated point, point of attraction or middle point. Therefore, *logocentrism* is a system of thought that enthroned reason as the hallmark of world civilization. This is the theory that upholds reason as the architect of the world history and development as we could see in the work of Hegel and other Western philosophers. The Age of reason (Enlightenment period) was clear on this. As it were, the Enlightenment period enthroned reason as the fire-brand of the world civilization. Ramose put it thus:

Enlightenment is man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man’s inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in the lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. The motto of enlightenment period is: *Sapere aude!* “Have courage to use your own reason!”⁹

As seen from the excerpt, self-incurred is not ultimately the lack of reason, rather lack of self-resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. It is all about one’s ability to determine his or her destiny without being compelled from outside. Man, as said, is the architect of his destiny. Now, let us turn to emotivism (emotion).

Emotivism

The term, *emotivism* is a word derived from the term *emotion*. It is a psychological term. It is a term mostly used or employed by some African philosophers to interpret or justify African relationship with nature, or African episteme-cosmological interpretation. It has to do with feelings in relation to human beings and objects. In this view, African thinkers saw the metaphysical interconnectedness between human beings and objects in African world view (*weltanschauung*) or cosmology. The concept “Negritude”, a deconstructive term, was also employed by Aime Cesaire in his book, *Return to My Native Land*, to analyze the concept of

emotivism in Africa. The term, *negritude*, in this way, conceptualizes the dignity, the personhood or personality of the black (African) people.

As a result, reason is taken to be the Western property; emotion, on the other hand, is seen as the property of the Negroes or Blacks (Africans). Meanwhile, the title and subtitle of the book of Masolo are clear indications that African Philosophy was an offshoot of controversy between the African scholars and European scholars. In this line of thought, Horace Emeagwara's *An Eclectic Philosophical Hermeneutics of African Personality* asserted that some thinkers argue that it is within the juxtaposition of the African and the White we can dramatically speak of the African in the ideological sense.¹⁰ This is a peculiar issue. African philosophy in this case is a mode of thinking or thought that is peculiar to the African.

Therefore, with Hegel's theory of World history, Levy-Bruhl's idea of primitive mentality of Africans, and on the other hand, Senghor statement that reason is for the Greek, while emotion is for the Black, confirmed the ideas of *logocentrism* and emotivism, and this actually, showcased the real nature of the struggle of control of African identity.

The Historical Flash on the Struggle for the Control of African Identity

The origin of the struggle was initiated by colonialism, slave trade and racism. We shall discuss this under Africa-in-European (intellectuals') conception. But it is proper to say that the old pattern of physical brutality, slavery or slave trade as W. Rodney described: "They walked in long pathetic line, yoke together, carrying on their heads elephant tusks, bundles of cloth, beads and grains with raiders matching besides them with ready whip for the weary and ready to sword down those who, could not match any more."¹¹

Presently, the pattern has changed as seen in the waves of globalization and other western policies for Africa. The idea of globalization, as it were, has become another challenge to African continent. Little wonder, Cape Verdean/Guinean nationalist leader, Amílcar Cabral made it clear in the Portuguese language slogan "A luta continua" (the struggle continues).¹²

This paper is motivated by the fact that the struggle for control of Africa is no longer as it appeared during colonialism and slave trade. The method, as observed nowadays, has changed. Therefore, Africa's liberator should fight against the contemporary trends in the domination of African continent. The point is that African intellectuals have significant roles to play in the process of restoration of African identity. The struggle obviously is not a physical struggle, but an intellectual struggle.

Logocentrism: Africa-in-European Conception

Africa-in-European conception could be predicated on *logocentrism* (philosophical racism). The phrase "philosophical racism" as seen here is conceived as a system of thought that justified the superiority of one race over the other. Racism is derived from *race*. According to William Dunbar, the concept, *race* is said to have entered the English language in 1905.¹³ The term, *race* designated a class of people or things¹⁴. Some years later, some emerging sciences like Zoology and Botany, adopted the concept to mean the existence of natural sub-groups of organism within a species. These sub-groups differ geographically, ecologically, or physiologically. The

difference between races and species is that races can inter-breed; yielding fertile progeny, but species cannot.¹⁵

In recent times, the term, *race* has been adopted to describe human differences that are based on skin colour. As Oyebola would say, in race classification, emphasis is usually placed on variations in the externally physical characteristics. This implies the existence of groups which have certain physical similarities which are perpetuated according to the laws of biological inheritance.¹⁶ Based on this understanding of race, people are currently classified under the following five races depending on their skin colour and their geographical locations: the Caucasoid (Europeans), Negroid (Africans), Mongoid (Asians), Americanus (American Indians), and the Australiod (Australian Aborigines).¹⁶ The term, 'race' in itself is not a negation of other races. It is a neutral concept. Its derivative, 'racism' made it fanatical.

In this respect, Aschcoft would define racism "as a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, causal way to psychological or intellectual characteristics, and which on this basis, distinguishes between 'superior' and 'inferior' racial groups."¹⁷ Stressing further, Hume wrote:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; they are low people, without education, will never stand up amongst us, and cannot distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA indeed they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishment, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.¹⁸

Hume was specific in his degradation of Negroes or Blacks (Africans). He did not mince words to assert that, "No ingenious manufacturer amongst them, no arts, no sciences".... Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROES slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; they are low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession."¹⁹ Eric Omazu reported that one of the earliest racist views against the Africans is traceable to the work of P. Camper. He wrote thus: "P. Camper had employed the facial angle in the study of apes and human beings. Camper had concluded that the facial angle of African came nearer to that of apes rather than that of Europeans. This forms the basis of the assumption that African is physically and intellectually inferior to Europeans."²⁰ Lucien Levy-Bruhl, in his work, demonstrated the disparity between the nature and quality of mind of the European and what he called 'primitive mentality' of the Africans.²¹

Hegel, in his *Lecture on the Philosophy of World History*, bluntly wrote, “We shall therefore leave Africa at this point, and it needs not to be mentioned again. For it is an unhistorical continent, with no movement or development of its own.”²² Hegel further stated that,

...the characteristic feature of the Negroes is that their consciousness has not yet reached an awareness of any substantial objectivity—for example, of God or the law in which the will of man could participate and in which he could become aware of his own being. The African, in his undifferentiated and concentrated unity, has not yet succeeded in making this distinction between himself as an individual and his essential universality, so that he knows nothing of an absolute being which is other and higher than his own self.²³

But we know for sure that it is pure prejudice. Saying that the Negroes have not yet reached the awareness of any substantial objectivity is a direct way of saying that Africans cannot reflect or discover the truth. Africans are still in the level of pre-reason or pre-logical, as Levy-Bruhl purported. For Hegel, reason moves history. Reason is the sole determinant of world development and cultural transformation. History is a process of change. Through the intervention of reason, man knows and transforms his reality in a continuous dialectical manner. In this transformation, culture is born.²⁴ This culture is itself in constant dialectical motion through the conflict of contradiction. As Hegel discusses the movement of the world, he compared the geographical basis of world history and at the same time, compared their contributions.²⁵ Within this framework, he rated Africa low in everything. Culture is born out of the unfoldment of reason in the world history, and where there is no reason, there is no culture. Then, he concluded that since Africans have no reason, therefore, they have no culture. And life in Africa is not a manifestation of dialectical reason but of a succession of contingent happenings and surprise; no aim or state exists whose development could be followed. They are unconscious of themselves just like in the state of biblical Adam and Eve. They are in the state of innocence.²⁶

Masolo, in summarizing Hegel’s philosophy, claimed that it is logocentric.²⁷ Civilization, which for Hegel as Masolo noted, is the world from human point of view, begins only with the mind’s power of drawing conclusions and determining right and truth. Also, Africans are excluded from this fundamental value. They have no reason. Because they lack reason, they also lack history, development, and culture.²⁸

Perhaps, Hume and Hegel did not just propound these theses; they were anchored on the misinterpretation of Aristotle’s definition of man as “a rational animal.” Though, Aristotle, in his philosophical discourse, noted that some people were naturally born to serve others,²⁹ that all men are not equal by nature. As such, Aristotle supported human inequality, that is, slavery in the world (the slaves and the slave owners, the ruled and the rulers).³⁰ John Locke’s polarization of the substance into primary and secondary qualities also gave credence to bifurcation of human race. This, as well, supported the relegation of Africans as sub-humans. In confirming Locke’s import, Ramose wrote thus:

Locke, I contend, is a pivotal figure in the development of modern racism in that he provides a model which permits us to count skin color as a nominally essential property of men. This comes about because in the

course of his formulations of theories of essence and substance it emerges that the essential properties of men are computed like those of gold. What appears to be a simple system of classification based on tallies of observed properties in fact facilitates counting color, sex, language, religion, or IQ as “essential.” Indeed, there is no mechanism within the Lockean model to rule out counting skin color as the “essential” property of men.³¹

There is an overview of superiority and inferiority paradigm in human relationship, and this, as well, questioned the ontological and epistemological front of human existence. Africans were perceived differently from all perspectives of life including culture, politics, language, etc.

After some years, Levy-Bruhl made a shift from his previous description of Africans. He came up with a different view of Africa. He states that, the nature of the African’s thinking pattern is influenced and determined by the collective representation of his society. These representations are in turn, shaped by the social institutions. That long acquaintance with scientific institution molds people into thinking logically and procedurally. The pre-scientific age on the other hand was marked by attribution of explanations to supernatural and occult powers. Expressing further, he said that, “human society can be classified into two broad types-*the civilized and the primitive*, and with two opposed types of thought springing from each. From every stage of institutional development emerge a corresponding epistemology and a corresponding morality. As regards this, Ramose said that, Bruhl proposed a moral relativism. This moral relativism has its correspondence and development in the epistemological relativism which he saw in the studies of primitive mentality. By saying this Levy- Bruhl derives the universal general identity by human spirit and the unity of character seen in the logical thought.³²

Buttressing this, he opined that the modern man makes his judgments by means of the principle of identity; the primitive man is dominated by collective representation, and realizes a mystic participation or relationship with his object. With this, he posited two systems of thoughts – Western and Non-Western (naturalistic for the Europeans and magic or mystic mentality for Africa). Also, he contended that in the savages the mystical or magical prevails. They do not regard magical facts as impossible or magical judgment as nonsensical. Therefore, for the savages, all is possible as for the magician. Explaining further, he states that the only difference between the European and the savage is that the European uses the word impossible in relation to facts which refer to the general conditions of experience.

Above all, the important thing in the later conception of Africans by Levy-Bruhl was that he began to understand Africans in their state of nature. He was no longer judging Africans from the periscope of Europeans, which he initially did. His later understanding was against the Europeans’ view that Africans are people without, or with inferior forms of religion, law, economic, government, technology and logic. Bruhl’s later position was that though African can make judgment, though not individual judgments, but collective judgment, or rather magical judgment. It is to counter this perspective that Emotivism emerged. Let us now turn to understanding what Emotivism signifies.

Emotivism: Africa-in-African Conception

The concept of emotivism (negritude) as a system of thought stands out here. Amie Cesaire, some years back, made such call in his book “*Return to My Native Land*” published in 1939. This book of his initiated a serious discourse on African identity. It stood against the logocentric system of thought of the Europeans. In that book, Cesaire introduced two words “negritude” and “return.” This word, “negritude” was interpreted or conceptualized as the compendium of dignity, the personhood or humanity of black(African) people, while the word, “Return” conceptualized the dignity, the personhood or humanity of black people in their historicity.³³ The concept, *Return* turns into a consciousness or awareness or into a state (of mind) which is subjected to manipulations of history of power relations. It is this idea of return, according to Masolo, that opens the way to the definition of negritude as historical commitments or movement. According to Cesaire, as Masolo noted, the word, ‘return’ has two meanings: one, showing Cesaire’s historical repatriation to a geographical or perceptual space, while the second shows metaphorical meaning, that is, a ‘return’ to or a regaining of a conceptual space in which culture is both field and process-first of alienation and domination, but now, most importantly, of rebellion and self-rebinding of African personality or identity.³⁴ It is a call for decolonization or liberation. It is a call for freedom.

The concept, *return*, as Masolo noted, is used as a *deconstructivist* term.³⁵ The term, ‘return’ is an aspect of the struggle of the people of African origin to control their own identity. It is conceived as a *return* either of militant nationalism or Africanism. It was both of an ideology and a full-blood call. It was a call to counter the arrogant and aggressive Eurocentric culture. It is a call to all black people to rally together around the idea of common origin and in a struggle to defend their unifying commonality, to set African free from the shackles of westernism, slavery, colonialism, philosophical and spiritual racism of the western philosophers and missionaries. The essence was for the black Africans to heed to a refinding, redefinition and reproclamation of itself.³⁶

Cesaire, as noted, identified Western logocentrism as an instrument of discriminating against the other. In this regard, Cesaire wrote:

Reason I will sacrifice you to the evening wind.
You call yourself the language of order and system?
For me you are the crown of the (colonial) whip
But there are the new contraband goods of my laughter
My treasure made of saltpeter
Because we hate you
You and your reason
Because we identify ourselves with the dementia praecox
Our treasures and therefore the self-thinking madness
The madness that shouts
The madness that free itself.³⁷

In the above poem, Cesaire saw reason as the property of the West. He was of the opinion that Africans should sacrifice reason to evening wind because it was the crown of colonial whip; that reason was the colonial instrument for brutality, discrimination, racism, colonialism, and intimidation. In fact, for Cesaire, reason was the carrier of all sorts of evils or atrocities in Africa.

Reason also calls itself the language of order and system. Then, when reason is rejected, what should be accepted by the Africans? When Africans rejected reason, does it mean they are irrational or less-human? No! Not at all! The issue is that those who enthrone reason as the hallmark of development, civilization, and as that from which culture is born, did not embrace the interconnectedness of humanity, or rather, the intrinsic nature of man. They did not understand that there is an internal collection between the subject and object, man and nature, seen and unseen, or physical and metaphysical realities. It is important to note that Ceasire, in his poem, rejected reason and accepted emotion. Ceasire noted that, Africans identified themselves with the dementia praecox. He argued that Negritude is embodiment of African identity, personhood and dignity which European man's reason did not acknowledge.

Senghor, on his own part, gave new experience of what Africa must truly be, and it was not the Africa idealized in the poems. Therefore he called for a harmonious integration of black and white values as the basis of the new African personality. In this regard, Senghor defined culture "as the psychic constitution that, in every people, explains their civilization."³⁸ This implies that culture is in a certain way, peculiar to every group, of feeling, thinking, expressing and acting.³⁹ Senghor wrote that the confluence of geographical, historical, racial and ethnic determinants makes every race different in expression from another. Every race has a fundamental ontological difference from all other races.⁴⁰ It is this new negritude, Masolo noted, which led Senghor to his famous saying on the epistemological difference between white people and black people; that is, between two systems or modes of thought, one ratiocinative or logocentric (which stands for logocentric system of thought), and the other emotive⁴¹, (which stands for emotive system of thought). Senghor wrote thus: "Emotion is black (Negroes) as much as reason is Greek."⁴²

Senghor further showed the difference between an African man and a European man in understanding or interpretation of reality. He, in the first place, gave the nature of the white man as:

A man of will, a warrior, the bird of prey, pure look, or staring, who differentiates himself from his object. He maintains that object at a distance, immobilizes and fixes it. Armed with the instruments of precision, he dissects it in ruthless analysis. Animated by a will to power, he kills the other and reduces it to a mere instrument for practical purpose. He assimilates it. The European mind considers the universe as an essentially determined, ordered system intelligible to the contemplative and different observer whose primary concern is to discover the natural laws that govern all beings. In this domain, the role of reason is paramount as the power that guides human activity. Man is the *res cogitas* and object, the *res cogitate*, and truth is the precision in the relationship between the cogitative activity and its object-that is, *adaequatio rei et intellectus*.⁴³

The center of this epistemology, as seen earlier, is the cogitative act or reason, not as passive state or faculty, but as an active or aggressive effort to assimilate the other. In contrast to the cogitative white people, Senghor wrote:

The black man is a man of nature. Traditionally, he is thought to live with, and by nature. He is a sensualist, a being with open senses and without an intermediary between subject and object. He is himself subject and object at the same time. He feels more than he sees. It is in himself, in his body, that he receives and tests the radiation emitted by objects of knowledge. He dies to himself to reborn in the other. He is not assimilated, but assimilates and identifies himself with the other. This does not mean that the black man has got no reason as other make me say, but rather that his reason is not discursive but synthetic; it is not antagonistic, but empathetic. This is another way of knowing. While the European reason is analytic by utilization, that of the black man is intuitive by participation.⁴⁴

For the blacks, things are not separated from themselves; rather they are interconnected to each other. In an African man, reason and emotion are not inseparable. African man sees himself in the object. Senghor further stated that the African still remains essentially characterized by the emotive faculty. He warned that this is not the negation of reason but another form of knowledge that nevertheless substitute for pure reason in the knowing process, that which moves the black man is not the exterior aspect of objects, but rather the essence, or, better still, the surreality of nature.⁴⁵ Senghor noted that, water moves, not because it washes, but because it purifies; fire not because of its heat or colour, but because of its destructive power. The bushes which dry up and become green again, are symbols of life and death. This is because the exterior aspect of objects, in order to be grasped in its particular singularity is but a sign or symbol of the essence of the object.⁴⁶ This shows that for Africans, symbols play very important role.

Perhaps, an Igbo adage says, *nku di na mba n' enyere mba nri* (people make use of what they have to make a living). Put differently, people make use of the philosophical materials at their disposal to philosophize or interpret their world. Africa is no exception here.

Above all, Senghor, in his work, *Negritude et humanism*, wrote:

Negritude is the whole of the values of civilization- cultural, economic, social, political, - which characterize the black people, more exactly the Negro-African world. It is essentially instinctive reason, which pervades all these values, because it is reason of the impression, reason that is *seized*. It is expressed in the emotions through an abandonment of self in identification with the object; through the myths, I mean by images- archetypes of the collective soul, especially by the myth primordial accorded to those of the cosmos. In other terms, the sense of communion, the gift of imagination, the gift of rhythm- these are the traits of Negritude that we find like an indelible seal on all the works and activities of the Black man.⁴⁷

This idea of negritude by Senghor, which was highly criticized by some African scholars, brought the African closer to Levy-Bruhl's collective mentality or collective representation of ideas or object. Senghor wrote that, "I have often written that emotion is Negro. I have been reproved for this. I don't see how else to account for our specific quality, that negritude which is the sum total of the cultural values of the black world."⁴⁸ With regard to emotive nature of African man, Langston Hughes wrote in his poem that:

We, the creators of the new black generation,
Want to express our black personality
Without shame or fear,
If this will please the whites, much the better
If not, it does not matter,
We know ourselves to be beautiful,
And also ugly,
The drums laugh.
If this will please the whites, much the better
If not, it does not matter.
It is for tomorrow that we are building our temples
Solid temples as we will ourselves know how to construct them.
And we will keep ourselves straight,
On top of the mountain,
Free in ourselves.⁴⁹

Embedded in the above poem are African attitude, technology and black civilization. In the Levy-Bruhl's "idea of impossible", a drum can never "laugh" because it is an inanimate being. For the Africans, a drum can laugh. This can really be explained only in African culture. Even in the contemporary African world, an African philosopher can still say that a drum does laugh, and still give a philosophical interpretation, and derived a meaning from the statement. This could only be obtained within the African context. In contrast, it is scientifically nonsense or meaningless for the Whiteman.

Therefore, we could understand that the struggle is that of reason over emotion. Regarding the above on Africa, one wonders whether there is a time in the history of humanity when reason was infused such that Africans were not partakers of it. If that is not the case, denying Africa of reason, culture, development, and history is irrational and nonsensical.

In the above section, effort was made to establish the origin and the nature of the struggle. To say there is a struggle is not mincing word because that is really what it is. *Logocentrism*, as a system of thought, emerged from the philosophical work of Euro-western philosophers, where reason was enthroned as the carrier of the civilization and world development. Reason was claimed to be the property of the west alone. It is against this backdrop that *emotivism* emerged in contradiction to the western view, that is, in defense of African personality or identity. African identity, as we can see, comprises African personality, history, culture, rationality, civilization, and development, and all these, initially, were denied of African people by the Euro-western philosophers. Negritude, as was propounded by Ceasire and Senghor, emerged to carry to its logical conclusion the uniqueness of African personhood, that is, to project African identity. The questions here are: Is the *emotivism*, as a system of thought used by the African philosophers, solved the problem of denial of African identity? Did it salvage African predicament, and set her free from the shackles of colonialism, neocolonialism or imperialism in the form of modern globalization? If not, what is the effort of the African Intellectuals towards reclamation of African personality in the contemporary world? How do other Africans, if not being understood or interpreted by the Western philosophers, understand themselves, their culture, their history

and most importantly their personality or identity? How do they interpret their culture, history, philosophy, socio-political and economic conditions? Do African philosophers succumb to Western influence or not? This is where the problem lies.

Now, let us turn to the impact of African philosophy as a way of reclaiming the lost identity in the contemporary society.

African Intellectuals Vs Reclaiming of African Identity

One's personality or identity can never be given from outside. It must, definitely, come from within the individual. It becomes a problem when the individual is not able to define his identity or personality but anchors on the one given to him from people other than himself.

The root of colonization, social segregation, political disenfranchisement and cultural discrimination was clear to the Africans. Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* expressed the root of African predicament, which he predicated on exploitation and domination so as to reduce the African man to nothing or non-existence. Negritude, before now, was seen as an instrument to express black personality and identity. Blyden, a member of the Harlem Renaissance, was outstanding in this struggle of the African emancipation. Blyden's *Race and Study* called for total return to African land, which he thought could be the only option to restore African rationality, culture, history and personality. Regarding this, he wrote:

For each one of you –for each one of you –there is a special duty to accomplish, a terribly necessary and important job, a job for the race to which we belong. There is a responsibility that our personality, our belonging to this race, presupposes – the duty of every individual and every race is to struggle for its own individuality, to maintain it and develop it. Therefore, honour and love your race for yourselves if you are for yourselves, for if you abdicate your personality, you will not have left anything to give to the world. Neither will you be happy nor of any use, and you will have nothing to attract and fascinate other people because with the suppression of your individuality you will also lose your distinctive character. You will also realize then that having abdicated your personality you will also have lost the special duty and glory to which you are called. In truth, you will be denying the divine idea of god and sacrifice the divine individuality; this is the worst type of suicide.⁵⁰

Blyden was furious and electrified towards reclaiming the lost identity. For him, it is a call and duty for all African intellectuals and leaders. Regarding the denial of African civilization and rationality, some Africa scholars made efforts to project Africa as the cradle of human existence and civilization. Theirs were to contradict Hegel's postulation that Africa has no reason, history, development and culture. Cheikh Anta Diop's *African Origin of Civilization* argued that many social and cultural practices, namely; totemism, circumcision, kingship and language, cosmogony, agriculture, social organization and matriarchy, in their old and in modern forms, owned their origin to Egypt.⁵¹ All these were obvious in the philosophy of Ionians like Thales, and other successive Greek philosophers, who gave the cosmological origin of the world.

Meanwhile, some African philosophers uphold the view that Greek philosophy was a stolen legacy. They tried to establish the fact that human existence and civilization started in

African continent and as well argued vehemently that philosophy began in Africa. George M. James's *Stolen Legacy*, I. C. Onyewuenyi's *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*, and John G. Jackson's *Introduction to African Civilization* argued from this perspective. To this end also, Odelela stated that, "the contemporary African philosophy would be moribund if it does not take into account the 'Western history of African philosophy' which will take us back to ancient Africa (Ancient Egypt). Once this is done, the monopoly of philosophy by the Greek will take a turn."⁵²

Doubting the Possibility of African Philosophy

One cannot study African philosophy without studying the problems of African philosophy like documentation, periodization, content, status, logic, definition and others as the case maybe. Even the denial of African philosophy is in itself a problem. The fact remains that doubting the possibility of African philosophy by some African philosophers, and some Western philosophers has made reclamation of African identity difficult. It is over time now an aspect of study in the "Introductory to African Philosophy". It is uncalled for. Till date, some African intellectuals still doubt the authenticity of African philosophy. The question: "Is there an African Philosophy, if there is, what is it?" asked by an African philosopher, Peter Bodurin, and supported by some other African scholars who upheld the professional current in African philosophy, to some extent, has actually promoted the debate on rationality in Africa. That is, it created a doubt on the possibility of the African having reason or rationality, as claimed by Levy-Bruhl, Hegel, Locke and Hume.

Philosophy, as it were, is a critical, systematic and/or coherent way of looking at issues, events such as culture, politics, economic, social, and/ or other theological realities. It is a highest order activity. Though, it is individual activity, but be collectively used to solve a problem as observed in the philosophical works of Plato, Aristotle and other Greek, German and Western philosophers. Hegel, as said earlier, saw culture as the child of reason. Since culture is a child of reason and the African has no reason, as they said, therefore Africa has no culture and philosophy. Culture as we know, gives identity. Philosophy, as well, originates from culture because culture is an ingredient of philosophy. Therefore, since Africa has no reason and culture, it means that Africa has no identity and can never philosophize. So many African philosophers ignorantly supported this European view. When Levy- Bruhl used the word "impossible" in relation to Europeans and Africans, he meant that logicity or rationality is for Europeans, while magic or mysticism is for Africa. According to him, everything is possible for the Africans. The word; impossible, he said, has no meaning for the Africans because they make judgment through collective representation or principles of participation. This statement is disputable and illogical. To philosophize is an individual activity not a collective participation or representation as Levy-Bruhl purported.

Even, C.S. Momoh observed the problem of intellectual colonialism some African scholars fell into when he said that the problem of intellectual dilemma in which the African intellectual or scholar finds himself is most fundamental. African intellectuals or philosophers have thoroughly imbibed and internalized the concepts, doctrines and world-views of Western intellectual traditional philosophy – they cannot and do not see except through the lenses of questions in Western philosophy.⁵³ However, the struggle for control has been that of the intellect. It is a philosophical struggle. If it is true that the Africans have no reason, it implies they have no

philosophy and culture. Hountondji, Wiredu, Bodunrin, Makinde, and Hallen were of the opinion that African philosophy as a professional discipline is relatively young.⁵⁴

If we were to go by the statement that African philosophy is “relatively young”, what have we to say about William Amo,⁵⁵ who might have lectured Kant and other Western philosophers that denied Africans reason or rationality? It was recorded that William Amo, the Ghanaian philosopher lectured in German Universities when Immanuel Kant was still a pupil. Does it mean that Kant did not see or know him? Does it mean that William Amo has no reason, even as a lecturer in German University?

The truth remains that most of these Euro-African philosophers or western-oriented African philosophers, in one time or the other, experienced racism in their course of study in Europe. Some of them were forced to sacrifice African philosophy on the altar of professorship. Some were forced to adopt Western philosophical tradition to the detriment of African philosophy. Suffice to say that the struggle was that of domination of Africa. African experience of communalism, which is an African pattern of life, is being substituted by the Western democratization, globalization and human rights slogans, etc.; neo-colonialism and imperialism are also obvious in the contemporary era. Despite the prevalent degradation of the African personality, the African man is a unique individual with his knowledge, experience and truth. His insight is peculiar to him; though he cannot dwell on his insight alone, but can also integrate into his worldview other foreign insights.

Perhaps, the problems in Africa have been that of intellectual dilemma of the African philosophers or scholars, of the definition of African philosophy, of the placement or status of African philosophy, of the content of African philosophy, of logic question in Africa and of the direction in Africa.⁵⁵ The already mentioned problems, obviously or clearly, have their roots in the philosophical foundation laid by Western philosophers. These problems as simple as they seemed have torn African intellectuals apart, and till date, the struggle to control or dominate still manifest itself within the African sphere. Those who said that African philosophy was not written down as was done in the west also contributed and heated up the struggle.

Socrates, as we know, did not write when he was alive but his successors wrote about him. For those who said that African question/philosophy must be written by an African like Hountondji and others) should remember Ludwig Wittgenstein was a German but his *Tractatus Logicus Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations* took a different dimension in British traditions of analytic and linguistic philosophy.⁵⁶ Again, Karl Marx was neither a Russian nor a Chinese but his thought form parts of contemporary philosophy of Russia and China.⁵⁷ We may say that the concept, *philosophy* is philosophy everywhere. But, what differs is people’s definition of philosophy and their designations.

In Africa, John Locke, Charles Montesquieu’s separation of power and other Western theories are practiced and studied in Africa but they are not Africans. Their works are making waves in Africa. They are studied in African Universities and African students are expected to read and pass them in their examinations before graduation. Is African philosophy given this kind of recognition in Western Universities? This is a fundamental question for the African philosophers. If African philosophy or cosmology should be studied in European, or Western universities as theirs are studied in Africa, the problem of racism, and other negative conception

about Africa continent would have been a thing of the past. The gulf that had existed on race difference must have been glued or filled.

Nicolas Carey noticed imminent problem in his article, *African Intellectuals African Decolonization* when he called for mental decolonization of African scholars. With regard to this, he wrote:

Decolonizing the mind is thus the dual task of first, placing African discourses at the center of scholarship on Africa; and second, of dislocating African humanity from this human-inhuman binary. Africa cannot escape its subjugation within modernity simply by attempting to climb up through “development,” as development does not disperse the anti-blackness and anti-Africanness of Western modernity. We do not have enough reasons to expect that once everyone is rich and educated, anti-black racism will disappear. Although these days few contemporary scholars producing Western narrative discourses on Africa would refer to Africans as “primitive,” current discourses frequently oppose Western “modernity” with “traditional” African cultures or practices—where “traditional” is a more acceptable euphemism for “primitive.” In short, the binary opposition of a primitive or traditional Africa to a modern or enlightened West continues to pervade academic discourses, contemporary journalistic accounts of Africa and its peoples, and the perspectives of international development and aid organizations.⁵⁸

Carey also went further to state that the challenge for African and non-African scholars alike is to establish the substantial and valid fact of African humanity, in all its diversity, and to enable the representation of Africa beyond its historical role as the foil to Western humanity. And so the quest for African subjectivity continues. We take up this challenge as the mandate within intellectual work, to continue to strive for the decolonization of the academy and its production of knowledge of Africa. In line with Fanon, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Cabral, Lewis Gordon and other revolutionary thinkers, Carey said:

The foundations of African thought cannot rest on Western intellectual traditions that have as one of their enduring features the projection of Africans as Other and our consequent domination. As long as the “ancestor worship” of academic practice is not questioned, scholars in African Studies are bound to produce scholarship that does not focus primarily on Africa—for those “ancestors” not only were non-Africans but were hostile to African interests. The foundational questions of research in many disciplines are generated in the West.⁵⁹

In the above, Carey conceptualized the spirit of the time. The first task, for Carey, is decolonizing the mind, and this has been at the center of scholarship on Africa; and at the same time, dislocating African humanity from this human-inhuman binary. He further said that Africa cannot escape its subjugation within modernity simply by attempting to climb up through “development,” as development does not disperse the anti-blackness and anti-Africanness of Western modernity. Carey made it clear that the binary opposition of a primitive or traditional Africa to a modern or enlightened West continues to pervade academic discourses, and that, as well, continues pervades contemporary journalistic accounts of Africa and its peoples, and the perspectives of international development and aid organizations.

Africa's Fate in the Contemporary Global Village

At this point, it is good to remind us that this work is all about the two systems (logocentrism and emotivism) and how they were interpreted in the struggle for control of African identity. And this struggle, as well, has taken different forms. The argument is that African intellectuals should be careful in projecting African image to the world. In the past, the struggle for control of African identity has taken the form of denial of rationality of the Africans tagging them irrational or subhuman, savages, and uncivilized; as people without culture, religion, history, and have never contributed in the world civilization. African intellectuals or philosophers should understand that physical racism or domination, in form of violent colonialism where Africans were beaten, tortured, brutalized, killed and exported to America and Europe to work in plantations as slaves is no longer possible in this contemporary world. What is contemporarily possible is philosophical (or ideological) enslavement. Any Afro-Western relationship that jeopardizes African identity or personality should be seriously examined by Africans. *Logocentrism*, as a system of thought, has played a detrimental role in the history of African colonialism, and still playing the same role now. The wave of globalization, as it were, could be conceived as an aspect of *logocentrism*. Globalization and its agencies could be placed on neocolonialist and imperialist intent of domination. The world is seen as a global village. The question is: Where lies the African identity within the framework of globalization? Whose culture, history, civilization, identity, economic and political progress is projected within the ambience of globalization?

Structurally speaking, the components of globalization include: politics, culture, communication, economics, technology, language, etc. Then, where do we locate Africa amongst all these structural components of globalization? The answer to this question remains imperative for African intellectuals of all spheres in life. The struggle for control of African identity continues even with the chains of globalization.

According to Anshi Martin Wang and Jando Francisca, "it is difficult to trace the origin of globalization, but as an economic, political, social and cultural reality, could be traced back to the month of May of the year 34 B.C.E. This is the era when Alexander the Great (336-323), Macedonian War Lord, with his array of soldiers and military tried to unify Macedonian and Persians into one kingdom so as to make them one people and as well, spread Greek language, culture and ways of life which they believed are superior to all others."⁶⁰ This desire to dominate or control the world took another dimension around 1880s in the name of globalization. Little wonder, the globalization of Africa took the form of colonialism with the intention of economic exploitation and extermination of the African identity. Dukor expressed that,

The Europeans' occupation of Africa was essentially economic in its fundamental impulse. The legacy left behind were those of pangs of slavery, colonization, economic domination and imperialism. The Europeans metropolitan peripheralization and political manipulations that led to and continue to sustain intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic wars and violence, aided and sustained by

the technological weapons and propaganda of the powerful nations of Europe and America.⁶¹

In the web of globalization, African freedom, culture, sovereignty as well as African personality or identity are questioned. One may ask, how does the African retain her authenticity, her sovereignty, her freedom, her personality and more so, her cultural identity in the net of globalization or global change; put simply, in the global village? One can still say that the wave of globalization has been a historical erosion of African identity and authenticity. That is to say that it is another phase of political and economic neo-colonialism.⁶² globalization is more of indirect invasion into Africa. The issue is whether the African culture or philosophy can co-exist with globalization and combat cultural invasion from the west since the concept has much of Western cultural values and civilization. That is to say that globalization propagates western cultural values and civilization.⁶³This is in tandem with what Stephen Castle said about globalization. He said that the hallmark of globalization includes enculturation of the developing or underdeveloped nations.⁶⁴

If we are to consider globalization from the perspective of development, economics and technology, African has remained at the periphery. Dukor confirmed this when he said:

Africa has remained at one corner and periphery, which could be that they are outside the globalization flux to develop and explore the world for meaningful existence. The paradigm developed by the Europeans and the Americans remained the paradigm of world's development, the touch bearer of mankind, and their conception of good and development as well remained the parameter and index of change; their political system, governance, social and economic policies, justice and rule of law are measured within the framework of definable, identifiable, and definite progressive cultures in Europe and American.⁶⁵

However, all known and tested political systems in the west have been flawed by their incompatibility with Africa; there has been the collapse of political and economic structure consequent upon which there have been political and economic instability and wars. Klein pointed out the danger of globalization in Africa which he predicated on the presence of the international corporations in Africa. As regards this, he wrote thus:

...because the international corporations or bodies have been able to relocate their facilities to most parts of Africa, workers, communities and countries further leading to a 'face to the bottom' in which 'wages, social and environmental conditions tend to the level of the most desperate the second danger signal in Africa is the exacerbation of a general downward spiral in income, social and material infrastructure as each work your or county seeks to become more competitive by reducing its wages and reduced public spending accompanied by less buying power lead to stagnation, recession, and unemployment. Thirdly, there has been a polarization of haves and have-nots in African and the third world generally even as billions of dollars flow annually from African to rich region of the world in the form of debt replacement and

capital fight. Fourth, globalization has made national governments to lose much of their power to direct their own economic. This is shown in the unfettered transnational corporation and global institutions like I.M.F and World Bank that have become the most powerful economic actors... that economic globalization is producing chaotic and destructive rivalries. Globalization has resulted to the pillage of the planet and its people especially of African.⁶⁶

Naomi Klein exposed some of the dangers of globalization in Africa when he said that the so-called global village pretends to be creating, is no other than that which multi-nationals are consistently using to exploit the poorer countries for unimaginable profits. She went further to describe the so-called global village as a village where Bill Gates live to accumulate fortune of 55 billion dollars yearly at the expense of labour whose one third is constituted by the people from the Third World with jobs that are not even permanent, and who therefore have only a gloomy economic future in return for their services.⁶⁷

Other areas where this struggle is clearly seen today is in the area of world international market, World Bank, international Monetary Fund (IMF), etc. The International Market is dominated with goods from Europe and America, namely, automobiles, computers, canned food, electronic gadgets, etc. According to Wang and Francisca, effect of globalization as it reflects in Africa is on the erection of large market for goods produced in Europe and America and other industrial nations. That is, about 70% of the goods and services that fill the market of African countries are foreign ones. Anshi, as well, linked globalization to colonialism. He said that:

One of the greatest mishaps on African personality is colonialism. This inflicted not only physical wound, but also psychological wound. The psychological wound has been described in variety of ways such as inferiority complex; Cargo cut mentality, anthropological impoverishment, identity crisis, cultural alienation, psychological trauma and so on... the preservation of African identity in the new global agenda would go a long way in constructing a spirit of critical acceptance or rejection of ideas that are imported wholesale from Europe and America.⁶⁸

The fate of Africa in this contemporary era seriously hangs on this truth. African intellectuals need to buckle up. The issue now is no longer physical wound, but rather the psychological wound inflicted on Africans. The extreme importance for all Africans, and especially for the African intellectuals, is mental decolonization. Many African intellectuals do not appreciate what we have here in Africa. Many of them consider communalism or egalitarianism as an over taken philosophy, and still project Western philosophy to the detriment of African identity and personality.

Conclusion

An Igbo adage says, *onye n' amaghi ebe mmiri bidoro mabaya amaghi ebe oga akwusi* (He who does not know where rain starts beating him will never know where it stops). Regarding this, Africa's case is different; We, Africans knew where the rain started beating us. The origin of struggle in Africa is very clear to us. In this paper, the two systems in struggle of control for identity "logocentrism (reason) and emotivism (emotion)" are seen as the underlying systems in

the struggle for control of African identity. Western philosophers, namely, Levy-Bruhl, Hegel, Hume, Locke, etc. saw the terms as independent entities that exist in different races: the white and the black people. While reason is for the white, emotion is for the blacks (Africans). This of course, is the root of philosophical and spiritual racism that initiated colonialism in Africa.

The Africa's problem, as we said earlier, is nothing but loss of identity. Colonialism shattered the African culture, history, religion and civilization. Since all those components that carried African identities were shattered, African identity automatically is shattered. The main focus of African philosophy, over these years, has been that of repositioning Africa amongst her counterparts in the world. But since the period of colonialism till date, it has not been easy for African scholars or intellectuals. The imperative question is: Why was it difficult to restore African identity or move away from its bereft sovereignty? We, Africans seem to have left the substance, and always pursue the shadow. The truth is that African philosophy can never solve this problem of lost of African identity, if there is no African history of philosophy, or rather a Western history of philosophy that has the African origin of civilization. It is obvious to most African philosophers that Thales and other Ionian philosophers who were regarded as the originators of philosophy or the first philosophers, seemed to be racially ascribed such. Onyewuenyi's *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism* was outstanding in this view. Racism has played, and still continued to play a role in writing the history of philosophy. Egypt, as the cradle of human existence and civilization, obviously was not mentioned in the history of Western philosophy, even in the history of philosophy being studied in the African universities; rather Greece or Athens was posited as where "reason" started. Suffice to say that Alexander the Great (336-323), the Macedonian War Lord, who attempted to dominate the world through globalization; and wanted to spread Greek language, culture and ways of life which they believed are superior to all others, must have played a part here. Athens being the world power then, it is quite possible to erase African contribution to the world history of civilization and development.

My argument is that African philosopher should come together to write a comprehensive work on African philosophy for the new generation of African philosophers. They should write a history of philosophy that has African history, culture, as well as Africa's contribution to the world civilization and development. This should be done so that African identity would not be lost through deceptive ideology of globalization. Africa should be very careful in accepting some of the western ideologies that are detrimental to African identity or African world-view. We, Africans, should be able to distinguish between modernization and westernization of culture. In modernization, we are called to integrate relevant alien ideologies with African ideologies in form of inter-cultural dialogue. We are also called up to build upon or develop what we already have at hand knowing our cultural background. Kwameh Nkrumah's *Philosophical Consciencism* was also clear on this. I, as well, agreed with Olela to state that, "the contemporary African philosophy would be moribund if it does not take into account African history of philosophy, which will take us back to ancient African (Ancient Egypt). This is very important if we are to talk of authentic African identity in contemporary world. If this is done, African philosophy will achieve its monumental project of searching for African identity.

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