

Racist Ideology and African Unfreedom

Maduabuchi Dukor

The impact of racism or race differentiation in the world history cannot be overemphasized. It is a matter both for inter-subjectivity, objectivity and concrete reality. The primordial or primitive race distinctions among mankind, the Negroid, Caucasoid and Mongoloid are chiefly inferred from and based on colour variations, and the entity of this into humans' intellect and thinking to build walls in their relations is the problem which is today called racism. African unfreedom and backwardness in the present on world order is explainable in terms of race, evolution and civilization. This paper's objective is therefore to examine the impact of racist ideology and westernism on African freedom.

The Concept of Racism

The Bible says, "God made out of one man (Adam) every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth".¹ Therefore all men living today belong to the same specie and descended from the same stock, yet history and issues of the moment have torn mankind asunder in tags of races. Slavery, ethnic conflicts, domination, discrimination and prejudices are all symptoms and spillover of racism. So much so that the virus of racism has spilled into the ethnic groups that have become 'races' only on peoples imagination. Nonetheless there is ample evidence showing that racism in terms of cultural achievements and genetic potential is not real but illusion. Race category and ethnic racism subsist first in the reified imagination before it settles down in the concrete reality of human life as a convenient instrument and ideology of oppression. If not for the imagination and concoction of the absurd concept of race, there would have been a breakdown of human boundaries. But the extent this obvious human designed prejudice has gone to alter the balance of humanity in favour of one and to the disfavour of the African leaves much to be desired.

In 1769, there was a group of African slaves advertised for sale among the European buyers and traders on human beings which reads thus: "To be sold on Thursday the third day . . . A CARGO OF NINETY-FOUR PRIME HEALTHY NEGROES, consisting of Thirty-nine MEN, fifteen BOYS, Twenty-four WOMEN and sixteen GIRLS. just arrived in the Brigantine Dembia from Sierra Leon. . . ." ² This advertisement represents a moment in the history of man's in humanity to man and to the negroes (Africans). It marked the beginning of consideration of race differences in human affairs. It anticipated the evolutionary superiority of the white and the inferiority of the non-white. With it was associated the episode of colonialism and exploitation of the negro people of Africa. The deprivation, discrimination and slavery that attended the Africans on the heel of this 'albatross of our imagination' were unprecedented in the history of man.

Racism in theory and practice is one phenomenon that has left Africans and the negroes smarting and reeling under the technological or economic domination of Europe. The extent to which the so-called black negroes appreciate this cultural fact is problematic. The black Africans dominate themselves as if they don't know that they themselves are being dominated by Europe. They have inadvertently subscribed

¹ Acts 17:26.

² This is a carefully and strongly worded statement advertising Africans for sale as if they were cattle. See *Awake* Dec. 8, 1990, p. 7.

to the thesis that any particular race is inherently superior to or has the right to dominate another. Yet there is no basis for believing that a race is inherently superior to or has the right to dominate another. Even though slavery has been abolished in most nations of the world, discrimination, prejudices and racism still subsist among ethnic groups that were races in the imagination of the people. Perhaps Anthony K. Appiah captured the unreality of racism in the following words,

*where racism is implicated in the basis for national solidarity it is intrinsic, not extrinsic. . . . Nevertheless, most racial hatred is in fact expressed through extrinsic racism. Most people who have used race as the basis for harm to others have felt the need to see others as independently morally flawed.*³

He therefore argues that intrinsic racism is a moral error and extrinsic racism entails false beliefs. Yet the Pan-Africanists responded to their experience of racial discrimination by accepting racism as a reality, for instance W. E. B. Du Bois, a Pan-Africanist says that, "the history of the world is the history not of individual but of groups, not of nations, but of races"⁴ and that "we believe that the Negro people, as a race, have a contribution to make to civilization and humanity, which no other race can make".⁵

Race problem, whether real or imagined is one of the greatest obstacles to African development and emancipation. African leaders cry out and rake out actions and policies tailored against imperialism even as a few of them are incarnates of Adolf Hitler. They extolled their states just as Hitler extolled the Aryan race, though biologically there is no such thing. In Africa conflicts of ethnic motivations are analyzed with race sense datum and spectacle. The Hutu genocide against the Tutsis of Rwanda in 1994 is akin to the murder of six million Jews by the Aryan race of Hitler's Germany. The massacre of the Igbo masterminded by some ethnic groups and their compradoral ethnic groups in 1966 was one of the race problems that have hamstrung African development. In his words, Nnamdi Azikiwe says that "to achieve mental emancipation, the apostle or disciple of the new Africa must hurdle over barriers of race or tribe"⁶ In Ghana, Liberia, Angola, South Africa, to mention a few of African countries the spoiling and pillaging mien among ethnic nationalities is something sprouting from racist paranoia. Racist ethnicism is one problem that has diminished African status in the committee of nations.

Mankind certainly wallows and baths in the murky consciousness of racism with little or no knowledge of the implications. In the warped views and idealism of 'defence of one's fatherland' 'Patriotism' 'nationalism' and 'ethnicism' man diminishes himself or the other. Under these noxious and toxic consciousness mankind has divided itself, few in the upper racial ladder and many below. K. A. Busia said that,

Race relations in Africa constitute an acute international problem. Behind the various policies we have encountered lies the common elements of relations between Europeans and Africans, between white and black people. At best the policies

³ Appiah, Kwame Anthony, *In My Father's House*, Oxford, (Oxford University Press, 1992) pp. 26–27.

⁴ Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Conversation of Races* p. 76.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁶ Azikiwe, Nnamdi, "Africa in Renaissance" in Gideon Cyrus M. Mutiso and G. W. Rohio, *Readings in Africa political Theory* (London, Heinemann, 1975), p. 161.

*have been marked by liberal paternalism worst, by yielding white ascendancy.*⁷

United States of America and European nations have been placed to exercise hegemonic economic and cultural 'control of the third world nations. Yet within the third world nations African countries, they have further sub-divided themselves for the convenience and racist domination of either the Tutsis over the Hutus of Rwanda or the Hausa domination of the Igbo of Nigeria or vice-versa. In defence of American nation, U.S would go a whole hog to stockpile armament and nuclear weapon, and out of ethnic patriotism, some particular ethnic groups would take control of the commanding heights of the military in their respective nations. This trend and phenomenon is the legacy of the racist Germany, U.S. and Britain. Yet Appiah has argued, *the truth is that there are no race: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us. As we have seen, even the biologists' notion has only limited uses.*⁸ This assertion is implicative of the denial of racism at both intrinsic and extrinsic levels or at the levels of human nature and subliminal subjective reality racism, though conspicuously absent in human nature is a created, reified concept that has the colour human relations and govern public affairs.

Had all ethnic nationalities in Africa been independent with self-determinations no part of Africa would have been the economic and political interest of U.S. or Britain or Russia. But where some ethnic groups with false sense of racist pedigree are want to dominate others, development would be undermined, conflicts and wars would prevail and negro people would remain unemancipated from the hands of Europe and U.S. As a logical and inevitable progenitor of fascism and social Darwinism, racism as an ideology flowered as a social, phenomenological and psychological incubus that accentuated colonialism and neo-colonialism. Therefore racism is an attitude which is both social and psychological. According to the Racists,

*the visible physical differences between the races are paralleled by profound mental differences both intellectual and emotional so that individuals of certain races are not capable of achieving the same intellectual development as those of other races and have a kind of characteristic that make them unable to command and predisposes them to obey.*⁹

in addition, it has been argued that racism is not a universal phenomenon and that it is different from ethnocentrism. The beliefs of ethnocentrism are (1) all human societies have a fairly good opinion of themselves in terms of their cultural superiority (2) Man's claim to excellence are either usually based narcissistically or because of the content of his gonads (3) Some people held the theory that their cultures were superior because of their genetic pool. Be that as it may, it must be acknowledged that racism developed comfortably from the philosophy of ethnocentrism. Also, although racism is said to have existed in some traditional societies, it is a fact that it has assumed an international dimension, couched in western philosophy which has been the motive force of the colonization of Africa and Asia. Consequently many explanations have been proffered for the rise of racism in the context of western tradition. These are in terms of necessary antecedent conditions and efficient causes.

The most important necessary condition for the rise of racism is the presence in sufficient numbers of two or more groups that

⁷ Busia K. A., "The Dark Skin" in Gideon Cyrus M. Mutiso and S. W. Rohio, *Ibid.*, p. 286.

⁸ Appiah, Anthony *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁹ Maguēt, Jacques, *Africanity, The Cultural Unity of Black Africa* (London, Oxford University Press 1972) p. 11.

*look different enough so that at least some of their members can be readily classifiable. In addition to their physical differences, these groups also have to be culturally different and in a position of institutionalized inequality for the idea of inherent racial differences to take root.*¹⁰

With regard to the efficient causes, there have been different causal priorities postulated by different scholars according to their theoretical predilections. To the psychologist, the ultimate source or seat of racism is personality, and causation must be sought in terms of the dynamics of frustration, aggression and the authoritarian personality. Frustration-aggression argument is as follows;

*a denial of certain goals or gratifications leads to frustration which is, at least in some situations, displaced from the causal agent of the frustration to an unrelated scape-goat. The scape-goat then becomes the object of aggressive behaviour, and thus expression of aggression presumably has the cathartic effect of relieving frustration. When the choice of scape-goats becomes culturally stabilized on members of certain groups, racial or ethnic prejudice results because the expression of aggression is rationalized in terms of the alleged undesirable traits of the scape-goats.*¹¹

Like the frustration aggression theory, the authoritarian personality is anchored in psychoanalytical concepts. For the authors of the authoritarian personality

*a syndrome exists which predisposes certain persons to become prejudiced against members of ethnic and racial group. Among the traits characteristic of the authoritarian personality are respect for force, submission towards superiors, aggression towards subordinates, lack of self-insight, acceptance of ready-made ideas, intolerance of deviance destructiveness and cynicism, a tendency towards superstition.*¹²

The impact of the sociology of frustration aggression and authoritarian personality syndrome on the West and African relations goes to some extent to explain African unfreedom. For one thing, Africa is made a scape-goat for the West inexplicable frustration and greediness. Secondly, Western fetishism, superstition and its cynicism about African humanity rendered her intolerable of African being and values. It must be stressed that the whole lot of Western attitude towards Africa is metaphysically unwarranted. Even studies have also shown that the psychopathology of racism does not fully explain the social morphology of racism. Psychogenesis and psychodynamics of prejudice show that some people simply conform to social norms without internalizing their prejudice at any depth. Racism, for some people, is a symptoms of a deeply rooted psychological problem, but for most people living in racist societies, "racial prejudice is merely a special kind of convenient rationalization for rewarding behaviour".¹³ It is, therefore, not out of place for a marxist to describe racism as an epiphenomenon of the material and economic interest and machinations of the imperialists. Thus, marxism has a mono-causal explanation of the origin of racism. Racism, so to speak, is a bourgeois ideology designed especially to rationalize the exploitation of non-white people of the world during the imperialistic phase of

¹⁰ Pierre L. Vanden Berghe, *Race and Racism, a Comparative Perspective* (New York, John Wiley and Sons; Second edition) p. 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

capitalism. Others who are inclined to assign causal priority to the realm of ideas, trace the origin of racism to the current of social Darwinism.

Pierre L. Vanden Berghe argued that any social explanation of the genesis of western racism must take three main factors into account. Firstly, racism was congruent with prevailing forms of capitalist exploitation and slavery in the New world and incipient colonial expansion in Africa. He says that

There is no question that the desire to rationalize exploitation of non-European people fostered the elaboration of a complex ideology of paternalism and racism with its familiar theories of grown-up childishness, civilizing mission, atavistic savagery, and arrested evolution.¹⁴

Secondly, he says that racism was congruent with the new Darwinism current of thought in the biological sciences. According to him, notions of stages of evolution, survival of the fittest, hereditary determinism, and near constancy of the genetic pool (except for rare mutations) were all eagerly applied to *homo sapiens* and adopted by the bourgeois social science of the late 19th century (Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner). Although John Stuart Mill and other early liberals were explicitly anti-racist, their *laissez faire* doctrine was later reinterpreted as a mandate not to interfere with any form of human inequality and suffering. The poor were poor because they were biologically inferior and the Negroes were slaves as a result of natural selection which had found the best place for them. Again, the egalitarian and libertarian ideas of the Enlightenment conflicted with racism, but they also paradoxically contributed to its development. Pierre L. Vanden Berghe rightly argued;

Faced with the blatant contradiction between the treatment of slaves and colonial people and the official rhetorics of freedom and equality, European and white North Americans began to dichotomize humanity between men and sub men, or the civilized and savages.¹⁵

Egalitarian ideals were restrictively applied to the whites. "The desire to preserve both the profitable forms of discrimination and exploitation and the democratic ideology made it necessary to deny humanity to the oppressed groups."¹⁶

Western Culture and Nationalism

The universalization and rapid spread of European culture have led to what I would call fetishization of western culture. This phenomenon goes a long way to rationalize the domination of the African. According to Enrique Dussel, "A fetish is something made by human hand but made to appear divine, absolute, and worthy of worship, fascinating and tremendous, that before which one trembles in fear, terror, or admiration. Every system tends to fetishize, totalise and absolutise itself."¹⁷ He describes 'fetishization' as the process by which the totality is made absolute, closed and divinized. In the global context, political totality becomes fetishized in the form of western imperialism and nationalistic totalitarianism "When a political system attains central power, geopolitically, economically, and militarily speaking, it divinises itself."¹⁸ So when western philosophy and ideology attains central power

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17 and 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁷ Enrique Dussel *Philosophy of Liberation* (trans) Aquilina Martinez and Christian Markovisky (New York, Orbis Books 1985), p. 96.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

geopolitically, economically and militarily, it divinises itself and consequently dominates the whole of the world.

We cannot, therefore, do justice to the factors that arrested African growth and independence without pointing out that the intellectual current of the enlightenment period caused African historical regression in the area of philosophy, thoughts, and religion. The denial of African philosophy, thoughts and religion denies Africans their civilization and this gave impetus for their domination. Apart from the dominance and the progressive tempo of western philosophy over ancient African philosophy, certain assertions and propositions propounded by westerners falsely argue that Africans suffered historical regression. It is believed, among others, that

- (a) Africans are primitives and savages
- (b) Africans are of genetically and intellectually inferior stuff compared to whites
- (c) Africans have no history and civilization.¹⁹

It is also believed that Africans had grasshopper mentality, and that they could not conceive the idea of God because they could not think metaphysically. On the contrary, it is safe and plausible to assert that African freedom is unnatural and most probably an artificial creation of man's inhumanity to man. The evidence for the unity of man as a creature created by God, the unifying spirit, is manifest in diverse inner promptings and destinations of man, and creations in the physical world. Much as Nietzsche's *Ego or 'I'* as the will to power and similar conceptions of Hegel's 'Absolute Wissen' Kantian '*Ich denke*' and Spinoza's, Schelling's and Fichte's '*ego or 'I'* as the propelling force of human spirit were used to justify conquest and colonializing of the less powerful underdeveloped and peripheral nations of Africa and Asia, such theories were really meant, or could be really used, to negate all values attributable to or inherent from, colonialism. One thing that has been inadvertently or advertently over-looked by the ideologists of power and colonialism is that the nativities of the prominent theorists of the concepts that have been used to justify the ideologies of the centre were in the peripheries.

Like the enlightenment and renaissance philosophers who emerged from the periphery to produce concepts and theories taken up later to be the official philosophical background of the ideology of the centre, Rev. Fr. Iwegbuna Michael Cyprain Tansi, whose remains Pope John Paul II beatified on 22 March 1998, as a process of elevating him to sainthood, stands out significantly as a challenge to Western domination of Africa and as one of those avatars from the periphery who contributed as much as any Italian, Greek, Roman, Briton or American towards the unity of man and progress of the world. This episode may not be isolated in the history of Black Africa at least, as one could recall Anthony William Amo, a Ghanaian Philosopher in the 18th century who studied, taught and became a professor of philosophy in a German University with many treatises to his credit. But Father Tansi beatification towards sainthood is a beacon of hope and challenge to the much flaunted European superiority and hegemony over the black race.²⁰

Venerable Iwene Michael Cyprain Tansi, with his beatification by Pope John Paul II, has joined other great black Africans who by dint of hard work, personal purity and sanctity, and especially by the universality of their personages, built bridges across races and demolished the structure of racism that had for many years posited Africa at the lowest level of the evolutionary ladder. Among the known and celebrated

¹⁹ Onyewuenyi, Innocent C. *African Origin of Greek Philosophy* 1987, p. 10.

²⁰ Perhaps, many scholars, scientists, philosophers and theologians in ancient Africa could have been suppressed just for the hatred of any evidence for African Development.

sanctified and purified humans but who were unique for having come from the periphery African to the centre of world church were St. Augustine of Hippo, born in the present day Algeria and remembered for his treatise, the City of God; St. Monica, mother of St. Augustine; St. Bakhita, a Sudanese slave girl who later became a nun tending to the poor and the elderly, St. Charles Lwanga, a Ugandan catechist who was martyred and canonized between 1885 and 1887 and so on.

African political backwardness is a matter of serious concern and contemplation especially in the face of economic and social somersaults and political instability which are more often than not justified on the platform of an African unphilosophical nature, savagery, paganism and the consequent colonialism. But the rise of Iwene Tansi from the side Aguleri in the periphery Igbo race of Nigeria in the world consciousness joins other black Africans in offering a ray of hope and reasons for the freedom of the Blacks from all manners of handicaps pari pasu the white man. Spirituality is not, after all, only a theological issue for it offers a number of leeways and visages for the technological and economic emancipation of the white race. Indeed it could be recalled that the allegation of incapacity of the Africans to think philosophically and conceptualize the idea of God was extended to mean that they could not advance technologically, politically and economically. The beatification of Father Iwene Tansi is a call for the Blacks to look inwards in the search for the causes of and solution to, their problems. African unfreedom from imperialism, economic hardships and dictators' trip on African Continent could be divorced from the essence of African man which is the same as that of a white man as portrayed by Tansi. Movements of any sort at the periphery have the possible ultimate destination of ending at the centre.

There is always that tendency for the philosophy of the periphery to situate itself in the centre, that is, in total exteriority. Just as the pre-Socratic thought appeared not from Greece but from Turkey and Southern Italy which are political economic and geopolitical peripheries; just as Greek fathers were peripheral as with Latin fathers; just as Rene Descartes, a distinguished modern Philosopher, arose from peripheral France and Immanuel Kant, arose from peripheral Konigsberg, so Venerable Iwene Tansi arose from the country side village of Aguleri of the peripheral Igbo race in Africa. Just as the philosophies of Descartes, Kant, Spinoza and so on were not intended to be used to affirm the 'Centre' or 'I' but to emphasize the universality of man, so also the rise of Iwene Tansi in the consciousness of African Catholic Church and in the white church is an emblematic and symbolic of the equality of all races, at least, in the mind of the Creator. If for any reason the philosophies from the peripheries were used to explain racism and political and economic instability, it must have been with the desire by Europe to enslave Africa and the rest of the world.

Venerable Iwene Tansi was born in the periphery of peripheries. The Igbo race he was born into was a periphery race. His nativity Aguleri is a periphery community near the suburb of Onitsha in Igbo nation. Yet in spite of this, he was able to find himself in the Mount St. Bernard Abbey Monastery in the United Kingdom where he developed himself and became relevant to humanity. As a child of unpredictable circumstances from a poor peasant and pagan home, he managed to become a teacher and subsequently a catholic priest, teaching and proselytizing in the periphery of the present day Anambra State of Nigeria. In response to his intuition and the call of God, he resigned in faith to go to the Mount St. Bernard Abbey Monastery in the United Kingdom where he became a monk and later Novice Master and Abbot of Mount Saint Bernard. His pastoral letters, correspondences and teachings, though, not published, are invaluable sources of understanding the exemplary life of Christ and asceticism.

The lessons from Venerable Iwene Tansi's life and his beatification by Pope John Paul II on 21st of March, 1998 near his country home Aguleri are that all races are one; that whatever a white man could achieve, a black man could also achieve; that the

present disparities in the economic and political development of the west and the rest of Africa and Asia are not functions of racial differences but probably could be as a result of contingent human prejudices or understanding and historical accidents and or the result of colonialism. Another lesson is that persons like Venerable Iwene Tansi, St. Augustine of Hippo, Rene Descartes, Immanuel Kant from the periphery of the centre have provided the ideology of the centre. Suffice it to say that African unfreedom is not unfreedom of reason but unfreedom from economic, political and social woes which are more or less the results of failure of reason and wisdom. Tansi has demonstrated that if the whole of Black race could be unfree he alone could be free in the Lord and that he consummated in Mount St. Bernard Abbey, England. Men have been in the forefront of greatness and universalism in black Africa. The question of African women is also a relative factor in African emancipation. But their contribution to this goal is contentious much as it is has been pegged on the European conception of 'women's liberation', which is wrong.

In terms of Ideology, what the African woman need is education and enlightenment. It is fundamentally education that will raise the African woman to the level where a retrogressive culture has placed the African man; the African woman would not be liberated by destroying the culture by making the woman richer or urbanized and deruralised or by breaking of homes. Culture is indestructible and the culture that placed the African women at the lower level of the societal ladder cannot be destroyed, but can be modernized or outgrown by the society's evolutionary consciousness in a way that is natural and in obedience to the law of nature.²¹

Fetishization of western culture is a long term dynamo and concept being foisted as a *succuba* on African freedom to think, develop and emancipate independently into the centre of the world affairs. Colonialism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism are all fronts and dimensions of the fetishization of European culture of dominance. From purely deductive and conceptual analysis, some of the European and western concepts and institutions like Western Democracy, Presidential system of government, International monetary fund, Paris Club, Aid, Armament, Disarmament western technology and education are a few of those western cultural values that have stagnated African development.

There are two options to the understanding of the background of this cultural predicament of the Africans. One is for the Africans to approach the existential question with an open mind and appreciate what has been tagged the 'stolen legacy' of the ancient Africans by the early Greeks and Europeans. The other is to recognize the influence of culture in the political and economic domination of Africa. Either ways or approaches and their rapprochement will raise necessary questions and proffer probable or necessary answers to the existential matter of African freedom. The conceptions of freedom in focus here are: Self-perfection, self-realization and self-determination.

The contemporary European arrogance and western assumed superiority in technology, economic stability and political systems are implicated in the theory of the stolen legacy of African cultural heritage. Various scholars in philosophy and cultural anthropology like G. C. M. James, Henry Olela, Innocent Onyewuenyi in different spaces and times have vigorously asserted that what today is called Greek or Western philosophy has its origin in Africa and Egypt (Africa). Henry Olela advanced the thesis that there were four schools of thought in ancient Africa; Schools

²¹Dukor, Maduabuchi, "How Not to Empower Women" in Dukor, Maduabuchi (ed.) *Philosophy and Politics: Discourse on Values and Power in Africa* (Lagos, Nigeria, O.O.P. 1998) p. 90.

at Heliopolis, Hermopolis, Thebes and Memphis and, that of these schools, the one which fashioned the basis of Greek philosophy was that of Memphis.²² This school of thought on African origin of Greek and Western philosophies postulated that the ancient Greek philosophers influenced by Ancient African philosophy included Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Parmenides Democritus, Leucippus and Plato.²³ This thesis is corroborated by Taban O. Liyon's postulation of Negroid's philosophical, scientific and cultural intrusion into the caucasoid and Mongoloid races. So what accounted for the ascendance of what is today called European culture and philosophy is the progress of civilization from ancient Africa which included Egypt through Greece to Europe.

African enslavement consists essentially in the ascendancy of European culture or more specifically, European civilization. It is 'civilization' because 'culture' would not have been more appropriate especially where civilization is construed to be in the primeval culture of the Negroid or caucasoid-Negroid. Civilization creates a difference between a developed culture and underdeveloped culture. It is therefore not surprising why in the age of racism, the developed cultures of the west were technologically utilized as instrument of oppression of the weak cultures and uncivilized races. Frantz Fanon in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* observed thus:

*Colonial domination . . . disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultural life of a conquered people. This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power.*²⁴

Culture is also the torch-bearer of civilization and the essence and authenticity of man. The culture in question is the one that gives expression to man in his artistic, religious, social political and scientific life. It is not the static and underdeveloped culture which is not on the onward lane of civilization. Professor Barnabas Chukwudum Okolo argued in this light saying:

*African culture is highly significant to the African. His realization of the tragic effects of colonialism on his culture, traditional religion, art, language, customs, traditions, for instance, has made him all the more appreciative of his culture. . . . Consequently the African's present striving to build up Africa have meant also building up a viable culture.*²⁵

Indeed it is the reality of European cultural dominance and its fetishization and the need to build an independent Africa that caused the establishment in schools and universities disciplines like African language, African literature, African philosophy and African religions. But the extent these efforts have eroded the towering edifice of Western cultural domination is another big question. The point remains, as Fanon has pointed out, that each generation must, out relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it. The fulfillment in Africa's culture will engender necessary self-perfection, self-realization and self-determination that will not only extricate Africa from the apron spring of western domination but will also enhance progress and civilization.

The question of African predicament is essentially a function of the stolen legacy and where it is placed today in western civilization and the obscure and unfulfilled culture of the Africans supposedly stolen from them by the Greeks and the West. As it were,

²² See Richard A. Wright, ed. *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, p. 74.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.

²⁴ Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London, Penguin Books 1965) p. 190.

²⁵ Okolo, B. Chukwudum, *African Philosophy: A Short Introduction* (Enugu, Nigeria, CFCIA 1993) p. 21.

the African culture and philosophy, whether stolen or preserved intact, would have needed the input of human intelligence and environment for development in terms of science and technology. It is this special application of culture to the human and environment needs in forms science, technology, political and social values that have placed Europe above Africa in the evolutionary ladder and the consequent enslavement of the latter. The logic of this enslavement is the fetishization of European culture and African unfreedom. Therefore the difficulty in the African discovering her essence and mission in her culture and fulfilling it, as well as the European development and fetishization of the stolen legacy jointly and severally constitute the bane of African freedom from neocolonialism and imperialism.

To sum it all up, Africans were believed to have no history and civilization. Consequently African traditional thoughts, philosophy and religions were ignored and their humanity viewed in another light as sub-humanity. Though it is true that mythological explanation of the universe was the hall-mark of primitive cultures all over the world, yet the emergence of western systematized system of thought called philosophy and science eroded ancient African philosophy. Africa suffered as a result of this, resulting to her domination by the west. While Africa could be partly blamed for not advancing as much as the west and so become dominated, Europe could also be partly held responsible for the domination of Africa and Asia because of the ideological overtones of her philosophy which excluded Africa and Asia from the rest of humanity.

Like Nazi Germany, the European conquest of Africa started with the formulation of Europe as a superior race and reformulation of Africa as an inferior race. Hence the quest for the domination of the black was systematically preceded by the ideological philosophy of Europe as a superior race; Western philosophers, especially of the Renaissance and modern periods contributed most to this ideology of dominations. Some of the statements and predicates encapsulating white superiority and Black inferiority are as follows. According to Gobineau

The negroid variety is the lowest, and stands at the foot of the ladder. The animal character, that appears in the shape of pelvis is stamped on the Negro from birth, and foreshadows his destiny. His intellect will always move within a very narrow circle. If his mental faculties are dull or even non-existent, he often has an intensity of desire, and so of will, which may be called terrible. Many of his senses, especially taste and smell are developed to an extent unknown to the other two race.²⁶

In his own words Charles Darwin says,

At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes . . . will no doubt be exterminated. The break will then be rendered wider, for it will intervene between man in some more civilized state.²⁷

Voltaire says this concerning Africa:

²⁶Gobineau quoted by Marimba Ani, *Yurungu, An African Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behaviour* (New Jersey, African World Press 1994) p. 282.

²⁷Quoted in George Stocking, *Race, Culture and Evolution* (The Free Press, New York, 1968) p. 113.

*If their understanding is not of a different nature from ours, it is at least greatly inferior. They are not capable of any great application or association of ideas, and seemed formed neither for the advantages nor the buses of philosophy.*²⁸

On Africa again, David Hume says:

*There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturer among them, no parts, no sciences. . . . Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men.*²⁹

For George Hegel,

*. . . incapable of contemplating any objective entity such as God or Law. . . . Nothing remotely human is to be found in their (the Negroes') character. Extensive reports by missionaries confirm this and Mohammedanism seems to be the only thing which can, in some measure, bring them nearer to a civilized condition.*³⁰

Abraham Lincoln added his racist voice as follows:

*I will say then, that I am not or ever have been in favour of brining about in any way, the social and political equality, of the white and black races. That I am not, nor never have been, in favour of making voters or jurors of Negroes, not of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people and I will say in addition to this, that there is a physical difference between the white and black races, which will ever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And as much as they cannot so live, while they do remain together, there must be a position of Superior and Inferior, and I as much as any other man, am in favour of having the Superior position assigned to the White Race.*³¹

In his racist words Edgar Allen Poe says,

*Our assailants are numerous, and it is indispensable that we should meet the assault with vigour and activity. Nothing is wanting but mainly discussion to convince our own people at least, that in continuing to command the services of the salves, they violate no law divine or human, and that in the faithful discharge of their reciprocal obligations lies their duty.*³²

For Andrew Johnson,

²⁸ Quoted in Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1968) p. 87.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁰ Quoted in J. M. Ha, "Frobenius, Senghor and The Image of Africa", in *Modes of Thought*, Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan (eds.), Faber and Faber, London, 1973, p. 310 from Hegel, *Die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Reclam Verlag Stuttgart, 1961, p. 155.

³¹ Quoted in Marimba Ani *op. cit.*, p. 299 and Abraham Lincoln (1858).

³² Quoted in Marimba Ani, *Ibid.*, p. 299 and from Edgar Allen Poe (Southern Literary Messenger, 1836).

*It is vain to deny that they (Blacks) are an inferior race-very far inferior to the European variety. They have learned in slavery all that they know in civilization. When first brought from the country of their origin they were naked savages and where they have been left to their own devices or escaped the control of the white race they have lapsed, to a greater or less degree into barbarism.*³³

In the most wicked words, Benjamin Franklin says:

*Why increase the sons of Africa, by planting them in America, where we have so fair an opportunity, by excluding blacks and tawnys, of increasing the lovely white and red?*³⁴

Without any sense of history and humanity, Arnold Toynbee says:

*It will be seen that when we classify Mankind by colour, the only one of the primary races, given by this classification, which has not made a creative contribution to any of our twenty-one civilizations is the Black Race . . . within the first six thousand years, the Black Race has not helped to create any civilization.*³⁵

In a paternalistic and imperialistic couched statement, Albert Schweitzer says:

*The Negro is a child, and with children nothing can be done without the use of authority. We must, therefore, so arrange the circumstances of our daily life that my authority can find expression. With regard to the Negroes, then, I have coined the formula: "I am your brother, it is true, but your elder brother."*³⁶

According to Marimba Ani, the nature of the European domination "defines others as competitors and enemies", and, at the same time compels Europeans to leave 'home' (where they are at least surrounded by those who look like them) and then move into alien in which they are 'strangers'. Cases in point, according to her are colonial situations and slave plantations. As a psychologist, and a Black American, Marimba Ani opined that the European sense of power is exhilarated by the fact that they are among a very few whites who control many dark skinned 'natures'. But in modern times, the inability of Africa to compete effectively with the west in the area of science and philosophy accounts for the western arrogance and her domination over Africa.

The Dynamics of Western Domination of Africa

Because of the philosophy of domination and superiority complex created by the Enlightenment period and the subsequent emergence of 'I' and 'centre' ontologies, the Europeans embarked on the scramble for the colonization and partitioning of Africa, their supposedly inferior race between 1875 and 1900, thousands of years after the evolution of man from matter or monkey or after creation by God, as the case may be. Motivated by this bogus, supposedly civilizing and inhuman enterprise, and encouraged by the belief in white racial superiority, Britain acquired the largest number of colonies which included the present day nation-states like Liberia, Sudan,

³³ Quoted in Marimba Ani, *Ibid.*, p. 299 and from Andrew Johnson (1867).

³⁴ Quoted in Marimba Ani, *Ibid.*, p. 299 and from Benjamin Franklin (*Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind*, 1753).

³⁵ Quoted in Marimba Ani, *Ibid.*, p. 299.

³⁶ Quoted in Marimba Ani, *Ibid.*, p. 299 and from Albert Schweitzer (*On the Edge of Primeval Forest* 1961).

Egypt, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Somali, Kenya, Zanzibar, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Swaziland, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Southern Rhodesia, Saint Helena Island and Seychelles. Second and close to Britain in this inhuman acquisition and destruction of the African race was France who acquired Algeria, Tunisia, Cameroon, Togo, Senegal, Mali, Madagascar, Congo, Somalia, Dahomey, Niger, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Chad, Central African Republic, Gabon, Mauritania, Comores Mascarene Islands, Djibouti and so on. Portugal colonized Angola, Guinea-Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands, Saint Thomas, Mozambique and so on. France and Germany partitioned Morocco. Spanish colonies included western Sahara, Ceuta and Melilla. Belgian colonies included Congo, Luanda and Burundi while Italy colonized Libya.

This phenomenon of partitioning, occupation and domination of African race is what is classically called colonialism. The tentacle of colonialism included the universalization of European culture, psychic and political domination and economic exploitation. The realization of these unnatural deeds and injustices awakened the consciousness of African leaders and people to the liberation struggle which culminated in most African territories getting their political independence from Britain, France, Spain, Belgium and Italy by 1962. The last African country to free itself from British colonial rule in 1990 is Namibia. In the Republic of South Africa, the white minority ruled the black majority with apartheid and racial policies until 1994.

In his book *Philosophy of Liberation*, Enrique Dussel gave a fascinating and illuminating praxis of domination. According to him,

*the praxis of domination is a perversity. It is the practical affirmation of totality. It is the ontic realization of being, its alienating performance. The master exercises power over the servant by means of oppressive praxis. It is the mediation of the system by which its structure endures and persists.*³⁷

In the South African context, 'Apartheid' which literally means 'apartness' or 'the state of being separate' is the praxis of domination and the affirmation of totality and its progenitor. Apartheid as an oppressive system was vividly articulated by Dr. Malan, the white minority party leader, in March 26, 1943 as follows:

*to ensure the safety of the white race and of christian civilization by the honest maintenance of the principles of apartheid and guardianship.*³⁸

Domination is the act by which people are forced to live in the system that alienates them. The people are thereby forced to perform actions contrary to their nature and their historical essence. Under the system of domination, the servant obeys out of fear, out of habit. A study of the conditions of the African worker undertaken by David Davis shows that

*the conditions under which black people live and work are the result primarily of a system of racial and national oppression known as apartheid. It is a system that, for African workers, not only makes normal trade union activity and collective bargaining impossible, but also destroys normal family and social life.*³⁹

³⁷ Dussel, *op. cit.*, p. 54 and 55.

³⁸ Malan quoted by Okolo, B. C. 'Apartheid As Unfreedom' in *Presence Africaine Nouvelle Series Bilingue No. 129 1^{er} Framestre 1984* p. 24.

³⁹ David Davis quoted by Okolo, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

In a section of their work entitled *The Poor Get Poorer*, Ruth First, Jonathan Steele and Christabel Gurney write: "One characteristic of South Africa's economy has been its rapid rate of growth; another is the glaring disparity between white affluence and black poverty; a third, i.e. the continual decline in African living standards. All three factors are caused by apartheid."⁴⁰ Repression comes into the praxis of Domination when the oppressed tries to liberate themselves from the pressure they suffer; and with every act of the oppressed to liberate themselves the dominator increases the pressure of the domination. This had been the tactics of the white minority government in South Africa and the experiences of the black majority had been torture, incarceration, marginalization and segregation. Repression can be social and psychological. In social repression, cultural norms are interjected through education, and punishment into the very psychic structure of the child, or the person. In this way, political and economic power represses those who rebel and represses them politically through the police or the military. UNESCO report on Apartheid concludes:

*in education, science, culture and information, apartheid violates, both in principle and in practice, the United Nations Charter, the constitution of UNESCO, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. . . . It is a policy of deliberate inequality built into the educational system, expressed in scientific and cultural activities and underlined in the regulations governing access to information.*⁴¹

As a form of social and psychological repression, Apartheid educational system is, "the only education system in the world designed to restrict the productivity of its pupils in the national economy to lowly subservient tasks, to render them non-competitive in that economy, to fix them in a tribal world."⁴² In psychological repression, the corporeality of the people is violated against their will. The institutional violence of psychological repression is justified by what Enrique Dussel calls "the ontology and ideology of the system."⁴³ The failure of civil disobedience, constitutional means and peaceful resistance to dismantle apartheid in South Africa resulted in the declaration of arms resistance by the blacks in 1962, followed by series of clashes between the white minority police and the black civilians. This was seen to be inevitable. Enrique Dussel vividly captures the inevitability of the situation when he says:

*war is the ultimate fulfillment of the praxis of domination; it is domination in its pure state. When the dominated no longer accept being oppressed by peace, or by repression, or by tactical violence, the dominator begins war. . . . War is practical ontology; it is the being that in practise reduces the other to non being.*⁴⁴

Indeed, Apartheid in black South Africa and its semblances in neo-colonized black African continent have created a massive and deep rooted syndrome of alienation in the black people and a corresponding syndrome of phobic complex in the white minority and their imperialistic compradors. The ethos of domination revolves around the mystification, in the form of reigning customs or virtues, of what were vices in the time of oppression. Ethos, the moral character of a people or a person, is a structural attitude that predetermines action.

Repressed, the oppressed bring upon themselves a psychic self-poisoning in response to the violence they suffer. It is

⁴⁰ Firstly, Steela and Gunney quoted by Okolo, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴¹ UNESCO quoted by Okolo, *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴² Dr. W. G. McGonkey quoted by Okolo, *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴³ Dussel, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

*impossible for the weak to exercise the desired act of revenge against the strong. Thus arises resentment as autorepressive interjection of power, which, not being turned against the dominator, poisons as it settles into the one dominated. The resentment of the dominator cannot be lived either as a vice, which it is, or as mere resigned passivity. It is sublimated as the virtue of patience, or obedience, or discipline, or fidelity.*⁴⁵

Under South Africa's Apartheid system, hatred dwelt in the heart of the dominator's ethos, the ethos of white-minority. The domination is repulsed by the goodness, happiness, or success of the other, the black majority, "Hatred is a perversion of natural tendencies. It is autoeroticism of the totality and the exclusion of exteriority. It is the origin of political and individual pathology. . . . Hatred is the perverse pulsion that keeps united the structured parts of the totalised whole."⁴⁶

Under a perverted systemlike Apartheid, prudence (practical wisdom) is shunted into 'reason'; the art of planning and winning wars. Under Apartheid system, justice gives to the powerful what was snatched from the weak under the epiphenomenon of legality, and the arrogance of the manager is the indignity of the hourly workers. Similarly, temperance is made comfort, which leads to a rocklike insensibility impervious to another distress. All in all, the 'virtues' of the centre and the dominating classes are alienation in the periphery and the dominated classes: black Africans and Asians.

Nationalism and Militarism, no doubt, collectively and severally, constitute the efficient cause of Eurocentricism, international fascism and African unfreedom. Nationalism espouses love of one's country at the cost of world state and love of the other's country. It seeks to promote national pride against other nation's pride. As Enrique Dussel would argue, it is the affirmation of totality at the expense of metaphysical exteriority, or more succinctly put, it is the deification of 'I' at the expense of the 'other'. It is, therefore, not surprising that in order to defend and propagate nationalism, as it were, each nation most, of necessity, build defence mechanisms and networks which create an atmosphere of militarism. In his paper, *conflict and corporations among Nations* Ivo Duchacek comments on Nationalism as follows: "Nationalism divides humanity into mutually intolerant units. As a result, people think as Americans, Russians, Chinese, Egyptians or Peruvians first and human beings second — if at all."⁴⁷ The former UN Secretary-General, U Thant says, "so many of the problems that we face today are due to, or the result of, false attitude — some of them have been adopted almost unconsciously. Among these is the concept of narrow nationalism — my country, right or wrong."

Conclusion

The realities of the 19th and 20th century nationalism and militarism which were the manifestation of fascism, and which are rooted in Darwinism and Racism, are not in doubt. It is not accidental, that after the scramble and partitioning of Africa, European nations engaged in testing one another's military capabilities and strengths. Invariably, this phenomenon led to the First World War in 1918, the Second World War between 1939 and 1945 and the Gulf War between February and March 1991. There is no doubt that the First and Second world wars ushered in the concept of 'super-powers' and an era of power tussles. This resulted in the emergence of the so called super-power like United States, and Soviet Union and the struggle for fittest in the nationalistic and militaristic struggle for domination. The weakness and the inability of Africa to meet the challenges of nationalism and

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Ivo Duchacek quoted by *Awake op. cit.*, p. 26.

militarism and consequently her non-inclusion in the security council of the United Nations mean a lot to her freedom. Again, the emergence of U.S.A. as the leader of NATO and Russia as the leader of the former U.S.S.R., after the Second world war further reduced Africa to unfree race.