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## RACISM, PHILOSOPHY AND AFRICAN THOUGHT

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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **CONCEPT CLARIFICATION**

By Emmanuel Iniobong.

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION:**

Racism as a concept has a derogatory nature and content such that it spreads a bad odour because of its anti-humanistic tendencies in almost every aspect of our interest and endeavours.

In the consideration of this topic one would discover that to the westerner the Africans do not have any rationality hence they cannot philosophise and make good value judgement of a particular situation. To them, there is nothing like an African philosophy and because of this assertion one would crystal see the racial tendency and prejudice amongst the westerners towards the Africans. The Africans have hitherto been discriminated in issues that are deemed technical and systematic because of the alleged fact that they have no rationality. But is it really the case that the Africans have no rationality and thus cannot philosophise? Who does set the standards for rationality? This is a food for thought for all.

Philosophy is a cognitive cultural human activity. Everybody everywhere philosophises in one way or the other from time to time, this is because rationality is one of the characteristics of the psychosomatic nature of men. So for us to say that philosophy started with Thales of Miletus brings our understanding to disrepute makes nonsense of our assertion and claims. Thus it is obvious that there is an element of racism in the assertion that the African's have no rationality and philosophy. Apart from this, some very popular racist like Hegel, David Hume, Kant etc have all had one degrading remarks made towards the Africans. Some like Trevor-Roper have made the claim that there is nothing like African History. Hegel equally dismissed Africa as a candidate of world history. From all this it seems to me that the westerners are using their culture i.e. the westerners think that their culture is superior to that of the Africans? When even Hegel in his dialectical turn of mind affirms that the truth is in the whole? This is partiality in its entirety.

The reports of the Europeans explorers, merchants, missionaries and colonialists who visited Africa had an interpretation of Africa coloured by their motives and sentiments. Because recent discoveries have proved them wrong.

Africa indeed has suffered a lot as a result of racism and discrimination because our culture and civilisation has been misrepresented and distorted. There is now a new challenge to look into the African past in order to understand and explain her present. Just like what the book of Ecclesiastics posit in chapter 1 verse 9 that there is nothing new under the sun. Most western philosophies are comfortable inherent in our Africa folklores, riddles wise-sayings etc though, the Europeans would want an extra-faith Knowledge of European history and social existence ever though Christianity came to Ethiopia first before Paul took it to Macedonian, the African continent is now pejoratively notioned "third world" as underdeveloped or on the way-to- development. The Boer racism policy in apartheid saw to the extermination of Hottentot tribes and other killings in Africa readily comes to mind.

Today, emphases have shifted even to the aspect of knowledge. The African have really been discriminated intellectually and seen as people that do not have a soul and rational faculty. And that is why the issue of African philosophy should be taken very seriously because it has come to be discovered that the philosophies of most westerners are things that the African have been aware of long-time ago though it

has been modified with bombastic and jaw-breaking vocabulary like Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative for example. The Africans can start from somewhere articulates their philosophies and document them. Though very impressively, this is already on course as we have great renowned African philosophers like Hountondji, Bodunri, Wiredu, Omoregbe etc. towing this line.

In this work however, we want to, as our contributions to the sustenance of Africa philosophy, project further this crusade that African philosophy is real and has come to stay as we argue vividly from true philosophical perspective. Enough of this racism to African philosophy and in attempt to achieve this we have divided this work into five chapters where some concepts shall be clarified like: what is racism? what is philosophy? And what is Africa thought? in chapter one; then we shall look at racism and philosophy in chapter two, and in chapter three, we shall talk about the impact of racism in Africa and in chapter four we shall examine racism in African thought and finally in chapter five we shall give a conclusions, recommendation and solutions.

## 1.2 Definition of Terms: WHAT IS RACISM?

According to Longman Dictionary of contemporary English, Racism is defined as unfair treatment of people, or violence against them, because they belong to a different race from your own; also it is the belief that different race of people have different character and abilities and that the qualities of your own race are the best.

Also in the Encyclopaedia Britannica vol. 16 racism is seen as the theory or idea that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and certain traits of personality, intellect or culture and combined with it, the notion that some races are inherently superior to others. The term racism has no necessary relation to biological or anthropological definitions of race, a subdivision of a species. Racist ideas are often indiscriminately extended to apply to such non-biological and non-racial groupings as religious sects, nations, linguistic groups, and ethnic or cultural groups. As one authority has noted, "racism is quite different from a mere acceptance of scientific and objective study of fact of race and the fact of the present inequality of human groups (Cosmas 52-3)

**Racial And Ethnic Criteria:** Race, in the sense relevant to racism, refers to human group that defines itself or is defined by others as culturally different by virtue of innate immutable physical characteristics. Thus under racism a race is defined socially but on the basis of physical characteristics.

**Ethnocentrism And Racism:** Parallel to the problem of distinguishing between race and ethnic group is the problem of distinguishing between racism and ethnocentrism. The distinction is that in ethnocentrism, presumably, the alleged inferiority, disabilities, and negative traits of the out-group are thought to be culturally determined only, where as in racism there is a belief that the disabilities are inborn.

**Discrimination And Prejudice:** The term racial discrimination denotes all forms of differential behaviour based on race. The most notable form of racial discrimination is of course, physical segregation by race, but there are more others, such as rules of etiquette defining forms of address between racial superiors and inferiors or choice of friends or spouses. Racial endogamy (that is, marrying within one's own racial group) is frequently required and almost always preferred in racially stratified societies. Commensality rules (rules determining with whom one may or may not eat) are also a very common manifestation.

## 1.3 WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

By Elogbo James

Although people in the western world have philosophised for more than 2,500 years. The exact nature of philosophy is still a matter of dispute. Philosophy originally began as a curious mixture of scientific, Theological, magical "and ethical" explanation of the common and uncommon features of the world. The concept of philosophy like most other abstract concepts cannot be give a precise definition that will command general acceptance. This is why the attempt to define the concept philosophy has itself posed a philosophical problem and to avoid the difficulties involved in defining philosophy some scholars may resort to tracing the etymological root meaning of the concept. In these connection the concept philosophy is derived from two Greek words namely "Philein" meaning love, and "Sophia" meaning Wisdom. These

two words conjoined together gives the etymological meaning of Philosophy, which in the light of the forgoing would imply the love of wisdom. And the philosopher therefore can be said to be one that loves wisdom. But this definition is debatable. This is because the Greek works “Sophia” which is literally translated. Into English as “wisdom” had a much wider application more than the Modern English word Sophia for Homer, for example refers to the skills of a carpenter, while Herodotus used the verb “Philosophies” in the context in which it meant the desire to find out. In these connections it has been stated that philosophia connotes the love of exercising one’s curiosity and intelligence I wish to state that the exercise of one’s curiosity or intelligence is not merely an aesthetic disposition. Rather it is an exercise that yields knowledge, which in some way is useful in the solution of problems. Since the philosopher in spite of his specialised interest within the ambit of the discipline of philosophy is to articulate knowledge that leads to the optimisation of some human interest.

On a general note, however, the concept philosophy has variously been defined. For instance the concept philosophy, especially in contemporary usage, could be interpreted simply as a discipline of study in an academic institution. Apart from this interpretation, there is also the popular notion of the concept philosophy, which means any general theory or idea dealing with important questions about life. In another perspective, philosophy has been defined as a free rational inquiry into the nature and meaning of reality. Philosophy has also been defined as thought about thought. This definition is in line with the view articulated by Fredrick Copleston which posits that philosophy is a second-order discipline which is capable of being applied to a variety of first order disciplines and activities.

Finally, philosophy is the search for authentic nature pre-occupies himself with the search for this authentic truth.

#### 1.4 WHAT IS AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND AFRICAN THOUGHT

The status of African philosophy as a philosophical discipline has been a major point of disagreement. This intellectual bias was instigated mostly by David Hume and G.W. Hegel who took it for granted that the Negro-African was bereft of philosophical reflection, and this was supported by even some Africans themselves who were sceptical about the existence of African philosophy. Thus they will not readily say yes to the question: is there an African philosophy?. Someone like Henri Maurier, thinking about philosophy in a formalised way, as defined by the west, says that there is no such thing as African philosophy, and if it is, it has not yet come.

For some others, there is such a thing as African philosophy that stands as a legitimate course of study. But even among those schools, both African and European, who thinks there is such a discipline called ‘African philosophy’ opinion are strongly divided. The preceding view explains the reason why many approaches have been underlined by scholars and Odera Oruka identifies four or three trends to include **Ethno-philosophy**: these claim that philosophy is cultural. So for there to be an African philosophy, then it must be rooted in the culture and traditions of the African people.

**Philosophic sagacity**: this belong to the realm of philosophising that seriously holds the view that philosophy resides in the breast of individuals therefore rejecting the holistic approaches to African philosophy.

**Nationalist-idealistic philosophy**: this is the word view derived from the political reactions of the Nouveau African intellectuals to the imperialistic domination of the African people.

**Professional- philosophy**: these are philosophers of African origin who received requisite training in western philosophy and are now looking at philosophy as a universal discipline with no cultural boundary so to them philosophy whether African or not must be universal not cultural.

In all, African philosophy is the critical, rational, systemic and coherent view of the African on his problem and how to solve them.

African thought on the other hand is the pre-scientific thought which tend to construct explanation of natural phenomena in terms of the activities of gods and spirit. Wiredu distinguished African thought from African philosophy, which according to him African thought has to do with the inquiries of the African into natural phenomena, which he attributes to the gods or the spirits.

Nwala, on the other hand defined (African) thought as the manner and process of forming ideas, concepts and judgements and hence the process of arriving at believe and holding opinion as to the truth or nature of anything (Nwala, 76).

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **RACISM AND PHILOSOPHY:**

By Enyimba Maduka

Having defined racism and philosophy one will immediately see that certain racial traits colour or characterise some philosophical thoughts especially as it concerns the European and the Africans. Most western philosophers of the likes of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F Hegel and Karl Marx have distinguished themselves in this respect. It is this racist perception of African that has led western scholars to deny Africans intellectual ability and to describe them as incapable of any good thing. Such pejorative terms as savages, primitives, barbarians, backwardness etc. have been used to qualify African and anything African. This is indeed very wrong and should not be the case.

It is against this backdrop that we in this chapter will attempt a critical examination of the altitudes of Hume and Kant towards the Black race. The point will be made that their thoughts or philosophies are coloured by racism and therefore should be held with reservation.

#### **2.1 HUME ON NATIONAL CHARACTER**

In his essay on National Character, David Hume exhibited his aversion and contempt for the black man. Because of his belief that a person's intellectual ability or otherwise is a function of his or her nativity or racial descent, Hume, held that the African (the black-man) is incapable of logical thinking and is therefore intellectually unproductive, among other inadequacies.

David Hume has absolutely no respect for the black man. He believes very strongly in the idea that Europe is the model of humanity, culture and is history itself. It is this type of belief; that led Hume, in the aforementioned essays to declare thus:

*I am apt to suspect the Negroes  
to be naturally inferior to the  
whites. There scarcely ever was  
a civilised notion of that  
complexion; nor even any individual  
eminent in action or speculation...*(Wiredu, 198).

From the above, it is clear that Hume attaches great importance to complexion (the color of a person's skin), and accords it a prominent role in the determination of a person's rationality or irrationality. Indeed, one cannot but describe Hume as a racist whose racial prejudice has greatly coloured his philosophical insight. Continuing in his remarks against the black man, Hume said, there is;

*No ingenious manufacturers amongst them,  
on arts, no sciences. On the other hand  
the most rude and barbarous of the whites, ...  
have still Something eminent about them...  
such a uniform and constant difference  
could not happen...if nature had not made  
original distinction betwixt these breeds of men*(Eze, 214).

Here Hume falls into the same error of causality which he earlier refused in his philosophy, by saying that there is a causal relation between a person's skin colour and his intellectual capacity. Thus, he identifies skin colour as the uniform, constant difference between two races of men. This is categorically as incorrect as it is contradictory.

It should be recalled here that David Hume in attacking the idea of causality had argued that we cannot legitimately justify our impressions or sensation. According to him "it is because an object lies contiguous and prior to another that we say there is a necessary connection". For him "there is no causation or succession, all objects are co-existent" (Njoku, 112).

Furthermore on the black race, Hume asserts that any African who is respected by his people for his intellectual achievement, must be seen as a mere parrot who cannot say anything coherently. In his words:

*In Jamaica, indeed they talk of one  
negro as a man of parts and learning;  
but it is likely that he is admired for  
slender accomplishments, like a parrot who  
speaks a few words plainly.* (Wiredu, 199)

This attitude of Hume puts a question mark on his philosophical disposition and leaves one wondering how genuine a philosopher he was since he lacks the philosophical attitude of open-mindedness and tolerance. David Hume is therefore fundamentally wrong as his argument is based on a weak logic. This is applicable to Kant whom we now consider.

## 2.2 KANT ON THE VARIETIES OF DIFFERENT RACES OF MEN

In his "varieties of the different races of men" Immanuel Kant like Hume ascribed to skin colour (white or black) the evidence of rational and therefore human capacity or the lack of it. For instance, Kant said of one negro:

*This man was black from head  
to toes and this is a clear proof  
that what he said was stupid* (Eze, 215)

This is undoubtedly another case of fallacious argument. One cannot, as Kant has just done, in this quotation, dismiss a person's statement or position as stupid simply because of his skin colour without first analysing the content or structure of his or her statement or position to ascertain its truth value. This attitude indeed does not befit a philosopher.

Yet on the basis of this skin colour criterion Kant went on to divide the human race into five distinct groups, namely,

Stem genus:	very brunette
First Race:	very blond (northern Europe)
Second Race:	copper-red (America)
Third race:	Black (Senegambia)
Fourth race:	olive yellow (indians)-(Eze, 215).

This classification can be likened to the five varieties of human species distinguished by Linnaeus in which African is at the base. (Mbefo, 26-27).

In justifying his statement and position on this issue Kant directly appealed to Hume's statement. Cited earlier and said:

*So fundamental is the difference between  
the two races of men and it appears to be as  
Great in regard to mental capacities as  
in colour* (Tsenay, 237).

Indeed, Kant falls into the same racial prejudice and narrow-mindedness which characterised Hume's writing and exposes their lack of genuine philosophical attitude of open-mindedness and presuppositionless. Philosophical attitude according to Nwala demands a "curiosity to know, maintenance of critical attitude to life, openness of mind on all issue and lack of dogmatic assertion or stand, but an

attitude of tolerance and readiness to examine everything without prejudice or pre-conceived notion” (Nwala, 2).

These qualities are evidently lacking in the works of Hume and Kant under consideration. This is particularly most unfortunate, especially when it is recalled that these are men whose works and various writings have influenced a lot of changes in the world.

It is worthy of note here that it is not only in philosophy that racial bigotry and cultural arrogance has prompted a disfigured perspective of the African by Europeans. In 1963 for instance, Trevor Roper, a British professor of history denied that African had a history. Mbefo quotes him as saying:

*Perhaps in the future there will be  
some African history...but at present  
there is none: There is only the history of  
The Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness...  
And darkness is not a subject of history* (Mbefo, 10)

These are all one sided and ignorant presentations of Africa history and philosophy (thought). Apart from cultural arrogance and racial reasons, other reasons for European’s erroneous view of African society as static and incapable of initiating change and as possessing unintelligible thought, include the lack of writing tradition in traditional Africa at that time, and the desire to facilitate their colonial government in Africa. And this has had grave effects in the African peoples and Culture.

Conclusively, it is therefore, racial prejudice to describe some set of human beings as incapable of reasoning, as primitive and or as savages because of their descent or simply because they are of different race or origin from one. There is indeed no moral, rational or logical justification for such far-reaching conclusion or thinking.

In fact, in our opinion, it is the one who is prone to such racial delusion that should be referred to as primitive, inhuman and therefore must not be taken very seriously. Hence, we Africans should desist from worshipping these people and from accepting hook-line and sinker their ideas and thought as Cannons and apodictic. This must however, not be done as a matter of prejudice, but as a matter of fact, because it is the truth; otherwise we will be falling into the same racial bigotry with them.

As Wiredu rightly pointed out, the African indeed possess a high degree of coherent thought. For instance, “the west has a lot to learn from our moral thoughts which are free from superstition. It is therefore the task of contemporary African philosophers to expose these aspects of traditional thoughts and thereby correct these misconceptions of African thought.

### **2.3 RACISM AND HEGELIANISM**

By Isogin Kizito

Of all the injuries inflicted by racism on people of colour, the most corrosive is the wound within, the internalised racism that leads some victims at unspeakable cost to their own cause of say, to embrace the values of their ‘oppressor - “H. Lack Geiger ( Steinem 1992:118).

Racism describes that entrenched social and political distinctions between sexes, races or classes on the basis of assumed superiority of one race or clan over the other. This is basically based on prejudice.

Hegel writing in contradiction to Aristotle, who stated that of all the races, only the Caucasian race (white European and the descendants) have this inherent capacity for rationality. According to Hegel the African, Indians and other races lacked the capacity for rationality. Thus they cannot be classified as humans. At best they are to be treated as sub-humans. This racial prejudice was later developed in Germany into the Aryan Cult. This Aryan cult held that the Aryan race was superior to all races.

Unfortunately, experience today cart Hegel in this mould of an irrational thinker for not only has it been proved and established that rationality is a universal human heritage, race which Hegel excludes from the brackets of rationality have been shown to have established great civilisation and centre of learning, that herpes certain European countries at the time of Hegel

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **IMPACT OF RACISM IN AFRICAN**

By Gurje Eunice O.

#### **3.1 NEGATIVE IMPACT OF RACISM IN AFRICA**

Before saying some of the negative impacts of racism, I would like to define or say what Racism is all about.

Racism according to W.E.B.D Bois, it is a vast family of human being generally of common blood and language always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of ordain more or less vividly conceive ideas of life.

Turning to real history, there can be no doubt, first, as the wide spread, nay, universal, prevalence of the race idea, the race spirit the race idea, and as to its efficiency as the vastest and most ingenious invention for; human progress.

Racism, as we have seen, is only one element of a vaster whole; that way of the systematised oppression of a people. The consequences of Racism on cultural level, we witness the destruction of cultural values of ways of life. Language, dress, technique are deralorises.

Enslavement, in the strictest sense of the native population is the prime necessity, for this its system of reference have to be broken. Expropriation, spoliation, raids objective murder, are matched by the sacking of cultural patterns, social panorama is destructured; values are flaunted, crushed, emptied.

Exploitation-torture, raids collective liquidations, rational oppression take turns at different levels in order to make of the native an object in the hands of the occupying nation, the feel we cannot exist without them.

Also to Westerner, they believe that African cannot philosophise because of anti-humanistic tendencies.

We must tirelessly look for the repercussions racism at all levels of sociability. The apathy so universally noted among colonial people is but the logical consequence of this operation.

#### **3.2 THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF RACISM TO AFRICAN THOUGHT**

By Nduke Emen

Racism although had more negative impact on African, it at the same time had some positive impact on African too.

Racism makes the blacks to get motivated in the sense that it creates awareness for them to think critically in order to know their state of narrow-mindedness, thereby working towards it to make an improvement. For example, the present debate on the question on the origin of philosophy has shown Africans that the “Westerner” historians deny them the existence of the origin of philosophy based on their biased mind. Be as it may, we have known through our research, our study, that originated in African that African has a lot to offer both intellectually and otherwise. We also work hard to show the Americans that knowledge acquired cannot be based on the ‘inferior race’ has something to offer to all fields of life. Racism breaks the barrier of African inferiority complex the outbreak of world war of 1914-1918 in the sense that before and during the war, racial discrimination between the white and black in West Africa was at its highest. Africans suffered from inferior mentality, they saw Europeans masters as nothing but semi gods to cless creative etc. Even in the battle field in the African were not allowed to shoot a white soldier, even if he was an enemy. This should the height to which racial discrimination was played. So the war now disclosed to African soldiers that the white were not semi-gods but ordinary men like them. They also discovered that the bullets that killed the blacks also killed the whites. They also saw that many of the European were mere labourers, shop-polishers and house-boys in European, it also disproved other opinions formerly held by the Africans as being sub-human to whites.

Racism enlightened African and also led to the formation of such African Organisation as, Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU), Economic Community of West Africa State (ECOWAS), National Association of British West African State (NABWAS)etc. to ensure the unity of Africa State to fight against colonialism, neo-colonialism which are off shoots of racism itself. Hence it was the Menace of racism on the black continent that led to the formation of the aforementioned organisations and other ones to table certain demands from the British. Parliaments demanding for more African participation in their own affairs. They also asked for equal rights with their white counter parts in the civil service and government since they were rated second class citizens. And this we consider a positive end. Also due to the rate of racial prejudice in America and Britain against the blacks in the late 1950<sup>s</sup> some self-help organisation had sprang up in the black community, the inactive ones were encouraged and reactivated. According to D.E Udo, “one of such earlier organisation was led by Mrs Ashwo Garvey, the widow of the late black leader, Marcus Garvey, she had founded the British equivalent of the America NAACP which was simply known as the association for the Advancement of coloured people”. (Udo,111)

Racism also led to the introduction of education which aid in the elimination of colonial rule in Africa though the nationalist movement Education one will recall was one of the reward offered by Europeans compensating the unfortunate Africans for causing them mental and physical anguish during the slave trade. As a result of the introduction many schools were built. The schools so built later produced brilliant Africans who later became the nucleus of Africa nationalism these African educationists after their education realised that they were discriminated against by the Europeans. They were not employed to high government posts and when they were employed, they did not receive the same salary with the European counterparts who had the same academic qualification. They, who knew what this mean condemned it and therefore began to form themselves into nationalists movement with the sole aim of eliminating colonialism from African

### **3.3 COLONISATION**

By Obi-Osang, .V. Titilayo

Colonisation means when country imposes its own government on another country and make it subjects to its home government in which all loyalties and allegiance is to the home government.

Colonisation is of course a product of racism. The element of time cannot be eroded on the impact of colonialism in African. The colonialists and the colonised agreed on the haphazard nature and the incompleteness of the execution of European intentions and action on the African continent a long period or duration that would have given them enough scope to lead up the Africans from the state of Savagery to that of civilisation.

The change of policy then surface it was a period when the Africans felt that the African spirit has to be reawaken. The spirit of nationalism began to emerge through the African colonies. There were of course “internal force” and “external force” agitating and pressuring the government to grant independence to the colonies. By the latter force, it meant the anti-colonial force determining decision about colonies at the United Nation while the former force meant the Nationalistic movements and the agitation of a small but vociferous group in the labour movement which fought for the instance Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria and Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika used their developed specific form of diplomacy to win European confidence. Azikiwe used his Newspaper (the Pilot) to agitate and to bring out his nationalistic and to bring out his nationalistic view, he was also fired by an ambition he had been imbued with, especially by the influence in his formative years by his mentor Dr. Aggrey. By this Azikiwe had the notion that given the opportunity and the education, the Negro would prove that he is not inferior to the white. As Luke Nnamdi Mbefo said in his book titled – “The Reshaping of African traditions”, he said Azikiwe was imitative, his goal was not to be himself, to evolve his own identity but to be another Aggrey. In the course of his search to reach this ideal, he was given an added motive to show the white-man, the black-man’s latent possibilities namely, “the Europeans snubbed me and, as a defence mechanism, to myself that I would one day be more developed than they intellectually”.

However, the consequence of those forces is the rapid transfer of power. Its implication varied with colonies. Which Nigeria possessed a large cluster of competent professionals and administrators judging from her University degree holders, there were no trained out personal in such countries as the Belgian, Congo and Tanganyika. At independence in 1975, after five centuries of Portuguese domination, 98 percent of the Angolans were illiterate. In Chad there were no paved roads 120 miles outside the capital, N’Djamens. The facts of bring surprised by independence is evident in all the colonies, the former colonists have been seeking and offering excuses for the mess they made of their opportunity in Africa.

Colonialism also brought about its negative and positive impacts in Africa. The negatives as follows:

- It dampened to African spirit often referred to as “Africanism”- “the way of life” of the Africans, for example, by eroding some of our cultural values. Segregation and division set in by having their own different colonies in Africa oneness was not well fostered. Hence we have different official languages in Africa.

- It brought about slave trade, our ancestors were taken to Europe to work as labourers.

- The colonial masters were exploiting our raw material for their industries in Europe rather than investing them on our land, they were taking and not putting in. taking Nigeria for instance, at the gradual withdrawal and tail end of their story, oil was discovered for the first time in Olobiri (Bayelsa State) in 1956, if this had happened at the beginning of their story when the whites mostly dominated the civil service, they would have come in droves like bees piercing on honey to settle down and drain us of our oil. In south- Africa, we have so many whites and this of course brought apartheid. In Zimbabwe, so many whites own farming lands more than the black and this is why President Robert Mugabe brought the land Reform issue.

- Colonisation sets in “tribalism” for examples Nigeria the British came with their “indirect Rule” i.e. principles of “divide and rule in zoning, they divide the counter into regions i.e. the northern regions Western region and eastern region. They were well establish in the North because the North gave them little resistance as against the other regions, hence they empowered the North politically against other regions the positive impacts of colonisation an also not be over looked.

Colonisation brought civilisation, there arose technological development. In the farming sector for example, manual farming gave way for mechanise farming, primitive implements were replaced by tractors.

There was improve by medial heath care, death rate (mortality rate) became reduced the prevalent disease then was Malaria, Europeans brought anti-Malaria drugs.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RACISM AND AFRICAN THOUGHT**

#### **4.1 THE ROLE OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY IN FIGHTING RACISM**

by Ubani Ozioma

We have heard about David Hume and Hegel's view towards racism and as well the impact of racism or what it has done especially to the African such positive and negative ranging from underdevelopment, colonialism, tribalism and as well ethnic conflict. But since we have African philosophy notwithstanding the racial discrimination which is a rational and critical reflective activity which answer question about African worldview; the question now is –is African philosophy playing any role as to fight against racism, which has affected African most?

In this Chapter, I will look into some strategies Africa philosophy has mapped out or some role created by Africa philosophy to achieved its functional objective as regard in fighting against racism like-Africanism, decolonisation and so on.

It is noted that racism stands or shows an individualistic aspect of human existence in which some set of human is better than others as in the area of reflection critical and rational reason which is exactly what happened between the Westerns and Africans who claim that they are rational and critical in reason than African.

However, Africa philosophy in its efforts to combat racism has created an identity for Africa in projecting African worldview which is known as Africanism, and what is Africanism? It is really African ways of life. One may also ask-what is African ways of life? Africa ways of life is a way of life that holds strongly on the principle of harmonious complementation in their traditional thought which maintain that anything that exist serves as a missing link of reality and as a result the activity or thought of one person serves as a complement or fulfilment to the other persons thought.

However, this traditional thought is nothing more than thoughts of individuals in a community in which ideas are being gotten through the reflective activity of some individual philosophers who hence reflected on the fundamental question arising from African human experience which according to professor Wiredu it is "The common property of all and sundry". African philosophy although initially was not written down but in its effort to fight racism in Africa, African philosophy developed channels for transmitting its own philosophy through some categories like mythologies wise saying, traditional proverbs stories and especially religion so as to show that they can reflect critically as well because they explain their own world view.

However, through Africanism which is African way of life –African philosophy has been able to revolt at least theoretically against aspects of western colonialism and racism which led the African to estrangement and alienation from customs. African philosophy in its effort to fight racism not only advocate for Africanism, it has also advocate for de-colonisation, in-fact some of its scholars has even gone to the extremity advocate for conceptual de-colonisation which involve moving away from western way of life entirely including its conceptual framework.

Also, African philosophy in creating an avenue for fighting racism completely was seen able to equipped its citizen in the area of leasing, it is in such efforts that gave rise to what is called Consciencism in philosophy that has contributed in fighting racism. In this Consciencism Nkrumah saw racism as man inhumanity to man and as a condemnable distortion of the property of waste and by Consciencism he mean intellectual map which will enable African society to dissect the western and Islamic and the Euro Christian elements in African and development in such a way that they fit into the African personality. It is also as a result of its effort in equipping its citizen through awareness that made Frantz Fanon to advocate for violence as a means for fighting racism and colonialism, which he said that it is violence in nature.

Conclusively Africa philosophy has really created or played so many avenue or role in fighting racism but not only de-colonisation, Africanism, Consciencism and this mentioned there is still more than that; although it has done good work but a lot need to be done because some part of Europe today for example is still holding a strong view towards racism. However enough effort is needed by making more use some categories.

Beside, African philosophy today in fighting against racism should also come down home because racism has generated a negative spirit of ethnicity which has affected nearly every family, life and groups in Nigeria ranging from racial employment, admission into universities political appointment. Nigeria today is operating a one party system because of racial effect inclinations. The political, religious economic and social conflict in Nigeria today is as a result of ethnic spirit, so for Africa philosophy to maintain its functional objective should device a avenue as to eradicate or control racism.

## **4.2 DECOLONISATION**

By Kalu, David .A.

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, to decolonise means to give independent status to a colony. To be independent means not dependent on other things, not controlled by other people or things. Furthermore, decolonisation is the withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies.

The question that arises here is who has colonised African and how. In proffering an answer to this question one must take cognisance that the present African status is not the traditional African set up. The westerners colonised Africa, they inducted into Africans their own culture, Religion, Tradition and mode of reasoning as a replacement of ours which they claim is barbaric, timid and unacceptable.

The bid to colonise African by the Westerners stems from racism which is the belief that some races are superior to others. The white is of the view that the black man has nothing to offer, he is ill-educated and thus needs to be trained and in their own way precisely. But the question that has not been properly addressed is how and why would we accept that the Westerners are right while the Africans are wrong? It is this question that necessitates and propels the urge for decolonization.

Luke Nnamdi Mbefo in his book the Reshaping of African tradition avers that decolonization proposes a project of continuing the story of African from where it was interrupted by the colonial invasion. The schools of set that sets to effect a positive change on the issue are the revolutionists Fanon and Cabral as well as the historian Mazrui and Ajayi. Cabral argues "we agree that history... is the result of class struggle, but we have our own class of struggles in our country; the moment imperialism arrived and colonialism arrived it made us leave our history and enter into another history. This indicates that African history can be viewed as evolving in three stages: pre-colonial period, colonial period and post-colonial period which coincides with what Carbal and others are struggling for namely decolonisation. (61).

Decolonisation is a call for African disengagement from colonial influence over the years, it is an imperative to reflect African way of life, promote, her cultural heritage, philosophise on African philosophy, promote African thoughts, arts, myths and reality. It is a task that has grown in the mind of true Africans and has vividly manifestations in their actions, thoughts and ideas. And any form of cannot hinder this development externally. It is high time African became African in their "true nature" (positive).

However, this task might seem impracticable to some, but then if decolonisation must be achieved, it must start from the mind because until a colonised mind is decolonised, then colonial influence would not be liberated. When the mind is conscious of the fact that African approach, reflection, propaganda and action would become African.

## **4.3 AFRICAN IDENTITY**

Identity has to do with characteristics and distinguished features by which a thing or someone could be referenced or thought of Identity reveals who or what somebody or something is

African identity as discuss implies that there are certain features which are African and there also exist those that are not associated with Africa.

...The call for "African way of life". The heritage left by the ancestor's stirs up emotional response in the mass of African population. It is important, however to ask, in what that heritage consists and what

is reality “the African way of life” is. The contrasts are highlighted in order to emphasise a specifically African spirit that supposedly differ from the Western European. (Mbefo, 64)

The aphorism that emotion is black as reason is Greek is controversial. Luke Mbefo in portraying African identity asserts that African seek to understand and identify with the rhythm of nature rather than with their effort to manipulate nature. Among themselves, the individual find his-self-fulfilment in the community rather than in isolation. Sympathy and intuition rather than cold logic and analytic reason guide social procedure. The moral and spiritual well-being is treasured above material and technological comfort (65).

In my analysis, the contemporary African is very conscious, thoughtful, inventive, and sociable. He appreciates the complementarity of both Western and African cultures to harmonise social existence but refrains from any ideology that would relegate the authenticity of African way of life. He is critical and participates rationally to issues that aids mutual existence of the societies.

The authentication of an identity that reflects African in culture, tradition, philosophy, dressing, music, etc. has become a conscious orientation of all proud Africans who are involved in the undaunted task of preaching, propagating, and exposing the uniqueness of the African way of life as ideal and relevant to the African society and the world at large.

All cultures must be seen as borrowers, none should claim originality of all she has and upholds. We have shared and would continue to share diverse ideas, tradition and opinion for the sake of harmony and complementation to better humanity.

The Western culture must accept that African cultures has influenced than remarkably just like Africans cannot deny the influence of Westerns culture.

#### **4.4 THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY.**

By Ezekwem Ikenna

The question of African philosophy had been a controversial issue in the study of philosophy. At best we can say it is a matter of mere historical interest. The subject African philosophy is presently being taught either as a self-subsisting course or as part of comparative philosophy in many African universities. A number of these have been written on it by both undergraduate and postgraduate students we acknowledge the pioneering effort of such African scholars as P.O Bodunrin, J.O. Sodipo, J.I Omoregbe, K Wiredu, K.C Anyanwu, Odera Oruka, P. Hountondji, C.Smomoh, B.C Okolo, I Onyewuenyi, Sophie Oluwole and a host done a lot to promote African Philosophy.

However, a major area of disagreement among African philosophers is what really is the nature of African philosophy? What constitutes African philosophy? In considering the nature of African philosophy we shall proffer three schools of African philosophy, namely, the Universalists, particularist, and the eclectic school.

For the Universalist school, philosophy is the same everywhere, using the same methodology. It was ably represented by P.O Bodunrin, Kwasi Wiredu, Odera Oruka and Paul Hountondji. For this school, a philosophical problem is one that has a universal relevant to all men. This is to say that fundamental questions and problem that cuts across geographical boundaries and cultures. They are also of the view that for anything to pass as philosophy at all, it must essentially be characterised by criticism and argument for anybody of thought that cannot withstand the sledge hammer of criticism and argument is not worth its salt. They also stated that the analytic specifically, dialectical method of inquiring is the ideal method of doing philosophy. Following this method, “when one is putting forward a philosophical thesis, we expect him to state his case clearly, to state the issue at stake as clearly as possible so that we can know what we are being united to accept”. One must be able to show that his theory solves the problem being death with than rival theories.

We also have the Particularist School who claims that for philosophy to be worth it salt, it must have local relevance that is to say it must not be divorced from culture. According to then, we should not deny African philosophy because of the tradition of writing (i.e. literacy of the Greek philosophers including Socrates left, no writing, yet their philosophical reflections are not only preserved through a writing tradition.

For the eclectic school the best approach to an understanding of philosophy is a combination of the Universalist and particularist approaches. For this school an intellectual romance between the Universalist conception and particularist conception will give rise to authentic African philosophy. The Universalist approach will provide the necessary analytic and conceptual framework for the particularist school.

Meanwhile the Westerners' attitude on Africa has been based on mere cultural bias, which "gradually grew into a formidable two-pronged historical reality: slavery and slave trade on the one hand, and academic expressions on the other hand. In the 18<sup>th</sup>, the black man or Negro was eloquently given an intellectual rationalisation by G.W. Hegel when he says consciousness has not yet attained to the realisation of any substantial objective existence.

For Hegel's estimation, there is an ontological distinction which the Negro is as yet bereft of: he cannot yet go beyond himself ---beyond his historical behaviour and posit the existence of a being outside of himself.

Following Hegel, Levy-Bruhl was once attributed to have queried about how an untutored African could know God! For him it was the reason while the first missionary outreach in Black Africa was conceived as a venture to rescue souls from the devil and for God.

Furthermore, in giving his report to the ethnological society of London, Sir Samuel Baker wrote about Africa. For him without any exception they are without a belief in a Supreme Being, neither have they any form of worship or idolatry nor is the darkness of their minds enlightened by even a ray of superstition.

All these boil down to the fact that Westerners deny the possibility of theistic knowledge without Western education where such a possibility is admitted in the form of such undisputed epithets as 'fetishism, animism,' nature worship and so on.

To conclude, it is granted that philosophy is philosophy everywhere. But since there are important areas which have to grapple with the problem of society, philosophy has a cultural dimension. This does not make African philosophy synonymous with African culture. It simply means that African philosophy has its roots or reunification in culture. Again it does not mean that we have to carve out some portion of reality and label it 'African' but that like any other cultural philosophy (e.g. Indian philosophy) African philosophy is adapted to explain reality from an African perspective.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION,**

By Nwobum Cordelia.

From what we have studied, we can see that 'racism' is the belief, that some races are superior to other races, and in this case, there is always unfair treatment or dislike from a superior race.

The Europeans have really criticised and discriminated African thought and ideas, I think it is time for us African to say no to their derogatory statement against African culture.

Though the Europeans like David Hume, G.E. Hegel, Kant, Marx etc. discriminate us because of our skin colour. For according to them, skin colour determines whether a race is rational or irrational. If really the Europeans call themselves rational human beings they should understand with logical thinking or reasonable thought that skin colour can never determine a race or person's ability or rationality.

I'm against such discrimination of African culture which they respect and restore, so why do they find delight in destroying the trace of the African people? After all, both the Africans and Europeans are born naturally and originally with the same characteristics. I think the only difference is that some countries are more developed than the other.

In tracing down to the Europeans' achievement we will discover that their achievements are based on their exploitation of African ideas, cultures and thoughts, resources etc. The Europeans stole away African ideas which were very rich in development. African resources which are very rich in wealth, African

complementary living which was rich in mutual association of communities. The Europeans exploited all these, then went to their countries or races to develop it and turned back to calling us (Africans) timid and village dwellers. It is time we say no to such derogatory words used against our (African) race.

The Europeans should even be ashamed of themselves because they are not rich in any kind of national acquisition like the Africans, rather they come to Africans to exploit and steal theirs. What the Europeans do is that, because of their nonsensical pride, they turn back to call Africans bad names to cover up their exploits and thefts from African race forgetting that no matter how a baby is in the womb of her mother, that surely the mother will deliver of it, the truth is always open to us and them.

The whites should not forget that "black" is beauty. They (whites) call us blacks forgetting that our skin colour if they should think from that angle determine riches.

Let us African come out stand firm to saying no to the Europeans, because they came to African and destroyed our African culture and complementary living abused our fathers minds, and stole away our culture and able men, women and children through slavery. That is why these days in Nigeria, the only three tribes and ethnic groups are against each other because the imperative rule by the British, brought about the un-complementary and un-symbiotic association between communities in Nigeria.

If the Europeans should call us hewers of wood and carriers of water and all sorts of bad names, irrational beings, I still say, it is because we have strong and able and agile men and women and children in African, they are only jealous of African race and capabilities which are not found in the white-man's land. Nature blessed African in all dimension that the Europeans because of their selfish and uncontested mind wants to exploit us African of all we have thereby stealing our possession, till date should the Europeans not be ashamed of themselves for stealing and jealousy. But the problem in African is that the fools amongst us African give out our idea and ability to the white-men due to ambivalence of human interest.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATION**

Based on what I mentioned above, it is time for African to appreciate their thoughts and ideas tradition and culture, ethnic and values, which are rich and appetising.

African should remember that the Europeans love exploited us badly, that African should not give room again for that.

African should also note that most political problem in African today is due to European influence because they want to cause commotion amongst and acquire everything we have. Their (white-men) selfishness is too much.