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**ON THE TEACHING OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY  
IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

BY

**MESEMBE ITA EDET, M.A.,**

Lecturer, Department of Philosophy

University of Calabar

Calabar – Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this paper is to question the approach to teaching Western Philosophy in African Universities. In the light of the results of recent research efforts of African scholars it has become known that the Philosophical postulations of the like of Aristotle, Bentham, Hegel and Nietzsche provided the logic that inspired and justified colonization and slavery in Africa. It has also been affirmed that Aristotle, Locke, Kant, Hume and Hegel were pure and absolute racists; yet in teaching their philosophies in African Universities we treat them with so much prestige and respect. The paper contends that in teaching Western Philosophy in African Universities the paucity of political content is obvious. Consequently, the paper calls for a radical overhaul of the whole epistemological paradigm underlying the current educational system based on an African centered curriculum anchored on a critique of Eurocentrism.

**Key words:** Colonisation, slavery, racism, Western-Philosophy Eurocentrism

**Introduction**

The following presentation is an indictment or a reproach against the teaching of Western Philosophy in African Universities. In another essay I made the observation that philosophical studies in most African Universities are essentially Western oriented. I stated that,

...For four years the students are saddled right from their introductory classes with the history of Western philosophy beginning with Thales in the ancient period up to the major characters of the contemporary period of Western philosophy. In the latter years, as they study the traditional branches of Ethics, Metaphysics, Epistemology and Political Philosophy, we witness so much overlapping and repetition among the courses, and so

much emphasis and attention is paid to exposition and analysis of the so-called “perennial problems” of philosophy. Curriculum remains to a great extent traditional (Edet, 2002:13)

Further I pointed out that,

there needs to be a de-emphasis of the history of Western philosophy as currently taught ... students of philosophy...are treated to an overdose of the metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of history, philosophy of religion, of Descartes, Berkeley, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Kant, Bentham, Hegel, Mill and other Western philosophers (Edet, 2002: 22)

Our aim in this paper is to question the approach to teaching Western philosophy in African Universities. In the light of the results of recent research efforts of African scholars, it has become known that the philosophical postulations of the like of Aristotle, Jeremy Bentham, George W. Hegel and Friedrich Nietzsche provided the logic that inspired and justified colonization and slavery in Africa. It has also been affirmed that Aristotle, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, David Hume and Hegel, to mention but only a few were pure and absolute racists; yet in teaching their theories in African Universities we treat them with so much prestige and respect and even the most internationally renowned universities are not known to have taught philosophic racism found in the postulations of the philosophers just mentioned.

The question that arises here is, why did the teaching of Western philosophy in African universities fail for so long to address the concrete experience of racial exploitation and injustice especially slavery, colonialism, segregation and the denial of economic, social and political equality to persons of African descent in the light of philosophical racism which we find in the postulations of Aristotle, Locke, Kant, Hume, Bentham, Marx and Hegel.

M. B. Ramose posits that the failure to address the concrete experience of racism in the light of philosophical racism attests to the fact that for too long the teaching of western philosophy in Africa was decontextualised precisely because both its inspiration and the questions it attempted to answer were not necessarily based upon “the living experience of being –an-African in Africa”. According to Ramose,

...the Western philosophers that the teaching of philosophy in Africa emulated always drew their questions from the lived experience of their time and place. Such questioning included the upkeep and refinement of an established philosophical tradition. In this sense, western philosophy has always been contextual. But this cannot be said without reservation about the teaching of Western philosophy in Africa since it was - and still is - decontextualised to the extent that it systematically and persistently ignored and excluded the experience of being - an - African in Africa (Ramose, 2002;29)

I am in agreement with Ramose. The most serious reproach one can level at the manner of teaching western philosophy in African universities is its socio-political poverty. The discussions of our philosophy teachers reduce socio-historical considerations to abstractions as if philosophy were an entity that floats above the societies which produce the philosophers. In our opinion every philosophy either conceals or reveals a political idea even when it apparently has notoriously little political content, especially if one looks at it from the point of view of a concern with the African peoples. Thus we will identify examples to show that modern Western philosophy produced intellectual fabrications that were designed to justify slavery and colonization and that the prevalence of racism in our time is deeply rooted in a philosophical framework traceable in the history of Western philosophy from the ancient, through the enlightenment and right up to the present.

The mimetic and the decontextualized character of the teaching of Western philosophy in Africa and indeed, of the entire educational system, calls for a radical overhaul of the whole epistemological paradigm underlying the current educational system. As Ramose very rightly admonishes, to evade this duty is to condone racism which is a form of injustice. The injustice is apparent in the recognition that there is neither a moral basis nor pedagogical justification for the western epistemological paradigm to retain primacy and dominance in decolonized Africa (2002, 29).

Consequently, we advocate an Africa-centred curriculum based on a “critique of Eurocentrism” as the leading thrust to reform philosophical education in African universities and we give reasons why the Africa-centred curriculum is essential.

### **Western Philosophical Justifications of Colonialism**

Colonialism has been described as,

the indescribable crisis disproportionately suffered and endured by the African peoples in their tragic encounter with the European world, from the beginning of the fifteenth century through the end of the nineteenth into the first half of the twentieth. This is a period marked by the horror and violence of the transatlantic slave trade, the imperial occupation of most parts of Africa and the forced administrations of its peoples and the resilient and enduring ideologies and practices of European cultural superiority (ethnocentrism) and “racial” supremacy (racism) (Eze, 1998:213)

E. C. Eze opines that slave trade, conquest, occupation and forced administration of peoples, in that order were all part of an unfolding history of colonialism. As colonialism swept through most of Africa the invasion, subjugation and exploitation of indigenous Africans had to be given a theoretical and intellectual justification by the intruders.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the period of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, colonialism reached its peak. The Industrial Revolution sparked off a lot of social problems in Europe. It created unemployment, poverty, disease, the ugly aspects of the factory system such as child labour, poor conditions in the mines, over crowding in the cities, high birth and death rates, inequality in education and other social evils. There was therefore the need to look outwards and explore new lands and exploit their resources, open up markets and procure cheap raw materials obtained by the exploitation of peasant labour.

Thus began sporadic and systematic maritime commercial incursions into Africa by European fortune seekers. These commercial interests, individual as well as institutional, were aimed at the extraction and trading of gold, ivory and other natural resources and raw materials, but it quickly

expanded into the exportation of able bodied Africans and their children as slaves to the Americas and other parts of the world.

The degradation of man in these centuries stirred the conscience of social thinkers, and it was in response to these objective realities that different strands of social and philosophical thought emerged. Theories were propounded to explain the cause of the contradictions of the era. The social theories of the Enlightenment, typically the social contract theories of Rousseau and Hobbes were rejected as they were considered to have outlived their usefulness and the concepts of "liberty" "equality" and "fraternity" which these social contract theorists harped upon were considered mere metaphysical jargons. E. C. Eze has noted that,

Significant aspects of the philosophies produced by Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Marx have been shown to originate in, and to be intelligible only when understood as, an organic development within larger socio-historical contexts of European colonialism and the ethnocentric Idea: Europe is the model of humanity, culture and history in itself (Eze, 1998;214).

We are going to consider subsequently the racist elements in the postulations of Hume, Kant and Locke but it is my view that the philosophical postulations of Bentham, Hegel and Nietzsche amongst others, provided justification for European incursions into Africa.

Jeremy Bentham was one of the most famous exponents of Utilitarianism. The Utilitarians conceived of their philosophical work as an attempt to lay down an objective principle for determining when a given action was right or wrong. They called this maxim the principle of utility. The principle states: an action is right in so far as it tends to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Bentham interpreted this principle as a form of hedonism by identifying happiness with pleasure. Interpreted in this way, the principle states that an action is right if it is productive of the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number, otherwise it is wrong. The essence of utilitarianism as a philosophy though is that it lays stress upon the effects which an action has. If an action produces an excess of beneficial effects over harmful ones for a greater number, then it is right, otherwise it is not. The minor pains or suffering that might result are insignificant and should be ignored.

The import of Utilitarianism is that seeking the greatest happiness for the greatest number implies ignoring the rights of minorities. For example, the majority might derive happiness or pleasure from enslaving the minority. With this kind of justification the transatlantic slave trade was rationalized. In the thinking of the colonizers the exploitation and subjugation of the Africans was minor and inconsequential as long as the Europeans, who considered themselves as the majority achieved the "greatest happiness for the greatest number".

If the trade and practices of transatlantic slavery were carefully philosophically constructed on the principle of ensuring the "greatest happiness for the greatest number", the practice of colonialism was parallelly predicated on a metaphysical denial of the historicity of African existence. Nowhere is this line of modern European thought as evident as in Hegel's twin treatise; *Lectures on Philosophy of History* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Right*.

We will rely on the summarization of these two works by E. C. Eze presented in his essay *Modern Western Philosophy and African Colonialism* in *African Philosophy: An Anthology* edited by Eze himself.

In the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel eliminates Africa (south of the Sahara) from the stream of history. He positions Africa *outside* of History, as the absolute, non historical beginning of the unfolding of spirit.

Accordingly, Africans are depicted as incapable of rational thought or ethical conduct. They therefore have no laws, religion, and political order. Africa, in human terms, is, for Hegel a wasteland filled with “lawlessness” “fetishism” and “cannibalism” - waiting for European soldiers and missionaries to conquer it and impose “order” and “morality”.

Within a few pages of *Philosophy of History*, Hegel uses the following terms to describe African peoples: “barbarism and savagery”, “barbarous”, “ferocity”, “barbarity”, “primitive”, “animality” “animal man” “terrible hordes”, “savagery and lawlessness”, “the most terrible manifestation of human nature”, “wild confusion” and “unhistorical, undeveloped Spirit”.

For Hegel, the African *deserved* to be enslaved. Besides, slavery to Europeans, Hegel argued, benefited the African, as it provided him/her with moral “education”. Accordingly, colonialism was also a benefit to Africa because Europe inseeded it with its reason, ethic, culture, and mores and thereby historicized it.

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel provides a detailed exposition of the theoretical structures that at once directly justify and explain colonialism - as the inevitable logic of the unfolding of Spirit in (world) history. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel further explains why and how the modern capitalist organization of state and economy in Europe necessarily leads to imperialism and colonialism.

According to Hegel, the imperial and colonial expansion of Europe is the necessary and logical outlet for resolving the problem of poverty inherent in capitalism. When the capitalist division of labour and trade that was meant to satisfy the “system of wants” of a civil society generates at the same time a class of paupers and disenfranchised segments of the population, there are, for Hegel, only two ways of resolving the contradiction. The first option is welfare, while the second is more jobs. The consequences of both options, however, violate what Hegel considered the basic tenets of the civil society. Welfare deprives the individual (the poor) of initiative and self-respect and independence, while the second – the creation of more jobs - according to Hegel, would cause over-production of goods and services in proportion to available market. This is how Hegel presents the scenario:

When the masses begin to decline into poverty,

- (a) the burden of maintaining them at their ordinary standards of living might be directly laid on the wealthiest class (higher taxes, for example) or they might receive the means of livelihood directly from other public sources of wealth ... in either case, however, the needy would receive subsistence directly, not by means of their work, and this would violate the principle of civil society and the feeling of individual independence and self-respect ...
- (b) As an alternative, they might be given subsistence indirectly through being given work, i.e. opportunity to work. In this event the volume of production would be increased, but the evil consists precisely in an excess of production and in the lack of a proportionate number of consumers... It hence becomes apparent that despite an excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, i.e. its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble (Hegel, 1967: 150)

In order, therefore, to resolve the problem of the poverty of the “penurious rabble” which results from the unequal distribution of wealth inherent to modern European capitalist societies, the solution Hegel recommends, is the generation of wealth for Europe from outside of Europe, through expansion. Poverty and the need for market, Hegel says,

drives it (the capitalistically “mature” European society) to push beyond its own limits and seek markets and so its necessary means of subsistence, in other lands which are either deficient in the goods it over produced or else generally backward in industry, (Hegel; 1974: pp. 282-283).

Colonial and capitalist expansions are therefore a logical necessity for the realization of the obviously universal European Idea and by labeling the non-European territories and people as “backward” in “industry” they become legitimate prey for colonial and colonialist activities. According to Hegel,

All great peoples ... press onward to the sea because the sea affords the means for the colonizing activity – sporadic or systematic –to which the mature civil society is driven and by which it supplies to part of its population a return to life on the family basis in a new land and so also supplies itself with a new demand and field for its industry (Hegel; 1974 283)

Eze observes that in this articulation of Europe’s rush for wealth and for territory in other lands, Hegel does not raise any ethical questions or moral consideration. There was no need to bother about the moral dimension since the African was sub-human: the African lacked reason and therefore moral and ethical content. This philosophically articulated “natural” status of the African automatically precludes the possibility that the relationship between Europe and Africa, the European and the African, the colonizer and the colonized, may be governed or regulated by any sort of law or ethics (Eze, 1998: 216).

Hegel states in the *Philosophy of Right* that, “The civilized nation (Europe) is conscious that the rights of the barbarians (Africans for example) are unequal to its own and treats their autonomy as only a formality” (Hegel, 1967; 219).

The arrogant egoism of the European colonialists derived further impetus from the philosophical postulations of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche posits that there are two kinds of morality, namely, the slave - morality and the master –morality. The slave- morality is the morality taught by Christianity. It is the morality that preaches love, meekness, humility, kindness, self denial, sympathy, etc. All these are considered as virtues by the slave – morality. It encourages weakness of character, and fears the strong and powerful. It sees weakness as a virtue and strength of character as a vice. The slave – morality wants to bring all men to the same level through absolute and universal moral laws applicable to all men. It prevents people from developing into strong and powerful men, for it fears such people as dangerous and “evil”. Thus the slave – morality is an obstacle to human development.

Nietzsche consequently severely attacks Christianity which preaches such a morality. Christianity is only fit for the ignoble species of men, for it is a religion that stifles intellectual pursuit and destroys the best part of man. Christianity does all kinds of deplorable things to man’s spirit in the name of God whose commands and prohibitions it claims to hand down to men. Hence Nietzsche declared “God is dead”. God’s death, says Nietzsche, has set man free. The death of God is man’s liberation as man

is now free from God's oppressive commands and prohibitions which are obstacles to human development. The slave-morality can now give way to the master-morality.

The master-morality is the morality of the strong and the powerful who have liberated themselves from divine commands and prohibitions, and have rejected the slave-morality. In this morality, pride, great passions, strength, instinct for war, desire for conquest, revenge, ambition, adventure, voluptuousness, egoism, self-seeking, etc are all virtues. War, self-assertion and violence are marks of the noble spirit which should be encouraged, whereas peace, patience, meekness, etc are marks of weakness of character. The master-morality is a morality of power, of ruthlessness, of struggle, of valour, of strength and ambition.

Nietzsche's starting point lies in his concept of the nature of reality as a whole. For Nietzsche, ultimate reality consists of a perpetually striving will – a will to power. This force permeates the universe and is responsible for every manifestation of striving and vitality, endurance, vigour and initiative. The urge to preserve one's self, Nietzsche thought, is only incidental to nature's overall thrust of energy that aims at increased power.

Nietzsche writes "a living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength. Life itself is will to power, self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results thereof" (Nietzsche, 1927; 186). What Nietzsche means here is that this will to power is the dominant force coursing through all living organisms including human beings. Human beings are thus free to employ any methods available for the expression and acquisition of this fundamental power. The individual should feel no qualms of conscience at using deceit, cruelty, lies, or violence since the drive for the enlargement of the self is the basic truth of our being.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes "exploitation does not belong to a depraved or imperfect and primitive society; it belongs to the nature of the living being as a primary organic function; It is the consequence of the intrinsic will to power" (Nietzsche, 1969; 252). Here Nietzsche advocates an uninhibited exercise of power. In fact, for Nietzsche, whatever is life-enhancing or increases the fullness of our being is thereby justified, because we are linking into the most elemental force of existence.

As a corollary to this doctrine advocating the uninhibited exercise of power, Nietzsche recognizes the fact that a vigorous and perhaps brutal competition will result. And he welcomes this atmosphere because it would be a tonic to the development of the individual, stimulating excitement and creative energy. For Nietzsche, we breathe best in a thunder storm. Not only will an exhilarating environment be produced but Nietzsche could foresee that humanity would become divided into the successful and the unsuccessful through the winnowing force of competition. As each person strove to expand his own power, the lines of self-interest would converge and the outcome of that clash would be the creation of superior and inferior classes, the shepherds and the sheep. The two groups would not be separated by social or economic factors or by disfunctions of birth but by the degree to which they possess the will to self-assertion.

The Superior people, (Nietzsche called them "masters") would consist of those who have the courage to take charge of their lives and ignore the interests of other people for the sake of maximizing their own being. They would overcome the dictates of conscience, which only reflect conventional morality and perform actions that spring from their personal code of plenitude and power. They would act for themselves and let others defend themselves with the force of their will, giving no quarter, asking none. Their harshness and aggression would be what they expect to encounter and their victory would justify their higher status because it demonstrates the superiority of the will.

The inferior people, (Nietzsche called them "slaves") on the other hand, would be those who lack the strength to develop themselves at someone else's expense and feel obliged to follow social rules. They are the people who honour values such as pity, consideration and compassion because their will is flaccid and weak. For Nietzsche, values such as these are really nothing more than rationalizations masking a basic cowardice. The slaves are making a virtue of necessity, championing the self-denying tendencies they find most comfortable. To sacrifice for others gives them a sense of being needed and of belonging, makes them feel virtuous and admirable. Instead of taking risks they cringe in fear of

being hurt and settle for the safety of kindness to others, meekness, deference and humility, They are the ones who glorify service over self and feel morally self-satisfied when in fact they have abdicated authority over their lives and denied the primal will to power.

Consequently, for Nietzsche, there are these two levels of humanity: the masters and the slaves. Consequently, two different ethics must be acknowledged. It would be a mistake to have a general morality that ignores this distinction and proclaims an absolute set of principles for everyone. Nietzsche wrote "moral systems must be compelled first of all to bow before the gradations of rank; their presumption must be driven home to their conscience until they thoroughly understand at last that it is immoral to say that what is right for one is proper for another" (Porter, 1988: 53). Hence Nietzsche's distinction between "master morality" and "slave morality"

In Nietzsche's scheme different rules apply for master-morality and for slave-morality. The masters should be hard and domineering; the slaves, deferential and ingratiating, the slaves lack originality, resist all change and follow their leaders obsequiously. Above all, the masters have the right to pursue their power whereas the slaves have surrendered that right through their cowardice and frailty, they are subjugated to the ambition of the masters.

The master-morality is the morality of the man who has taken the place of God as the legislator of moral laws; the man who has rejected the values of the slave-morality and has carried out a "transvaluation of values". The ideal man, for Nietzsche, the man who embodies the master-morality, is the "superman". The "superman" is *beyond good and evil*, he creates his own values, he has liberated himself from belief in God and has rejected slave-morality.

It is clear from the foregoing that Nietzsche's doctrines also embodied those justifications which give a philosophical basis to the activities of the colonialists in Africa. The Western colonialists worked towards the realization of the "superman" ideal. Their thinking was that they had realized themselves and had evolved to the peak and could determine what is right or wrong. Colonization was thus seen as the expression of the Western *will to power*. The West considered themselves as the masters, the Africans as the slaves.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Africa was completely subdued and partitioned by the West. Such philosophies of Bentham (Utilitarianism), Hegel and Nietzsche provided the logic that inspired and justified colonization and slavery in Africa. These philosophies and ideologies supported the partition of the non-European worlds, the exploitation of the territorial resources of the conquered; the political domination of these societies and the control of the thought processes in the new countries through imperialism.

The prestige and respect philosophy teachers in African universities accord these thinkers in my view, compounds their evil considering that their intellectual fabrications were deliberately designed to justify racial exploitation and injustice, especially slavery, colonialism, segregation and the denial of economic, social and political equality to persons of African descent. It goes to show that there is a problem in teaching Western philosophy in African universities as the curriculum of philosophy in African universities remains based upon European philosophy and suffers paucity of political content, especially when one looks at it from the point of view of unraveling implications, meaning and consequences for the African peoples.

If we consider the prevalence of racism in our time we will again see that Hume, Locke and Kant all of whom philosophy teachers in African universities treat with respect and prestige made no small contribution to providing philosophical bases for modern racism, as we shall see presently.

### **Western Philosophical Bases of Modern Racism**

*The World Book Encyclopedia* (Volume 16) defines racism as: "the belief that members of one or more races are inferior to members of other races". The *Encyclopedia* explains that "usually, this attitude also involves the belief that one's own race is superior to other races". Further the *Encyclopedia* states,



People who believe in or practice racism are called *racists*. They claim that members of their own race are mentally, physically, morally, or culturally superior to those of other races. Because racists assume they are superior, they believe they deserve special rights and privileges (WBE, 1979; 60).

Following from this clarification of the concept of “racism”, it can be stated unequivocally that George Hegel, David Hume, John Locke and Immanuel Kant were pure and absolute “racists” or held a racist attitude as we shall see when we consider some of their statements. Groups as well as individuals, differ. But there is no scientific evidence to support claims of superiority or inferiority for these differences. Social scientists emphasize that no two groups have exactly the same environment. As a result many group differences are largely the result of different environments. Scientists have long disagreed over the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining these differences. But racism continues to be widespread and has caused major problems, even though no scientific proof supports racist claims.

Claims of racial superiority and inferiority have been used to justify discrimination, segregation, colonialism, slavery and even genocide. Thus racism is immoral and the racist evil. Why then do teachers of philosophy in Africa continue to teach the theories of Hume and the others out of context when these theories provided the philosophical framework which justifies the prevalence of racism in our time and its attendant evils?.

Let us consider Hume’s racism which is very explicit. In one of Hume’s essays, *On National Character*, an essay that is hardly ever mentioned to African students of philosophy by their teachers, Hume remarked,

I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; tho’ low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA indeed they talk of one negro as a man of parts and learning; but tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly (Quoted in Ramose, 2002; 13-14).

Ramose’s sharp criticism of Hume’s statement above is apt and well considered. He observes that, although Hume refers to “ages”, a pretension to knowledge of history and, “our colonies” yet another claim of knowledge of the colonies, it is apparent that such imagined knowledge exposes Hume’s ignorance of history and the reality prevailing in the colonies (Ramose, 2002, 14).

Ramose again rightly concludes that “Hume’s racism is therefore based upon his idiosyncrasy than upon objectivity” (Ramose, 2002; 14).

With regard to John Locke his theory of essence and substance has been interpreted as providing some further basis or justification for modern racism. In Locke's theory he distinguishes between *primary* and *secondary* qualities. Primary qualities are those qualities which are really in things and inseparable from things. The secondary qualities on the other hand, are those qualities which are not really in things but are only powers in things with which they impress themselves on our senses and thereby produce simple ideas in us.

H. M. Bracken has pointed out, and in my view, the argument is well reasoned out, that: Locke, I contend, is a pivotal figure in the development of modern racism in that he provides a model which permits us to count skin colour as a nominally essential property of men. This comes about because in the course of his formulation of theories of essence and substance it emerges that the essential properties of men are computed like those of gold. What appears to be a simple system of classification based on tallies of observed properties in fact facilitates counting colour, sex, language religion or IQ as "essential". Indeed, there is no mechanism within the Lockean model to rule out counting skin colour as the "essential" property of men (Bracken, 1978-79; 243-244).

If we cannot claim categorically that Locke was thoroughly a racist, we can maintain that the tenor of his thought was such that he cannot be exempted from being the holder of a racist attitude.

Kant's racism is discernible, according to the exposition of C. Neugebauer, where Kant identifies four races in a racial pecking -order. According to Kant, the "whites" are on top, followed by the "yellow" and the "negro" and at the bottom the American or "red race" The pecking -order is defined by a decrease in mental and general ability (Neugebauer, 1991; 58- 63).

Following this exposition any attempt to defend Kant of the allegation of racism leads one into a self contradiction.

Racism is a form of prejudice. Many people tend to consider their own appearance and behaviour as normal and therefore desirable. They may distrust or fear people who look or act differently. When differences are obvious – such as in skin colour, shape of eyes, or religious worship – the distrust becomes greater. Such attitudes can lead to the belief that people who look or act differently are inferior. Many people do not bother to look for the same qualities in other races that they admire in their own. Also they do not recognize the different but equally good qualities that members of other races possess. Clearly, Hume, Locke and Kant exhibit this prejudice.

### **The Africa-Centred Philosophical Education**

We have stated that the decontextualised character of the teaching of Western philosophy in Africa, and, indeed of the entire educational system, calls for a radical overhaul of the whole epistemological paradigm underlying the current educational system. For philosophical education, we propose or advocate an African centred curriculum of philosophical education based essentially on a "critique of Eurocentrism". Philosophy teachers in Africa must teach Western Philosophy with the purpose of unraveling the political content which underpins many of the theories. As we maintained, every philosophy either conceals or reveals a political idea even if on the face of it the political content is not explicit.

The Africa-centred curriculum of philosophical studies which we propose is a reaction against the Western philosophical project of historical and cultural genocide against African peoples. The Western account of African reality, culture and history has been grossly inaccurate, deliberately distorted and scandalously malicious, supported by the intellectual fabrications of the Western philosophers we have discussed.

Several reasons can be adduced for why the Africa-centred curriculum is essential. The first and most

important reason is to restore the truth to the curriculum. The falsification of the role of Africa in world history and civilization results not only in a deformation of African history but the history of the world, especially since Africa has played such a decisive part in the events that comprise world history. The correction of this mutilation is surely in the interest of humanity, if the truth is at all relevant to human development.

A second reason is the necessity of developing a framework for cultural equality in this age of globalization. Elsewhere I pointed out that, ... globalization must help to show that the people are different and Africans must insist on mutual recognition and parity. As we globalize we must develop a framework for cultural equality. We must recognize though that cultures are not static and weak. Cultures are dynamic, and so foreign element can be adapted and incorporated into indigenous cultures. But again we must be critical of what we receive. We can adapt, incorporate, but still resist cultural hegemony and cultural domination. Whether America or the nations of the West like it or not, we must ensure a multi-cultural world in the face of globalization (Edet, 2003 ; 37)

Today the multicultural world is exploding as long suppressed cultures are now demanding dignity and power in the world arena and the road to multicultural equality and respect cannot even begin until Africa is restored to its proper historical and cultural position.

Finally, another reason for the necessity of the African centered curriculum is the fact that any culture (especially one which has been suppressed) needs its own apparatus for its restoration, maintenance and development. The main reason Western culture has been dominant is because Europeans have controlled political, economic and social power including educational policy for the last several centuries.

### **Conclusion**

Africa-centred curriculum of philosophical studies must be based essentially on a critique of Eurocentrism. The teaching of Western philosophy in African universities must not ignore the political dimensions of Western philosophical theories. For the efforts of Aristotle, Bentham, Hegel, Nietzsche, Locke, Hume, Kant and the rest in providing the philosophical framework that propelled slavery, colonialism and racial exploitation, oppression and subjugation one wonders whether they are deserving of the prestige and respect with which teachers of philosophy in African Universities, treat their theories. The Africa-centred curriculum urges a radical overhaul of the entire epistemological paradigm underlying the current approach to teaching philosophy in African Universities. At this point it is pertinent to re-echo Ramose ; "... there is neither a moral basis nor pedagogical justification for the western epistemological paradigm to retain primacy and dominance in decolonized Africa" (Ramos, 2002; 29)

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