

Africa in a Globalized Democratic Existentialism

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Abstract

The whole question of African Freedom ranges from its definition, the genesis, the problem and the background of African serfdom, the philosophical basis of her freedom to what it means for Africa to be free. The question is; what does it mean to say that Africa is free? Or what conditions will characterize Africa as free? In what forms will African future be in order for one to legitimately say that Africa is free? Presently, even in the globalized world, Africa is unfree culturally and existentially. Karl Jaspers may have been a racist but his existentialism will be used in defense of African freedom in a Globalized Democratic Existentialism. The thesis of this paper is that good governance, democracy, sustainable and independent economic growth and development of Africa cannot be conceived and achieved in isolation of a definable and tangible African freedom from neocolonialism and imperialism of the west.

Introduction

Without freedom development initiatives will go down to the dust bin of history. Organization of African Unity and Sub-regional economic blocks have failed to yield desired result simply because of African unfreedom. Likewise, African Union and New partnership for Africa's development and the policies to alleviate poverty, promote development and accelerated growth, build political superstructure and conditions for sustainable development and economic empowerment can only be meaningful if there is a level playing cultural and existential field whereby African countries could pursue their destinies independent of the West. Condition of poverty, human and natural disasters, retarded economic growth, corruption, diseases, religious bigotry, ethnicism and tribalism, etc are partly the results of African political and economic unfreedom from self imposed bondage and undemocratic existentialism. I think that African predicament is existential, the sense in which Karl Jaspers treatises that "philosophy is for every man"¹ justified by the principles of "the philosophy of freedom"² and "The freedom of philosophy"³ Philosophy is an activity for the freedom of the mind. This activity is thinking which prepares the way for action, reflects upon the act, ascertains it and relates the thinker not only to himself but to others⁴ "Thinking without action is empty (mere contemplation) and action without thinking is blind"⁵ Existentialism is a philosophy of freedom and freedom of philosophy for man and not against man – no racist demarcations. Freedom is freedom of man and philosophy is philosophy of man. From Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre to Marcel the central theme of existentialism is man. The freedom of the African is identified boldly in the existentialist principle that "existence precedes essence"⁶ i.e men make their essences as they go along, and do not live out a predetermined essence or blue-print. Jaspers contends that we stand at the brink of the abyss, both in the mind and in existence. Man (African) is an *existenz*⁷, a category which he used to refer to an authentic being, who has undefined freedom. With philosophy, according to him "what seemed an abyss becomes space for freedom, apparent nothingness is transferred into that from which authentic being speaks to us"⁸ This is because, after all, the Renaissance explorer found, not a pit of monsters at the Atlantic's but the new world "Jaspers found, not the abyss of nihilism at the thinking edges but space for freedom"⁹ Freedom of existence in Jaspers and other existentialists is, therefore, a democratic one where; every man has the right to exist; every race and nation has the right to self-determination; every culture is authentic and self-evident; every nation, race, and culture has the right to assert herself and subsist in a democratized existent world; therefore, the *existenz*, the African exist in a democratic existentialism where no political, economic or cultural reasons compel her to be out rightly dependent on other powers, economies and cultures. Until the ideal or the goal of democratic existentialism is achieved all economic, social and cultural initiatives for African sustainable development would remain myriads.

The Direction of African Freedom

There have been two contending views about Africa's future, and ironically, the protagonists of each of these views have interpreted African freedom from the vantage point of two positions. These two existentialist views are Black Renaissance and Europeanization or Alienation. Metaphysically speaking, alienation culturally means a conscious rejection of one's identity and self, and a deliberate quest for new horizons of life and experience. Some have argued that Africa has no choice but to look forward towards her future in the direction of western culture and civilization. Whatever is the merit of this, a situation whereby the teaching of western civilization to African students turns into a disparagement of African civilizations and a recommendation of Europeanization of African culture is existentially calamitous. That is not to say that western civilization or culture should not be taught in African schools, after all we must know our historic adversaries very well if we hope to liberate ourselves (egos). But then we must learn and play the opponent's (Europe) game of cultural revivalism and universalization. This will bring Africa and Europe to a point where they will look at each other as equals and then the African will be existentially free. Similarly the mastering of the opponent's game in philosophy is also necessary because Europe sees her method of philosophy as the universal method of philosophy and any other method is either a-philosophical or pre-logical. So if Africa must be free, African philosophy must be raised to the level of self-pride as that of Europe; and perhaps, thereafter, the world could then start to talk of world philosophical heritage. Cultural revival is the locus of the whole issue of African freedom. Cheikh Anta Diop speaking to *Africope Magazine* in 1977 argues that as Black African people are slowly recovering their national sovereignty, they are obliged to free themselves from all forms of cultural alienation; without that internal recovery and psychic self-appraisal, very little could be accomplished. Cultural freedom, psychic autonomy, political (ideological) freedom, economic freedom and technological development must combine in innovative and existential manner to usher in African renaissance and freedom in transcendental and encompassing totality. Jaspers' philosophy as a philosophy of freedom and the freedom of philosophy would be an ideal reality. For him man is a being that is beyond the relativity of all our perspectives, horizons, and conceptual scheme called "the encompassing" *das um greifende*¹⁰. The encompassing is used to designate the world, being itself and man himself. Man himself, an encompassing, being, is always more than what he can know himself to be, i.e. "in principle he is never exhaustible by any conceptual or scientific knowledge"¹¹ This, contrary to the theoretical identification of man with what man knows himself to be, has the inner effect of destroying precisely that freedom and authenticity which is the essence of man i.e. he loses himself in the picture he has formed of himself. Jaspers conceptualized man as follows: *Dasein*, (the empirical subject,) an existent which lives in space and time, a thing among things, *Bewusst- Sein Uberhaupt* (Consciousness at large), the abstract understanding by which he comprehends essential connections among eternal truths, as in mathematics and *Geist* that aspect which strives to embrace all of his experience, life, and culture within certain ideal totalities.

The *Existenz* is the individual in his inwardness, as he is to himself, the historical self and the actual only in authentic self – awareness. A corruption of that existential and cultural awareness may corrupt *Existenz* itself. *Existenz* "is but a possibility for man; it is not a property with which we are endowed by nature"¹² Things in the world have no such possibility i.e. no authentic human nature. This is not of course, to deny that things exist, but rather to signalize that they exist in a way radically different from authentic human nature. *Existenz* is unique, historical, and, taken in itself, isolating.¹³ One act of *Existenz* is reason. Reason "is the will to unity"¹⁴, which can unite diverse *Existenzen*; such a union, communion, or communication is truth. There are many senses of truth as there are levels in the communicating human beings, and actual truth as mode of historical communication".¹⁵ *Existenz* philosophy is an inner acts of transcending. It is neither mysticism nor simple incommunicability – it is a recognition that only *Existenz* can understand *Existenz*. Hence most essential thing men have to say to one another cannot quite be said nor its contemplation be forced, nor can its truth be objectivity established.¹⁶ For Jaspers, Reason can transcend itself if it remains honest and clear – the situation is as if we stood in a small pool of light to the encompassing darkness. The encompassing darkness can be seen by turning a torch light. But we can be aware of this darkness as the limits of our light. This the eye cannot literally see. We must be aware of that darkness if we are not to forget what light means.¹⁷ Therefore every African state has a long way to go on the road to cultural emancipation.

They need to adopt a language policy, educational system, literature and arts relevant to African culture, as well as develop an ideology which puts premium on autonomy and to build a political system which gives weight to the culture of the people in encompassing transcendence and authentic uniqueness in self-realization. In the context of the liberation and self-realization of the individual, Jaspers' *Existenz* is as much self-realized African epitomized by theistic Humanism or theistic humanistic principles. Theistic humanism is as much a philosophical doctrine designating "African ideas of man, universe and God"¹⁸ as it is a signification of a spiritually realized African man and humanity. "African culture is an example of a culture that is humanistic while at the same time holding the belief in transcendental beings like spirits, gods and so on... African and Asian cultures are existentially pragmatic in their philosophies which are a medley of pantheism, polytheism and theism"¹⁹ In African worlds of gods, spirits and ancestors, there was no police force to check civil and moral offences. Retribution or Nemesis was the metaphysical instrument of checking and punishing moral or civil or criminal offences. Theistic humanism underlies African egalitarianism, fairness and justice. "It is the philosophy of the belief in God, gods, spirits, ancestors, objects, myths, symbols and of the interest of man. The former are philosophical objects and the later, that is man, is a thinking or philosophical subject."²⁰ Man, in African philosophy, as a thinking and historical subject is the Jaspers' *Existenz* in the encompassing world of freedom and globalized village.

Black African Existential Renaissance

Culture is an important element in the components of existential civilization. In fact it could be said to be what must be defined in a people's identity. It is the matrix which defines a people's psychological, economic, and political autonomy. Culture is the heritage from the past, but also that which people of today have made theirs by existentially living it and practicing it, that which for them, connects the past with the present and upon which they base the connection between now and the future in total freedom of individuals and nation. Frantz Fanon argues that:

Culture is first the expression of a nation, the expression of its

Preferences, of its taboos and of its patterns. It is at every stage of the whole of society that other taboos, values, and patterns are formed. A national culture is the sum total of all these appraisals; it is the result of internal and external extensions exerted over society as a colonial situation. Culture, which is doubly deprived of the support of the nation and of the state, falls away and dies. The condition for its existence is therefore national liberation and renaissance of the state.²¹

Culture is certainly subject to change as a result of development in science and technology as well as contact with people of alien cultures. In the process, the individual, the group or the people periscope and live their culture from the spectacle of the present and the future. It is in this sense, perhaps, that Frantz Fanon says that each generation must out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it. Revival of African culture rehabilitates African people from the vestiges of colonialism. "In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium, it is responsible for an important change in the native".²² Historically, cultures in various countries or races have always been either an instrument of dominating another race or people or instruments of liberation. Why? It is because they projects the identity and authenticity of a people or alienate people by killing their identity or existential essence. That is why the struggle for Arab liberty has been accompanied by a cultural phenomenon known by the name of the 'awakening of Islam' or Islamic consciousness.

It is against this background that one advocates Black cultural renaissance or consciousness or authenticity. Black cultural renaissance is Black existential rebirth and liberation from Europeanization. This existential rebirth will not be the resuscitation of the dead past but practicing and understanding of the cultural heritage from the past as a living thing so that the black world would see the light and will not hesitate to assert the existence of common ties and a motive power that is identical with other cultures in encompassing totality and freedom. In the quest for Black cultural revivalism, as a means of freeing Africa from imperialist domination, certain elements of African culture are necessary. As dictated by post-modernism not all aspects of African culture could co-exist with others. However, there are some elements which can survive the test of time, and which can be promoted within the context of modernity or post-modernity.

One of the most salient features of Africanity (as Jacques Maguet would call it) is the extended family system which sharply contrasts with the nuclear family in Europe. Nuclear family as a basic family unit consisting of the mother, father with their children is alien to African culture. Extended family system is a system where emphasis is not on the family unit but on a wider network of a conglomeration of family units forming a wider network of family of families. The practice of nuclear family in Africa in modern times is a detraction from the extended network of family relations. However the extended family system has to be reviewed in the context of development. In the system one is defined by his descendants; while in a European system, a person is defined by nationality, profession, and social class. In Africa person traces his descendants from, patrilineal filiations or matrilineal filiations. In the extended family lineage, the head of the family is the eldest person. Heads of families constitute important political groups responsible for discussing and solving political problems. In African political system, underlined by the philosophy of communalism, there are no concepts of power and opposition in the sense of the Anglo-Saxon parliamentary democracy. The highly-structured and highly protective network of relations is what is called kinship. Kinship, on social and political terms, has a network of obligations and rights. It is the basic frame-work of the society. The reality of African world is supernatural and people always strive to live in harmony with pervasive cultic forces like God, gods, divinities, and ancestors. The African man is seen as a link in the chain of generations, and also symbolically and ritualistically related to cultic forces. This is the spiritual consciousness of the African, as the *Existenz*, in his inwardness, historical self and authentic self-awareness.

In some parts of Africa, the installation of a king or monarch is by hereditary succession, and as such the legitimacy of the king does not originate from the subjects. However, the king's power is not absolute as he has a team of advisers without whom he could not exercise his supreme prerogatives. He is one ruler among others even though he is regarded as first in importance. In the political administration of the kingdom, a category of rulers or chiefs is delegated to administer the territory when the territory is too expansive to be the directly administered by a monarch. A chiefdom is not too large to be governed from the centre; but a kingdom is centralized. This is common to all African kingdoms. For example Buganda, an ancient African nationality, has a network of connections; the capital maintains a large labour force requisitioned by local officials. For instance, in Chaka the Zulu's military reform and the warrior band of Mossai, the whole political system rested on physical coercion. In the kingdom, tensions and internal oppositions were always latent. The royal power aimed at stronger and stronger centralization which was resisted by local powers trying to retain or increase their autonomy.²³ Yet all these are what time and tide as well as post-modernity would put in proper contexts in transcendental communicative rationality of Globalization and world democracy. In African society, History, as the knowledge of the past relevant to the present, is highly emphasized. While in western culture, history is preserved by writing and texts.

In African society history is preserved through art. Art existentially is closely linked with two essential themes of African culture; ancestors and kings. Artistic communities. It depicts the relationship between man and his ancestors. The pomp and glory of kings are reflected in the work of Craftsmen and Artists. For example the Benin bronzes and ivories reflect the royal power and grandeur of king. African craftsmen are professional in their own rights. The Ife and Benin artists used the long, difficult lost process to make their famous bronze and brass statutes. Artistic works in black Africa exact the wealth and power of dominant group. In addition to court art, there is the "art of the masks through which the gods can take material form and communicate with men. This is also the art of religious or magical status, well balanced weapons and graceful post".²⁴ Art is a function of imagination and transcendence and hence contributes to African existential and transcending freedom.

There is, however, some critical issues in African culture like the caste system and slave-owning. As a matter of fact there are some cases which had been discouraged by modernity and the fundamental and natural rights of human beings. But that notwithstanding, there is the philosophy of "existing for others".²⁵ in the isolated cases where slavery obtained, the slave was certainly a property of his master. He was a member of his master's household and could hope for eventual emancipation. The freemen of the lower stratum were not subjected to such direct exploitation as were slaves. While the upper stratum obtained important economic advantage from the lower stratum, they also ensure that they were protected. So there were obligations from both sides.

Yet, terrorism and violence in slavery and caste system is contrary to the democratic existentialist world order or the cosmopolitan world life – order envisaged by Jaspers because according to him, “violence in its potential for physical and spiritual destruction, is a boundary situation for men”,²⁶ Force is contrary to the world politics because it is the highest obstacle to the establishment of freedom, the very point of politics. For Jaspers, conflict boils down to the use of force, which ought not be. Hence the Europe would be guilty of use of force in the circumstance resulting to the alienation of the Africans. Force in this circumstance and any similar one may bring about a new situation, open a space, but it cannot bring about unity of wills, “Unity by force does not avail; in adversity it fades as an illusion.”²⁷ Force engendered by violence and terrorism resulting from conflict of cultural and existential power is opposite to Jaspers hope for the world, contrary to communication, and encompassing transcendence in freedom and authenticity, alien to the contentions of minds, and destructive of humanity in every sense. “Where force rules there is fear, silence, concealment, coercion, unrest... in the state based on force there is universal mistrust”.²⁸ Jacques Maguet outlined some major categories of African culture which, could, after proper modification in tune with the scientific age, constitute an ideology of cultural liberation devoid of force and violence, from Europeanization. These categories are:

*Kinship, marriage and family; the spatial organization and social control of the community; the socialization of the young by their upbringing and education, philosophical conceptions and world-views: government and social stratification; Religion and magic; ritual and art.*²⁹

To revive and criticize these elements of African culture and so promote African civilization and freedom, a language policy should be adopted. This is because of the fact that language is the vehicle of transmission and dispersion of cultural traits. It is a means of enculturation, transculturation and acculturation. In the sub-Saharan West Africa, East Africa and South Africa, English and French have been the Linguafranca. Because of the multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic nature of African societies, English and French have been playing the roles of neutral language in schools, colleges and universities. By implications, these languages as carriers of European cultures promote European cultures instead of indigenous culture. Experiment on formulating an indigenous linguafranca for cultural and technological growth has met with only minimal success, if not failure. Indian experiment in language development provided an important contrast to the experience of Africa. In India, Hindi is the language of instruction for primary education and it is believed that in the area of education generally the area covered by English is being drastically reduced. There has been less linguistic nationalism in Africa than has been observed in countries like Malaya, India and Bangladesh. In West Africa, English still remains the linguafranca because of the multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic differences in the societies. Generally in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and in Kenya, the spread of education has led to an increased demand for English at primary level. It is important to note that linguistic enculturation, transculturation and acculturation do not guarantee the philosophical freedom of the African. The authentic self-awareness of the African is presupposed in linguistic nationalism as an integral component of encompassing and transcendental universal reality.

As a result of colonization, there has been increasing acceptance of linguistic Afro-Saxons and linguistic Afro-Gauls. Senghor, as a colonized child of the French language believed that French could be medium through which his own countrymen of Senegal, and indeed all those black people who had been ruled by France, could make their contribution to world civilization. But from critical point of view, English and French as inter-ethnic languages could only achieve national integration among the educated. This has prompted the problem of the search for a national linguafranca. It is believed that the use of national and regional African language “could promote integration at two levels: horizontally among the masses of different ethnic groups and vertically to narrow the gap between the masses and the educated elite”.³⁰ However the problem, inherent in the search for a national language is that there are many ethnic languages in West Africa, for example. The issue is which one is to be chosen as the regional or national language. In Nigeria alone, there are more than a hundred ethnic languages, although dominant ones are Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. The Nigerian experience in national language has been an attempt to synthesize the three main languages and bring out a national language which is called WASOBIA. This method of achieving a linguafranca has not been effective since individual ethnic prejudices are still strong, and so English has remained the common language.

Kiswahili, the Bantu-language has a greater advantage over others as a language of national and regional integration in East Africa, in that it is ethnically neutral; it is not associated with any particular ethnic community. The Kiswahili language does not suffer from being the language of a powerful and sometimes politically distrusted ethnic group. So far the development of Kiswahili has made some progress in Tanzania. According to Ali Mazrui and Michael Tidy,

*in political development, Kiswahili has done more than promote cultural fusion and 'nationalize' school children; it has widened the range of potential political leadership. In any African state where the national language is an European language, the choice of leaders is inevitably restricted.*³¹

Presently all three countries of East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda) are seeking ways of increasing cultural intercourse among different ethnic groups. No similar effort is, today, being made by other regional groups in Africa. But suffice to say that language is a vehicle of national and regional integration as well as vehicle for technological and scientific development, based on rational and universal communication.

Communication has a great role to play in democratic existentialism. Communication is never a one way process, but always requires two who are willing to communicate and are committed to doing so unconditionally. In other word, Jaspers recognizes that there is a certain limit to tolerance, there cannot be tolerance of intolerance. In the face of intolerance one has to be prepared to defend oneself to survive culturally, if need be, and, even if reluctantly, do by taking up arms. Hence communication is not the avenue to a state of everlasting tranquility. Since human encounters, on a personal as well as on the political level, are about disagreements, the need to communicate is perennially ongoing, never at an end. Jaspers considers communication to be a struggle, but cautions us to make it a loving struggle and maintain it as such. Everything is subject to unlimited public debate. Complying loyally with what in given situations are common decisions, the minority in turn enjoys the protection of the laws and of a solidarity founded upon the common democratic idea. Hence, for Jaspers, the idea of a monolithic institution like that of Islamic faith combined with political power which is unquestionable and unchangeable as purportedly dictated by the divine is undemocratic and unencompassing. It is not in accord with unconditionality and *Existenz*. There should be freedom and continuous debate on the right of man without believing in Burke's assessment that "The law is morality based, but real owing to force",³² This is because today, the unity of mankind is an idea imposed upon us by reality itself. It could be wrought only by unanimity about the rights of man...²¹ Jaspers disparages the partisan conception of the right of man because, it should be unconditionality and unanimously sought from transcendence and encompassing reality or *atoraxy*.

*Politics is, on the one hand, to become a legal process that eliminates force from its arsenal; on the other hand, it cannot become such a process, since sovereignty and the veto stand in the way.*³³

Jasper is inclined towards the removal of sovereignty of individual members of the United Nations as well as the abolishment of veto power in the conduct of the affairs of United Nation because it blocks unanimous and unconditional debate, which to him is the true spirit of democracy. He also envisioned the rights of man as the authority of legality for a federation of states clearly distinguished from world government with control of all force.

*"Whatever combines all force in one hand will soon crush freedom. Political freedom can be preserved only by the separation of powers, by the system of checks and balances that has been conceived and variously realized in modified form over since Antiquity".*³⁴

Africanizing Education

The process of Africanization of Education or Educational policy relevant to African culture, and African technological and scientific researches started with the awareness of newly independent states to cleanse Africa of the vestiges of colonialism and become culturally free in a democratic existentialist world. Africanization of Education serves two important needs: cultural liberation and bold initiatives in the fields of science and technology. But one of the obstacles to cultural liberation has been the confusion of the concept of modernization with westernization. A lot of people believe that modernization is the absorption of western culture which is seen by them as superior to African culture. The argument however, has been that:

Retraditionalization of African culture can take modernizing forms, especially if it becomes an aspect of decolonization.

Retraditionalization does not mean returning Africa to what it was before the European came. In hard assessment, it would be suicidal for Africa to attempt such a backward leap. But a move towards respect for indigenous ways and the conquest of cultural self-contempt may be minimal conditions for cultural decolonization.³⁵

Much as western education was used to propagate westernism or western culture, independent African states should also see the need to use Africanized education to promote and propagate African culture. In modern African states, education appeared to be the area the governments have spent the greatest percentage of their incomes. Between 1962 when most African states got their independence and now, there has been a rapid growth in the number of universities in African countries. In Nigeria, the number of universities has multiplied, some of them owned by State Governments and the Federal Government while others are private universities. Similar increases in the number of Universities are also noticeable in Ghana, Upper Volta, Niger, and so on. The growth in the number of universities in most African states, no doubt, has corresponded with a rapid increase in the students' enrollment figures in secondary and tertiary institutions. So generally speaking, the Educational sector in most African states has witnessed a quantitative growth. In qualitative terms, there has been some progress in Africanizing the teaching personnel, curricula, and syllabuses in African states. This has reduced the number of missionary school and missionary teachers. These trends have been supported by a process of secularization with hope that it would lead to proper Africanization of education. Apparently, secularization would lead to the erosion of the impact of Christianity on the colonial system of education. In the process of Africanization, the curricula and syllabuses of colleges and universities would be adjusted to reflect African interests in the areas of culture and technology. In both colleges and universities, most courses have become indigenized. In schools, today, students now study African this or that; African history, African literature, African philosophy, African religion and so on. At secondary school level, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the comparable East African body EAAC have played key roles in syllabus revision. There have equally arisen institutes of African Studies in most African States. These institutes are devoted to the studies of African traditional heritage with a view to modernizing them instead of a whole sale adoption of westernism as modernism. These institutes are also aimed at rediscovering African ancient civilizations.

As part of the process of Africanizing education, it is proper to initiate and promote indigenous African arts, impressionism, surrealism and literature. The liberation of Africa from the clutches of European culture definitely borders on propagating indigenous African arts, impressionism and surrealism. Presumptively, a farewell attitude to Eurocentric arts, impressionism and surrealism will mean the 'freedom from' of Africa in these areas. Drawing and paintings (impressionist arts) abound in Africa before the coming of the white man. There were the paintings and carvings of African civilization relics. There were the impressions and art works depicting the war heroes and gods of ancient African empires like the Songhai, Ghana, and Mali empires. There were also the impressions of great African monarchs. The art works depicting the great emirs and queens of the Hausas and Fulanis, and those depicting the civilization in Ife, the ancient city of Yoruba land are all evidence of original African arts, impressionism, and surrealism. It is also noticeable that the post-colonial literatures by African authors are literatures of decolonialization and liberation of Africa from the clutches of imperialism. Most of these literatures are revolutionary and are targeted towards the freedom of Africa from European cultural and existential domination. When one talks of truly African literatures one readily remembers Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* and Wole Soyinka's *Idanre* and other poems. For the total liberation of Africa and the emancipation of truly and authentic African personality more initiative efforts are needed to promote African literature, art, impressionism and surrealism.

Also through education, African culture could be made to be scientific oriented. Bold initiatives in the development of science and technology by the African could go a long way to make Africa less dependent on western science. Technology transfer from the west, at best, serves the needs of Europe. African dependence on Eurocentric technology and science partly accounts for her unfreedom. Therefore science and technology could be tools for achieving African development and freedom. Technology is the means for the eradication of preventable diseases, the eradication of illiteracy, the elimination of hunger and the fight against ignorance. This kind of technology is badly needed by Africa to free herself from European domination. Professor Peter Bodunrin argues,

In our attempt to rediscover our self-identity and self-pride we must not forget that the feeling of racial superiority over us which the colonialist had was as a result of their scientific and technological achievements. We cannot solve the economic problems that confronts us today without the aid of science and technology.³⁶

It is therefore imperative that African education philosophy should promote ideas which enhance a scientific culture. But Jaspers warns that,

The exact sciences, the natural sciences, have entered upon a phase of stimulating and rapid advance in respect of their fundamental notions and their empirical results.... This process has its repercussion among the masses in the ready comprehensibility of the results.....³⁷

Terrorism of all forms ranging from armed robbery, torture, to suicide bombing all take advantage of the benefit of scientific and technological know-how. The phenomenon results to abuse of scientific development by religious faith and political power today. According to Jaspers, "Genuine science is a knowledge that is accompanied by knowledge of the methods and limits of knowledge."³⁸ Hence he cautioned against the destruction of humanity through terrorism and violence using nuclear weapons or atom bombs. He says that "Life, the soul and the mind cannot be technologically made but only conditionally influenced".³⁹ The technological actions according to him would influence the condition under which political action takes place. Jaspers transcendental and encompassing approach to the problem of mankind is "political thinking", 'empathizing' and 'cipher – reading' known interpretatively as "world orientation, existential elucidation and metaphysics".⁴⁰ For Jaspers 'thinking' is existentially imperative. By 'thinking' he means "to look around us; to observe what is going on; to visualize the possibilities; to clarify the situation in the direction that emerge..."⁴¹ He said that in our political situation, two unprecedented phenomena make this prerequisite thinking even more pressing; "the atom bomb, as the problem of mankind's very existence"⁴² and "the threat of totalitarian rule with its terroristic structures that obliterates all liberty and human dignity" Science has empowered totalitarian and authoritarian rule to build up terroristic structures. These totalitarian powers engage in terrorism either nakedly or in the name of religion and in consequence obliterate liberty and human dignity; they are political powers that seek religious goals through legal, social and physical violence.

Professor Wiredu however pointed out what he considered to be the three maladies of African culture inimical to the development of a scientific attitude in Africa. They are; anachronism, supernaturalism and authoritarianism.⁴³ But much as one would agree with Wiredu on the retrogressive nature of anachronism and authoritarianism, the notion that supernaturalism is one of the maladies eroding African scientific culture is arguable and problematic. Supernaturalism may even be the basis of an authentic and independent African science. After all, all sciences must not follow the model of western empirical sciences. Africans believe that reality is supernatural and so an African science independent of western science could begin from supernatural reality. Suffice it to say that one of the factors that make Africa unfree from European domination has been her dependence on western science and technology.

Ideology of Liberation

One hard-fact that must be taken into cognizance by activists and radicals in the forefront for the freedom of Africa and the third world in general is that Africa is a people existentially unfree. It is the struggle against imperialism for concrete historical exteriority, originality and alterity of Africa. Dependency syndrome is just one aspect of the African peripheral totality and so should be one of the targets of the struggle for liberation. The praxis of liberation must be carefully studied and carried out from within the continent against the reactionary forces and against the outside forces of imperialism and neo-colonialism. Existential and authentic African freedom begins from among the people and so liberation implies the taking over of power by the popular classes in order to organize social formation. Hitherto social formation is the social formation of the periphery serving the needs of the social formation of the centre (Europe). The centre exercises hegemony through imperialism of a multinational, operative, capitalist type. Political liberation, as distinct from economic liberation begins with resistance to oppression. It takes up the struggle that the dominators have necessitated (for them it is perverse) and to which those who are liberated respond (for them it is honorable, good, heroic).⁴⁴ Secondly it entails the organization of the state and a new mode of production.

The struggle for liberation must also be waged from the economic angle because economic alienation is a form of unfreedom because it enslaves persons to work for the benefit of a dominator, emptying their very being. That is why Enrique Dussel's argues that economic liberation "is the concrete realization of human liberation, the process of which the oppressed hurl themselves into a new projection of exteriority".⁴⁵ The liberation of Africa from the western domination must take the concrete dimension of establishing a just economic order where authentic economic freedom can be exercised and where equals can choose what is just. The new economic order would banish the freedom where the powerful existentially destroy the weak. This will require the dismantling of the lopsided and asymmetrical present economic order which permits the African economic dependency on Europe and a system whereby Europe benefits from the purchase of the labour of Africa. Economic liberation is the service to the other as other and to the oppressed people of Africa in an encompassing totality. Liberative economy implies work, suffering, skill, technology, design, and art. According to Enrique Dussel,

*It implies poesies, justice, structures, equality and freedom. Liberative economy is service in justice, mediation that ministers to the other, technical innovation and technology for the other — for the other's liberation which implies inspiration from popular, traditional, national institutions — there is no real liberation.*⁴⁶

These theoretical insights into the praxis of political and economic liberation are for the benefits of the agitators, activists and advocates of African freedom.

The models of the liberation of the periphery (dependent nations) have taken different forms in different countries depending on the theoretical predilections of the activists and leaders and the cultures of the societies. There were leftist models of liberation of Trotskyite guerrillas in Argentina, the leftists of Chinese cultural revolution and the Palestinian guerrillas. There were the leftist front model of Sandanista front in Nicaragua and the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front in El Salvador. There were the populisms of diverse inspirations like that of the Vargas of Brazil, Mahatma Gandhi of India, Nasier of Egypt, and Nyerere of Tanzania. There were the militarist model of Velazco Alvarado in Peru and Quathafi of Libya. Also there were the neo-liberalisms of the Christian democratic parties in Latin America and the dependent capitalist fascisms such as Golbery do Couto e Silva of Brazil and Pinochet in Chile etc. This last model is traditional centre-right conservatism. The array of models of liberation open for Africa include leftist revolutionary approach, neo-liberalism, militarism and democratic socialism. Experiments on neo-liberalism have titled in favour of western capitalism, fascism and centre-right conservatives, all of which in the final analysis would return Africa to square one and dependency syndrome. Militarism of Quathafi types has at best maintained national integrity without the much needed domestic and internal economic freedom and resilience. This approach to national or continental freedom is at best a freedom from one super power and slavery to another internal super power. In such a system democracy suffers since the ruling clique, whether military or civilian, dictates to the majority their wish. Whatever the approach to the liberation of Africa is, the domestic or internal political culture must be considered. To that extent various postulates on African decolonization have taken into consideration some peculiarities of African culture. Each of them is seen by the authors as the appropriate model of African liberation from western cultural dominance. For instance, Consciences appreciates the African value that man is endowed with dignity and its corresponding socialist principle of communalism. It is opposed to Marxian class theory of horizontal social stratification where there are class conflicts as a result of disproportionate economic and political power. Consciences, therefore, is a brand of democratic socialism and existentialism.

Negritude on the other hand is supposed to be an ideology of liberation of Africa from colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. According to B. C.Okolo, it contains a new African personality, an African world-view, and a path to authentic black existence. It is an anti-racist racism in defense of Africa. It is an affirmation of African being and her historical struggle against white racism and domination. But as a theory of social action and liberation, it does little to mobilize the people of Africa democratically and economically against foreign domination. Paradoxically, Senghor's opposition of the Black African mind (intuitive by participation) to the classic European mind (analytic by utilization) in his theory of Negritude plays into the hand of the white man and so annihilates the goals of African liberation and integration into the world global village. Julius Nyerere postulated 'Ujamaa' as the basis of African socialism, and perhaps African freedom also. According to him, socialism is an attitude of mind which is needed to ensure that the people care for each other's welfare.

This attitude of mind in African society is living in a community. People take care of community, and the community takes care of them. People neither need nor wish to exploit their fellow men. He argues that, In rejecting the capitalist attitude of mind which colonialism brought into Africa, we must reject also the capitalist methods which go with it. One of these is the individual ownership of land. . . .⁴⁷ ‘Consciencism’, ‘negritude’ and ‘Ujamaa’ are all forms of democratic socialism or existentialism. Apparently, Democratic socialism fits well into the furniture of African culture. It is part and parcel of democratic existentialism. The democratic capitalism and communalism of African culture bespeaks of Democratic socialism. As against scientific socialism, the modern formulation of democratic socialism believes that social development is not susceptible to scientific cognition. Democratic socialists have the conviction that, Human activity is directed by conscious and unconscious impulses and leads to a parallelogram of social forces, the preliminary resolution of which is scientifically impossible and quite impracticable in the foreseeable future.⁴⁸ Democratic socialism seeks “the final causes of all social processes in human beings themselves and their ideas on freedom, justice and solidarity”.⁴⁹ This Democratic existentialism appropriates the element of freedom from liberalism and the element of humanism from Marxism. As such it is viewed by critics as eclectic and pluralistic. These critics argue that it is erected “on the unstable soil of pluralism and openness to bourgeois reformist proposition and philosophical and ideological ideas”.⁵⁰ they maintain that it is vulgarized scientific socialism. But its popularity in Africa as a model of liberation is due to the fact that African culture is a combination of the elements of capitalism (freedom) and socialism (communalism).

Peripheral societies all over the world have similar cultures and so democratic socialism could be a model of real existential liberation. But from critical point of view, democratic socialist theories like ‘Ujamaa’ ‘consciencism’, ‘negritude’ and so on, have turned out in the countries where they were experimented to be populisms of liberation. Their inefficiency is usually betrayed when, in a crisis, the dominant national classes ally themselves with transnational corporations and with imperialism against the oppressed classes. Critics of democratic socialism may be right only to the extent that in practice, this theory has been betrayed in African countries by the petty bourgeois forces allying themselves with imperialist forces. But from the point of view of cultural relevance, popularity among the people and effectiveness, democratic socialism is preferable to neo-liberalism, conservatism, and purposeless militarism and aggression. On the other hand, Jaspers argues that the “the demand that a rule in the world be obeyed as the rule of God, or of history, is not made by God or by history. It is made by men”.⁵¹ On the other hand, Jaspers warned that Democracy as the sovereign will of the people “is not the fiction of sovereign people, personal ruler – as authority whose supreme wisdom is charged with the sole responsibility by all individuals, who then feel free of responsibility themselves”.⁵² Democracy is every individual. The “deified sovereign people that no one wants to be”,⁵³ is as easily a source of unfreedom as the duty which no one is but which someone must represent.

*“As the fiction of a general will revealed through another fiction, that of public opinion absolves the individual of responsibility and disguises the multiple relations involved in plural political action, so the fiction of a general interest disguises or denies the interplay of particular interest. There is no social or political person with a voice and an interest except in the minds of those who would like to have it so”.*⁵⁴

This is a critique of contemporary democracy, which alienates the individual in the name of sovereign will. This view of Jaspers is short of saying that if democracy is so limited, religious faith and political power operating as any form of government is more fictitious, more deified, more alienating and more irresponsible. For Jaspers the analysis of this present world situation must elicit existential elucidation and cipher-reading (metaphysical transcendence) none of which gives practical solution. This is because, according to him, the knowledge of totalitarian regimes, terroristic structures in some countries and suicide bombing infrastructure in Palestine, “baffles the imaginations, because its nature seems humanly impossible and is accordingly not believed in reality”.⁵⁵ However, he says it is only imagination which can “open our eyes to the deepest abysses as well as the highest potentialities of human life”.⁵⁶ On terrorism, violence and religious conflicts in the world, Jaspers offers not an objective analysis but an encompassing and transcendental analysis because “intellect always predict the negative only. It knows what is doomed... Man adds something new to the world, something not adequately comprehensible in terms of what went before, not even in retrospect.”⁵⁷

It is by imaginations that people of the world, for world peace, can range over the situation of injustice, terrorism religious conflicts and religiously motivated suicide bombing as well as the threat of atom bomb and chemical and biological warfare, viewing them from many perspectives and illuminating them from a distance (What Nietzsche called “real dialectic”). It is by imaginations that we hold ideas of human history (as Kant would argue). It is the imagination of reason not that of empirical existence, *Dasein*, by which man *Geist* strives to expand and becomes the organ of *Existenz*. All things being equal justice, liberty, equality, equity and all attributes of an ideal democratic society are implied in *Existenz* wherein one has an encompassing and communicative transcendence. “In rational communication, there is a common authority to be clarified only in communication itself”⁵⁸. The problems of ruler ship and economic and social management of human welfare, for Jaspers, take bearing appropriately in the face of purposive actions and unconditional action of men. A purposive action is where “I am aware of the ends of my underlying drives. I have interposed a series of calculated arrangements between the drive and its satisfaction, to relate the end to certain means”⁵⁹. Unconditional act exists when a man acts with an eye to eternity, doing what he considers essential for eternity and when the act is illuminated as an assurance of being. The truth of unconditional action in the world is “the tension in existence that I act as if existing reality were absolute, and am aware at the same time that as mere reality everything is nothing.”⁶⁰ If man unconditionally makes decisions and takes actions and choices, politically, economically and socially, there would be peace in the world. According to Jaspers “the aim of politics is the establishment, consolidation and preservation of freedom, but they did not state a final purpose”⁶¹. Objective freedom, political freedom is ‘historically manifold and nowhere quite reliable...’⁶². The idea of freedom has historically incarnated into many forms of government. Here Jasper seems to be re-echoing postmodernist philosophy in apparently calling for plurality of truths in political engineering and ideas about government because his ‘ethos of undefined rules’ are independent of religious and political power. The political task in an era of advanced technology is to ensure justice is introduced into the material order, in the broad context of world political order. Hence, in that state what is done and made by individuals and groups “can be controlled by the community of men”⁶³. According to Jaspers, the democratic idea “Knows no reigning and governing sovereign, but it knows a will that must constantly evolve anew in a process of self-education, in institutions which, for all their firmness and despite all checks and safeguards, remain modifiable”⁶⁴. It requires solidarity of the most diverse members of the rationally oriented and directed community. The way of the democratic idea is an incessant common struggle for truth.

Prospects of African Freedom

African existential freedom poses some challenges which constitute a Herculean task. It entails an end of alienation, evolving a veritable and formidable political culture, conquering poverty by developing a sustainable and resilient economy and preservation of African identity through arts, sculpture, and literature. These challenges of African freedom could be squarely tackled if the necessary political will is there. This would not be too utopian to believe in. Decolonization of Africa at political level has to a large extent freed Africa from their governance by the colonialists. This has been relatively peaceful in certain countries. But in some African countries like Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the fight for freedom was militaristic and violent. Yet the struggle for the freedom of the blacks in South Africa took more violent dimensions. So far the end of white rule in South Africa put an end to white rule in Black Africa. Also the cultural relevance of Democratic existentialism to Africa could help in formulating a system of government that can free Africa from the shackles of imperialism and neo-colonialism. So far the experiment on parliamentary system of government adopted by most African countries has failed to achieve the much desired political stability necessary for economic independence. As such it has been substituted by a presidential system of government in which the head of state himself assumes the power of the executives. The presidential system, though foreign in origin, is adapted to suit African political philosophy. In African presidential system, like Nigerian experiment, the president personifies the nation as the old time monarch personified his people. Some examples of this include Mobido Keita, Sekou Toure, and Houphouet Boigny etc. Leopold Senghor, former president of Senegal and one of the authors of Negritude, says that African presidential system expresses the spirit of African philosophy. Also the presidential regime which is accompanied and reinforced in Africa, by a one-party system is analogous to African king’s henchmen who constituted the governmental apparatus. It is a hard fact, therefore, that the emergence of presidential regime and one party system of government are no accidents. This is because it found a comfortable culture for growth in Africa dominated by kingship.

In the face of ravaging effect on African freedom by imperialism and neo-colonialism, the presidential system need not only to be strong but must also be supported by Democratic socialism as a model of total liberation of Africa. The failure of presidential regimes in African to achieve the desired independence from foreign powers is partly accountable by the absence of a coherent and acceptable ideology of liberation for domestic and foreign policies. The sooner African governments cultivated sense of direction and eschews militarism and alignment to one power or the other, the better, Democratic socialism as a model of liberation in Africa demands also the awakening of national consciousness or culture.

Freedom of Africa goes beyond political to economic and technological independence. At this historical moment of imperialism and neo-colonialism, Africa suffers from dependency syndrome. Colonization did not bring advanced industrial technology to all the African territories. Even in areas where there were industrial developments there were poverty among the populace. That's why it is argued that the paradox of the existence of poverty and advanced industrial development in certain parts of Africa is explained by their economic independence. The shackle of economic independence must be destroyed if Africa must be free. Ideological freedom is incomplete without economic self sufficiency.

Identity question in African freedom is a cultural and metaphysical issue. One of the basic variables or matrixes of African freedom is African identity. African material progress is an aspect of African freedom. It may not matter much if Africa borrows what will lead to this, but retaining her identity seems to be overriding. Alienation resides not only in political and economic institutions but also in ideas and cultures. It is on this ground that African freedom must mean retaining some basic elements of African culture and heritage. African ideas reside in her culture, arts, sculpture and literature. African freedom is also sandwiched between the desire of Africa to retain her identity and her desire to be globalized. Globalization b ends aspects of the culture. It has effects beyond technical level as can be seen in such diverse spheres as habitat, kingship, obligations, family and local authorities and so on. Would this process in Africa continue to the detriment of African freedom? or would it lead to the uniformity of all the globalized civilizations of the world, whether they be African, Western, Asiatic or Soviet? The later prospect is a remote possibility because of the game of ideological narcissism of the super powers. Therefore if Africa must be free, it must play the opponents game of ideological and existential assertion.

Conclusion

Africa could contribute to the world cultural superstructure in terms of world-views, religions, art and literature. Through their contribution to world culture, the various civilizations could also become universal. To a very large extent, the tradition of a particular society can henceforth enrich the common heritage of humanity through the process of Globalization. African freedom here means the west abandoning their ideological, existential and cultural assertion for a universal heritage of humanity where all cultures are existentially free. Therefore, Africa's freedom in terms of playing the opponent's game of ideological and cultural assertion and in terms of contributing alongside with the West to the world universal heritage is what I have called the paradox of African freedom and the reconciliation of African freedom and Globalization. The freedom of Africa could be achieved in terms of her contributing to world philosophical heritage if the imperialist West is ready to cooperate. Hence Africa would not only welcome technical progress and preserve its own originality, it would also contribute to the collective enrichment in terms of Arts and Sculpture and their aesthetic orientation. Dance, music and arts are parts of the creations of the aboriginal Africans. The traditional music which the slaves from Africa brought to the New World is one source of Latin American rhythms and jazz in Soviet, western world, Asia and Africa. Therefore, African culture when it becomes a part of world culture in an encompassing totality Africa would be existentially free among existentially free races in a globalized village or world order. In a globalized world order where all races are existentially free, development policies and initiatives will equally be existentially free from the imperialist and neo-colonial encumbrances as much as they are propelled by the impulses of self-determination and self-realization, Africa, under this milieu of Democratic Existentialism could retain her culture, authenticity and historical self both as a benefactor and beneficiary of Globalization.

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